

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, June 17

Senior Menu: Lasagna bake, tossed salad with dressing, fruit cocktail, cookie, whole wheat bread.

Legion at Battle of Omaha, Neb.

**Cancelled:** Junior Teeners at Britton, 5:30 p.m. (2)

U10 B/W hosts Webster, 6 p.m. (2)

U8 R/B at Webster, 6 p.m. (4)

T-Ball G/B scrimmage, 6 p.m.

Ladies Invitational Golf Tourney at Olive Grove, Registration at 9 a.m., shotgun start at 10 a.m.

The Pantry at Community Center, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

## Tuesday, June 18

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, biscuit, vegetable Catalina blend, pears, tapioca pudding.

Legion at Battle of Omaha, Neb.

U12 B/W at Aberdeen 11, 5:30 p.m. (2)

U10 W/R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (2)

U8 R/B at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (4)

SB hosts Claremont (U8 at 5 p.m. (1), U10 Gld at 6 p.m. (1), U12 at 7 p.m. (1))

Common Cents Community Thrift Store, 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

## Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460

# HAPPY MONDAY

## Good Morning

May the Lord  
fill your day  
and week  
with many  
Blessings,  
Answered  
prayers, and  
Joy  
unspeakable  
and full of  
Glory. Have a  
Wonderful  
Day!



God's Spoken  
Word Ministries

The Pantry at Community Center, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Olive Grove Ladies League, 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 12:30 p.m.

## Wednesday, June 19

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes with ham, mixed vegetables, sunset salad, whole wheat bread.

Legion at Battle of Omaha, Neb.

U12 W/R hosts Watertown, 5:30 p.m. (2)

U10 R/B hosts Milbank, 6 p.m. (2)

SB at Warner (U8 at 5:30 p.m. (1), U10 Blk at 6:30 p.m. (1), U12 at 7:30 p.m. (1))

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Family Fun Night, 7 p.m. (Julia (Grenz) and Jordan Kroll will be sharing their message)

Olive Grove Men's League

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

As we continue to evaluate the Minnesota Vikings' roster for the upcoming season, we turn our attention to the tight end position. Before we get into it, however, let's talk for a moment about the tampering charges that were being investigated by the NFL this offseason.

The investigation began after Kirk Cousins made some troubling comments during his introductory press conference in Atlanta. Cousins spoke about how he was in touch with the Falcons' coaching and equipment staff before the official start of free agency, which is against the tampering rules set forth by the NFL. This isn't the first time a team has had contact with a player before they were supposed to, and while most of the time the punishment was a fine and a forfeiture of draft picks, there are instances where the affected team received the forfeited draft pick as compensation. There was never a doubt that the Falcons had tampered with Cousins, the only question was whether the Vikings would receive any compensation. Last Friday, the league announced they had finished the investigation and found two additional instances of tampering. Unfortunately for the Vikings, the NFL did not award any compensation – instead, Atlanta was fined and had a fifth-round pick taken away. It was, at most, a slap of the wrist. I expect most teams now feel emboldened to tamper because even if they are caught, there won't be any serious consequences.

Ok, back to our regularly scheduled programming.

The Vikings currently have six tight ends on the roster. Last season the Vikings kept four tight ends on the roster, and with T.J. Hockenson possibly starting the season on the Physically Unable to Perform (PUP) list, it's possible that only one of the TEs on the roster will be cut before the start of the regular season.

T.J. Hockenson – Unquestionably the player at the top of the TE depth chart, Hockenson has been one of the best tight ends in the league since being drafted eighth overall in 2019. Unfortunately, Hockenson was injured in the week 16 matchup against his former team (Detroit Lions), and there is currently no timetable for his return. If I had to guess, I think Hockenson will do everything he can to return to the lineup following the Vikings' week 6 bye, especially considering the Vikings play the Lions in week 7.

Josh Oliver – Signed as the TE2 last offseason, Oliver will likely begin the season on top of the depth chart. Although he's capable of catching passes, Oliver was signed to a lucrative deal because of his blocking abilities. Will Oliver be able to elevate his game and become a reliable pass catcher for Sam Darnold and/or J.J. McCarthy?

Robert Tonyan – An under-the-radar free agency signing, Tonyan was brought in to help fill the pass-catching void that was created by Hockenson's injury. The 30-year-old TE spent his first five seasons in Green Bay before playing in Chicago last season.

Johnny Mundt – An undrafted player out of Oregon, Mundt spent his first five seasons with the Los Angeles Rams before following head coach Kevin O'Connell to Minnesota. After Hockenson went down in week 16, Mundt saw the biggest increase in playing time and impressed the Vikings so much the team signed him to an extension this offseason.

Nick Muse – A seventh-round draft pick by the Vikings in 2022, Muse has mostly played special teams up to this point in his brief career. Last week it was announced that Muse had recently had knee surgery to "clean up" some issues, but he should be ready to go once training camp rolls around next month.

Trey Knox – Although he was undrafted, Knox was given a hefty signing bonus when he signed in Minnesota, so the Vikings must think he has some serious potential. He began his college career as a wide receiver before transitioning to tight end, so Knox is already a capable pass-catching threat. If he can improve his blocking abilities by adding weight and getting stronger, Knox could develop into a solid TE in the NFL.

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## "Prescriptions for Parks"

Doctors write prescriptions for medications all the time. However, have you ever heard of a doctor prescribing a walk in the park? While this prescription will not fit in a bottle, it can pack some powerful health benefits. It may sound strange, but doctors actually can prescribe time outdoors to their patients with the help of a national program, ParkRx.org. This free online program can help a patient track their outdoor activity and discuss more outdoor exercise options with their doctor.

In South Dakota, health care providers can contact the Department of Health to get a "Park Prescription" pad that is redeemable for a free 1 day pass to any South Dakota State Park or a discounted annual pass. Minnesota, Iowa, Wyoming, Montana, and Nebraska all have "Walk with a Doc" programs where you can meet at a public location to walk with a doctor and other health-minded individuals. Spending time in nature has been proven to help both physical and mental health.

A review of 20 medical trials of participants who spent time in a forest environment found that their blood pressure was significantly lower after being in a forest than it was in a non-forest environment. Additionally, this improvement lasted for several days after being in the wooded area. These participants did not need to go for hikes, simply walking in, sitting in, or viewing the forest was able to give the participants lower blood pressures. This worked both for people with high blood pressure and normal blood pressure. It also showed improvement regardless of age as children, young adults, and older adults all had similar findings.

One study found that children who spend more time outdoors have reduced rates of nearsightedness. Children who spent more time outdoors also have a lower risk of developing asthma according to another study. Increasing outdoor play also decreases BMI in preschoolers and lowers obesity in adults.

Time outside has also been shown to be associated with improved sleep and sleep quality. Spending time outdoors has been linked to improving the immune system and decreasing stress. While spending time in State Parks and Forests is beneficial, even walking around the local neighborhood and being in an outdoor "green space" has shown to have health benefits.

Of course, no medication is without side-effects. The great outdoors has bugs, you can get sunburned or there are uneven surfaces and loose gravel. So when you are going outside, remember to use sunscreen or wear a wide-brimmed hat and have bug repellent if going into areas where there are mosquitos and ticks. It is also important to have proper fitting shoes for your adventures to prevent blisters and slips or falls. With all the benefits of spending time outdoors, it just makes sense that doctors should write prescriptions for outdoor activities. So get out into nature to stay healthy out there!

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and on Facebook and Instagram featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show providing health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



Jill Kruse, DO

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## Groton Transit Fundraiser

Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

5:00 pm - 7:00pm at

### Groton Community Center

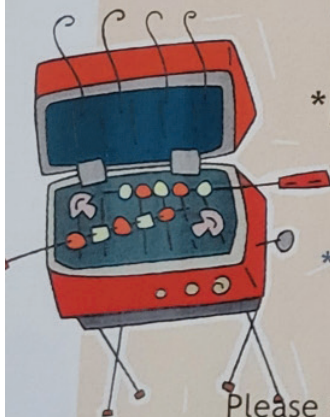
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## EARTHTALK ™

Dear EarthTalk: Do you have any tips on how to deal with climate anxiety?  
– J.J., Brea, CA

Climate anxiety, also known as eco-anxiety, is the chronic fear of environmental doom. It is becoming increasingly prevalent as the impacts of climate change become more evident and the urgency of the crisis grows. Addressing climate anxiety is crucial not only for maintaining mental health but also for ensuring effective climate action. When individuals are paralyzed by fear, they are less likely to engage in the proactive behaviors necessary to combat climate change.

Climate anxiety manifests through various psychological and physical symptoms, including persistent worry, sleep disturbances, a sense of helplessness, and even physical symptoms like heart palpitations and headaches. Recognizing these symptoms is the first step towards managing them effectively.

Art therapy is a unique way to cope with climate anxiety. Engaging in creative expression can help people process their emotions and reduce anxiety. According to Yale Climate Connections, art therapy allows individuals to visualize their fears and hopes, providing a cathartic release of pent-up emotions. "Art offers a way to express the inexpressible," notes the article, highlighting its therapeutic potential.

Techniques such as mindfulness and meditation are effective in grounding individuals and reducing anxiety. Practicing mindfulness helps individuals stay present and reduces the constant worrying about the future. This practice can be as simple as focused breathing exercises or guided meditation sessions.

Being part of a community can significantly reduce feelings of helplessness associated with climate anxiety. According to researchers at the University of Colorado, engaging in collective action can provide a sense of purpose and solidarity. Participating in local environmental or community projects can help one feel they are contributing to a larger cause, thus mitigating feelings of isolation and powerlessness.

Adopting eco-friendly habits can help, too. Reducing waste, conserving energy and buying sustainable products can provide a sense of purpose. Staying informed and engaging in advocacy can also help. Being informed allows one to make good decisions and contribute to meaningful change. Advocacy work like writing, speaking or participating in demonstrations, can provide a sense of purpose and hope.

Also, don't be afraid to seek professional help, which can be crucial for those severely affected by climate anxiety. Therapists and counselors can provide coping strategies and emotional support. The World Economic Forum emphasizes the importance of finding climate-aware therapists specializing in eco-anxiety. These professionals understand the unique stressors associated with climate change and can offer tailored support. By managing our anxiety and participating in collective action, we can contribute to a healthier planet and a more hopeful outlook.



**There are many tools we can use to help ground us during times of despair when we contemplate the severity of the climate crisis.**

Credit: Pexels.com.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Democrats nominate PUC candidate at state convention**

**BY: SEARCHLIGHT STAFF - JUNE 16, 2024 5:04 PM**

The South Dakota Democratic Party has nominated Forrest Wilson, of Lead, as its candidate for the Public Utilities Commission in the Nov. 5 general election.

Wilson is the director at the Lead-Deadwood Boys & Girls Club.

"South Dakotans deserve a public utilities commissioner who will advocate for the everyday utility rate payer," Wilson said in a news release. "Right now, we don't have that."

Wilson will face incumbent Republican Kristie Fiegen, who was nominated recently by her party to run for reelection. A Libertarian, Gideon Oakes, has declared his intent to seek his party's nomination at its state convention later this month.

Democrats held their state convention over the weekend in Oacoma. They also adopted a platform and selected their national committeeman and committeewoman, Dennis Olson and Deb Knecht, and chose numerous delegates to the Democratic National Convention in August.

### **SD courts aim to improve language access as diversity, interpreter needs grow**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JUNE 16, 2024 10:00 AM**

Interpreter use in South Dakota courtrooms has more than doubled in the last decade, according to the Unified Judicial System.

Requests for translation services, which cost the state more than \$26,000 a year in 2022 and 2023, increased from 1,566 in 2013 to 3,570 in 2023.

UJS expects further growth in requests as South Dakota becomes more diverse. More than 17,500 South Dakotans speak English less than "very well," according to a UJS report.

The court system started working to improve language access in the courts over a decade ago. Historically, the state has approached language access "ad hoc," said Greg Sattizahn, the state court administrator.

The state has taken a more strategic approach to language access since then, Sattizahn said, including implementing a statewide language access plan in 2021.

"We wanted to make sure we develop the capacity to meet the demands and expectations — and understood how to work with interpreters," Sattizahn said. "This is an area we have to continue to grow in and be responsive to with the demands we're seeing. It's not static."

Both Sattizahn and critics of the courts' current language access system say the courts have a long way to go, especially in recruiting quality interpreters and ensuring accurate interpreting.

#### **South Dakota lacks training for interpreters**

Interpreters are professionals contracted out by UJS to interpret a person's testimony or case verbatim if the person or judge determines they do not speak English well enough.

Of the more than 3,500 instances of interpreter use in 2023, according to UJS, 51% were Spanish, followed by 9% Arabic, 6% Swahili and 6% Dinka (spoken by the Dinka people, an ethnic group native to South Sudan in northeast Africa).

South Dakota has nearly 80 interpreters, according to UJS, but circuit courts frequently reach out to



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interpreters in other states or through remote services. Of the statewide roster, 25 are Spanish interpreters, four are Arabic, one is Swahili and none are Dinka.

South Dakota doesn't provide support or training for interpreters, said Sandra Guzman, a Spanish legal interpreter and translator based in Sioux Falls.

"In South Dakota, there is nothing provided for people to educate themselves in the field for court interpreting," said Guzman, who is an immigrant from Chile.

That makes it difficult for potential interpreters to learn about the profession, she said, and contributes to South Dakota's dearth of legal interpreters.

Minnesota's legal system offers a course for interpreters. In it, interpreters are evaluated on their English skills and their interpreted language, led through interpreter ethics, and taught how to interpret in a legal context — including participating in a mock trial.

Guzman, who has interpreted in South Dakota since 1995, took the Minnesota classes in 2007 and 2008. She also attended an intensive legal interpreter program in Arizona in 2009. She's been a self-employed, full-time legal interpreter and translator since 2022.

"It was like a preparation course," Guzman said.

Minnesota courts ranked highest in the country for language access, according to the National Center for Access to Justice. South Dakota, based on a 2021 assessment, ranked last.

States like Minnesota are "more advanced" than South Dakota, Sattizahn said.

"That's definitely somewhere we need to get to and try to build that into our process and make it more inviting for interpreters," he said, adding that UJS's language access coordinator has reviewed materials from surrounding states.

The first step, is recruiting more qualified interpreters, Sattizahn said.

"It's very informal here. We kind of rely on interpreting agencies to provide training," Sattizahn said. "A training like that would help us and is something that'll be on a future list of to-do items here."

The hope is to "build our foundation" through recruitment and informational sessions, Sattizahn said. Those sessions won't train potential interpreters — which Guzman said would have the biggest impact — but focus on the information needed to succeed in the role: the process of the court, common terminology, types of cases, and engaging with documents they'd need to be familiar with.

Sattizahn aims to get such a training up and running by 2026.

"In my mind, 18 months seems realistic," Sattizahn said. "We're really trying to explain how to work with us. Other states have developed those robust programs, which we should be able to borrow from."

## State lacks interpreter qualification evaluation, test

South Dakota is lacking in recruitment, Guzman said, but also lacks a way to ensure interpreter quality. Competent court interpreters are "able to completely and accurately interpret everything said in court," the state's language access plan says, "without adding or omitting words or summarizing statements."

"You need to have knowledge of the field you're interpreting for. You can't just be bilingual — even Americans don't understand what they're being told in the court system," Guzman said. "They need to be trained, and they need to have a passion for what they do. They can't just be anybody off the street."

South Dakota relies on interpreter expertise and qualifications built around personal or educational experience, Sattizahn said. After that, it's up to the judge, attorneys and others in the courtroom to make sure the interpreter is doing their job adequately.

If it looks like the interpreter is summarizing or not providing information when the person is talking, for example, "there are cues, and you can rely on other people in the court," Sattizahn said.

South Dakota joined the Consortium for Language Access in the Courts in 2022. Membership allows access to tests to establish qualified interpreters and to share interpreter-related resources and databases with other member states.

South Dakota is not using the test materials, however, and UJS doesn't plan to develop an independent testing program, Sattizahn said.

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Guzman said she's seen a judge throw out an interpreter because he was caught interpreting inaccurately. The client's case was rescheduled and delayed as a result.

Guzman herself has been assigned cases as an interpreter for clients who aren't truly Spanish speakers, including for people originally from Guatemala. While Spanish is a commonly spoken language in Guatemala, it has a different dialect and can be spoken in combination with native Mayan languages.

"Their words and the way they phrase things are kind of broken. I'll tell the attorney and they'll verify they speak a specific dialect and have to get a new interpreter," Guzman said. "I don't want to fool anybody or waste their time or my time."

Taneeza Islam is CEO for South Dakota Voices for Peace and South Dakota Voices for Justice. She's seen similar incidents. Islam represented a client who requested an interpreter during her civil case. The client, who interpreted professionally, stopped her interpreter during the case and informed the judge she was not being accurately interpreted, Islam recalled.

Islam said interpreter problems can create real problems for non-English speakers in the justice system, and not just in criminal cases.

"These are really high stakes issues," Islam said. "Oftentimes we think of access to justice on the criminal side, but civil cases are important too: protection orders against abusers, evictions, custody. If I can't communicate with an attorney or explain what's happening to a judge, how are they going to actually make a decision? Usually the party that knows English has a greater advantage in convincing a judge or explaining their side of the story."

## Using technology to supplement dearth of in-person interpreters

In-person interpreters are ideal for most situations, but it's unlikely that UJS will be able to fill the state's translation needs entirely with in-person, local interpreters. Several other states across the country also struggle to recruit qualified interpreters, Sattizahn said.

He sees technology as a solution, citing remote interpreters.

About 93% of interpreter requests in 2023 came from the Second Circuit Court, which is located in Sioux Falls and includes Minnehaha and Lincoln counties. The remainder of South Dakota courts need interpreters less frequently, though the need is growing in communities such as Huron or Flandreau, where there are growing communities of non-English speakers.

UJS recently kicked off a pilot program in Minnehaha, Brookings, Aurora, Yankton and Beadle counties to make it easier for non-English speakers to navigate language barriers outside of the courtroom. In addition to the video interpreter, the software program under testing offers live AI-written interpreter and translation services.

The hope is to find a balance between remote and in-person interpreters, Sattizahn said.

"We can minimize and use the technology to address the things that an interpreter might view as a waste of time, like if they had to drive an hour for a short hearing," Sattizahn said. "Shorter proceedings where you're just checking in fit better with remote. Cases of evidence or testimony of witnesses is important to have a live interpreter."

Guzman has traveled to nearly every county courthouse in southeastern South Dakota at least once to interpret for Spanish speakers. She's interpreted several times in Brookings, Mitchell and Parker.

Finding a balance between remote and in-person interpreters "makes sense," Guzman said, but she's still cautious of remote interpreting. The process can be awkward and is best reserved for "in case of emergency," she said.

Guzman is glad South Dakota plans to implement a training program for potential interpreters, and hopes she can be involved.

"People need to be trained," Guzman said. "Something has to start soon. We're growing too fast."

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## **Timeline of UJS language access improvements, according to the organization:**

2012-2020:

Language access decentralized to each circuit. Statewide involvement focused on providing resources from the state court administrator's office.

Each circuit operated under their own language access plan.

2021:

Created a language access coordinator position (adding responsibility to an existing position)

Created a statewide language access plan (in addition to circuit-level language access plans).

Passed a law that clarified the state is responsible for the cost of interpreters, not civilians.

Created an interpreter complaint process (one complaint has been made in over two years).

Began translating forms from the UJS self help page into Spanish (ongoing).

Posted signs in various languages at all South Dakota courthouses informing non-English speakers that interpreter services are available.

2022:

Joined the Consortium of Language Access Coordinators through the National Center for State Courts.

Trained judges, court service officers and specialty court personnel how to work with limited or non-English speaking people.

Provided continued legal education on language access to early-career lawyers in South Dakota.

Streamlined the process of providing interpreters for child support referees.

2023:

Trained clerks to work with limited or non-English speaking people.

Continued legal education on language access at the State Bar convention.

Increased data accuracy for tracking the need for interpreters in the court management system.

2024:

Began pilot project to allow clerks in five counties to connect to live video interpreters while assisting a non-English speaker outside of the courtroom.

Plans going forward:

Explore opportunities to leverage technology in rural areas.

Expand interpreter recruitment efforts.

Complete the translation of forms into Spanish and begin reviewing what other language translations are most needed.

Update written documents, such as the interpreter handbook.

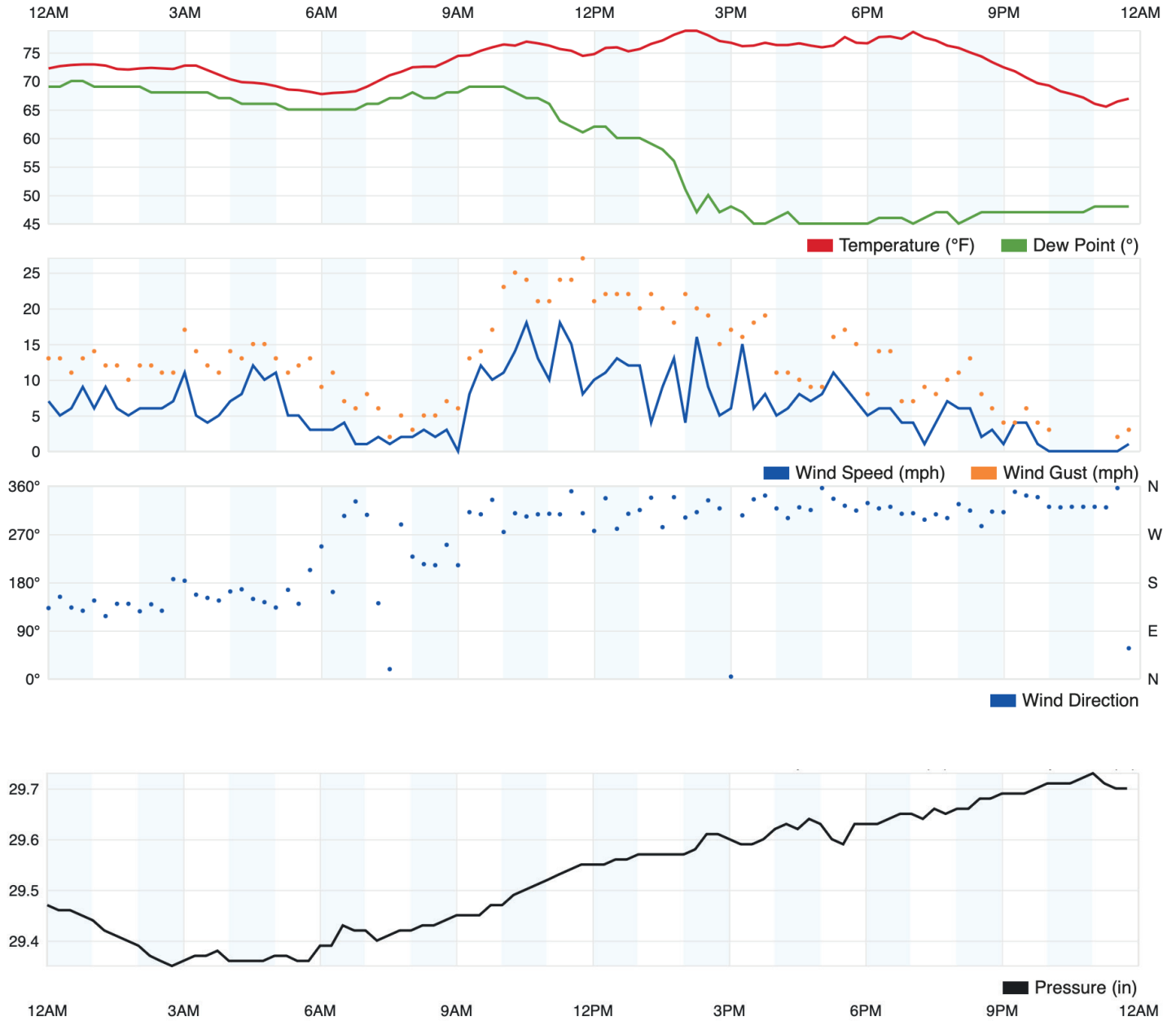
Conduct training for other entities, such as court reporters.

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan whose work has won national and regional awards. She's spent five years as a journalist with experience reporting on workforce, development and business issues within the state.*

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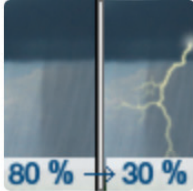




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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Juneteenth
				
<b>High: 69 °F</b>	<b>Low: 60 °F</b>	<b>High: 78 °F</b>	<b>Low: 49 °F</b>	<b>High: 72 °F</b>
Showers then Chance T-storms	Severe Thunderstorms	Chance T-storms	Slight Chance Showers	Partly Sunny

## Severe Weather Threat Overview June 17, 2024 5:09 AM

Tonight Through Early Tuesday

### Timing/Location

- Severe storms possible over the entire region tonight through early Tuesday
- The main threats for the area in **Yellow**

### Tornado Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High

### Max Hail Size

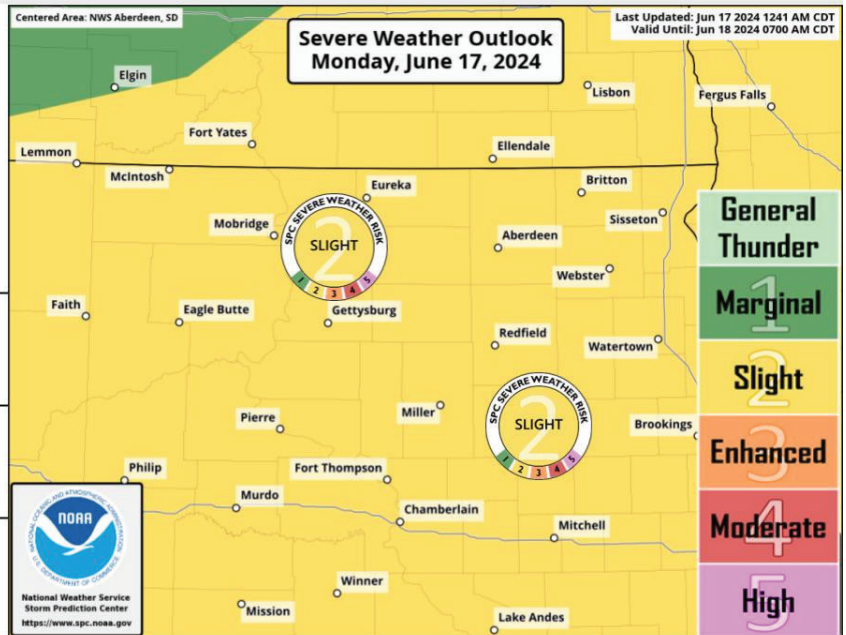
Dimes Quarters **Golfball** Baseball

### Max Wind Speed

< 60 mph **60-70 mph** 70-80 mph > 80mph

### Heavy Rain/Flooding Potential

Very Low **Low** Medium High



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Another round of showers and thunderstorms moves into the area tonight with strong to severe storms possible over the entire forecast area. Main threats include large hail, ranging from quarter to golfball size, and 60-70 mph wind gusts.

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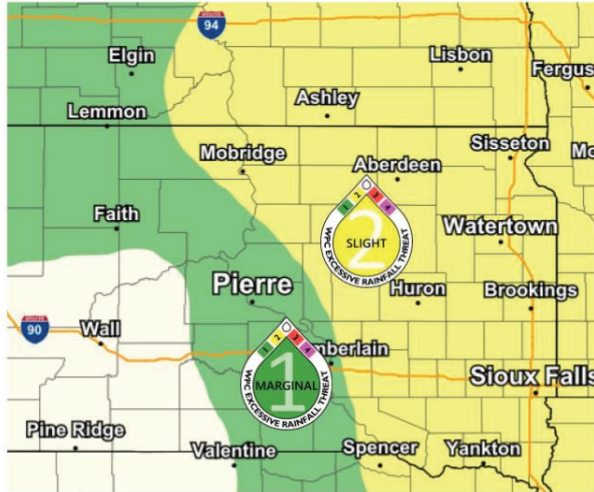
## Precipitation Timing and Location

June 17, 2024  
5:14 AM



### Day One Excessive Rainfall Outlook

- 1  
Marginal
- 2  
Slight
- 3  
Moderate
- 4  
High



Risk of rainfall exceeding flash flood guidance within 25 miles of a point  
**HIGH: At Least 70%** **SLGT: At Least 15%**  
**MDT: At Least 40%** **MRGL: At Least 5%**

### Probability of Precipitation Forecast (%)

	6/17 Mon						6/18 Tue							
	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm
Aberdeen	75	60	30	25	35	75	75	60	35	25	25	20	20	20
Britton	60	70	25	30	40	80	65	35	30	30	30	30	30	25
Brookings	85	95	70	60	40	25	15	10	10	10	50	50	50	50
Chamberlain	80	85	35	20	40	35	30	20	15	5	10	10	25	25
Clark	80	60	50	35	45	60	25	30	25	25	35	35	35	30
Eagle Butte	65	20	15	5	15	65	90	80	30	10	10	10	10	10
Ellendale	60	55	20	25	40	85	85	80	50	35	35	20	20	20
Eureka	60	45	15	15	20	45	90	90	50	25	25	15	15	15
Gettysburg	75	45	20	15	15	30	75	65	30	20	20	15	15	15
Huron	65	60	55	30	45	35	30	20	15	15	25	25	30	30
Kennebec	65	60	30	15	25	25	45	35	10	5	10	10	20	20
McIntosh	35	30	15	5	15	85	95	65	30	25	25	25	25	10
Milbank	80	95	70	45	60	70	45	25	35	35	55	55	55	40
Miller	80	45	30	20	35	35	40	40	30	20	20	20	20	20
Mobridge	45	35	20	10	20	50	90	80	35	15	15	10	10	10
Murdo	55	40	20	10	15	40	50	40	15	5	5	5	15	15
Pierre	75	35	20	15	15	25	60	45	15	5	5	5	15	15
Redfield	75	40	25	25	35	60	40	45	35	25	25	25	25	20
Sisseton	65	85	55	60	50	80	65	30	40	40	50	50	50	30
Watertown	85	80	60	40	55	60	30	10	20	20	40	40	40	35
Webster	80	80	50	45	60	70	45	20	30	30	40	40	40	30
Wheaton	70	80	70	70	50	80	75	40	45	45	60	60	60	30



There is a slight risk (15%) for heavy rain/flooding across portions of north central SD and areas mainly east of the Missouri River today and tonight with the ongoing rain today and developing storms tonight.

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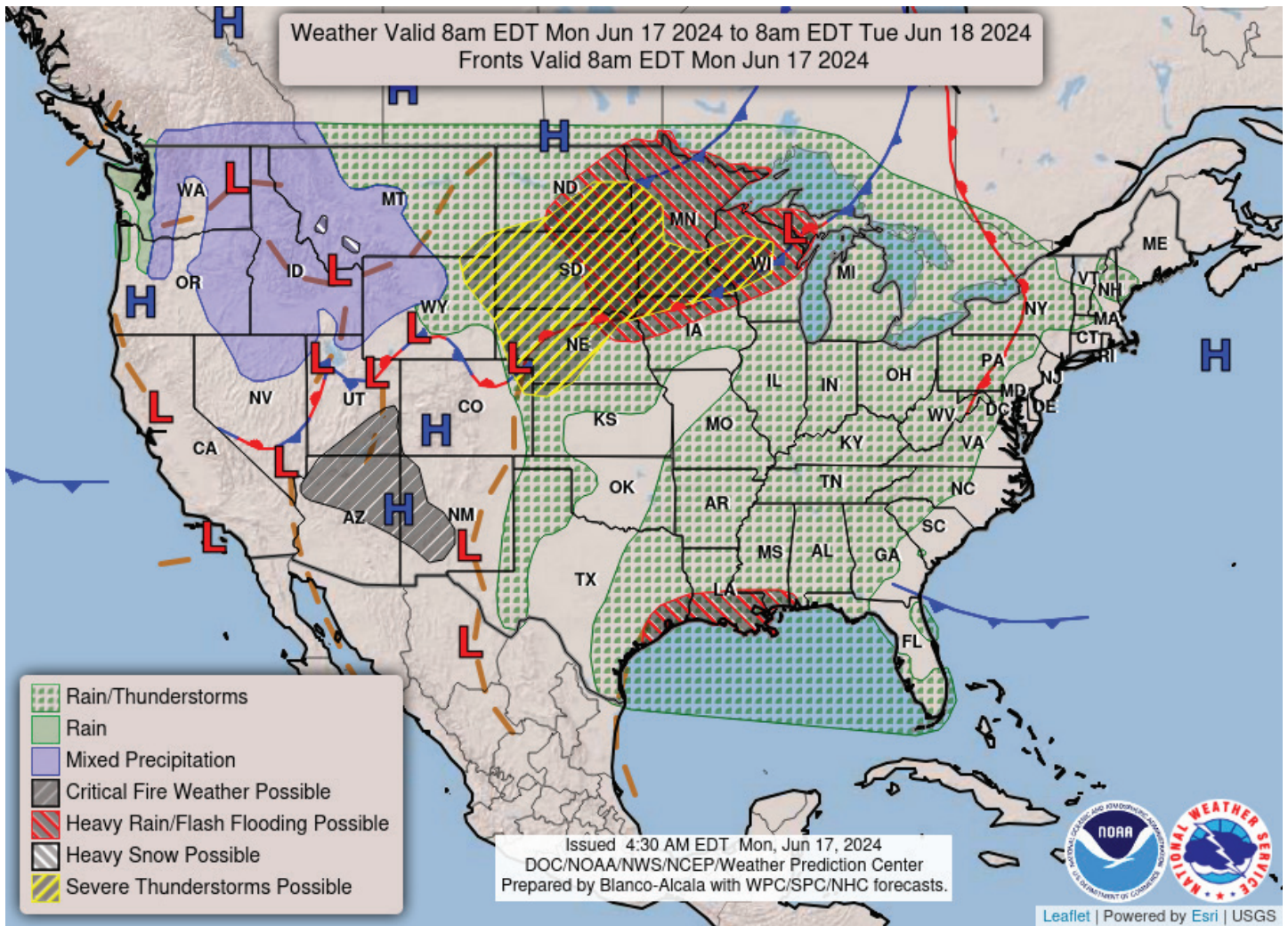
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 79 °F at 2:10 PM**  
**Low Temp: 65 °F at 11:10 PM**  
**Wind: 27 mph at 11:40 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

Day length: 15 hours, 43 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1933  
Record Low: 40 in 1915  
Average High: 81  
Average Low: 56  
Average Precip in June.: 2.03  
Precip to date in June: 0.50  
Average Precip to date: 9.28  
Precip Year to Date: 7.57  
Sunset Tonight: 9:25:28 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:41:40 am



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## Today in Weather History

June 17, 1944: On this date, six estimated F2 or greater tornadoes were tracked across Faulk, Codington, Brown, Day, Grant, and Roberts County in South Dakota as well as Big Stone in Minnesota. The first tornado touched down at approximately 3:30 pm CST in Faulk County. This estimated F2 tornado destroyed all buildings except the house on a farm 7 miles northeast of Faulkton. The next tornado occurred at 4:00 pm CST in Codington County, where barns were destroyed. Cattle and a truck were thrown into Grass Lake, near Wallace. About the same time, in Brown County, a tornado moved northeast from just northeast of Warner and crossed the town of Bath. This storm killed two people and injured another twelve. A couple was killed in the destruction of their home. Twenty homes in Bath were damaged. A brick school had its upper story torn off. Another tornado moved through Codington County at 4:45 pm CST, killing three and injuring twenty-five. This F4 strength tornado moved northeast from two miles northeast of Henry, passing over Long Lake and ending 2 miles northwest of Florence. The funnel was described as snake-like over Long Lake and massive as it swept through five farms southwest of Florence. Over 100 head of cattle were killed, and about a dozen homes were destroyed. In Day County an estimated F2 moved due north from 4 miles south of Webster, ending 2 miles northeast of Roslyn. This storm passed two miles east of Webster where barns were destroyed, and livestock was killed on a half dozen farms. At 5:15 pm CST a monster of a storm moved northeast from 5 miles south of Summit, passing 3 miles south of Wilmot and ending about 3 miles east of Beardsley, Minnesota. This massive tornado had an estimated width of 1500 yards and traveled 30 miles. Along the path, eight people were killed, and another forty-three were injured. Farm devastation southwest and south of Wilmot was as complete as it could be with some farms reportedly left without even debris on the property. About 15 farms in South Dakota reported F3-F5 damage. From this day, the Red Cross counted 13 dead and 560 people injured across the state.

June 17, 2010: This day will go down as the day with the greatest single-day tornado total in Minnesota history. The 3 EF4 tornadoes in Minnesota were the first tornadoes EF4 or stronger in this state since the Granite Falls tornado on July 25, 2000. This outbreak produced the highest number of tornadoes rated EF4 or greater in one day in Minnesota since the Black Sunday tornado outbreak on April 30, 1967. This was the first EF4 tornado in Freeborn County since the Black Sunday outbreak. The four total EF4 tornadoes across the Upper Midwest on June 17, 2010 (3 in MN, and 1 in ND) were the most in an outbreak in the U.S. since the "Super Tuesday Outbreak" on February 5-6, 2008. The number of tornado fatalities (4) on this day was the highest in Minnesota since July 5, 1978. Click [HERE](#) for an NWS summary.

1859 - Hot Santa Ana winds in southern California roasted fruit on one side at Santa Barbara. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1882 - A tornado traveled more than 200 miles across the state of Iowa killing 130 persons. The tornado touched down about ninety miles west of Grinnell, and struck the town and college around sunset, killing sixty persons, and causing more than half a million dollars damage. Traveling at nearly 60 mph, the tornado hit Mount Pleasant about 11 PM causing another half a million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1946: The third deadliest tornado in Canadian history struck southwestern Ontario from Windsor to Tecumseh. 17 people were killed and hundreds injured. Damage was conservatively estimated at \$1.5 million.

1965 - Holly, CO, was deluged with 11.08 inches of rain to establish a state 24 hour rainfall record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the south central U.S. Thunderstorms in Kansas produced wind gusts to 76 mph at Lyons, and baseball size hail at Garden City. The Edwards Aquifer, which supplies water to San Antonio, TX, reached a record level of 699.2 feet following a record 18.43 inches of rain in thirty days. Torrential rains between the mid May and mid June sent 8.8 million acre feet of water down the rivers of southern Texas, the largest volume in 100 years of records. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in Georgia and the Carolinas. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 75 mph at Eden, NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2009: A tornado leveled a house knocks down power poles and overturns about a dozen railroad cars in Aurora, Nebraska. The tornado is rated EF2, with winds between 111 and 135 mph.



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Daily Devotionals

## Seeds of Hope

### "LUCKY LINDY"

Everyone called him "Lucky Lindy" but not those who knew him. When he made his historic flight across the Atlantic Ocean, Charles Lindbergh left absolutely nothing to "luck." During his preparation he was careful and cautious, thoughtful and thorough. He never hoped things would go right. He made certain that everything would be right. Nothing was left to chance. Everything relating to his flight was the result of a deliberate choice.

A few days prior to his historic solo transatlantic flight, Lindbergh and his copilot, Frank Samuels, completed a hard day's work. They spent endless hours examining every detail of what he would do, why and how he would do it and the possibilities of something going wrong.

That night they checked into a motel. Shortly after midnight Samuels was awakened and saw Lindbergh at the window. "Why are you sitting there awake when you should be sleeping?" asked Samuels.

"I'm studying the stars," he answered "and practicing staying awake."

Paying attention to details and leaving nothing to chance is a God-honoring character trait. It is a reflection of our dependence upon God to give insight and wisdom to do everything to honor Him for His gifts.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to realize that whatever we do as Christians is a reflection of You. May whatever we do in word or deed be done to glorify You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. Colossians 3:17



We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.14.24

1 25 26 31 65 2

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$61,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 41 Mins 51 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.15.24

26 31 32 36 49 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$3,190,000**

NEXT DRAW: 14 Hrs 56 Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.16.24

1 12 20 38 43 10

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 11 Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.15.24

2 10 19 25 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 11 Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.15.24

30 38 44 54 55 22

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 40 Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.15.24

4 36 48 54 56 2

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$44,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 40 Mins 52 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the Associated Press

### **The anti-abortion movement is making a big play to thwart citizen initiatives on reproductive rights**

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Reeling from a string of defeats, anti-abortion groups and their Republican allies in state governments are using an array of strategies to counter proposed ballot initiatives intended to protect reproductive rights or prevent voters from having a say in the fall elections.

The tactics include attempts to get signatures removed from initiative petitions, legislative pushes for competing ballot measures that could confuse voters and monthslong delays caused by lawsuits over ballot initiative language. Abortion rights advocates say many of the strategies build off ones tested last year in Ohio, where voters eventually passed a constitutional amendment affirming reproductive rights.

The strategies are being used in one form or another in at least seven states where initiatives aimed at codifying abortion and reproductive rights are proposed for the November ballot. The fights over planned statewide ballot initiatives are the latest sign of the deep divisions created by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision two years ago to end a constitutional right to abortion.

This past week, the court issued a ruling in another major abortion case, unanimously upholding access to a drug used in the majority of U.S. abortions, although fights over mifepristone remain active in many states.

The stakes for the proposed ballot initiatives are high for both sides.

Where Republicans control the legislature and enact strict abortion limits, a statewide citizens initiative is often the only avenue for protecting access to abortion and other reproductive rights. Voters have either enshrined abortion rights or turned back attempts to restrict it in all seven states where the question has been on the ballot since 2022.

In South Dakota, lawmakers passed a bill allowing residents to withdraw their signatures on citizen-led petitions. This launched a comprehensive effort by anti-abortion groups to invalidate a proposed abortion rights ballot measure by encouraging endorsers to withdraw signatures.

The South Dakota secretary of state in May labeled as a "scam" hundreds of phone calls from an anti-abortion group the office accused of "impersonating" government officials.

"It appears that the calls are trying to pressure voters into asking that their name be removed from the Abortion Rights petitions," the office said in a statement.

Adam Weiland, co-founder of Dakotans for Health, the organization behind the proposed measure, said this is part of "an orchestrated, organized effort across states."

"The people want to vote on this issue, and they don't want that to happen," he said of anti-abortion groups. "They're using everything they can to prevent a vote on this issue."

An Arkansas "Decline to Sign" campaign escalated this month after a conservative advocacy group published the names of the paid canvassers for an abortion rights ballot measure effort. Arkansans for Limited Government, the group behind the ballot measure effort, denounced the move as an intimidation tactic.

In Missouri, Republicans and anti-abortion groups have opposed efforts to restore abortion rights through a constitutional amendment at every step in the process.

Republican Attorney General Andrew Bailey stonewalled the abortion-rights campaign for months last year. Then the secretary of state, Republican Jay Ashcroft, tried to describe the proposal to voters as allowing "dangerous and unregulated abortions until live birth." A state appeals court last year ruled that Ashcroft's wording was politically partisan and tossed it.

But Ashcroft's actions and the legal battle cost the abortion-rights campaign several months, blocking its supporters from collecting thousands of voter signatures needed to put the amendment on the ballot.

Once the legal battles were settled, abortion opponents launched a "decline to sign" campaign aimed at thwarting the abortion-rights campaigns' signature-collecting efforts. At one point, voters were sent texts

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falsely accusing petitioners of trying to steal people's personal data.

Republican lawmakers sought to advance another ballot measure to raise the threshold for amending the Missouri Constitution, partly in hopes of making it harder to enact the abortion-rights proposal.

Both anti-abortion efforts failed, and the abortion-rights campaign in May turned in more than double the required number of voter signatures. Now it's up to Ashcroft's office to verify the signatures and qualify it for the ballot.

Meanwhile, opposition groups in Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Nebraska have tried to create their own ballot amendments to codify existing abortion restrictions, though these efforts failed to gather enough signatures in Florida and Colorado.

Jessie Hill, a law professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland who served as a consultant to the Issue 1 campaign that codified abortion rights in Ohio, said she had warned about the possibility of competing ballot measures that could confuse voters.

While attempts to keep abortion off the ballot follow a similar blueprint to what she saw in Ohio last year, Hill said she is closely watching new efforts across the country.

"The anti-abortion side is still trying to figure out what the formula is to defeat these ballot measures," Hill said.

A strategy document leaked last month shows Arizona Republicans considering several competing measures to enshrine abortion restrictions into the state constitution. Possible petition names include the "Protecting Pregnant Women and Safe Abortions Act," the "Arizona Abortion and Reproductive Care Act" or the "Arizona Abortion Protection Act."

The document explicitly details how the alternative measures could undercut a proposal from reproductive rights groups aiming to codify abortion rights through viability, usually around 23 weeks to 24 weeks into pregnancy.

"This leaked document showed a plan to confuse voters through one or multiple competing ballot measures with similar titles," said Cheryl Bruce, campaign manager for Arizona for Abortion Access.

In Nebraska, anti-abortion groups are countering a planned ballot initiative to protect reproductive rights with two of their own.

Allie Berry, campaign manager of the Nebraska Protect Our Rights campaign, which is intended to protect reproductive rights, said the competing measures are designed to deceive and confuse voters. She said the campaign is working to educate voters on the differences between each of the initiatives.

"If you're having to resort to deception and confusion, it shows that they realize that most Nebraskans want to protect abortion rights," she said.

One counter initiative launched by anti-abortion activists in May seeks to ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy. Called "Now Choose Life," the petition would grant embryos "personhood."

Another launched in March would not go that far but instead seeks to codify the state's existing 12-week abortion ban into the state constitution while giving lawmakers the ability to pass further restrictions in the future.

The petition, called Protect Women and Children, has been endorsed by the national anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America and others in the state.

Sandy Danek, executive director of Nebraska Right to Life, called the petition a "reasonable alternative measure." She said as "as time goes on and we continue to educate," the organization will aim to restrict abortion further.

"I see this as an incremental process that we've been working on for 50 years," she said.

## **Biden's campaign announces a \$50 million advertising blitz highlighting Trump's conviction**

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's reelection campaign is spending \$50 million through the end of June, a blitz that includes its first television ad trumpeting Donald Trump's felony conviction and signals that the Democratic incumbent is seeking to make his Republican opponent's legal woes a bigger issue heading into November.

The advertising push comes with Election Day still more than five months away. But Biden's campaign says it wants to more clearly define the choice between the candidates ahead of the first debate between them in Atlanta on June 27.

The ad campaign includes more than \$1 million geared toward media reaching Black, Hispanic and Asian American voters and a spot highlighting Trump's conviction on 34 felony counts in a New York hush money case. It will air on general market television and connected TV on streaming devices and cellphones in battleground states as well as on national cable.

Besides Trump's criminal conviction, the ad, titled "Character Matters," notes the former president also was found liable for sexual assault and financial fraud in separate proceedings. Trump also faces felony charges in three other criminal cases, none of which may go to trial before the November election.

"This election is between a convicted criminal who's only out for himself and a president who's fighting for your family," intones the ad's narrator over images of a Trump mug shot and Biden high-fiving supporters.

Biden also has frequently talked about Trump's 34 felony convictions while decrying the former president for claiming that the case against him was politically motivated. Biden argues that "it's reckless, it's dangerous, it's irresponsible for anyone to say this was rigged just because they don't like the verdict."

Biden's son Hunter last week was convicted in Delaware of three felony charges related to the purchase of a revolver in 2018, when, prosecutors argued, he lied on a mandatory gun purchase form by saying he was not illegally using or addicted to drugs. The president has said he would accept the outcome of the case and "continue to respect the judicial process as Hunter considers an appeal."

A central part of Biden's reelection strategy is also highlighting Trump's policy proposals for a second term and firing up disaffected Democrats and independent voters. Still, the campaign producing an ad that leans heavily into Trump's conviction and including it in such a large advertising buy indicates a renewed effort to make Trump's legal problems an election issue in ways Biden's team previously resisted.

"It's a stark contrast, and it's one that matters deeply to the American people," Biden campaign spokesman Michael Taylor said in a statement. "And it's why we will make sure that every single day we are reminding voters about how Joe Biden is fighting for them, while Donald Trump runs a campaign focused on one man and one man only: himself."

Trump has denied any wrongdoing and has argued, without evidence, that Biden or Justice Department officials orchestrated the New York case against him for political reasons. He and his allies also have raised the prospect of prosecuting political opponents in revenge if he returns to the White House.

Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said that the Biden administration had "weaponized the justice system against President Trump" and that the contrast between her candidate and Biden "will be very clear on the debate stage."

## Israeli officials say Netanyahu has dissolved the War Cabinet after key partner bolted government

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu dissolved the influential War Cabinet tasked with steering the war in Gaza, Israeli officials said Monday, a move that comes days after a key member of the body bolted the government over frustrations surrounding the Israeli leader's handling of the war.

The move was widely expected following the departure of Benny Gantz, a centrist former military chief, earlier this month. Gantz's absence from the government makes Netanyahu more dependent on his ultranationalist allies to govern and the dissolution of the War Cabinet underlines that shift as the eight-month-long war in Gaza drags on.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the change with the media, said that going forward Netanyahu would hold smaller forums with some of his government members for sensitive issues surrounding the war. That includes his security Cabinet, where far-right governing partners who oppose cease-fire deals and have voiced support for reoccupying Gaza, are members.

The War Cabinet was formed in the early days of the war, when Gantz, then an opposition party leader and Netanyahu rival, joined the coalition in a show of unity following the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel. He had demanded that a small decision-making body steer the war, in a bid to sideline far-right members of Netanyahu's government.

It was made up of three members — Gantz, Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant — and together they made important decisions throughout the course of the war.

The move to scrap the War Cabinet comes as Israel faces more pivotal decisions.

Israel and Hamas are weighing the latest proposal for a cease-fire in exchange for the release of hostages taken by Hamas during its attack. Israeli troops are still bogged down in the Gaza Strip, fighting in the southern city of Rafah and against pockets of Hamas resurgence elsewhere. And violence continues unabated between Israel and the Lebanese Hezbollah militant group — with a Biden administration envoy in the region in a bid to avert a wider war on a second front.

Netanyahu has played a balancing act throughout the war between pressures from Israel's top ally, the U.S., and the growing global opposition to the war and from his government partners, chief among them Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

Both have threatened to topple the government should Israel move ahead on a cease-fire deal. The latest proposal being considered is part of the Biden administration's most concentrated push to help wind down the war. For now, progress on a deal appears to remain elusive.

Critics say Netanyahu's wartime decision-making has been influenced by the ultranationalists in his government and by his desire to remain in power. Netanyahu denies the accusations and says he has the country's best interests in mind.

Gantz's departure, while not posing a direct threat to Netanyahu's rule, rocked Israeli politics at a sensitive time. The popular former military chief was seen as a statesman who boosted Israel's credibility with its international partners at a time when Israel finds itself at its most isolated. Gantz is now an opposition party leader in parliament.

Netanyahu's government is Israel's most religious and nationalist ever. In Israel's fractious parliamentary system, Netanyahu relies on a group of small parties to help keep his government afloat and without the support of Gantz's party, Netanyahu is expected to be more beholden to the far-right allies.

## The war in Gaza has wiped out entire Palestinian families. AP documents 60 who lost dozens or more

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — He is among the very last survivors of his Gaza family, a clan so close they knew without thinking how blood and marriage bound them across generations and city blocks.

Then, branch by branch, 173 of Youssef Salem's relatives were killed in Israeli airstrikes in a matter of days in December. By spring that toll had risen to 270.

Bones and flesh strewn over the ruins of family homes. Blond curls of a young cousin peeking through bricks. Unrecognizable bodies piled on a donkey cart. Lines of burial shrouds.

These images are what survivors are left with from hundreds of families in Gaza like the al-Aghas, Salems and Abu Najas.

To a degree never seen before, Israel is killing entire Palestinian families, a loss even more devastating than the physical destruction and the massive displacement. An Associated Press investigation identified at least 60 Palestinian families where at least 25 people were killed — sometimes four generations from the same bloodline — in bombings between October and December, the deadliest and most destructive period of the war.

Nearly a quarter of those families lost more than 50 family members in those weeks. Several families have almost no one left to document the toll, especially as documenting and sharing information became harder.

Youssef Salem's hard drive is stocked with photos of the dead. He spent months filling a spreadsheet with their vital details as news of their deaths was confirmed, to preserve a last link to the web of relationships he thought would thrive for generations more.

"My uncles were wiped out, totally. The heads of households, their wives, children, and grandchildren," Salem said from his home in Istanbul.

In the last two decades, 10 members of his family were killed in Israeli strikes. "Nothing like this war," he said.

The AP review encompassed casualty records released by Gaza's health ministry until March, online death notices, family and neighborhood social media pages and spreadsheets, witness and survivor accounts, as well as a casualty data from Airwars, a London-based conflict monitor.

The Mughrabi family: more than 70 were killed in a single Israeli airstrike in December. The Abu Najas: over 50 were killed in October strikes, including at least two pregnant women. The large Doghmush clan lost at least 44 members in a strike on a mosque; AP documented over 100 family members killed in following weeks. By the spring, over 80 members of the Abu al-Qumssan family were killed.

"The numbers are shocking," said Hussam Abu al-Qumssan, who lives in Libya and has taken over documenting the family death toll as his relatives in Gaza struggled to keep track.

In the 51-day war of 2014, the number of families that lost three or more members was less than 150. In this one, nearly 1,900 families have suffered multiple deaths by January, including more than 300 that lost over 10 members in the first month of the war alone, according to Gaza's health ministry.

Ramy Abdu, chairman for the Geneva-based EuroMed Human Rights Monitor, which monitors the Gaza war, said dozens of his researchers in Gaza stopped documenting family deaths in March after identifying over 2,500 with at least three deaths. "We can hardly keep up with the total death toll," Abdu said.

The killing of families across generations is a key part of the genocide case against Israel, now before the International Court of Justice. Separately, the International Criminal Court prosecutor is seeking arrest warrants for two Israeli leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including for the intentional killing of civilians, as well as for three Hamas leaders over crimes connected to the Oct. 7 attack.

Palestinians will remember entire families that have disappeared from their lives, Abdu said: "It is like a whole village or hamlet has been wiped out."

Without warning the deaths across generations slice through the Palestinian society, history, and future. Entire families are buried in mass graves, in hospital courtyards or beneath staircases in the homes where they were killed.



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Getting detailed images and documentation is difficult even for Palestinians. Power is limited to hospitals and Israel cuts communication networks frequently. Nearly all of Gaza's 2.3 million population has been displaced, dividing families and severing contacts between parts of the small territory. Homes that normally would shelter a nuclear family fill with multiple generations of displaced relatives.

Hamas militants from Gaza attacked Israel on Oct. 7, killing 1,200 people in the deadliest day of the Jewish state's 75-year history. Israel promised to destroy Hamas' leadership and its estimated 35,000 fighting force in response. Within five days, Israel Air Force dropped 6,000 bombs on Gaza, including many unguided missiles.

Israel's relentless bombing since has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians by early June, including many women and children.

Eleven members of the al-Agha family were killed in a single strike on a family home in the first week of the war. Then death reached Khamis al-Agha's home in the second week.

Back in 2021, Khamis al-Agha, an employee at a Hamas-linked charity, received a phone call from an Israeli soldier alluding to his ties to the militant group and warning him to evacuate his house in Khan Younis to avoid an impending airstrike nearby. Al-Agha recorded the call and posted it online. He didn't evacuate and no one was killed.

On Oct. 14 there was no warning. The airstrike killed Khamis al-Agha and 10 others: his wife, their four young children; his brother and his 9-year-old son and 3-year-old daughter; his cousin and her 18-year-old boy. Only the brother's wife survived.

Jaser al-Agha, a second cousin of Khamis, helped medics pull bodies from the debris.

"Nothing is left of the house," said Jaser al-Agha.

Israel's army confirmed the airstrikes, saying it had hit unspecified Hamas targets near the locations identified by AP. It said the targets were anywhere from a few meters (feet) to 460 meters (1,500 feet) away. It gave no details on the nature of the targets, but said it hit a Hamas military compound in one of the strikes. It did not say whether it had taken any measures to reduce civilian casualties. In general, Israel has said it targets Hamas and accuses the militant group of endangering civilians by operating among the population and in tunnels below them.

A senior Israeli official told reporters in December that the army calculated two Palestinian civilians were killed for every Hamas militant, a ratio an army spokesman called "tremendously positive" but which experts said showed a higher tolerance for civilian casualties than in previous wars.

Israel estimates 15,000 Hamas militants had been killed by June, but has not given evidence or explanation. It is not clear whether the count includes men like al-Agha, who worked in one of the hundreds of Hamas-linked organizations or officials in the government that administered life in Gaza for over 16 years.

Israel has said it takes measures to mitigate against civilian harm, such as direct warnings to civilians in past conflicts. But in this war, that method has been partly replaced by evacuation orders for entire areas that not everyone is willing or able to obey. Standards have clearly been relaxed, fueled by anger over the Oct. 7 attacks and domestic politics, said Craig Jones, a lecturer at Newcastle University who studied the role of Israel's military lawyers.

The law of war allows for a "sort of rushed form of warfare" with higher civilian casualties where a military needs to respond quickly and in changing circumstances. But "Israel is just so clearly violating the law because it's pushing the rules so far," he said.

The AP geolocated and analyzed 10 strikes, among the deadliest from Oct. 7 to Dec. 24, and found they hit residential buildings and shelters with families inside. In no case was there an obvious military target or direct warning to those inside, and in one case the family said they had raised a white flag on their building in a combat zone. Together, the strikes killed more than 500 people, including the two bombings that wiped out the Salems and three others that killed 30 members of the al-Agha family. AP also consulted six weapons investigators, open-source analysts and experts.

By the spring, AP documented nearly 100 members of the al-Agha family were killed in Israeli strikes. Jaser al-Agha has buried almost more relatives than he can count, including three cousins he considered brothers.

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"I was waiting for my turn," he said.

When afternoon becomes night Ramzy Abu al-Qumssan's family lived in the Jabaliya refugee camp since his family was displaced in 1948 from Deir Sneid, a village north of Gaza in what is now Israel. Like the majority of Palestinians in Gaza, they are officially refugees, and the territory is filled with semi-permanent camps that have developed into urban communities over generations.

The Jabaliya refugee camp, in northern Gaza, was among the most densely populated. On the afternoon of Oct. 31, Abu al-Qumssan heard warplanes overhead, then a quick succession of explosions.

"In a matter of seconds, it turned into night," Abu al-Qumssan said. "It felt like containers of explosives and iron were dropped on us. It was a very strange and bloodcurdling sound."

Israel said it targeted a Hamas command center in the camp. Videos, including one filmed by Abu al-Qumssan, showed deep craters and destroyed buildings as far as the eye could see.

"I couldn't make out the streets from homes," he said. "People and bodies evaporated."

He went to his uncle's house, only to find the flimsy metal structure had been crushed into nothing.

Airwars identified 112 civilians killed in Jabaliya that day, including 69 children and 22 women. In all, 37 members of Abu al-Qumssan's family were killed in the shack and two nearby buildings, including four of his cousins, his aunt, her daughter and granddaughter, whose bodies were locked in an embrace.

Of the 10 strikes analyzed by AP, it was the only one in which Israel named a commander. The toll on innocent Palestinians was immense.

The airstrikes left several craters, and weapons experts said they were likely caused some of the largest bombs in Israel's arsenal, probably 2,000-pound missiles aimed at tunnels, that are hardly used in populated areas.

Two weeks later, Abu al-Qumssan's own house, only several meters from the large explosion, was bombed. His wife, 5-year-old daughter, mother, two sisters and 10 other relatives died. He and his three sons survived because their upstairs room caved into the crater.

Abu al-Qumssan called his daughter Nour's name over and over.

"My friend pretended to be trying to save her to calm me down," said Abu al-Qumssan, who as a journalist has a rare phone connection to send his images outside Gaza. "I knew she was not coming back and that she wouldn't be pulled out of under the rubble."

In all, 55 members of his family perished in Jabaliya in two Israeli bombings two weeks apart. By the spring, the family managed to document at least 82 killed, most in Jabaliya.

For the Okasha family, the killing of at least 33 members, including grandparents, children and grandchildren, in the Oct. 31 bombing "was a huge calamity. We are not a big family," said Abdeljawad Okasha, 61, who lives outside of Gaza.

By May, the family documented at least 57 members killed.

Brian Castner, a weapons investigator with Amnesty International, said any war crimes investigation in Gaza is complicated by the pace of the bombings, limited access for independent entities, and a lack of forensic evidence. Since October, Amnesty has found evidence of direct attacks on civilians, unlawful and indiscriminate attacks in at least 16 Israeli strikes it investigated that killed 370 civilians, including 159 children and "decimated families." The strikes included three as recent as April.

The last bombing analyzed by AP hit the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza on Dec. 24.

Mohamed Abed, a journalist who arrived soon after the strikes, said three explosions came less than an hour apart. The first decimated the Musallem family. The second hit the same road and killed several members of the Abu Hamdah family, including a drama teacher. The last hit a house further away.

A total of 106 people were killed from at least eight families, according to handwritten hospital records that listed the numbers from each family, obtained by the AP. The UN had earlier tallied 86 dead.

Israel said it was going after Hamas militants and "mistakenly" struck two adjacent targets. The statement is the first and a rare one in which Israel acknowledged an error and expressed regret for the "injury to those not involved." A military official told Kan, the Israeli public broadcaster, that the wrong weapon was used.

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The line between military necessity and disproportionate civilian casualties is “based on the good faith judgment of the commander making the decision” said Geoffery Corn, a former Judge Advocate General officer and director of the Center for Military Law and Policy at Texas Tech University. “That line is incredibly amorphous.”

In all, the AP record included 2,700 killed from over 70 families, with some previously unknown details on their deaths, such as where they were killed or who died along with them.

“Everything we build vanishes” Kinship reaches far beyond the nuclear family in Gaza. Compounds, frequently multiple buildings of three stories or more, are occupied by an entire bloodline.

Extended family is an independent economic unit, and relatives pay each other’s debts, pitch in for schools. Often, a family lends its name to a block or even an entire neighborhood. And when formal governing structures are contested, families in Gaza usually step in as enforcers of order — or sources of violence at times, said Ilana Feldman, anthropology professor at George Washington University, who studied the history of rulers of Gaza.

When the Salem family home in northern Gaza was destroyed in 2009, Youssef and his brothers chipped in to rebuild it for their father and uncles. It was damaged again in 2014. Now it is a skeleton, torched from the inside.

“Everything we build vanishes with any escalation, any war,” Youssef Salem said.

After the 2021 war, he told his wife it was time to leave with their toddler daughter. He found work as a legal analyst in Istanbul and begged members of his extended family to join him. He took a little bit of Gaza with him — his books, his traditional checkered kuffiyeh scarf. His wife packed wedding and family photos and her favorite trinkets.

After Oct. 7, he took advantage of the safety of exile to coordinate for relatives in Gaza as they chased shelter and food. He connected them to one another and kept them updated with the news.

“I left Gaza, but I still belong,” said Youssef Salem, who told AP his family story over a series of telephone interviews.

On Dec. 11, the square that carries the family name was brimming with 150 relatives, some displaced there and others who came for the funeral of two of their own, killed in an earlier strike.

Battles had been raging between Hamas and Israeli forces for days about a half-mile (kilometer) away. Just before dawn, airstrikes hit the Salem compound. The explosions knocked down one building, leaving a pile of debris, and sheared the facades off several others.

Survivors deny any fighters were in the compound. Videos showed men clawing through crushed concrete to remove the bodies of men, women and children. A donkey cart waited at the top of the street to transport the bodies.

Sufyan Salem, a second cousin to Youssef, survived only because he had given over his apartment to visitors and was sleeping down the street. Among the 80 Salem family dead: his mother, three brothers, his only sister and her four children. At least 27 are missing beneath rubble that has yet to be cleared away.

“Those who left us are the ones who received some comfort. The survivors are longing for relief,” Sufyan Salem wrote on Facebook.

In Istanbul, Youssef Salem updated the spreadsheet.

Three days later, most of the surviving Salems followed orders from an Israeli pamphlet dropped from an airplane to head to the Rimal neighborhood. More than 200 people were crammed inside the abandoned two-story villa, mostly women, children, and the elders. They raised a white flag above the home.

Israeli troops in Rimal were establishing bases and set up snipers on roofs. A curfew was in place for four days. The sounds of combat echoed from an adjacent neighborhood.

Munir, his uncle, snapped a reassuring photo of the men playing cards, a family tradition. They even secured coal for their water pipes.

On Dec. 18, Israeli tanks rolled in, tearing down the fence and ordering the family out. Mohamed Salem, Youssef’s 21-year-old cousin, overheard Munir and other men of the family, who spoke Hebrew, refusing to leave.

It was the fourth time they’d been ordered out of a shelter, and they said nowhere was safe. Besides,

they argued, the Israeli army controlled Rimal.

Mohammed Salem slipped out to fetch water for another cousin, who was pregnant, and Sham, a baby girl born during a brief truce in November.

Shortly after midnight, Mohamed Salem, standing on a building across the street from their villa, counted four direct hits from airstrikes. The villa collapsed, and bodies were flung outside.

With snipers and soldiers everywhere, he didn't dare approach until daybreak brought an end to the Israeli curfew and he and a cousin watched tanks roll over relatives half-buried in the debris. It took days longer to pull out the decomposing bodies of his uncles, Saeed and Munir.

"There are bodies in the ground still. No one can reach them yet," Mohamed Salem said.

He said from the house packed with more than 200 Salems, only 10 are still alive. Nine-year-old Abdullah is the only survivor of his bloodline — Israeli strikes killed his father, mother and seven sisters. In May, Mohammed Salem survived two strikes on his home that he returned to in north Gaza. Seven family members perished.

Of Gaza's 400,000 families, none has been spared, said Omar Shabaan, an independent researcher and economist from Gaza, hurting Gaza's society, history, and future.

"Everyone is targeted; families from all classes, poor, Bedouins, farmers, businessmen, wealthy people who are nationalist but unaffiliated with political action. There is no distinction," said Shabaan, whose family counts many dead, including nine women. "It is becoming clear that this is a targeting of the social structure."

People of Gaza will be preoccupied for months after the war ends with looking for their missing and removing those under the rubble, Shabaan said.

"If they find the bodies, they will start going after the paperwork. They will start looking for papers to prove them as humans: Their death and birth certificates, their graduation papers, their land or home deeds," he said.

By June, the Salems' effort to document the toll was coming apart. Yousef Salem despaired of counting his family's dead. His cousin who took over the spreadsheet was critically injured in a strike.

"When the family had one martyr, it lived in grief for all its life. Imagine now," he said, his voice cracking. "How could we still be sane after all of this?"

Now he just calls his mother in Gaza every day to make sure she is still alive.

## **China blames Philippines for ship collision in South China Sea.**

### **Manila calls the report deceptive**

By SIMINA MISTREANU and JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

TAIPEI (AP) — A Chinese vessel and a Philippine supply ship collided near the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea on Monday, China's coast guard said, in the latest flare-up of escalating territorial disputes that have sparked alarm.

The coast guard said a Philippine supply ship entered waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef in the Spratly Islands, part of a territory claimed by several nations.

The Philippines says the shoal falls within its internationally recognized exclusive economic zone and often cites a 2016 international arbitration ruling invalidating China's expansive South China Sea claims based on historical grounds.

The Chinese coast guard said the Philippine craft "ignored China's repeated solemn warnings ... and dangerously approached a Chinese vessel in normal navigation in an unprofessional manner, resulting in a collision."

"The Philippines is entirely responsible for this," the coast guard said in its statement on the social media platform WeChat.

Meanwhile, the Philippine military called the Chinese coast guard's report "deceptive and misleading," and said it would "not discuss operational details on the legal humanitarian rotation and resupply mission

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at Ayungin Shoal, which is well within our exclusive economic zone.”

It used the Philippine name for the shoal, where Filipino navy personnel have transported food, medicine and other supplies to a long-grounded warship that has served as Manila’s territorial outpost.

“We will not dignify the deceptive and misleading claims of the China coast guard,” military spokesperson Col. Xerxes Trinidad said. “The main issue remains to be the illegal presence and actions of Chinese vessels within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone, which infringes on our sovereignty and sovereign rights.”

“The continued aggressive actions of the CCG are escalating tensions in the region,” Trinidad said.

Two speedboats — attempting to deliver construction materials and other supplies to a military vessel stationed at the shoal — accompanied the supply ship, according to China’s Foreign Ministry, which described its coast guard’s maneuver as “professional, restrained, reasonable and lawful.”

The Foreign Ministry did not expand on the extent of the damage to the Chinese or Philippine vessels.

Several incidents have happened in recent months near the shoal which lies less than 200 nautical miles (370 kilometers) from The Philippines coast and where it maintains an outpost aboard the BRP Sierra Madre, which had been encrusted with rust since it was deliberately grounded in 1999 but remains an actively commissioned military vessel, meaning an attack on it could be considered by the Philippines as an act of war.

China has increasingly become assertive in pressing its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea, which has led to a rising number of direct conflicts with other countries in the region, most notably the Philippines and Vietnam.

A new law by China, which took effect Saturday, authorizes its coast guard to seize foreign ships “that illegally enter China’s territorial waters” and to detain foreign crews for up to 60 days. The law renewed a reference to 2021 legislation that says China’s coast guard can fire upon foreign ships if necessary.

At least three coastal governments with claims to the waters — the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan — have said they would not recognize the law.

The territorial disputes have strained relations and sparked fears the conflict could bring China and the United States, a longtime treaty ally of the Philippines, into a military confrontation. Washington lays no territorial claims to the busy seaway, a key global trade route, but has warned that it’s obligated to defend the Philippines if Filipino forces, ships and aircraft come under an armed attack in the South China Sea.

Aside from China, the Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei are also involved in the long-seething territorial disputes, which are regarded as a flashpoint in Asia and a delicate fault line in the longstanding U.S.-China rivalry in the region.

Indonesia has also confronted Chinese coast guard and fishing fleets in the past in the gas-rich waters off the Natuna islands in the fringes of the South China Sea where it blew Chinese fishing boats it had taken under custody. Its navy also fired warning shots at Chinese vessels straying into what Jakarta regards as its exclusive economic zone.

## **The Latest | Netanyahu dissolves War Cabinet that was steering war in Gaza, Israeli officials say**

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli officials say Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dissolved the influential War Cabinet that was tasked with steering the war in Gaza.

The War Cabinet was dissolved following the departure from the government of Benny Gantz, an opposition lawmaker who had joined the coalition in the early days of the war. He had demanded that a small Cabinet be formed as a way to sideline far-right lawmakers in Netanyahu’s government. Gantz, Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant were its members and they made key decisions together throughout the war.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the change with the media, said Monday that going forward Netanyahu would hold smaller forums with some of his government members for sensitive issues.

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Gantz, a longtime political rival of Netanyahu's, joined the government as a show of unity after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. He left the government earlier this month, citing frustration with Netanyahu's handling of the war.

Critics say Netanyahu's wartime decision-making has been influenced by ultranationalists in his government who oppose a deal that would bring about a cease-fire in exchange for the release of hostages. They have voiced support for the "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and reoccupying the territory.

Netanyahu denies the accusations and says he has the country's best interests in mind.

Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza has killed more than 37,100 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians in its count.

Israel launched the war after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, in which militants stormed into southern Israel, killed some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducted about 250.

Currently:

- The war in Gaza is wiping out entire Palestinian families, one branch at a time. This is how
  - The war in Gaza has wiped out entire Palestinian families. AP documents 60 who lost dozens or more
  - Israel's army says it will pause daytime fighting along a route in southern Gaza to help flow of aid
  - 8 Israeli soldiers killed in southern Gaza in deadliest attack on Israeli forces in months
  - US aircraft carrier counters false Houthi claims with 'Taco Tuesdays' as deployment stretches on
- Follow AP's coverage of the war in Gaza at <https://apnews.com/hub/israel-hamas-war>

Here's the latest:

Israel says UN yet to 'take full advantage' of new aid route into Gaza  
KEREM SHALOM CROSSING, Israel — Israel said Monday the United Nations, the main aid provider in war-ravaged Gaza, is yet to "take full advantage" of a new route meant to ease the flow of aid into the enclave.

The military announced on Sunday a "tactical pause" in daytime fighting along roads leading from a main goods crossing to a north-south highway. The route is meant to help address a backlog of aid waiting for pickup on the Gaza side of the crossing.

"We have not seen the U.N. take full advantage of this step," said Shimon Freedman, a spokesman for COGAT, an Israeli defense body that oversees aid distribution in Gaza. Freedman was speaking at a briefing for reporters at the Kerem Shalom crossing.

Jens Laerke, spokesperson for the U.N. humanitarian office, said workers on the ground were unable to use the route on Sunday, blaming a breakdown in law and order in the territory.

At the Israeli briefing, officials did not say how many trucks had made use of the route.

Freedman said the route would have military presence and Israeli military spokesperson Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari said Israel would "make sure the road is safe."

Israeli authorities have continually said the lack of aid reaching desperate Palestinians in Gaza is due to the failure of the U.N. to distribute supplies within the war-stricken territory. Meanwhile, the U.N. has blamed Israel for enforcing unnecessary and drawn-out inspection procedures at the crossing, and said that fighting in Gaza, along with violence and truck looting, has hampered their distribution efforts.

Freedman said there were more than 1,000 trucks on the Gaza side of the crossing waiting to be picked up for delivery.

Israeli officials say Netanyahu has dissolved influential War Cabinet  
TEL AVIV, Israel — Israeli officials say Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dissolved the influential War Cabinet that was tasked with steering the war in Gaza.

The War Cabinet was dissolved following the departure from the government of Benny Gantz, an opposition lawmaker who had joined the coalition in the early days of the war. He had demanded that a small Cabinet be formed as a way to sideline far-right lawmakers in Netanyahu's government. Gantz, Netanyahu and Defense Minister Yoav Gallant were its members and they made key decisions together throughout the war.

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Gantz, a longtime political rival of Netanyahu's, joined the government as a show of unity after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel. He left the government earlier this month, citing frustration with Netanyahu's handling of the war.

Critics say Netanyahu's wartime decision-making has been influenced by ultranationalists in his government who oppose a deal that would bring about a cease-fire in exchange for the release of hostages. They have voiced support for "voluntary migration" of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and reoccupying the territory. Netanyahu denies the accusations and says he has the country's best interests in mind.

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Associated Press writer Tia Goldenberg contributed to this report from Tel Aviv, Israel.

Major defense industry show near Paris says a French court has banned Israeli exhibitors from participating VILLEPINTE, France — A major defense and security industry show outside Paris says a French court has banned Israeli exhibitors from participating.

Event organizers said in a press release posted at the entrance of the Eurosatory exhibition, seen Monday by Associated Press journalists, that the court order issued Friday prohibited "the participation of employees or representatives, of any nationality whatsoever, of Israeli companies" in the show.

"In addition, all exhibiting companies are prohibited from receiving, selling or promoting Israeli weapons," the press release said. It also said exhibitors cannot act as intermediaries at the show for Israeli companies "in any way whatsoever."

It did not say what motivated the court's decision. But it said the ruling came on the heels of a French government decision two weeks ago to prohibit Israeli companies from exhibiting at the show "in the current context."

The event organizers said they'll appeal the court decision "as soon as possible." The Eurosatory exhibition, held every two years at Villepinte northeast of Paris, opened Monday and runs to Friday.

Israeli army says it will pause daytime fighting along a route in southern Gaza JERUSALEM — Israel's military announced on Sunday that it would pause fighting during daytime hours along a route in southern Gaza to free up a backlog of humanitarian aid deliveries for desperate Palestinians enduring a humanitarian crisis sparked by the war, now in its ninth month.

The "tactical pause," which applies to about 12 kilometers (7½ miles) of road in the Rafah area, falls far short of a complete cease-fire in the territory that has been sought by the international community, including Israel's top ally, the United States. It could help address the overwhelming needs of Palestinians that have surged in recent weeks with Israel's incursion into Rafah.

The army said that the daily pause would begin at 8 a.m. and last until 7 p.m. and continue until further notice. It's aimed at allowing aid trucks to reach the nearby Israel-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, the main entry point, and travel safely to the Salah a-Din highway, a main north-south road, the military said. The crossing has had a bottleneck since Israeli ground troops moved into Rafah in early May.

COGAT, the Israeli military body that oversees aid distribution in Gaza, said the route would increase the flow of aid to other parts of Gaza, including Khan Younis, the coastal area of Muwasi and central Gaza. Hard-hit northern Gaza, an early target in the war, is served by goods entering from the north.

## Chinese and Philippine ship collision just the latest in a string of South China Sea confrontations

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) —

China has been at odds with many other countries in the Asia-Pacific for years over its sweeping maritime claims, including almost all of the South China Sea, a strategic and resource-rich waterway around which Beijing has drawn a 10-dash-line on official maps to delineate what it says is its territory.

Beijing is in the midst of a massive military expansion and has become increasingly assertive in pursu-

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ing its claims, giving rise to more frequent direct confrontations, primarily with the Philippines, though it is also involved in longtime territorial disputes with Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei.

A 2016 arbitration ruling by a United Nations tribunal invalidated Beijing's claims in the South China Sea, but China did not participate in the proceedings and rejected the ruling.

At stake are fishing rights, access to undersea oil reserves and other natural resources, as well as the possibility of establishing military outposts.

The U.S., a treaty partner with the Philippines, has raised concerns about China's actions and President Joe Biden has pledged "ironclad" support for Manila. That's sparked fears that if an incident escalates, it could spark a wider conflict.

In the latest incident, a Chinese vessel and a Philippine supply ship collided near the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea on Monday. China's coast guard said a Philippine supply ship entered waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, a submerged reef in the Spratly Islands that's part of territory claimed by several nations. The Philippine military called the Chinese coast guard's report "deceptive and misleading."

Here's a look at some other incidents and developments in recent months:

June 4: Philippine officials say the Chinese coast guard seized food dropped for Filipino naval personnel on an outpost on Second Thomas Shoal. Philippine Gen. Romeo Brawner says the Chinese may have suspected the packages contained construction materials intended to reinforce the rusty Philippine navy ship deliberately run aground at Second Thomas Shoal to serve as a Philippine outpost.

May 16: About 100 Filipino activists on wooden boats change plans to distribute food to Filipinos based on the Second Thomas Shoal after being shadowed by Chinese coast guard ships through the night. Instead, they distribute food packs and fuel southeast of the disputed territory.

April 30: Chinese coast guard ships fire water cannons at two Philippine patrol vessels near the Scarborough Shoal, another hotly disputed area where tensions have flared on and off. Philippine officials say water cannons could damage their ships' engines, or even capsize the smaller vessels. China called its move a "necessary measure," accusing the Philippines of violating China's sovereignty. China also re-installed a floating barrier across the entrance to the shoal's vast fishing lagoon.

April 23: A Chinese coast guard ship blocks a Philippine patrol vessel near Second Thomas Shoal, causing a near-collision. Before the incident, a Chinese naval vessel had shadowed two Philippine patrol boats as they cruised near Subi, one of seven barren reefs in the Spratly Islands that China has transformed in the last decade into a missile-protected island military outpost. Subi is also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan.

March 23: Chinese coast guard hits Philippine supply boat with water cannons near Second Thomas Shoal, injuring crew members and damaging the vessel, Philippine officials say. China says the Philippines intruded into its territorial waters despite repeated warnings.

March 5: Chinese and Philippine coast guard vessels are involved in a minor collision off the Second Thomas Shoal, and four Filipino crew members are injured when China blasts a supply boat with water cannons, shattering its windshield. China's coast guard says the Philippine ships were illegally intruding in the area's waters and accused one of them of ramming a Chinese vessel.

Jan. 12: Filipino fishing boat captain says Chinese coast guard drives him away from Scarborough Shoal, forces him to dump his catch into the sea.

Dec. 9, 2023: The Chinese coast guard surrounds a supply ship, blasts it with a water cannon in the area around Second Thomas Shoal. The head of the Philippine military, who was aboard the supply boat, says they were also "bumped" by a Chinese ship.

Nov. 10, 2023: China blasts Philippine supply ship with water cannon near Second Thomas Shoal; China says it acted appropriately under maritime law to defend its territory.

Oct. 22, 2023: A Chinese coast guard ship and accompanying vessel ram Philippine coast guard ship and a military-run supply boat near the Second Thomas Shoal. Chinese coast guard says the Philippine vessels "trespassed" into what it said were Chinese waters.

Sept. 26, 2023: The Philippine coast guard says it removed a floating barrier from blocking the entrance to the lagoon at the Scarborough Shoal, put in place by China to prevent Filipino fishing boats from entering. China would later replace the barrier.



## US aircraft carrier counters false Houthi claims with 'Taco Tuesdays' as deployment stretches on

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

ABOARD THE USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER IN THE RED SEA (AP) — The USS Dwight D. Eisenhower may be one of the oldest aircraft carriers in the U.S. Navy, but it's still fighting — despite repeated false claims by Yemen's Houthi rebels.

The Houthis and online accounts supporting them repeatedly have alleged they hit or even sank the carrier in the Red Sea as it leads the U.S. response to the rebels' ongoing attacks targeting both commercial vessels and warships in the crucial waterway.

That's put its leader, Capt. Christopher "Chowdah" Hill, and his social media profile directly in what has become an increasingly bizarre internet front line as the campaign goes on. And while he shrugs off his posts, they represent the new level of information warfare the Navy is having to fight as it faces its most intense combat since World War II and tries to keep the morale of the nearly 5,000 personnel aboard the Eisenhower high and munitions ready as their deployment stretches on.

"I think it's been about two or three times in the past six months we've allegedly been sunk, which we have not been," Hill told The Associated Press during a recent visit to the carrier. "It is almost comical at this point. They're attempting to maybe inspire themselves through misinformation, but it doesn't work on us."

The visit by two AP journalists and others to the Eisenhower represents part of the effort the Navy has made to try to counter the Houthi claims. While on board for about a day and a half, journalists escorted by sailors crisscrossed the nuclear-powered ship's 1,092-foot (332-meter) length. AP journalists also repeatedly circled the Eisenhower from the air in a Seahawk helicopter.

Other than rust on its side from the hot, humid Red Sea air and water apparently leaking from a pipe in a dining room, the ship appeared no worse for wear. Its flight deck bore no blast damage or gaping holes, just the stink of jet fuel, pooled puddles of oily water and the scream of engines before its F/A-18 fighter jets took flight.

The other half of the information warfare effort has been Hill himself, a native of Quincy, Massachusetts, something noticeable immediately in his South Boston accent. While even the secretive leader of the Houthis, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, has name-dropped the carrier in speeches while making false claims about the vessel, Hill has offered ceaselessly positive messages online about his sailors on board.

Videos of flight operations from the bridge and images of sailors eating cookies in the captain's chair are constant staple. After one false Houthi claim, Hill responded by posting images of cinnamon rolls and muffins in the bakery on board the Eisenhower — a subtle jab at the claims.

"The whole intent of the social media outreach was to connect with families, to bring them closer to the ship," Hill said. "So if I can post pictures of sons and daughters, husbands and wives out here, or even fathers and mothers, get it out there, it just kind of brings the family closer to us. And again, that's our support network. But it also took on another role because everyone else was watching to see what we're doing."

Then there's the "Star Wars" memes and images of Captain Demo, the Labrador-golden retriever mix who roams the ship as a support animal for sailors. And as far as the Houthi forces watching his postings, Hill takes special pleasure in writing about "Taco Tuesday" on the ship.

"We're going to celebrate 'Taco Tuesdays' because it's my absolute favorite day of the week. That will never end," the captain said. "If you call that an information warfare campaign, you can. It's just who I am, you know, at the end of the day."

But morale remains a deep concern for Hill and other leaders on board the ship. The Eisenhower and its allied ships have gotten just one short port call during the eight-month rotation so far to Greece. The carrier also has been the most-deployed carrier among the U.S.'s entire fleet over the last five years, according to an analysis by the U.S. Naval Institute's news service.

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One sailor, Lt. Joseph Hirl from Raleigh, North Carolina, wore a patch reading: "Go Navy, Beat Houthis." While that's a play on the classic call for the annual Army-Navy football game, the naval flight officer stressed that he knew the combat was deadly serious.

"It's pretty much the day-in, day-out stress of knowing that we are being shot at definitely gives a realism to the whole experience that this is not a normal deployment," Hirl said.

Meanwhile, munitions also remain a concern. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro told the U.S. Senate's Armed Services Committee in May the Navy had spent at least \$1 billion in armaments to fight in the Red Sea. Every leader on board the Eisenhower that the AP spoke to acknowledged the Navy was trying to use the right weapon against the Houthis, whose asymmetrical warfare sees them use far cheaper munitions.

"My sailors, my ships are priceless — that's not a calculus I want a captain to have," said Capt. David Wroe, the commodore overseeing the guided missile destroyers escorting the Eisenhower. "Now, using the appropriate effect weapon system on the appropriate threat to preserve magazine depth, to have more missiles, is certainly a germane tactical question."

For now, the Eisenhower continues its patrol along with the USS Philippine Sea, a cruiser, and two destroyers, the USS Gravelly and the USS Mason. It's been extended twice already and there's always the chance it could happen again. But Hill said his sailors remained ready to fight and he remained ready to continue to captain in his style.

"I came to a revelation at some point in my career that, one of the things that all humans require is to be loved and valued," Hill said. "So I shouldn't be afraid, as a leader, to try to love and value everybody, and also to expect other leaders that I'm responsible for to love and value their sailors."

## Think cicadas are weird? Check out superfans, who eat the bugs, use them in art and even striptease

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

FOREST PARK, Illinois (AP) — Mayumi Barrack sees a pair of mating periodical cicadas getting together, whips out her phone, says, "Hi guys!" and takes their picture.

"I'm not really a bug person, but as I look more and more I feel they are adorable," Barrack explained, noting that many other creatures — birds, squirrels, raccoons and more — are just as eager to get close to the bugs, if only to turn them into food. "I just want to document they existed."

And boy has she. Barrack has posted more than 4,600 photos of the bugs on the Cicada Safari app for cicada enthusiasts. That's 2,000 more than her nearest competitor. She's the queen of cicada chasers, though she doesn't really chase — most of the pictures are from her backyard — and she sees herself more as a mother to the bugs than as a queen.

"I'm caring for them," said Barrack, standing in her tree-and-flower filled suburban Chicago backyard.

Periodical cicadas are strange, with eccentricities that include super-strong urine flow and a zombie fungus infection. But their superfans are unusual, too, or at least highly passionate.

Gene Kritsky, a professor of biology at Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati, has been working toward this year's massive cicada emergence for decades. He first heard about cicadas in 1972 and has been studying and chasing them since 1974. He wrote the book on the current emergence, "A Tale of Two Broods." He also created the cicada tracking app that enthusiasts like Barrack use to post pictures and find where the bugs are in large numbers.

This is the third time Kritsky has mapped Brood XIII of the cicadas. That's quite an accomplishment since they only come out every 17 years.

Often wearing a safari hat that makes him look like the Indiana Jones of cicadas, which he has been called, Kritsky and his artist wife Jessee Smith have driven back and forth from Ohio to Illinois several times this spring to revel in the bugs. Over several long nights at a forest north of Chicago, he's seen massive numbers including his first one-in-a-million blue-eyed cicada. He cited the May 24 emergence as "incredible" with thousands coming out that night at his location.

"Periodical cicadas are the gateway drug to natural history," Kritsky said.

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For New York City chef Joseph Yoon, cicadas aren't just amazing, they're dinner. His Brooklyn Bugs company is on a mission to spread the word about the taste and sustainability of edible insects, though he knows many people are grossed out by the thought.

Yoon spent nine days in Illinois collecting, freezing and then bagging tens of thousands of cicadas. After getting back home, he served up tempura cicada to 400 people at a Syracuse University event.

Yoon said collecting and cooking cicadas "is quite painful for me because I love the cicada so much."

But he added: "At the same I also can acknowledge and appreciate that each one of these cicadas' lives represents a potential to transform somebody's perception or opinion about eating insects."

Yoon's friend, Wisconsin artist and professor Jennifer Angus, also sees the beauty in cicadas and other insects — so much so that she incorporates the actual bugs into her art. Sometimes she put them in outfits and posed them as dolls.

"I love them because they just have great faces and bulging eyes and they're very hardy," Angus said. "They stand up to the wear and tear at my exhibitions."

"I find their faces humorous," Angus said.

Renee Martin is an architecture professor at the University of Kentucky who also dabbles in puppetry. For a Cincinnati puppet festival three years ago — when Brood X was making big news on the East Coast — someone suggested she come up with a cicada costume or puppet.

"What would I do? A cicada strip-tease?" she asked her friends, who gave a resounding yes.

She worked up "something between a puppet and a costume" for that festival, then hauled it out again for this year's big emergence, putting on a show in a Cincinnati alley for friends, neighbors and visiting journalists.

Martin, wearing faux fishnet stockings and moving comically to stripper music, starts out as a cardboard pale nymph and then bursts through as a red-eyed adult nymph. The audience added to the effect with noisemakers and cries of "ooh la la" and "sexy cicada."

Meanwhile, photos of cicadas are swarming in to Kritsky's app, with nearly 5,000 people posting. About 150 people have posted at least 100 cicada pictures, but none are close to Barrack — who said she's surprised to be leading.

"I have so many pictures I haven't sent yet," she said.

## Severe weather forecast around US with high Southwest temperatures, Gulf rain and Rockies snow

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Heat and cold extremes are expected this week in the U.S. Officials warned Southwest residents to take precautions as a heat wave moves east, while heavy rains and flooding could drench the Gulf states and snow threatens parts of the Rockies and Northwest.

Extreme heat spread across Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Texas, Colorado and Kansas as severe weather swept across many parts of the U.S. on Sunday. There was unseasonable cold in the Pacific Northwest, snow headed to the northern Rocky Mountains and heavy rainfall forecast from the northern Plains to the Upper Midwest.

The National Weather Service estimated more than 63 million people were under heat advisories on Sunday, stretching from the Southwest northward up through Denver and into Chicago.

Temperatures in Phoenix, which hit 112 degrees Fahrenheit (44.4 Celsius) on Saturday, eased slightly on Sunday to 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius). Weather service forecasters say the first two weeks of June in Phoenix already have been an average of 5.6 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than normal, making it the hottest start to June on record.

"We have already seen some pretty significantly high temperatures in our area," said Ted Whittock, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Phoenix. "We are recommending that everyone reduce their time outdoors between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., stay hydrated and wear light, looser fitting clothing."

The heat in metro Phoenix will ease a bit Monday through Wednesday, with the highs pushing back up

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as the week progresses, likely prompting another excessive heat warning, Whittock said.

The heat has been especially dangerous in recent years in metro Phoenix, where 645 people died from heat-related causes in 2023, which was a record.

The city and Maricopa County have adopted additional measures this year in hopes of keeping people safer, including two new overnight cooling centers where people can rest in air conditioning after the sun goes down. There are more than 100 other cooling centers that have been open since May 1 where people can get cold water and sit in a cool space during daytime hours.

In neighboring New Mexico, a heat advisory was in effect over the weekend for the Chavez County plains including Roswell, where the high was forecast to hit 107 degrees F (41.6 degrees C) on Monday. The high for Albuquerque reached 99 degrees F (37 C) on Sunday and is forecast to cool slightly to 98 degrees F (36 C) on Monday. The high Sunday was 104 F (40 C) in El Paso, Texas, which opened five cooling centers.

Temperatures in Colorado ranged from near 90 degrees F (32.2 C) in areas of metropolitan Denver Sunday to 100 degrees F (37.7 C) in the southern city of Pueblo, with temperatures expected to surpass 100 degrees F Monday in the southern reaches of the state.

The heat wave was moving eastward Sunday into the Plains and the Great Lakes area and was expected to arrive in the Northeast by Tuesday. The threat of thunderstorms with potential high winds and heavy rainfall increased in the Chicago area, even as heat indices were forecast to reach near 100 degrees F (37.7 C) through the middle of the week.

As the heat wave spreads eastward, temperatures in Washington, D.C., and the rest of the mid-Atlantic, as well as New England, were likely to see highs in the mid- to upper-90s as the week progresses, with excessive humidity making it feel even more oppressive.

The U.S. last year saw the most heat waves, consisting of abnormally hot weather lasting more than two days, since 1936.

While much of the country swelters, late season snow was forecast for the northern Rockies Monday and Tuesday. Parts of Montana and north-central Idaho were under a winter storm warning, with as much as 6 inches (15 centimeters) of heavy, wet snow expected in the mountains around Missoula, Montana. As much as 20 inches (51 centimeters) was predicted for higher elevations around Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of tropical moisture will bring an increasing threat of heavy rain and flash flooding to the central Gulf Coast late Sunday into Monday. Heavy rain is expected to start Monday morning, with the moisture shifting toward the Gulf Coast by Tuesday.

The intense flooding from heavy rains continued to dissipate in southern Florida, where some areas in and around Miami and Fort Lauderdale were left underwater in recent days as storms dumped up to 20 inches (50 centimeters).

That unnamed storm system coincided with the early start of hurricane season, which this year is forecast to be among the most active in recent memory.

## **Strong winds, steep terrain hamper crews battling Los Angeles area's first major fire of the year**

By RYAN SUN Associated Press

GORMAN, Calif. (AP) — Strong winds pushed flames through dry brush in mountains along Interstate 5 north of Los Angeles on Sunday, and officials warned residents in the wildfire's path to be prepared to leave if it explodes in size again.

Los Angeles County's first major wildfire of the year swiftly grew to nearly 23 square miles (60 square kilometers), one day after it forced the evacuation of at least 1,200 campers, off-roaders and hikers from the Hungry Valley recreation area.

The blaze, dubbed the Post Fire, was just 2% contained Sunday evening. No injuries were reported. The cause was under investigation.

Firefighters working in sweltering conditions and steep terrain raced to douse spot fires that erupted as unpredictable winds blew embers ahead of the flames, said Kenichi Haskett, a section chief for the

LA County Fire Department. The gusts also hampered efforts by aircraft crews to drop water and fire retardant, he said.

"When it's windy, it just sprays the water everywhere we don't need it. So that's a challenge," Haskett said.

Meanwhile in Northern California, a small wildfire sparked Sunday prompted evacuation orders and warnings for a sparsely populated area near Lake Sonoma. The so-called Point Fire sent up a huge plume of dark smoke as it churned through brush and timber about 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of San Francisco. It was 15% contained.

The Southern California fire erupted Saturday afternoon near I-5 in Gorman, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles. Two structures burned within the evacuated recreation area.

Flames were moving toward Pyramid Lake, a popular destination for boaters that was closed as a precaution on Father's Day. No houses were threatened Sunday, but officials warned residents of Castaic, home to about 19,000 people, that they should prepare to leave if the fire pushes further south.

"If you're in a warning area, be prepared with a 'go bag,' with overnight clothes and your cellphone, your medicines, your glasses. Have your car fueled up," said Haskett. "Be ready to evacuate."

Low humidity and gusts around 50 mph (80 kph) were expected throughout the day, and winds could pick up speed after sundown, warned the National Weather Service office for Los Angeles.

About 75 miles (120 kilometers) to the east, the nearly 2-square-mile (5-square-kilometer) Hesperia Fire forced road closures and prompted evacuation warnings after it broke out Saturday near mountain communities in San Bernardino County. The blaze was 20% contained Sunday evening.

## Muslims in Asia celebrate Eid al-Adha with sacrifice festival and traditional feast

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Muslims in Asia on Monday celebrated Eid al-Adha, or the Feast of Sacrifice, with food and prayers for people in Gaza suffering from the Israel-Hamas war.

One of the biggest Islamic holidays, the occasion commemorates Prophet Ibrahim's test of faith through slaughtering livestock and animals and distributing the meat to the poor. It's a joyous occasion for which food is a hallmark where devout Muslims buy and slaughter animals and share two-thirds of the meat with the poor and it's a revered observance that coincides with the final rites of the Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

Much of Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, India and Bangladesh, observed Eid al-Adha on Monday, while Muslims in other parts of the globe, including Saudi Arabia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen celebrated the holiday on Sunday.

On Monday, worshippers shoulder-to-shoulder joined in communal prayers in Indonesia's capital, Jakarta. Preachers in their sermons called on people to pray for Muslims in Gaza and Rafah.

"Our prayers and thoughts are with our brother and sisters who are now suffering in Palestine," worshipper Adi Prasetya said after praying at a field in southern Jakarta. "There are many opportunities for us now to channel our help through charities."

"May Allah give strength to those ravaged by war... may those who are divided can live in peace again," said another devotee, Berlina Yustiza.

Although Indonesia has more Muslims than any other country in the world, its traditions to mark Eid al-Adha have been influenced by other religions.

Residents in Yogyakarta, an ancient center of Javanese culture and the seat of royal dynasties going back centuries, believe that if they manage to catch the crops arranged in the form of a cone-shaped pile called "gunungan" that is paraded from the royal palace to the Kauman Grand Mosque, it can bring them good luck. They scrambled to grab various food offerings, made of fruit, vegetables and traditional snacks.

A day before the sacrifice festival, people in East Java's Pasuruan city expressed their gratitude and respect for the sacrificial animals by dressing them as beautiful as a bride. The sacrificial cow is wrapped in a seven-fold garland, a shroud, turban and prayer mat and paraded in a tradition called "manten sapi,"

or bride cow, before being handed to the sacrificial committee.

Villagers in Demak, a town in Central Java province, celebrated the holiday with a procession of livestock called "apitan" as a form of gratitude for the food and harvest. They bring food in bamboo containers to the town's square where they eat together after praying. Locals believe the procession will provide prosperity and that disaster would come if it was abandoned.

Eid al-Adha commemorates the Quranic tale of Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Ismail as an act of obedience to God. Before he could carry out the sacrifice, God provided a ram as an offering. In the Christian and Jewish telling, Abraham is ordered to kill another son, Isaac.

In Malaysia, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim joined thousands of congregants, including foreign tourists, and offered morning prayers at a mosque near his office in Putrajaya, south of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile at a wholesale market in Selayang, just outside the capital, Muslim workers there knelt on mats placed on a large piece of white cloth laid outside the market to perform their prayers.

In his message, Anwar said the opportunity to go on the hajj pilgrimage to Mecca is one of God's great gifts and should make one more ascetic and simpler.

"I invite Muslims to live the message of simplicity that is preached in Hajj, to always be humble and not be mesmerized by the attraction of temporary worldly riches," Anwar said, "Let's not deviate from this goal. The world should be a bridge to the eternal land."

Muslims in India, where they comprise 14% of the population, celebrated Eid al-Adha on Monday across the country.

In New Delhi, thousands offered prayers at the historic Jama Masjid, a 17th century mosque. Families assembled early in the morning and many people shared hugs and wishes after the prayers. Numerous merchants with goats gathered on the streets leading to the mosque where people bargained with them for the best price.

Devotees across Bangladesh, a Muslim-majority nation of over 170 million people, on Monday marked the festival in open fields and mosques where many prayed for a better world free from war.

More than 400,000 devotees, the country's largest congregation, offered their prayers at a field in Kishoreganj district in the morning.

In the capital, Dhaka, a prominent imam led a gathering on the Supreme Court grounds where 35,000 men and women participated.

Millions of cattle were slaughtered across the country to celebrate the day.

## Maryland Gov. Wes Moore set to issue 175,000 pardons for marijuana convictions

By BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — Maryland Gov. Wes Moore is scheduled to sign an executive order to issue 175,000 pardons for marijuana convictions Monday, according to a news report.

The pardons will forgive low-level marijuana possession charges for an estimated 100,000 people. Moore, a Democrat, told The Washington Post Sunday night that criminal records have been used to deny housing, employment and education.

"I'm ecstatic that we have a real opportunity with what I'm signing to right a lot of historical wrongs," Moore said. "If you want to be able to create inclusive economic growth, it means you have to start removing these barriers that continue to disproportionately sit on communities of color."

Recreational cannabis was legalized in Maryland in 2023 after voters approved a constitutional amendment in 2022. Now, 24 states and the District of Columbia have legalized recreational cannabis.

Moore plans to sign the executive order Monday morning in the state Capitol in Annapolis with Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown in attendance.

Brown, a Democrat, described the pardons as "certainly long overdue as a nation" and "a racial equity issue."

"While the pardons will extend to anyone and everyone with a misdemeanor conviction for the posses-

sion of marijuana or paraphernalia, this unequivocally, without any doubt or reservation, disproportionately impacts — in a good way — Black and Brown Marylanders,” Brown told the Post.

## Takeaways from the AP investigation into the Palestinian families being decimated in Gaza

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — To a degree never seen before, Israel’s air and ground campaign in Gaza is killing entire Palestinian families.

Entire bloodlines, sometimes four generations from the same family, have perished in single airstrikes or a series of airstrikes on members of the same family sheltering together from the bombs. Often there is no warning.

An Associated Press investigation identified at least 60 Palestinian families where 25 people or more were killed in bombings between October and December. It was the deadliest and most destructive phase of the war, now in its ninth month.

Here are the key takeaways from the AP analysis:

No one left to document the toll Several families have almost no one left to document the toll and thousands cannot account for all their dead because so many bodies remain under rubble.

The AP review encompassed casualty records released by Gaza’s health ministry until March, online death notices, family and neighborhood social media pages and spreadsheets, witness and survivor accounts, as well as a data from Airwars, a London-based conflict monitor. AP also geolocated and analyzed 10 Israeli strikes, among the deadliest in the war, between Oct. 7 and Dec. 24. Together the strikes killed more than 500 people.

Among the hardest hit are the Mughrabi family: more than 70 were killed in a single Israeli airstrike in December. The Abu Najas: over 50 were killed in October strikes, including at least two pregnant women. The large Doghmush clan lost at least 44 members in a strike on a mosque and the total soared over 100 weeks later; by spring, over 80 members of the Abu al-Qumssan family had been killed.

“The numbers are shocking,” said Hussam Abu al-Qumssan.

No warning, no access Gaza was under siege before the war, but since Oct. 7 Israel and Egypt have totally blocked access for outside reporting teams or independent investigators. Hundreds of local reporters juggled covering the relentless Israeli bombings – 6,000 in the first five days of the war – while running for their own lives and seeking shelter for themselves and their families.

In the first month after Hamas deadly Oct. 7 attack on Israel, which killed about 1,200 people, Gaza’s health ministry said 300 Palestinian families lost over 10 members. That’s twice as many as during the devastating 51-day war of 2014.

The 10 strikes analyzed by AP mainly hit residential buildings, homes and shelters where parents, children, grandparents were huddled together for safety. In no case was there an obvious military target or direct warning to those inside. The Salem family has lost at least 270 members in all.

At one point the Salems raised a white flag on their building, which was in the midst of a battle zone. They told the army they will not leave because they said nowhere was safe.

Over 170 members of the family were killed in two bombings eight days apart. Three strikes over four weeks killed 30 al-Agha members; and a series of strikes in a refugee camp in December killed 106 people from at least four families. A Dec. 24 attack was the first time Israel admitted “mistakenly” striking next to its intended targets.

In one attack in the crowded Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, Israeli bombs erased an entire block of buildings. Nearly 40 members of the Abu al-Qumssan family were killed, while the toll for that Oct. 31 attack remains unknown. Unusually, Israel identified a target, saying it went after a senior Hamas commander.

Why it’s part of the war crimes and genocide cases Israel has said it takes measures to mitigate against t

civilian harm. In past conflicts, it often directly warned civilians about to be targeted. But in this war, that method is rarely used, replaced by evacuation orders for entire areas that not everyone can or will obey.

When civilian deaths are involved, the laws of war come down to a question of proportionality, whether the military advantage justifies the destruction.

The world's top court, the International Court of Justice is considering whether Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. The killing of families across generations is a key part of the case.

Separately, the International Criminal Court prosecutor is seeking arrest warrants for two Israeli leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including for the intentional killing of civilians, as well as for three Hamas leaders over crimes connected to the Oct. 7 attack.

Craig Jones, a lecturer at Newcastle University who studied the role of Israel's military lawyers, said Israel has clearly relaxed its standards for civilian casualties, fueled by anger over the Oct. 7 attacks and domestic politics.

The law of war allows for a "sort of rushed form of warfare" with higher civilian casualties where a military needs to respond quickly and in changing circumstances. But "Israel is just so clearly violating the law because it's pushing the rules so far," he said.

How the deaths affect the Palestinian futureThe deaths of so many Palestinian families will reverberate for generations. Kinship reaches far beyond the nuclear family in Gaza. Compounds, frequently multiple buildings of three stories or more, are occupied by an entire bloodline.

When the Salem family home in northern Gaza was destroyed in 2009, Youssef and his brothers chipped in to rebuild it for their father and uncles. It was damaged again in 2014. Now it is a skeleton, torched from the inside.

Palestinians will remember entire families that have disappeared from their lives, said Ramy Abdu, chairman for the Geneva-based EuroMed Human Rights Monitor, which monitors the Gaza war.

"It is like a whole village or hamlet has been wiped out."

## **The war in Gaza is wiping out entire Palestinian families, one branch at a time. This is how**

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel's air and ground campaign in Gaza has killed hundreds of family members from the same bloodline, an unprecedented toll on the small community mostly made up of refugees and their descendants.

An Associated Press investigation analyzed 10 strikes across the Gaza Strip between October and December that killed over 500 people. Nearly every Palestinian family has suffered grievous, multiple losses. But many have been decimated, particularly in the first months of the war.

AP geolocated and analyzed the strikes; consulted with weapons investigators; open data-analysts and legal experts; and drew on data by Airwars, a London-based conflict monitor. They hit residential buildings and shelters with families inside. In no case was there an obvious military target or direct warning to those inside. In one case the family said they had raised a white flag on their building in a combat zone.

This war has proven even deadlier than the displacement from Israel in 1948, said Rashid Khalidi, a Palestinian-American historian at Columbia University, when 20,000 were killed in what is known as the Nakbah, or Catastrophe.

"I don't think anything like this has happened in modern Palestinian history," said Khalidi.

Al-Agha family, 31 killedOn Oct. 11, an airstrike levelled Amin al-Agha's home in western Khan Younis. The 61-year-old was asleep on the ground floor of the two-story building with his wife and three sons. The top floor was the home of his son Muhannad al-Agha, 30, his wife Hind and their two girls, Talin, 2, and Asil, 1. The airstrike killed 11 in the family, including two cousins in an adjacent building.

"It was no longer a house. It was a pile of sand," said Jaser al-Agha, a cousin who arrived shortly after the strike.

Early Oct. 14, an Israeli bomb struck the house of Khamis al-Agha, an employee of a Hamas-linked charity.



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The three-story building in central Khan Younis was reduced to rubble. Among the dead: Khamis al-Agha, 38, his wife, Nisreen, two sons, aged 11 and 13, two daughters, 8 and 6, and his younger brother and 9-year-old son, a cousin and her son. Only the brother's wife survived.

On Nov. 14, the house of Awni al-Agha, a second cousin to Khamis, was hit, destroying the three-story building in western Khan Younis. Brian Castner, weapons investigator with Amnesty International, said the damage indicated it was an airstrike as well.

Only a satellite dish was sticking out above the debris. The strike killed the wife of Awni al-Agha, 64-year-old Samia; his four sons, aged between 42 and 26, his daughter Ramah, 41, her husband and two sons, aged 18 and 16. Awni al-Agha, a government education official, survived because he had woken up for dawn prayers. Three months later, in February, Awni al-Agha died at the age of 69, most likely of a broken heart, said Jaser al-Agha.

Emily Tripp, director of Airwars, said her investigators struggled to grapple with the killing of entire families, across generations.

"At times we had to create family trees to understand the civilian harm," she said.

Abu Naja family, 20 killed Israeli aircraft struck the homes of Abu Naja and Madi families in southern Rafah on Oct. 17. Twenty members of Abu Naja family were immediately killed, including two pregnant women, and eight children. The airstrikes killed the 78-year-old grandmother, her granddaughter and her children. Airwars said one of the men killed was identified on Facebook as a "Mujahid" or "warrior." His wife, pregnant sister, and her 2-year-old daughter also died.

Killing a fighter who is not participating in hostilities and is in a place crowded with civilians is considered a violation of the laws of war.

Tarzai and Souri families, 20 killed An Israeli airstrike destroyed a church building in Gaza City where hundreds of displaced were sheltering. The Oct. 19 strike killed 20 members of the intermarried Tarzai and Souri families, from the dwindling Christian community in Gaza, including at least seven children. Ramez al-Souri lost all three children and his wife.

Israel's military said it struck a Hamas command-and-control center, accusing the group of embedding among civilians. It acknowledged that a church wall was damaged.

Amnesty visited the site and analyzed videos, including one posted and since deleted by the Israeli army and concluded it was an airstrike. Even if a military target was identified, Amnesty said, it "was reckless and therefore amounts to a war crime."

Jabalia refugee camp, more than 130 killed The Oct. 31 Israeli bombing was among the deadliest of this war. Jabalia refugee camp was one of Gaza's most densely populated areas and has been struck multiple times since Oct. 7. The true toll remains unknown because many remain under the rubble.

Airwars named 112 civilians killed from 11 families, including 69 children and 22 women. They included at least 47 members of the Okasha and Abou al-Qoumsan families. AP identified an additional 17 from the al-Qoumsan family, where uncles, fathers and children perished.

The bombs left several craters in an area stretching for over 100 meters (yards). Several buildings collapsed. "This is consistent of the biggest craters we've seen ... for the last 20 years," said Cobb-Smith.

Israel said it targeted a Hamas command-and-control center and a Hamas battalion commander inside who would be the most senior member of the group killed so far.

Doghmush family, 44 killed A strike on a mosque in Gaza City's Sabra neighborhood hit in the early evening of Nov. 15, killing at least 44 people from the Doghmush family, including the head of the family, a 9-year-old, community leaders and two women relatives in an adjacent building.

The damage appeared limited to the mosque's top floors. In a video taken afterward, there was no crater and the mosque appeared to have been cleaned up. There was no sign of significant damage nearby, indicating the mosque may have been targeted directly with small aerial ammunition, said Chris Cobb-Smith, a former U.N. weapons inspector and British army officer who has investigated in Gaza after past wars.

The mosque was built and owned by the Doghmush family. Ragab Doghmush, whose 21-year brother was killed, said the mosque has no militant affiliation and that the family does not permit any militant

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activity in its neighborhood. A feud between Doghmush family and Hamas that dates to Hamas' power grab in 2007 has largely kept the area off-limits to Hamas militants.

Salem family, 173 killed Israeli airstrikes destroyed two separate shelters for the Salem family on Dec. 11 and Dec. 19. At least 173 family members were killed, including children, at least one pregnant woman, and many elderly, among them the 87-year-old head of the family.

The Dec. 11 airstrike ripped through a block of family buildings. One was destroyed, while others lost their facades. Experts said the limited damage indicated it was a large bomb programmed to delay an explosion until after impact.

At least eighty people were killed, including multiple generations from the same bloodline. Relatives said there were no obvious combat activities nearby.

On Dec. 19, an Israeli airstrike hit another group of displaced members from the Salem family, sheltering in a villa in Rimal. The attack left a deep crater but surrounding buildings were undamaged. Survivors said tanks rolled over the rubble. At least 90 Salems were killed.

"I saw the bodies of my uncles and cousins strewn over the floor," said Mohamed Salem, who survived the Dec. 19 strike. "We only could identify the bodies from their IDs. They were just a pile of flesh."

Maghazi refugee camp, at least 106 killed Witnesses said at least four homes, hosting many displaced Palestinians, were hit directly on Dec. 24. Body parts were strewn across the surrounding areas.

Videos showed damage consistent with airstrikes. Images showed several destroyed homes in narrow alleys lined with small, mostly one-story buildings, and a large crater at the camp's entrance.

The AP had access to the post-strike hospital records that registered 106 people killed. From public death notices and partial health ministry data, AP was able to identify 36 from the Nawasreh, Abu Hamdah and Qandil families.

Israel said it was targeting Hamas militants and mistakenly struck two adjacent structures.

In the first and a rare statement to admit an errant strike, Israel said it regretted the "injury to those not involved." It said it had taken necessary measures to avoid harm to civilians. A military official told Kan, the Israeli public broadcaster, that the wrong weapon was used in the strike, without elaborating.

## 'The Outsiders' wins best musical and 'Stereophonic' best play as women make strides at Tony Awards

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "The Outsiders," a gritty adaptation of the classic young adult novel, became the essence of a Broadway insider on Sunday, winning the Tony Award for best new musical on a night when women made strides.

The musical based on the beloved S. E. Hinton book is about rival gangs of haves and have-nots in 1960s Oklahoma. The win meant Angelina Jolie, a producer, landed her first Tony, too.

Producer Matthew Rego, in his acceptance speech, thanked Hinton, in the audience at Manhattan's Lincoln Center: "Susie, I'm here to tell you that your story and its eternal message of love and family and staying gold has forever changed all of our lives."

"Stereophonic," the play about a Fleetwood Mac-like band recording an album over a turbulent and life-changing year, won best new play and had the night's most total awards at five. It was written by David Adjmi, with songs by former Arcade Fire member Will Butler.

"Oh, no. My agent gave me a beta blocker, but it's not working," Adjmi said. He added the play took 11 years to manifest.

"This was a very hard journey to get up here," he said. "We need to fund the arts in America."

Two special guests electrified the crowd — Jay-Z and Hillary Rodham Clinton. The latter, a producer of a musical about suffragettes, presented "Suffs."

"I have stood on a lot of stages, but this is very special," Clinton said. "I know a little bit about how hard it is to make change."

In the first musical presentation, Alicia Keys appeared at a piano as the cast of her semi-autobiographical

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musical, "Hell's Kitchen," presented a medley of songs. She sang her and Jay-Z's 2009 smash "Empire State of Mind," joining the rapper on interior steps to wild applause.

Later, newcomer Maleah Joi Moon won best leading actress for "Hell's Kitchen," brushing aside a challenge from veteran Kelli O'Hara. The 21-year-old, who plays a role loosely based on Keys' life, dedicated her award to her parents.

Danya Taymor — whose aunt is Julie Taymor, the first woman to win a Tony Award for directing a musical — became the sixth woman to win the same award for "The Outsiders."

Then Shaina Taub, only the second woman in Broadway history to write, compose and star in a Broadway musical, won for best score, the ninth woman to do so. The "Suffs" creator had already won for best book earlier in the night.

"If you are inspired by the story of 'Suffs,' please make sure you and everyone you know have registered to vote and vote, vote, vote!" she said. Taub said the win was for all the loud girls out there: "Go for it."

Jeremy Strong took home the first big award of the night. The "Succession" star landed his first Tony for his work in the revival of Henrik Ibsen's 1882 political play "An Enemy of the People." The award for best lead actor in a play will sit next to his Emmy, Screen Actors Guild Award and Golden Globe.

Kara Young, the first Black performer to be nominated for a Tony three consecutive years in a row, won this time as best featured actress in a play for "Purlie Victorious," the story of a Black preacher's plan to reclaim his inheritance and win back his church from a plantation owner.

"Thank you to my ancestors," she said, giving thanks to a list that included playwright Ossie Davis and co-star Ruby Dee, who originated her role.

"Harry Potter" star Daniel Radcliffe cemented his stage career pivot by winning featured actor in a musical, his first trophy in five Broadway shows. He won for the revival of "Merrily We Roll Along," the Stephen Sondheim-George Furth musical that goes backward in time.

"This is one of the best experiences of my life," Radcliffe said. "I will never have it as good again." He also thanked his parents for playing Sondheim in the car growing up.

"Merrily" was also named best musical revival and earned Jonathan Groff his first Tony, for leading actor in a musical. Groff — previously nominated for "Spring Awakening" and "Hamilton" — thanked co-stars Lindsay Mendez and Radcliffe, both emotional in the audience.

Groff, who said he used to watch the Tonys in Pennsylvania as a kid, also thanked his parents and brother for letting him act out scenes from "I Love Lucy" as a child.

"Thank you for always allowing my freak flag to fly without ever making me feel weird about it," he said.

Kecia Lewis, who plays a formidable piano teacher in "Hell's Kitchen," took home her first Tony, too. The 40-year veteran made her Broadway debut at 18 in the original company of "Dreamgirls."

"This moment is the one I dreamed of for those 40 years," she said. "Don't give up!"

"Appropriate," Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' show centered on a family reunion in Arkansas, was named best play revival. Jacobs-Jenkins also thanked Davis, saying there would be no "Appropriate" without "Purlie Victorious."

"Appropriate" star Sarah Paulson added a best leading actress in a play Tony to her awards cabinet. Paulson said she was thrilled to be able to interrogate the human condition: "This is the heart and soul of what we do and I am so honored to be amongst you."

Three-time Tony-honored Chita Rivera got a special tribute from Audra McDonald, Brian Stokes Mitchell and Bebe Neuwirth. Images of her work in "Chicago," "Kiss of the Spider Woman" and "West Side Story" were projected while dancers performed her hit numbers. Host Ariana DeBose, who won an Oscar in Rivera's "West Side Story" role of Anita, joined in.

DeBose, a three-time host, also co-choreographed the opening original number, "This Party's for You." The song cheered those who sacrifice for their art and took a gentle swipe at other entertainment types: "You'll learn that film and TV can make you rich and make you famous. But theater will make you better."

The performances also included an intense, creepy version of "Willkommen" from the "Cabaret" revival led by Eddie Redmayne, Pete Townshend playing guitar for "The Who's Tommy" and a messy rumble from

"The Outsiders" that included falling water, buckets of dirt, various carpets and an onstage truck.

The telecast teased upcoming shows, inviting Nicole Scherzinger — slated to star in a "Sunset Boulevard" revival — to sing the "In Memoriam" section. Nick Jonas and Adrienne Warren — announced today as stars of 2025's "The Last Five Years" — presented.

Scherzinger sang "What I Did for Love" as the names appeared, including playwright Christopher Durang and actors Alan Arkin, Glenda Jackson, Louis Gossett Jr., and Treat Williams.

## **Strong winds, steep terrain hamper crews battling Los Angeles area's first major fire of the year**

By RYAN SUN Associated Press

GORMAN, Calif. (AP) — Strong winds pushed flames through dry brush in mountains along Interstate 5 north of Los Angeles on Sunday, and officials warned residents in the wildfire's path to be prepared to leave if it explodes in size again.

Los Angeles County's first major wildfire of the year swiftly grew to nearly 23 square miles (60 square kilometers), one day after it forced the evacuation of at least 1,200 campers, off-roaders and hikers from the Hungry Valley recreation area.

The blaze, dubbed the Post Fire, was just 2% contained Sunday evening. No injuries were reported. The cause was under investigation.

Firefighters working in sweltering conditions and steep terrain raced to douse spot fires that erupted as unpredictable winds blew embers ahead of the flames, said Kenichi Haskett, a section chief for the LA County Fire Department. The gusts also hampered efforts by aircraft crews to drop water and fire retardant, he said.

"When it's windy, it just sprays the water everywhere we don't need it. So that's a challenge," Haskett said.

Meanwhile in Northern California, a small wildfire sparked Sunday prompted evacuation orders and warnings for a sparsely populated area near Lake Sonoma. The so-called Point Fire sent up a huge plume of dark smoke as it churned through brush and timber about 80 miles (130 kilometers) north of San Francisco. It was 15% contained.

The Southern California fire erupted Saturday afternoon near I-5 in Gorman, about 60 miles (100 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles. Two structures burned within the evacuated recreation area.

Flames were moving toward Pyramid Lake, a popular destination for boaters that was closed as a precaution on Father's Day. No houses were threatened Sunday, but officials warned residents of Castaic, home to about 19,000 people, that they should prepare to leave if the fire pushes further south.

"If you're in a warning area, be prepared with a 'go bag,' with overnight clothes and your cellphone, your medicines, your glasses. Have your car fueled up," said Haskett. "Be ready to evacuate."

Low humidity and gusts around 50 mph (80 kph) were expected throughout the day, and winds could pick up speed after sundown, warned the National Weather Service office for Los Angeles.

About 75 miles (120 kilometers) to the east, the nearly 2-square-mile (5-square-kilometer) Hesperia Fire forced road closures and prompted evacuation warnings after it broke out Saturday near mountain communities in San Bernardino County. The blaze was 19% contained Sunday evening.

## **A year after the Titan's tragic dive, deep-sea explorers vow to pursue ocean's mysteries**

By PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — The deadly implosion of an experimental submersible en route to the deep-sea grave of the Titanic last June has not dulled the desire for further ocean exploration, despite lingering questions about the disaster.

Tuesday marks one year since the Titan vanished on its way to the historic wreckage site in the North

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Atlantic Ocean. After a five-day search that captured attention around the world, authorities said the vessel had been destroyed and all five people on board had died.

Concerns have been raised about whether the Titan was destined for disaster because of its unconventional design and its creator's refusal to submit to independent checks that are standard in the industry. The U.S. Coast Guard quickly convened a high-level investigation into what happened, but officials said the inquiry is taking longer than the initial 12-month time frame, and a planned public hearing to discuss their findings won't happen for at least another two months.

Meanwhile, deep-sea exploration continues. The Georgia-based company that owns the salvage rights to the Titanic plans to visit the sunken ocean liner in July using remotely operated vehicles, and a real estate billionaire from Ohio has said he plans a voyage to the shipwreck in a two-person submersible in 2026. Numerous ocean explorers told The Associated Press they are confident undersea exploration can continue safely in a post-Titan world.

"It's been a desire of the scientific community to get down into the ocean," said Greg Stone, a veteran ocean explorer and friend of Titan operator Stockton Rush, who died in the implosion. "I have not noticed any difference in the desire to go into the ocean, exploring."

OceanGate, a company co-founded by Rush that owned the submersible, suspended operations in early July. A spokesperson for the company declined to comment.

David Concannon, a former adviser to OceanGate, said he will mark the anniversary privately with a group of people who were involved with the company or the submersible's expeditions over the years, including scientists, volunteers and mission specialists. Many of them, including those who were on the Titan support ship Polar Prince, have not been interviewed by the Coast Guard, he said.

"The fact is, they are isolated and in a liminal space," he said in an email last week. "Stockton Rush has been vilified and so has everyone associated with OceanGate. I wasn't even there and I have gotten death threats. We support each other and just wait to be interviewed. The world has moved on ... but the families and those most affected are still living with this tragedy every day."

The Titan had been chronicling the Titanic's decay and the underwater ecosystem around the sunken ocean liner in yearly voyages since 2021.

The craft made its last dive on June 18, 2023, a Sunday morning, and lost contact with its support vessel about two hours later. When it was reported overdue that afternoon, rescuers rushed ships, planes and other equipment to the area, about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland.

The U.S. Navy notified the Coast Guard that day of an anomaly in its acoustic data that was "consistent with an implosion or explosion" at the time communications between the Polar Prince and the Titan were lost, a senior Navy official later told The Associated Press. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive technology.

Any sliver of hope that remained for finding the crew alive was wiped away on June 22, when the Coast Guard announced that debris had been found near the Titanic on the ocean floor. Authorities have since recovered the submersible's intact endcap, debris and presumed human remains from the site.

In addition to Rush, the implosion killed two members of a prominent Pakistani family, Shahzada Dawood and his son Suleman Dawood; British adventurer Hamish Harding; and Titanic expert Paul-Henri Nargeolet.

Harding and Nargeolet were members of The Explorers Club, a professional society dedicated to research, exploration and resource conservation.

"Then, as now, it hit us on a personal level very deeply," the group's president, Richard Garriott, said in an interview last week. "We knew not only all the people involved, but even all the previous divers, support teams, people working on all these vessels — those were all either members of this club or well within our network."

Garriott believes even if the Titan hadn't imploded, the correct rescue equipment didn't get to the site fast enough. The tragedy caught everyone from the Coast Guard to the ships on site off guard, underscoring the importance of developing detailed search and rescue plans ahead of any expedition, he said. His organization has since created a task force to help others do just that.

"That's what we've been trying to really correct, to make sure that we know exactly who to call and

exactly what materials need to be mustered," he said.

Garriott believes the world is in a new golden age of exploration thanks to technological advances that have opened frontiers and provided new tools to more thoroughly study already visited places. The Titanic tragedy hasn't tarnished that, he said.

Veteran deep-sea explorer Katy Croff Bell agrees. The Titan implosion reinforced the importance of following industry standards and performing rigorous testing, but in the industry as a whole, "the safety track record for this has been very good for several decades," said Bell, president of Ocean Discovery League, a nonprofit organization focused on making deep-sea investigation less expensive and more accessible.

Garriott said there will be a remembrance celebration for the Titan victims this week in Portugal at the annual Global Exploration Summit.

"Progress continues," he said. "I actually feel very comfortable and confident that we will now be able to proceed."

## The high cost of living is still biting the UK. Many don't think the election will change anything

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Dominic Watters watches his gas and electricity meter like a hawk. He topped it up a few days ago, but now there's just 1.85 pounds (\$2.40) of credit left. That may determine what kind of dinner he and his teen daughter get tonight, he says.

Watters, a campaigner for better access to nutritious food, is a single dad in Canterbury in southern England who relies on government welfare. He knows microwave meals don't compare to home-cooked dinners, but sometimes he simply cannot afford to use the gas stove or oven.

"It's become more and more of a struggle, especially for single parents on benefits," he said. "It leaves you feeling stranded. It doesn't allow you enough to pay for fresh fruit and vegetables, and also to pay for the gas and electric to cook the food."

Since calling a general election for July 4, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has been at pains to repeat a key message on the campaign trail: The economy is turning a corner. Inflation is down. Things are looking up.

That's not the reality for Watters and millions across the U.K. still feeling the squeeze from high food, energy and housing prices. The persistent cost-of-living crisis is a top concern for voters in the parliamentary election, when they will choose lawmakers to fill all 650 seats in the House of Commons, and the leader of the party that can command a majority — either alone or in coalition — will become prime minister.

While Sunak's Conservatives are widely expected to lose after 14 years in power, the dire state of the economy — combined with a deep disillusionment with politics and politicians among voters — means that the prevailing mood ahead of the election is one of malaise, not excitement or hope for change, even if the opposition Labour Party wins.

Although inflation has returned to near-normal levels after skyrocketing in recent years, energy bills and items on store shelves still cost more than they did before the pandemic, when they started their steep climb. And while wages are starting to rise, mortgages and rents have soared along with interest rates, taking large chunks out of many household incomes.

Coral Dyer, a psychologist who has a young child, was among shoppers lining up to buy 1-pound (\$1.30) bowls of fresh vegetables at a bustling street market in Lewisham in south London on a recent day.

"It's much cheaper than the supermarket, and you get a lot more," she said. Money's becoming tighter, she added, with her income just about covering high day care fees.

Dyer, 37, laughed and shook her head when asked if she agreed with Sunak's upbeat message.

"I don't really feel that way, no," she said. "I think we're being more conscious of buying in bulk, to shop and eat in different ways to save some money. It's becoming less of a choice and more of the way we have to do things."

Like other countries, Britain experienced a double economic shock when it was hit by surging prices, first

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stoked by supply chain issues during the coronavirus pandemic and then by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Inflation in the U.K. hit a peak of 11% in late 2022, the highest the country had seen in four decades. For most, especially public sector workers, take-home pay failed to keep up with spiraling prices.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, a leading think tank, said in March that the current parliament has overseen the worst growth in living standards since at least 1961. It added that from 2019 to 2023, the number of adults who reported being unable to adequately heat their homes more than doubled.

Sunak is keen to point out that the worst appears to be over: Inflation is now down to 2.3%, and average wages are also rising after more than a decade of low income growth following the 2008 financial crisis.

But there's little to be jubilant about. The latest official figures published last week showed that economic growth was flat in April, after rising 0.6% during the first quarter of the year.

The IFS and many economists have warned that whoever wins the election will face tough choices to raise taxes or cut public spending because they will need to wrestle with a huge debt burden while trying to take Britain out of economic stagnation.

For those on benefits or low incomes, talk about change or growth feels distant when it's a daily struggle to afford food staples and heating. Britain's poorest have been disproportionately hit by the cost-of-living crisis because they spend a much larger share of their incomes on essentials.

More people are falling into poverty and more are turning to food banks, according to the Trussell Trust, which runs more than half of all U.K. food banks. The charity said it provided 3 million emergency food parcels to people in need last year — a record number for the trust — including to over 300,000 people who used a food bank for the first time.

At the Community Food Hub in Hackney in east London, a rapidly gentrifying area that nonetheless still has one of the highest child poverty rates in the U.K., volunteers say their workload has not lessened in recent years as they packed up bread and canned food for patrons.

"I'm hoping that these elections are going to prove to be fruitful. I personally doubt it," said Michelle Dornelly, who has run the service since the pandemic. "I've kind of given up hope with these politicians and them understanding the common people, the working class people. I am kind of fed up that they won't take the time out to come and see what it is that we're doing and how people are living."

While Labour has a significant lead in polls and they're widely expected to win by political commentators and members of the public, there is a deep lack of optimism or belief among voters that either Sunak or his rival, Keir Starmer, can bring material change.

Watters, the food campaigner, said things won't get better until those in power take time to listen to struggling families.

"I think that it's been so bad for so long that people are trying to hold out hope for a change," he said. "But there is a kind of shared sense of hopelessness within my estate (social housing block) of whether change will actually happen, no matter what government, gets in."

## **AI experimentation is high risk, high reward for low-profile political campaigns**

By ALI SWENSON, DAN MERICA and GARANCE BURKE Associated Press

Adrian Perkins was running for reelection as the mayor of Shreveport, Louisiana, when he was surprised by a harsh campaign hit piece.

The satirical TV commercial, paid for by a rival political action committee, used artificial intelligence to depict Perkins as a high school student who had been called into the principal's office. Instead of giving a tongue-lashing for cheating on a test or getting in a fight, the principal blasted Perkins for failing to keep communities safe and create jobs.

The video superimposed Perkins' face onto the body of an actor playing him. Although the ad was labeled as being created with "deep learning computer technology," Perkins said it was powerful and resonated with voters. He didn't have enough money or campaign staff to counteract it, and thinks it was one of

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many reasons he lost the 2022 race. A representative for the group behind the ad did not respond to a request for comment.

"One hundred percent the deepfake ad affected our campaign because we were a down-ballot, less resourced place," said Perkins, a Democrat. "You had to pick and choose where you put your efforts."

While such attacks are staples of the rough-and-tumble of political campaigning, the ad targeting Perkins was notable: It's believed to be one of the first examples of an AI deepfake deployed in a political race in the U.S. It also foreshadowed a dilemma facing candidates in scores of state and local races this year as generative AI has become more widespread and easier to use.

The technology — which can do everything from streamlining mundane campaign tasks to creating fake images, video or audio — already has been deployed in some national races around the country and has spread far more widely in elections across the globe. Despite its power as a tool to mislead, efforts to regulate it have been piecemeal or delayed, a gap that could have the greatest impact on lower-profile races down the ballot.

Artificial intelligence is a double-edged sword for candidates running such campaigns. Inexpensive, user-friendly AI models can help them save money and time on some of their day-to-day tasks. But they often don't have the staff or expertise to combat AI-generated falsehoods, adding to fears that an eleventh-hour deepfake could fool enough voters to tilt races decided by narrow margins.

"AI-enabled threats affect close races and low-profile contests where slight shifts matter and where there are often fewer resources correcting misleading stories," said Josh Lawson, director of AI and democracy for the Aspen Institute.

National safeguards lackingSome local candidates already have faced criticism for deploying AI in misleading ways, from a Republican state senate candidate in Tennessee who used an AI headshot to make himself look slimmer and younger to Philadelphia's Democratic sheriff, whose reelection campaign promoted fake news stories generated by ChatGPT.

One challenge in separating fact from fiction is the decline of local news outlets, which in many places has meant far less coverage of candidates running for state and local office, especially reporting that digs into candidates' backgrounds and how their campaigns operate. The lack of familiarity with candidates could make voters more open to believing fake information, said U.S. Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia.

The Democrat, who has worked extensively on AI-related legislation as chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said AI-generated misinformation is easier to spot and combat in high-profile races because they are under greater scrutiny. When an AI-generated robocall impersonated President Joe Biden to discourage voters from going to the polls in the New Hampshire primary this year, it was quickly reported in the media and investigated, resulting in serious consequences for the players behind it.

More than a third of states have passed laws regulating artificial intelligence in politics, and legislation aimed specifically at fighting election-related deepfakes has received bipartisan support in each state where it has passed, according to the nonprofit consumer advocacy group Public Citizen.

But Congress has yet to act, despite several bipartisan groups of lawmakers proposing such legislation. "Congress is pathetic," said Warner, who said he was pessimistic about Congress passing any legislation protecting elections from AI interference this year.

Travis Brimm, executive director of the Democratic Association of Secretaries of State, called the specter of AI misinformation in down-ballot races an evolving issue in which people are "still working to figure out the best way forward."

"This is a real challenge, and that's why you've seen Democratic secretaries jump to address it and pass real legislation with real penalties around the abuse of AI," Brimm said.

A spokesperson for the Republican Secretaries of State Committee did not respond to the AP's request for comment.

How do you regulate integrity?While experts and lawmakers worry about how generative AI attacks could skew an election, some candidates for state or local office said AI tools have proven invaluable to their campaigns. The powerful computer systems, software or processes can emulate aspects of human



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work and cognition.

Glenn Cook, a Republican running for a state legislative seat in southeastern Georgia, is less well-known and has much less campaign cash than the incumbent he is facing in a runoff election on Tuesday. So, he has invested in a digital consultant who creates much of his campaign's content using inexpensive, publicly available generative AI models.

On his website, AI-generated articles are peppered with AI-generated images of community members smiling and chatting, none of whom actually exist. AI-generated podcast episodes use a cloned version of his voice to narrate his policy positions.

Cook said he reviews everything before it is made public. The savings — in both time and money — have let him knock on more doors in the district and attend more in-person campaign events.

"My wife and I did 4,500 doors down here," he said. "It frees you up to do a lot."

Cook's opponent, Republican state Rep. Steven Sainz, said he thinks Cook "hides behind what amounts to a robot instead of authentically communicating his opinions to voters."

"I'm not running on artificially generated promises, but real-world results," Sainz said, adding that he isn't using AI in his own campaign.

Republican voters in the district weren't sure what to make of the use of AI in the race, but said they cared most about the candidates' values and outreach on the campaign trail. Patricia Rowell, a retired Cook voter, said she likes that he's been in her community three or four times while campaigning, while Mike Perry, a self-employed Sainz voter, said he's felt more personal contact from Sainz.

He said the expanded use of AI in politics is inevitable, but wondered how voters would be able to differentiate between what's true and what's not.

"It's free speech, you know, and I don't want to discourage free speech, but it comes down to the integrity of the people putting it out," he said. "And I don't know how you regulate integrity. It's pretty tough."

Local campaigns are vulnerable. Digital firms that market AI models for political campaigns told the AP most of the AI use in local campaigns so far is minimal and designed to boost efficiency for tedious tasks, such as analyzing survey data or drafting social media copy that meets a certain word limit.

Political consultants are increasingly dabbling with AI tools to see what works, according to a new report from a team led by researchers at the University of Texas at Austin. More than 20 political operatives from across the ideological spectrum told researchers they were experimenting with generative AI models in this year's campaigns, even though they also feared that less scrupulous actors might be doing the same.

"Local-level elections will be so much more challenging because people will be attacking," said Zelly Martin, the report's lead author and a senior research fellow at the university's Center for Media Engagement. "And what recourse do they have to fight back, as opposed to Biden and Trump who have many more resources to fend off attacks?"

There are immense differences in staffing, money and expertise between down-ballot campaigns — for state legislator, mayor, school board or any other local position — and races for federal office. Where a local campaign might have just a handful of staffers, competitive U.S. House and Senate campaigns may have dozens and presidential operations can balloon to the thousands by the end of the campaign.

The campaigns for Biden and former President Donald Trump are both experimenting with AI to enhance fundraising and voter outreach efforts. Mia Ehrenberg, a spokesperson for the Biden campaign, said they also have a plan to debunk AI-generated misinformation. A Trump campaign spokesperson did not respond to the AP's questions about their plans for handling AI-generated misinformation.

Perkins, the former Shreveport mayor, had a small team that decided to ignore the attack and keep campaigning when the deepfake of him being hauled into the principal's office hit local TV. He said he viewed the deepfake ad against him as a typical dirty trick at the time, but the rise of AI in just two years since his campaign has made him realize the technology's power as a tool to mislead voters.

"In politics, people are always going to push the envelope a bit to be effective," he said. "We had no idea how significant it would be."

## List of winners at the 2024 Tony Awards

By The Associated Press undefined  
NEW YORK (AP) — Winners at the 2024 Tony Awards, announced Sunday.

Best Musical: "The Outsiders"  
Best Play: "Stereophonic"  
Best Revival of a Musical: "Merrily We Roll Along"  
Best Revival of a Play: "Appropriate"  
Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Musical: Maleah Joi Moon, "Hell's Kitchen"  
Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Musical: Jonathan Groff, "Merrily We Roll Along"  
Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role in a Play: Sarah Paulson, "Appropriate"  
Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role in a Play: Jeremy Strong, "An Enemy of the People"  
Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Musical: Daniel Radcliffe, "Merrily We Roll Along"  
Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Musical: Kecia Lewis, "Hell's Kitchen"  
Best Performance by an Actor in a Featured Role in a Play: Will Brill, "Stereophonic"  
Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Play: Kara Young, "Purlie Victorious: A Non-Confederate Romp Through the Cotton Patch"  
Best Direction of a Play: Daniel Aukin, "Stereophonic"  
Best Direction of a Musical: Danya Taymor, "The Outsiders"  
Best Original Score: "Suffs," music & lyrics: Shaina Taub  
Best Book of a Musical: "Suffs," Shaina Taub  
Best Choreography: Justin Peck, "Illinoise"  
Best Costume Design of a Play: Dede Ayite, "Jaja's African Hair Braiding"  
Best Costume Design of a Musical: Linda Cho, "The Great Gatsby"  
Best Orchestrations: Jonathan Tunick, "Merrily We Roll Along"  
Best Scenic Design of a Musical: Tom Scutt, "Cabaret at the Kit Kat Club"  
Best Scenic Design of a Play: David Zinn, "Stereophonic"  
Best Lighting Design of a Musical: Hana S. Kim and Brian MacDevitt, "The Outsiders"  
Best Lighting Design of a Play: Jane Cox, "Appropriate"  
Best Sound Design of a Play: Ryan Rumery, "Stereophonic"  
Best Sound Design of a Musical: Cody Spencer, "The Outsiders"

## Israel's army says it will pause daytime fighting along a route in southern Gaza to help flow of aid

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, WAFAA SHURAFU and LEE KEATH Associated Press  
JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's military announced on Sunday that it would pause fighting during daytime hours along a route in southern Gaza to free up a backlog of humanitarian aid deliveries for desperate Palestinians enduring a humanitarian crisis sparked by the war, now in its ninth month.

The "tactical pause," which applies to about 12 kilometers (7½ miles) of road in the Rafah area, falls far short of a complete cease-fire in the territory that has been sought by the international community, including Israel's top ally, the United States. It could help address the overwhelming needs of Palestinians that have surged in recent weeks with Israel's incursion into Rafah.

The army said that the daily pause would begin at 8 a.m. (0500 GMT) and last until 7 p.m. (1600 GMT) and continue until further notice. It's aimed at allowing aid trucks to reach the nearby Israel-controlled Kerem Shalom crossing, the main entry point, and travel safely to the Salah a-Din highway, a main north-south road, the military said. The crossing has had a bottleneck since Israeli ground troops moved into Rafah in early May.

COGAT, the Israeli military body that oversees aid distribution in Gaza, said the route would increase the flow of aid to other parts of Gaza, including Khan Younis, the coastal area of Muwasi and central Gaza. Hard-hit northern Gaza, an early target in the war, is served by goods entering from the north.

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The military said that the pause, which begins as Muslims start marking the Eid Al-Adha holiday, came after discussions with the United Nations and other aid agencies.

A U.N. spokesperson, Jens Laerke, told The Associated Press that Israel's announcement was welcome but "no aid has been dispatched from Kerem Shalom today," with no details. Laerke said that the U.N. hopes for further concrete measures by Israel, including smoother operations at checkpoints and regular entry of fuel.

Israel and Hamas are weighing the latest proposal for a cease-fire, detailed by U.S. President Joe Biden in the administration's most concentrated diplomatic push for a halt to the fighting and the release of hostages taken by the militant group. While Biden described the proposal as an Israeli one, Israel hasn't fully embraced it. Hamas has demanded changes that appear unacceptable to Israel.

With Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowing to press ahead with the war and many members of his far-right government opposed to the cease-fire proposal, news of the military's pause triggered a minor political storm.

An Israeli official quoted Netanyahu as saying the plan was "unacceptable to him" when he learned of it. The official said that Netanyahu received assurances that "there is no change" in the military's policy and "fighting in Rafah continues as planned." The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak with the media.

Israeli television stations later quoted Netanyahu as criticizing the military: "We have a country with an army, not an army with a country."

But neither Netanyahu nor the army canceled the new arrangement. While the army insisted "there is no cessation of fighting" in southern Gaza, it also said the new route would be open during daytime hours "exclusively for the transportation of humanitarian aid."

The fighting continued. Nine people, including five children, were killed Sunday when a house was struck in Bureji in central Gaza, according to AP journalists who counted the bodies at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah. A man wept over the small sheet-wrapped bundle in his arms. Two of the children had been playing in the street.

"What did this girl do to you, Netanyahu? Isn't this forbidden for you?" a woman cried, holding a dead child.

Israel's military didn't respond to questions about the strike.

Israel announced the names of 12 soldiers killed in recent attacks in Gaza, putting the number killed since Israel began its ground invasion of Gaza last year at 309. Hamas killed around 1,200 people during its Oct. 7 attack and took 250 hostage, Israeli authorities say. Health officials in Hamas-run Gaza say more than 37,000 Palestinians have been killed.

Israel's military offensive has plunged Gaza into a humanitarian crisis, with the U.N. reporting hundreds of thousands of people on the brink of famine.

Hamas' supreme leader, Ismail Haniyeh, called for more pressure to open border crossings. Another crossing, the Rafah terminal between Gaza and Egypt, has been closed since Israel moved into the city. Egypt has refused to reopen the crossing as long as Israel controls the Palestinian side.

The flow of aid in southern Gaza has declined just as need grew. More than 1 million Palestinians, many of whom had already been displaced, fled Rafah after the invasion, crowding into other parts of southern and central Gaza. Most languish in tent camps, with open sewage in the streets.

From May 6 until June 6, the U.N. received an average of 68 trucks of aid a day. That was down from 168 a day in April and far below the 500 a day that aid groups say are needed.

COGAT says there are no restrictions on the entry of trucks. It says more than 8,600 trucks of all kinds, aid and commercial, entered Gaza from all crossings from May 2 to June 13, an average of 201 a day. But much of that aid has piled up at crossings.

A COGAT spokesman, Shimon Freedman, said it was the U.N.'s fault that its cargo stacked up on the Gaza side of Kerem Shalom. He said its agencies have "fundamental logistical problems," especially a lack of trucks.

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The U.N. denies such allegations. It says the fighting often makes it too dangerous for U.N. trucks inside Gaza to travel to Kerem Shalom. It also says the pace of deliveries has slowed because Israel's military must authorize drivers to travel to the site, a system Israel says was designed for drivers' safety.

The new arrangement aims to reduce the need for coordinating deliveries by providing an 11-hour uninterrupted daily window

Because of a lack of security, some aid trucks have been looted by crowds as they moved along Gaza's roads. It wasn't immediately clear whether the army would provide security to protect trucks moving along the highway.

## Severe, chaotic weather around US with high temperatures in Southwest and Midwest, snow in Rockies

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Extreme heat spread across Arizona, New Mexico and parts of Texas, Colorado and Kansas as severe weather swept across many parts of the U.S. on Sunday. There was unseasonable cold in the Pacific Northwest, snow headed to the northern Rocky Mountains and heavy rainfall forecast from the northern Plains to the Upper Midwest.

The National Weather Service estimated that more than 63 million people were under heat advisories on Sunday, stretching from the Southwest northward up through Denver and into Chicago.

Temperatures in Phoenix, which hit 112 degrees Fahrenheit (44.4 Celsius) on Saturday, eased slightly on Sunday to 110 degrees Fahrenheit (43.3 Celsius). Weather service forecasters say the first two weeks of June in Phoenix already have been an average of 5.6 degrees Fahrenheit hotter than normal, making it the hottest start to June on record.

"We have already seen some pretty significantly high temperatures in our area," said Ted Whittock, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Phoenix. "We are recommending that everyone reduce their time outdoors between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., stay hydrated and wear light, looser fitting clothing."

Whittock said the heat in metro Phoenix will ease a bit Monday through Wednesday, with the highs pushing back up as the week progresses, likely prompting another excessive heat warning.

The heat has been especially dangerous in recent years in metro Phoenix, where 645 people died from heat-related causes in 2023 — a record.

The city and Maricopa County have adopted additional measures this year in hopes of keeping people safer, including two new overnight cooling centers where people can rest in air conditioning after the sun goes down. There are more than 100 other cooling centers that have been open since May 1 where people can get cold water and sit in a cool space during daytime hours.

In neighboring New Mexico, a heat advisory was in effect over the weekend for the Chavez County plains including Roswell, where the high was forecast to hit 107 degrees F (41.6 degrees C) on Monday. The high for Albuquerque reached 99 degrees F (37 C) on Sunday, and is forecast to cool slightly to 98 degrees F (36 C) on Monday. The high Sunday was 104 F (40 C) in El Paso, Texas, which has now opened five cooling centers.

Temperatures in Colorado ranged from near 90 degrees F (32.2 C) in areas of metropolitan Denver Sunday to 100 degrees F (37.7 C) in the southern city of Pueblo, with temperatures expected to surpass 100 degrees F Monday in the southern reaches of the state.

The heat wave was moving eastward Sunday into the Plains and the Great Lakes area and was expected to arrive in the Northeast by Tuesday. The threat of thunderstorms with potential high winds and heavy rainfall was increasing in the Chicago area, even as heat indices were forecast to reach near 100 degrees F (37.7 C) through the middle of the week.

As the heat wave spreads eastward, temperatures in Washington and the rest of the mid-Atlantic as well as New England were likely to see highs in the mid- to upper 90s as the week goes on, with excessive humidity making it feel even more oppressive.

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The U.S. last year saw the the most heat waves, consisting of abnormally hot weather lasting more than two days, since 1936.

While much of the country swelters, late season snow was forecast for the northern Rockies Monday and Tuesday. Parts of Montana and north-central Idaho were under a winter storm warning, with as much as 6 inches (15 centimeters) of heavy, wet snow expected in the mountains around Missoula, Montana. As much as 20 inches (51 centimeters) was predicted for higher elevations around Glacier National Park.

Meanwhile, a fresh batch of tropical moisture will bring an increasing threat of heavy rain and flash flooding to the central Gulf Coast late Sunday into Monday. Heavy rain is expected to start Monday morning, with the moisture shifting toward the Gulf Coast by Tuesday.

The intense flooding from heavy rains continued to dissipate in southern Florida, where some areas in and around Miami and Fort Lauderdale were left underwater in recent days as storms dumped up to 20 inches (50 centimeters).

That unnamed storm system coincided with the early start of hurricane season, which this year is forecast to be among the most active in recent memory.

## **Bryson DeChambeau wins another U.S. Open with a clutch finish to deny Rory McIlroy**

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

PINEHURST, N.C. (AP) — Bryson DeChambeau climbed back into the most famous bunker at Pinehurst No. 2, this time with the U.S. Open trophy instead of his 55-degree sand wedge, filling the silver prize with grains of sand to commemorate the best shot of his life.

Rory McIlroy wanted to bury his head in the sand.

DeChambeau won his second U.S. Open title on Sunday by getting up-and-down from 55 yards in a bunker — one of the toughest shots in golf — to deliver another unforgettable finish at Pinehurst and a celebration just as raucous as when his hero, Payne Stewart, won with a big par putt in 1999.

"That's Payne right there, baby!" DeChambeau screamed as he walked off the 18th green.

This was nothing like DeChambeau winning at Winged Foot in 2020, when there were no fans and no drama. This was high suspense that ultimately came down to a trio of short putts.

McIlroy, who for so much of the final round looked certain to end 10 years without a major, had a one-shot lead until missing a 30-inch par putt on the 16th hole. Tied for the lead on the 18th, with DeChambeau behind him in the final group, McIlroy missed a par attempt from just inside 4 feet.

He was in the scoring room watching, hoping, for a two-hole playoff when DeChambeau got into trouble off the tee as he had done all day. But then DeChambeau delivered the magic moment with his bunker shot to 4 feet and made the par putt for a 1-over 71.

"That bunker shot was the shot of my life," DeChambeau said.

Moments later, McIlroy was in his car, the wheels spinning on the gravel to get out of Pinehurst without comment. There wasn't much to say. This one will sting.

"As much as it is heartbreaking for some people, it was heartbreak for me at the PGA," said DeChambeau, who a month ago made a dramatic birdie on the 18th hole at Valhalla, only for Xander Schauffele to match him with a birdie to win the PGA Championship.

"I really wanted this one," DeChambeau said. "When I turned the corner and saw I was a couple back, I said, 'Nope, I'm not going to let that happen.' I have to focus on figuring out how to make this happen."

True to his form as one of golf's great entertainers, he put on quite the show.

The par putt wasn't as long or as suspenseful as Stewart's in 1999. The celebration was every bit of that. DeChambeau repeatedly pumped those strong arms as he screamed to the blue sky, turning in every direction to a gallery that cheered him on all week.

As much as this U.S. Open will be remembered for DeChambeau's marvelous bunker shot, McIlroy played a big part. He not missed a putt under 4 feet for 69 holes on the slick, domed Donald Ross greens. And then with the U.S. Open on the line, he missed two over the final three holes for a 69.

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McIlroy had the look of a winner. He ran off four birdies in a five-hole stretch around the turn. He was a model of cool, the opposite of DeChambeau's exuberance. He walked confidently to the 14th tee with a two-shot lead as the chants grew louder.

"Ror-EE! Ror-EE!"

DeChambeau could hear them, and he pounded a 3-wood on the reachable par-4 13th — the tees were moved forward to 316 yards — to the middle of the green for a birdie to stay close.

McIlroy took bogey from behind the 15th green, but he stayed one ahead when DeChambeau, playing in the group behind him, had his first three-putt of the week on the 15th when he missed from 4 feet.

And that's where this U.S. Open took a devastating turn for McIlroy.

He missed a 30-inch par putt on the 16th hole to fall back into a tie. On the 18th hole, McIlroy's tee shot landed behind a wiregrass bush. He blasted out short of the green and pitched beautifully to 4 feet. And he missed again.

DeChambeau kept fans on the edge to the end. He pulled his drive to the left into an awful lie, with a tree in his back swing and a root in front of the golf ball. The best he could manage was to punch it toward the green, and it rolled into a front right bunker.

"One of the worst places I could have been," DeChambeau. But he said his caddie, Greg Bodine, kept it simple.

"G-Bo just said, 'Bryson, just get it up-and-down. That's all you've got to do. You've done this plenty of times before. I've seen some crazy shots from you from 50 yards out of a bunker,'" DeChambeau said.

During the trophy ceremony, the shot was replayed on a video screen.

"I still can't believe that up-and-down," DeChambeau said.

Since he won the U.S. Open at Congressional in 2011, McIlroy has seven top 10s in this championship without a victory — it's been more than 100 years since anyone did that well without going home with the trophy.

DeChambeau becomes the second LIV Golf player to win a major, following Brooks Koepka at the PGA Championship last year.

An image of Stewart's famous pose was on the pin flag at the 18th, and DeChambeau put on a Stewart-inspired flat cap during the trophy presentation, later replacing it with his "Crushers" cap from LIV.

He finished at 6-under 274.

Patrick Cantlay lingered around this duel all afternoon, unable to get the putts to fall at the right time until he missed a 7-foot par putt on the 16th hole that ended his chances. He closed with a 70 and tied for third with Tony Finau, who matched a Sunday best with 67 without ever having a serious chance of winning.

This is not the same DeChambeau had become such a polarizing figure — a target of heckling for slow play and his spat with Brooks Koepka. In the sandhills of North Carolina, he had thousands on his side. He signed autographs during his round, he engaged with fans and he delivered one hell of a show.

And when it was over, he looked at the double-decker grandstands around the 18th and thousands circling the 18th green and invited them to his party.

"I want all of you guys somehow," he said, pointing at them in every direction, "I want you guys to touch this trophy because I want you to experience what this feels like for me. You were a part of this journey this week, and I want you to be a part of it for the after party."

DeChambeau wasn't flawless. He hit only five fairways, the fewest in the final round by a U.S. Open champion since Angel Cabrera at Oakmont in 2007. He couldn't escape the trouble on the 12th, leading to a bogey that dropped him two shots behind. He had his first three-putt of the week at the worst time, on the 15th to briefly fall behind.

But he showed the mettle of a two-time U.S. Open champion at the end.

"What's most impressive about Bryson is not that he hits the ball far. Everybody knows it," said Matthieu Pavon, who played with DeChambeau and shot 71 to finish fifth. "I was amazed by the quality of the short game on 18. It's a master class."

## Pilgrims commence the final rites of Hajj as Muslims celebrate Eid al-Adha

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

MINA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — Masses of pilgrims on Sunday embarked on a symbolic stoning of the devil in Saudi Arabia under the soaring summer heat. The ritual marks the final days of the Hajj, or Islamic pilgrimage, and the start of the Eid al-Adha celebrations for Muslims around the world.

The stoning is among the final rites of the Hajj, which is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. It came a day after more than 1.8 million pilgrims congregated at a sacred hill, known as Mount Arafat, outside the holy city of Mecca, which Muslim pilgrims visit to perform the annual five-day rituals of Hajj.

Fourteen Jordanian pilgrims have died from sunstroke during the Hajj, according to Jordan's state-run Petra news agency. The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it has coordinated with Saudi authorities to bury the dead in Saudi Arabia, or transfer them to Jordan.

Mohammed Al-Abdulaali, spokesman for the Saudi Health Ministry, told reporters that more than 2,760 pilgrims suffered from sunstroke and heat stress on Sunday alone. He said the number was likely to increase and urged attendees to avoid the sun at peak times and drink water. "Heat stress is the greatest challenge," he said.

The pilgrims left Mount Arafat on Saturday evening to spend their night in a nearby site known as Muzdalifa, where they collected pebbles to use in the symbolic stoning of pillars representing the devil.

The pillars are in another sacred place in Mecca, called Mina, where Muslims believe Ibrahim's faith was tested when God commanded him to sacrifice his only son Ismail. Ibrahim was prepared to submit to the command, but then God stayed his hand, sparing his son. In the Christian and Jewish versions of the story, Abraham is ordered to kill his other son, Isaac.

On Sunday morning, crowds headed on foot to the stoning areas. Some were seen pushing disabled pilgrims on wheelchairs on a multi-lane road leading to the complex housing the large pillars. Most pilgrims were seen sweltering and carrying umbrellas to protect them against the burning summer sun.

An Associated Press reporter saw many pilgrims, especially among the elderly, collapsing on the road to the pillars because of the burning heat. Security forces and medics were deployed to help, carrying those who fainted on gurneys out of the heat to ambulances or field hospitals. As the temperature spiked by midday, more people required medical help. The heat had reached to 47 C (116.6 F) in Mecca, and 46 C (114.8 F) in Mina, according to Saudi meteorological authorities.

Despite the suffocating heat, many pilgrims expressed joy at being able to complete their pilgrimage. "Thank God, (the process) was joyful and good," said Abdel-Moaty Abu Ghoneima, an Egyptian pilgrim. "No one wants more than this."

Many pilgrims will spend up to three days in Mina, each casting seven pebbles at three pillars in a ritual to symbolize the casting away of evil and sin.

While in Mina, they will visit Mecca to perform their "tawaf," or circumambulation, which is circling the Kaaba in the Grand Mosque counterclockwise seven times. Then another circumambulation, the Farewell Tawaf, will mark the end of Hajj as pilgrims prepare to leave the holy city.

The rites coincide with the four-day Eid al-Adha, which means "Feast of Sacrifice," when Muslims with financial means commemorate Ibrahim's test of faith through slaughtering livestock and animals and distributing the meat to the poor.

Most countries marked Eid al-Adha on Sunday. Others, like Indonesia, will celebrate it Monday.

President Joe Biden in a statement wished Muslims around the world a blessed Eid al-Adha and noted the holiday is a time of prayer, reflection and sacrifice.

"The Hajj and Eid al-Adha remind us of our equality before God and the importance of community and charity — values that speak directly to the American character," it said. "The United States is blessed to be home to millions of American Muslims who enrich our nation in countless ways, from medicine to technology, education, public service, the arts, and beyond."

Once the Hajj is over, men are expected to shave their heads and remove the shroud-like white garments

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worn during the pilgrimage, and women to snip a lock of hair in a sign of renewal and rebirth.

Most of the pilgrims then leave Mecca for the city of Medina, about 340 kilometers (210 miles) away, to pray in Prophet Muhammad's tomb, the Sacred Chamber. The tomb is part of the prophet's mosque, one of the three holiest sites in Islam, along with the Grand Mosque in Mecca and the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

All Muslims are required to make the Hajj once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to do so. Many wealthy Muslims make the pilgrimage more than once. The rituals largely commemorate the accounts of Prophet Ibrahim and his son Prophet Ismail, Ismail's mother Hajar and Prophet Muhammad, according to the Quran, Islam's holy book.

More than 1.83 million Muslims performed Hajj in 2024, Saudi Hajj and Umrah Minister Tawfiq bin Fawzan al-Rabiah said in a briefing, slightly less than last year's figures when 1.84 million made the rituals.

Most of the Hajj rituals are held outdoors with little if any shade. It is set for the second week of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month in the Islamic lunar calendar, so its time of the year varies. And this year the pilgrimage fell in the burning summer of Saudi Arabia.

This year's Hajj came against the backdrop of the devastating Israel-Hamas war, which has pushed the Middle East to the brink of a regional conflict.

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip weren't able to travel to Mecca for Hajj this year because of the closure of the Rafah crossing in May when Israel extended its ground offensive to the city on the border with Egypt. And they will not be able to celebrate the Eid al-Adha as they used to do in previous years.

Dozens of Palestinians gathered Sunday morning near a destroyed mosque in Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis to perform the Eid prayers. They were surrounded by debris and rubble of collapsed houses. In the nearby town of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza, Muslims held their prayers in a school-turned shelter. Some, including women and children, went to cemeteries to visit the graves of loved ones.

"Today, after the ninth month, more than 37,000 martyrs, more than 87,000 wounded, and hundreds of thousands of homes were destroyed," Abdulhalim Abu Samra, a displaced Palestinian, told the AP after wrapping up the prayers in Khan Younis. "Our people live in difficult circumstances."

Also in the occupied West Bank, Palestinians convened for the Eid prayers in Ramallah, the seat of the Western-backed Palestinian Authority. "We suffer greatly and live through difficult moments with (what's happening to) our brothers in Gaza," said Mahmoud Mohana, a mosque imam.

In Yemen's Houthi-held capital of Sanaa and in Iraq's capital, Baghdad, Muslims celebrated and prayed for the war-weary Palestinians in Gaza.

"We are happy because of Eid but our hearts are filled with anguish when we see our brothers in Palestine," said Bashar al-Mashhadani, imam of al-Gilani Mosque in Baghdad. "(We) urge the Arabic and Islamic countries to support and stand beside them in this ordeal."

In Lebanon, where the militant Hezbollah group has traded near-daily attacks with Israel, a steady stream of visitors made their way into the Palestine Martyrs Cemetery near the Shatila Palestinian refugee camp in Beirut early Sunday morning, bearing flowers and jugs of water for the graves of their loved ones, an annual tradition on the first day of Eid.

## 78 countries at Swiss conference agree Ukraine's territorial integrity must be basis of any peace

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

ORBÜRGEN, Switzerland (AP) — Nearly 80 countries called Sunday for the "territorial integrity" of Ukraine to be the basis for any peace agreement to end Russia's two-year war, though some key developing nations at a Swiss conference did not join in. The way forward for diplomacy remains unclear.

The joint communique capped a two-day conference marked by the absence of Russia, which was not invited. Many attendees expressed hope that Russia might join in on a road map to peace in the future.

The all-out war since President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has killed or injured hundreds of thousands of people, unsettled markets for goods like grain and fertilizer, driven millions from



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their homes and carved a wedge between the West — which has sanctioned Moscow — and Russia, China and some other countries.

About 100 delegations, mostly Western countries, attended the conference that was billed as a first step toward peace. They included presidents and prime ministers from France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Poland, Argentina, Ecuador, Kenya and Somalia. The Holy See was also represented, and Vice President Kamala Harris spoke for the United States.

India, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates — represented by foreign ministers or lower-level envoys — were among countries that did not sign the final document, which focused on issues of nuclear safety, food security and the exchange of prisoners. Brazil, an “observer,” did not sign on but Turkey did. China did not attend.

The final document signed by 78 countries said the U.N. Charter and “respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty ... can and will serve as a basis for achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.” That has been a nonstarter for Putin, who wants Ukraine to cede more territory and back away from its hopes of joining the NATO military alliance.

Viola Amherd, the Swiss president, told a news conference the “great majority” of participants agreed to the final document, which “shows what diplomacy can achieve.” Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said Switzerland would reach out to Russian authorities but did not say what the message would be.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy hailed the “first steps toward peace” at the meeting and said Ukraine was in talks with some countries, which he did not name, that had offered to host a “second peace summit.” No timetable was laid out.

Zelenskyy earlier this month accused China, backed by Russia, of attempting to undermine the Swiss conference, a claim denied by Beijing.

Allies of Ukraine now face the task of trying to keep up momentum toward peace. Zelenskyy said national security advisers would meet in the future, and “there will be a specific plan” afterward.

Testifying to war fatigue and other preoccupations, only about half of U.N. member countries took part. It’s a far cry from March 2022, when condemnation of Russia’s invasion led to passage of a non-binding resolution at the U.N. General Assembly by 141 countries calling for Russian troops to leave Ukraine.

It wasn’t clear why some developing countries attending didn’t line up behind the final statement, but they may be hesitant to rankle Russia or have cultivated a middle ground between Moscow, its ally China and Western powers backing Kyiv.

“Some did not sign — even though very few — since they are playing ‘Let’s have peace based on concessions’ game, and they usually mean concessions by Ukraine, and basically accommodating Russian demands,” said Volodymyr Dubovyk, a Ukraine expert and senior fellow at Center for European Policy Analysis, a Washington-based think tank. “They also like this ‘neutrality’ positioning.”

Dubovyk said the way forward for Ukraine was to receive aid — weapons and humanitarian assistance — that could improve its situation on the ground and thus give it a better negotiating position.

At the Swiss event, the challenge was to talk tough on Russia but open the door for it to join a peace initiative.

“Many countries ... wanted the involvement of representatives of the Russian Federation,” Zelenskyy said. “At the same time, the majority of the countries do not want to shake hands with them (Russian leaders) ... so there are various opinions in the world.”

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Union’s executive Commission, said peace won’t be achieved in a single step and asserted that Putin isn’t serious about ending the war.

“He is insisting on capitulation. He is insisting on ceding Ukrainian territory -- even territory that today is not occupied by him,” she said. “He is insisting on disarming Ukraine, leaving it vulnerable to future aggression. No country would ever accept these outrageous terms.”

Analysts suspected the conference would have little concrete impact toward ending the war because Russia, was not invited. China and Brazil have jointly sought to plot alternative routes toward peace.

Qatar’s prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said Saturday that his rich Gulf country hosted talks with both Ukrainian and Russian delegations on the reunification of Ukrainian children

with their families. It has so far resulted in 34 children being reunited.

The Ukrainian government believes that 19,546 children have been deported or forcibly displaced, and Russian Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova previously confirmed that at least 2,000 were taken from Ukrainian orphanages.

In Kyiv, at a regular demonstration by relatives of soldiers captured by Russia, the response to the Swiss gathering was muted.

"I would really like to believe that this (conference) will have an impact, but some very important countries did not sign the communique," said Yana Shyrokyh, 56, whose army serviceman son has been in captivity since 2022. "I would really like them to find powerful levers of influence on Russia."

## Milan Fashion Week: Prada projects youthful optimism, not escapism, in a turbulent world

By COLLEEN BARRY AP Fashion Writer

MILAN (AP) — Without making overt statements, Milan designers expressed their concern over the global turbulence through their collections.

Miuccia Prada said she wanted to project optimism.

"Because even if the times are bad, I feel that it was the right thing to do," she said backstage at the Prada show. She is not promoting escapism. "Eventually, I propose something positive, but escapism, I don't like."

Not using the platform to comment on the state of the world would be "irresponsible," said the designers behind the Simon Cracker brand, born 14 years ago to contrast the prevailing fashion system with upcycled collections.

They dedicated their collection, titled "A Matter of Principle," to "the children victims of matters of principle."

Some highlights from the third day Sunday of mostly menswear previews for Spring-Summer 2025:

Prada projects optimismThe Prada menswear collection plays with the idea of imperfection. But nothing is as it seems.

Tops, jackets and hoodies seem shrunken, more than cropped. Overcoats have three-quarter sleeves. It's a wardrobe somehow inherited, already lived-in. Creases are part of the construction, as technical as a pleat. Pointed shirt collars are held aloft by wires. Trousers feature faux belts, low and below the waistline. Belts also are featured as decoration on bags, as if to close them.

Miuccia Prada, co-creative director of the brand along with Raf Simons, said playing with the idea of the real versus the fake "is very contemporary," calling such details "an invitation to take a closer look at the clothes."

The neutral color palette is punctuated by feminine shades: a bright green cardigan, a floral blouse, a turquoise coat, which the designers said suggest a mother's or grandmother's wardrobe. Pieces can be lined up with inverted triangle cutouts, to layer.

"We wanted (the collection) to be already alive, as if clothes you already lived with," Simons said backstage.

Prada models emerged from a simple white hut, descending into the showroom down a runway flanked by a white picket fence. The designers describe the setting both as essential and utopian — and youthful.

"Here youth is the hope, it's the future," Prada said. "In this moment, we thought it was relevant also to encourage youth to think about our world."

A world in knots at Simon CrackerSo many knots to undo in the world, so many knots holding together the latest Simon Cracker collection of mostly upcycled apparel.

For Spring-Summer 2025, designers Filippo Biraghi and Simone Botte assembled their collection of repurposed apparel castoffs using laces and drawstrings to create skirts from tennis shirt panels, dresses from knitwear and restructure jackets. Each piece is unique.

The "nervous" color palette of black, violet, sea blue and acid green was achieved through dyeing, each material reacting differently to the process.

"It is a way of recounting what is happening in the world, without being too explicit," Biraghi said backstage. "It would be irresponsible to not be political in this moment."

The 14-year-brand's name is meant to denote that something is broken — cracked — in the fashion system. They embrace imperfection as part of the beauty of their creations, made from forgotten or discarded garments and deadstock fabrics, this time including textiles from Italian sportswear brand Australian.

Australian, which is gaining traction with the club crowd, also created a capsule collection of black neon and technical garments for Simon Cracker, its first production line. Doc Martens provided the footwear, which the designers personalized with pins, badges and costume jewelry.

JW Anderson's Real Sleep JW Anderson's warm weather collection for men and women cocoon the form in soft and spongy outerwear — a counterintuitive choice on warming planet. The collection's seeming motto, on jackets, sweaters and T-shirts, Real Sleep, might be read as a recipe to cope with the real world.

The humorous collection played "with this idea of miniature scale and maximum scale," the Northern Irish designer said after the show. It opened with oversized quilted jackets and transitioned into big cashmere balls of yarn, each in triplicate.

On the miniature side, Anderson recreated Georgian terraced houses and country cottages on the front of knitwear, with intarsia doors and windows.

Pillowy sweatshirts looked structural enough to break a fall. Big colorful silken balloon like structures on coats were deflated, as if to say the world is too much. And if so, take comfort in a smiling pint of a Guinness, the Irish stout is featured in a capsule collection with whimsical images of a last-century advertising campaign on knitwear.

Anderson said he was exploring "the idea of permissiveness with the clothing. This idea of what we do best is the storytelling."

## German police intervene to stem clashes between England and Serbia fans before Euro 2024 match

By JAMES ROBSON and STEVE DOUGLAS Associated Press

GELSENKIRCHEN, Germany (AP) — Riot police in Germany intervened to stop brawling soccer fans before Sunday's match between Serbia and England at the European Championship soccer tournament.

Social media footage showed men throwing chairs at each other outside a restaurant festooned with Serbian flags in the western city of Gelsenkirchen. One group quickly left as riot officers arrived and wrestled at least one man to the ground.

A Serbian fan told The Associated Press that a group of England fans had thrown glasses and stones at the area outside the restaurant where he and others were sitting together drinking beer.

"There was a clash and we are fine. So that's it, we are going to the game, we hope we will win. This is about football," said the man, who identified himself only as Vladimir and said he was from the Serbian capital Belgrade.

Reporters who arrived shortly after the fighting found the street littered with broken glass and tables as several dozen police officers stood by.

Gelsenkirchen police said in a statement that officers intervened to stop a confrontation between Serbian and English fans.

"Riot police were deployed and separated the two fan camps. They took seven Serbian supporters into custody and filed a criminal complaint for grievous bodily harm," the statement said.

There was no immediate information about injuries.

The Euro 2024 match between England and Serbia was classified as high risk by police over concerns about potential fan violence. Both sets of supporters have a reputation for causing trouble before and during matches.

About 20,000 England fans and 10,000 from Serbia were expected to converge on the city for the game. Only low-alcohol beer is being served in the Gelsenkirchen stadium in an attempt to reduce the potential for problems.

## Police identify Michigan splash pad shooter but there's still no word on a motive

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Authorities on Sunday identified the man who opened fire at a splash pad in suburban Detroit before taking his own life, but his motives remained unknown as investigators worked to determine if he left behind any hint of his plans.

Oakland County Sheriff's spokesperson Stephen Huber said the shooter was 42-year-old Michael William Nash of Shelby Township. Sheriff Mike Bouchard said Saturday evening that the gunman had no prior criminal history but apparently suffered privately from what the sheriff called "mental health challenges."

"It's our understanding that he was undergoing some mental health challenges, but no one that we know of was notified," Bouchard said during an evening news conference.

The splash pad shooting was one of at least four mass shootings that took place around the country Saturday night and early Sunday morning. Six people were shot in a residential neighborhood in Lathrup Village, another Detroit suburb. Seven people were shot at a party in Methuen, Massachusetts, and eight people were shot during a Juneteenth celebration in Round Rock, Texas. Two people were killed in that shooting.

Authorities said Nash drove to suburban Rochester Hills on Saturday and opened fire at a splash pad in a city park around 5 p.m. A splash pad is a recreational area with a nonslip surface where people can play in fountains and water sprays.

The sheriff said Nash fired as many as 28 times, stopping several times to reload.

In the chaos, "people were falling, getting hit, trying to run," Bouchard said. "Terrible things that unfortunately all of us in our law enforcement business have seen way too much."

The gunman was "apparently in no rush. Just calmly walked back to his car," the sheriff said.

Nine people were injured, including an 8-year-old boy who was shot in the head; his 4-year-old brother, who was shot in the leg; and the boys' mother, who was wounded in the abdomen and leg.

The 8-year-old boy and the mother were both listed in critical condition on Saturday evening. The 4-year-old was in stable condition. The six other victims, all at least 30 years old, were in stable condition on Saturday night. Huber, the sheriff's spokesperson, said all the victims' conditions were unchanged as of Sunday morning.

Nash eventually fled but apparently left his gun behind. Investigators were able to use the weapon's registration information to track him back to the home in Shelby Township he shared with his mother. When police arrived, they found a car that matched the gunman's vehicle.

Deputies surrounded the home and eventually entered to find the suspect was dead. Bouchard said the man died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Deputies discovered a handgun next to the body and a semiautomatic rifle on the kitchen table. Bouchard said Saturday that Nash may have been planning a "second chapter" to the shooting.

Nash's neighbors told the Detroit News that Nash's father died two years ago and he lived with his mother, who has been traveling the United States.

"He's a loner. The blinds are always pulled over there," neighbor Kyleen Duchene told the newspaper.

Nash's mother was "super friendly and nice" but Nash himself rarely left the house, neighbor Alex Roser said.

"And when he did, he didn't even say 'hi' back to us when we would acknowledge him," Roser said. "He was very quiet and didn't want to be a part of our community."

Bouchard said that Nash had no connections to the splash pad or any of the victims. Investigators will try to determine if he left behind any writings and examine his electronic devices in hopes of shedding light on his motive.

"In terms of the 'why,' I don't know," Bouchard said.

Rochester Hills is about 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Oxford, where in 2021 a 15-year-old fatally shot four high school students. Saturday's shooting came at the end of the first full week of summer vacation

for students attending Rochester Community schools.

"I love my community and my heart breaks today," Rochester Mayor Bryan Barnett said. "When I got on scene I started to cry because I know what a splash pad is supposed to be. It's supposed to be a place where people gather, where families make memories, where people have fun."

Bouchard called the attack "a gut punch" for the county.

"We've gone through so many tragedies," the sheriff said. "We're not even fully comprehending what happened at Oxford. And, you know, now we have another complete tragedy that we're dealing with."

## **The anti-abortion movement is making a big play to thwart citizen initiatives on reproductive rights**

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Reeling from a string of defeats, anti-abortion groups and their Republican allies in state governments are using an array of strategies to counter proposed ballot initiatives intended to protect reproductive rights or prevent voters from having a say in the fall elections.

The tactics include attempts to get signatures removed from initiative petitions, legislative pushes for competing ballot measures that could confuse voters and monthslong delays caused by lawsuits over ballot initiative language. Abortion rights advocates say many of the strategies build off ones tested last year in Ohio, where voters eventually passed a constitutional amendment affirming reproductive rights.

The strategies are being used in one form or another in at least seven states where initiatives aimed at codifying abortion and reproductive rights are proposed for the November ballot. The fights over planned statewide ballot initiatives are the latest sign of the deep divisions created by the U.S. Supreme Court's decision two years ago to end a constitutional right to abortion.

This past week, the court issued a ruling in another major abortion case, unanimously upholding access to a drug used in the majority of U.S. abortions, although fights over mifepristone remain active in many states.

The stakes for the proposed ballot initiatives are high for both sides.

Where Republicans control the legislature and enact strict abortion limits, a statewide citizens initiative is often the only avenue for protecting access to abortion and other reproductive rights. Voters have either enshrined abortion rights or turned back attempts to restrict it in all seven states where the question has been on the ballot since 2022.

In South Dakota, lawmakers passed a bill allowing residents to withdraw their signatures on citizen-led petitions. This launched a comprehensive effort by anti-abortion groups to invalidate a proposed abortion rights ballot measure by encouraging endorsers to withdraw signatures.

The South Dakota secretary of state in May labeled as a "scam" hundreds of phone calls from an anti-abortion group the office accused of "impersonating" government officials.

"It appears that the calls are trying to pressure voters into asking that their name be removed from the Abortion Rights petitions," the office said in a statement.

Adam Weiland, co-founder of Dakotans for Health, the organization behind the proposed measure, said this is part of "an orchestrated, organized effort across states."

"The people want to vote on this issue, and they don't want that to happen," he said of anti-abortion groups. "They're using everything they can to prevent a vote on this issue."

An Arkansas "Decline to Sign" campaign escalated this month after a conservative advocacy group published the names of the paid canvassers for an abortion rights ballot measure effort. Arkansans for Limited Government, the group behind the ballot measure effort, denounced the move as an intimidation tactic.

In Missouri, Republicans and anti-abortion groups have opposed efforts to restore abortion rights through a constitutional amendment at every step in the process.

Republican Attorney General Andrew Bailey stonewalled the abortion-rights campaign for months last year. Then the secretary of state, Republican Jay Ashcroft, tried to describe the proposal to voters as allowing "dangerous and unregulated abortions until live birth." A state appeals court last year ruled that

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Ashcroft's wording was politically partisan and tossed it.

But Ashcroft's actions and the legal battle cost the abortion-rights campaign several months, blocking its supporters from collecting thousands of voter signatures needed to put the amendment on the ballot.

Once the legal battles were settled, abortion opponents launched a "decline to sign" campaign aimed at thwarting the abortion-rights campaigns' signature-collecting efforts. At one point, voters were sent texts falsely accusing petitioners of trying to steal people's personal data.

Republican lawmakers sought to advance another ballot measure to raise the threshold for amending the Missouri Constitution, partly in hopes of making it harder to enact the abortion-rights proposal.

Both anti-abortion efforts failed, and the abortion-rights campaign in May turned in more than double the required number of voter signatures. Now it's up to Ashcroft's office to verify the signatures and qualify it for the ballot.

Meanwhile, opposition groups in Arizona, Colorado, Florida and Nebraska have tried to create their own ballot amendments to codify existing abortion restrictions, though these efforts failed to gather enough signatures in Florida and Colorado.

Jessie Hill, a law professor at Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland who served as a consultant to the Issue 1 campaign that codified abortion rights in Ohio, said she had warned about the possibility of competing ballot measures that could confuse voters.

While attempts to keep abortion off the ballot follow a similar blueprint to what she saw in Ohio last year, Hill said she is closely watching new efforts across the country.

"The anti-abortion side is still trying to figure out what the formula is to defeat these ballot measures," Hill said.

A strategy document leaked last month shows Arizona Republicans considering several competing measures to enshrine abortion restrictions into the state constitution. Possible petition names include the "Protecting Pregnant Women and Safe Abortions Act," the "Arizona Abortion and Reproductive Care Act" or the "Arizona Abortion Protection Act."

The document explicitly details how the alternative measures could undercut a proposal from reproductive rights groups aiming to codify abortion rights through viability, usually around 23 weeks to 24 weeks into pregnancy.

"This leaked document showed a plan to confuse voters through one or multiple competing ballot measures with similar titles," said Cheryl Bruce, campaign manager for Arizona for Abortion Access.

In Nebraska, anti-abortion groups are countering a planned ballot initiative to protect reproductive rights with two of their own.

Allie Berry, campaign manager of the Nebraska Protect Our Rights campaign, which is intended to protect reproductive rights, said the competing measures are designed to deceive and confuse voters. She said the campaign is working to educate voters on the differences between each of the initiatives.

"If you're having to resort to deception and confusion, it shows that they realize that most Nebraskans want to protect abortion rights," she said.

One counter initiative launched by anti-abortion activists in May seeks to ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy. Called "Now Choose Life," the petition would grant embryos "personhood."

Another launched in March would not go that far but instead seeks to codify the state's existing 12-week abortion ban into the state constitution while giving lawmakers the ability to pass further restrictions in the future.

The petition, called Protect Women and Children, has been endorsed by the national anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America and others in the state.

Sandy Danek, executive director of Nebraska Right to Life, called the petition a "reasonable alternative measure." She said as "as time goes on and we continue to educate," the organization will aim to restrict abortion further.

"I see this as an incremental process that we've been working on for 50 years," she said.

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## **7 shot when gunfire erupts at a pop-up party in Massachusetts**

METHUEN, Mass. (AP) — Seven people were shot and wounded, and an eighth was hurt while running away when gunfire erupted at a large gathering of young people in Methuen, Massachusetts, authorities said Sunday.

The gunfire began just before 2 a.m. after hundreds of people gathered for a pop-up party organized on social media, officials said at a news conference. The victims range in age from 17 to 22 years old, officials said. Two of them were in critical condition.

"This is another tragic case of gun violence that brings us together this morning," said Essex County District Attorney Paul Tucker. "It's pretty amazing that with the amount of ballistics evidence that we're recovering that more people weren't hurt." Methuen is located about 28 miles (45 kilometers) north of Boston on the border with New Hampshire.

Authorities declined to comment on the number of suspects. No arrests have been made, and no weapons have been recovered.

Methuen Police Chief Scott McNamara said authorities have been monitoring other "hot spots" where such gatherings typically take place, but Sunday's attack happened in a new location and was the first to turn violent.

"Usually these meet-ups consist of very loud music, disorderly conduct, sometimes drinking," he said. "We try to take action where we can to discourage it, and we've been fairly successful in that regard. Unfortunately we did experience a tragic incident here in Methuen last night."

## **German police shot a man allegedly threatening them with a hammer in Euro 2024 host city Hamburg**

BERLIN (AP) — German police said Sunday they shot and wounded a man who was threatening them with a pick hammer and a Molotov cocktail in the northern city of Hamburg, hours before it hosted a match in the European Championship soccer tournament.

Police officers opened fire after the man, a 39-year-old German, refused to put down the hammer and the Molotov cocktail, hitting him in the leg, Hamburg police said in a statement. The man was hospitalized with his injuries, it said. No one else was hurt.

The incident happened in the St. Pauli area of the northern port city, which thronged with fans before Sunday's Group D match between the Netherlands and Poland. Police said the man may have been suffering from mental illness and that there was no indication that the incident was related to the Euro 2024 game. A police spokesman had earlier described the tool as an ax.

German authorities have put police on high alert during the tournament, which began on Friday and runs through July 14, for fear of possible fan violence and extremist attacks.

On Friday, police fatally shot an Afghan man after he killed a compatriot and later wounded three people watching the televised game between Germany and Scotland in a town in eastern Germany. Police said Sunday that the motive for that attack was still unclear.

## **Britain's July 4 election is fast approaching. Rishi Sunak is running out of time to change the tune**

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — With less than three weeks until U.K. election day, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is running out of time to change an ominous tune for his Conservative Party.

Sunak, who in recent days traveled to a Group of Seven summit and a Swiss conference on the Ukraine war, has been dogged by questions about whether voters are about to bring his time in office to an abrupt end on July 4.

Polls continue to give the left-of-center opposition Labour Party under Keir Starmer a double-digit lead over Sunak's Conservatives, who have been in power for 14 years under five different prime ministers.

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Sunak's attempts to close the gap have had little apparent impact. The biggest splash he's made in the campaign so far was a gaffe – the prime minister's decision to skip an international ceremony in France on June 6 marking the 80th anniversary of the D-Day invasion. He has been apologizing ever since.

Commentators are starting to talk about doomsday scenarios for the Conservatives, who have governed Britain for almost two-thirds of the past 100 years and won 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons in the 2019 election.

University of Strathclyde politics professor John Curtice, one of Britain's most respected polling experts, said that Conservative support is at its lowest point in U.K. polling history, and Sunak "must be beginning to doubt his decision to call the election early."

In the past week, both Conservatives and Labour have released their election manifestos, the detailed packages of promises that form the centerpiece of their pitch to voters.

The Conservatives focused on reducing immigration and lowering taxes, pledging 17 billion pounds (\$22 billion) in tax cuts by 2030, to be paid for largely by slashing welfare costs.

Labour promised to get the economy expanding after years of sluggish growth by establishing a new industrial policy, investing in infrastructure, cutting planning red tape and building 1.5 million new homes. It has promised not to increase personal taxes, but the Conservatives say the tax burden will rise under Labour.

Critics say neither party is being up front about the tax increases that would be needed to repair public services left threadbare after years of Conservative-led spending cuts, Brexit, a global pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis triggered by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

"The gaping hole in both parties' manifestos is a reckoning with the scale and severity of the fiscal problems that will confront whoever wins the election," said Hannah White, director of independent think tank the Institute for Government.

The Conservatives' electoral prospects worsened when populist firebrand Nigel Farage entered the race at the helm of the right-wing party Reform U.K. Though it is unlikely to win many seats in Parliament, Reform's vote share appears to be rising, largely at the expense of the Conservatives.

In recent days, the Conservative message has shifted from aiming at victory to warning that voting Reform could help Labour win a landslide.

"If you vote for anybody else other than a Conservative candidate, you're going to get a Labour government with a large majority," Transport Secretary Mark Harper told the BBC on Sunday.

Labour is concerned that its supporters will think the election is in the bag and stay home on polling day. Health spokesman Wes Streeting cautioned Sunday that there was "breathtaking complacency in the media" about the Labour Party's poll lead.

Sunak, who has been in office for less than 20 months, insists that he's still fighting to win.

The United Kingdom's first Hindu prime minister told The Sunday Times that he was guided by the concept of dharma, which he said roughly translates as "doing your duty and not having a focus on the outcomes of it."

"Work as hard as you can, do what you believe is right, and try, and what will be will be," he said.

## Stores are more subdued in observing Pride Month. Some LGBTQ+ people see a silver lining in that

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With Pride Month in full gear, U.S. shoppers can find the usual merchandise many stores stock for the June celebration of LGBTQ+ culture and rights. But analysts and advocates say the marketing is toned down compared to previous years, and at some chains, there's no trace of Pride at all.

The more subdued atmosphere underscores the struggle of many retailers to cater to different groups of customers at a time of extreme cultural divisions. This year's Pride Month is unfolding amid a sea of legislation and litigation over LGBTQ+ rights, especially the ability of transgender young people to partici-



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pate in sports or receive gender-affirming care.

Against this backdrop, Target reduced the number of its stores carrying Pride-themed products this year after getting backlash in 2023. Nike, which like Bud Light became the subject of boycott calls last year over its marketing partnership with a transgender influencer, also has pulled back after offering Pride collections since 1999. The athletic brand said it won't have one this year; rather, it said it's focusing on programming and ongoing support for the LGBTQ+community.

Some brands and influencers who work with the community report a noticeable decline in corporate partnerships. Rob Smith, founder and chief executive of The Phluid Project, a brand of gender-neutral clothing, cited a 25% drop compared with last June in the number of stores carrying his collection.

"I guess they just decided this year, especially in an election year, with what's going on, just to play it safe," Smith said. He declined to reveal the names of his former retail clients.

But he and other advocates see a silver lining. They think the low-key landscape partially reflects a desire by some companies to move beyond one-month expressions of support toward more enduring acts of allyship, such as regularly featuring LGBTQ+-owned brands and models.

Here's what to know about the retail world and Pride Month:

What's the history of Pride merchandising? Many big retailers, including Levi's, Old Navy and Urban Outfitters, have put out Pride collections for years. Some brands limited their store displays to areas with large numbers of LGBTQ+ residents or visitors and expanded them to more places as LGBTQ+ rights progressed.

Many more brands eventually got in on the action, especially after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriages in 2015. But as Pride became more commercialized, some advocates questioned the hoopla, saying support of the LGBTQ+ community shouldn't be a seasonal marketing opportunity.

What happened with Target? Target introduced an annual collection of rainbow-branded fashion and accessories starting in 2015. It generated occasional opposition, but the reaction turned "volatile" ahead of last year's Pride Month, the company said.

Customers at a handful of stores confronted employees and tipped over Pride displays, threatening workers' sense of safety, Target said. The discounter responded last year by removing some items and relocating some displays.

Target declined to disclose how many of its stores don't have Pride merchandise this year; the locations that were stocked accounted for 90% of Pride sales from 2022 and 2023, it said. Pride items also are available on Target's website.

Meredith Browand, 47, who lives outside Seattle, was let down when she didn't see any Pride displays at her local Target. Browand, who considers herself an LGBTQ+ ally, said Target was where she always bought matching outfits for herself and her 5-year old daughter.

"I'm disappointed in that there isn't anything for us," she said. "But a bigger disappointment is that it's not visible for the greater community."

Where is Pride merchandise available this year? Many retailers contacted by The Associated Press said they haven't changed their approaches to commemorating Pride Month.

Macy's said its namesake department stores, its upscale Bloomingdale's and its Bluemercury beauty stores each spotlight products from LGBTQ+-owned, founded and designed brands at select stores and online.

Walmart offers an assortment from LGBTQ+ owned brands and creators available online and in some stores nationwide. Adidas, Converse and Levi Strauss & Co., which have brought out Pride Month collections for many years, did so again.

Teen retailer American Eagle Outfitters plans to offer a year-round Pride collection to "promote acceptance and equality," said Jennifer Foyle, president and executive creative director of American Eagle and Aerie, which sells women's clothing.

What are the signs of a Pride pullback? Marketing experts and LGBTQ+ rights advocates perceive that overall, brands aren't promoting their Pride Month products on social media as heavily as in past years.

"It's not dropping the support," said Barbara Kahn, a marketing professor at University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School. "But they're dropping the spotlight."

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It's possible the shift reflects a natural progression, Kahn said. If lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people are regarded as part of the norm, there's no point in making a big statement, she said.

Members of the LGBTQ+ community who previously got work tied to Pride Month cite a marked change in the demand for their services. Not all of them interpret the pullback as positive.

Alysse Dalessandro, a plus-size fashion and travel blogger and LGBTQ+ content creator who posts under the handle @readytostare, said 35 clients hired her as a model for their Pride Month social media campaigns in 2022. The number dropped to nine last year and to five so far this year, the Cleveland, Ohio, resident said.

"The hard part for me as a creator is that I can't change my identity. This is who I am," Dalessandro said. "How I make money is also who I am and who I love."

GLSEN, a nonprofit advocacy and education group that works to improve the school lives of LGBTQ+ students, also helps corporations craft Pride Month campaigns. The group started seeing a drop in revenue from such activities last year and experienced a bigger drop this year, according to Paul Irwin-Dudek, GLSEN's deputy executive director for development.

He declined to elaborate. Irwin-Dudek said some companies have retreated, but plenty of others have doubled down in their commitment to promoting LGBTQ+ rights.

At the same time, members of GLSEN's National Student Council who provided feedback to the Hollister fashion brand asked for fewer prominent rainbows and more messages of love, acceptance and individuality. The result: "Unapologetically You," a summer campaign launched this month.

How are retailers recognizing other heritage months? Experts say special merchandising and marketing campaigns around other months designated to honor specific groups, including racial minorities and women, also are fading.

Target CEO Brian Cornell told reporters last year the company had learned from the Pride backlash and planned to be more thoughtful in how it approached all heritage months.

Smith, of The Phluid Project, said his own brand is getting away from rainbows and evolving into a year-round fashion collection.

Low-cost Swedish retailer H&M sold a Pride collection in 2018 and 2019 but stopped doing so because it "chose not to commercialize Pride or other cultural months," Donna Dozier Gordan, head of inclusion and diversity at H&M Americas, said.

The company now focuses on reaffirming its dedication to the LGBTQ+ community in other ways, including by taking a prominent part in Pride marches globally. It said it would continue to donate as well as promote partnerships with groups like The Trevor Project, an American nonprofit that focuses on preventing suicides among LGBTQ+ youth.

## Clooney and Roberts help Biden raise \$30 million-plus at a star-studded Hollywood gala

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Some of Hollywood's brightest stars headlined a fundraiser for President Joe Biden that took in a record \$30 million-plus for a Democratic candidate, according to his campaign, in hopes of energizing would-be supporters for a White House contest they said may rank among the most consequential in U.S. history.

George Clooney, Julia Roberts and Barbra Streisand were among those who took the stage at the 7,100-seat Peacock Theater in Los Angeles on Saturday night. Late-night host Jimmy Kimmel interviewed Biden and former President Barack Obama, who both stressed the need to defeat former President Donald Trump in a race that's expected to be exceedingly close.

During more than half an hour of discussion, Kimmel asked if the country was suffering from amnesia about the presumptive Republican nominee, to which Biden responded, "all we gotta do is remember what it was like" when Trump was in the White House.

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Luminaries from the entertainment world have increasingly lined up to help Biden's campaign, and just how important the event was to his reelection bid could be seen in Biden's decision to fly through the night across nine time zones, from the G7 summit in southern Italy to Southern California, to attend.

He also missed a summit in Switzerland about ways to end Russia's war in Ukraine, instead dispatching Vice President Kamala Harris who made a whirlwind trip of her own to represent the United States there, a stark reminder of the delicate balance between geopolitics and Biden's bid to win a second term.

Further laying bare the political implications were police in riot gear outside the theater. A group of protesters angry about the Biden's administration's handling of Israel's war against Hamas in Gaza demonstrated nearby.

The fundraiser included singing by Jack Black and Sheryl Lee Ralph, and actors Kathryn Hahn and Jason Bateman introduced Kimmel, who himself introduced Biden and Obama. The comedian deadpanned, "I was told I was getting introduced by Batman, not Bateman."

But he quickly pivoted to far more serious topics, saying that "so much is at stake in this election" and listing women's rights, health care and noting that "even the ballot is on the ballot" in a reference to the Biden administration's calls to expand voting rights.

Kimmel asked the president what he was most proud of accomplishing, and Biden said he thought the administration's approach to the economy "is working."

"We have the strongest economy in the world today," Biden said, adding "we try to give ordinary people an even chance."

Trump spent Saturday campaigning in Detroit and criticized Biden's handling of the economy and inflation. The president was fundraising "with out-of-touch elitist Hollywood celebrities," Trump campaign spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said.

But Biden told the crowd in California that "we passed every major piece of legislation we attempted to get done." And Obama expressed admiration for sweeping legislation on health care, public works, the environment, technology manufacturing, gun safety and other major initiatives that the administration of his former vice president has overseen.

"What we're seeing now is a byproduct of in 2016. There were a whole bunch of folks who, for whatever reason, sat out," said Obama, who, like Biden wore a dark suit and a white shirt open at the collar.

Obama, speaking about the Supreme Court, added that "hopefully we have learned our lesson, because these elections matter in very concrete ways."

Trump nominated three justices who helped overturn Roe v. Wade, the landmark decision guaranteeing a constitutional right to an abortion. The audience expressed its displeasure at the mention of Roe, to which Obama responded, "don't hiss, vote." That was a play on his common refrain prioritizing voting over booing.

Biden said the person elected president in November could get the chance to nominate two new justices, though a second Biden term probably wouldn't drastically overhaul a court given its current 6-3 conservative majority.

He also suggested if Trump wins back the White House, "one of the scariest parts" was the Supreme Court and how the high court has "never been this far out of step."

Biden also referenced reports that an upside-down flag, a symbol associated with Trump's false claims of election fraud, was flown outside the home of Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito in January 2021. He worried Saturday that, if Trump is reelected, "He's going to appoint two more who fly their flags upside down."

Kimmel offered his special brand of humor throughout the night. At one point he asked how can a president get back at a talk-show host who makes fun of him on TV every night.

"Ever hear of Delta Force?" Biden responded, referring to the Army special operations unit.

Earlier in the program, Kimmel noted Biden's campaign promise to restore the soul of America and said "lately it seems we might need an exorcism." Then he asked Biden, "Is that why you visited the pope?" Biden and Pope Francis met in Italy on Friday.

The amount raised outpaced the then-record \$26 million from Biden's fundraiser in March at Radio City Music Hall in New York that featured late-night host Stephen Colbert interviewing Biden, Obama and former President Bill Clinton.

Biden held an early lead in the campaign money race against Trump, but the former president has gained ground since he formally locked up the Republican nomination.

Trump outpaced Biden's New York event by raking in \$50.5 million at an April gathering of major donors at the Florida home of billionaire investor John Paulson. The former president's campaign and the Republican National Committee announced they raised a whopping \$141 million in May, padded by tens of millions of dollars in contributions that flowed in after Trump's guilty verdict in his criminal hush money trial.

That post-conviction bump came after Trump and the Republican Party announced collecting \$76 million in April, far exceeding Biden and the Democrats' \$51 million for the month.

## **LGBTQ soldiers in Ukraine hope their service is changing attitudes as they rally for legal rights**

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and ALEX BABENKO Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Several hundred LGBTQ Ukrainian servicemen and their supporters marched in central Kyiv Sunday to demand more rights and highlight their service to their country in its war with Russia.

The servicemembers — many wearing rainbow and unicorn patches on their uniforms — called on the government to grant them official partnership rights. They described the event as a pride march but it did not have the celebratory atmosphere of peacetime events and took place in the rain and under a heavy police guard amid threats from counterprotesters.

The role of LGBTQ members in the military has been credited with shifting public attitudes toward same-sex partnerships in the socially conservative country.

"We are ordinary people who are fighting on an equal footing with everyone else, but deprived of the rights that other people have," Dmitriy Pavlov, an army soldier who used a cane to walk, told The Associated Press.

Campaigners are seeking legal reforms to allow people in same-sex partnerships to take medical decisions for wounded soldiers and bury victims of the war that extended across Ukraine more than two years ago.

They argue that an improvement in gay rights would create a further distinction between Ukraine and Russia, where LGBTQ rights are severely restricted.

Staff from the U.S. Embassy and several European embassies attended the pride rally.

Organizers had faced difficulties in organizing the rally. City authorities turned down a petition to allow it to be held at a metro station, and it was condemned by one of the main branches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

"This action is part of a left-wing radical political movement and is aimed at imposing a political ideology, and also aimed at destroying the institution of the family and weakening Ukrainian society in the conditions of war and repelling Russian aggression," the church said in a statement.

Police set up cordons in central Kyiv to keep the marchers clear of a counterdemonstration, ushering protesters into a central metro station at the end of the event.

Protesters in the counterdemonstration, some wearing face masks and carrying anti-gay signs, marched to a memorial for fallen soldiers in the center of the city.

An injured soldier, in Kyiv for physical therapy, said he attended the counter rally out of concern that divisive societal issues should not be raised during the war.

"I came because I think its not the right time for LGBT (activism)," said the soldier, who asked to be identified by his call sign "Archy."

"We need to strengthen our country."

Both those on the LGBTQ rally and the counterprotest took the opportunity to demand that foreign countries come to Ukraine's aid in its war with Russia, chanting "Arm Ukraine now!" \_\_\_ Dmytro Zhyhinas

in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed.

## Shooting in Detroit suburb injures 9, leaving an 8-year-old in critical condition

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. (AP) — Nine people were injured, including two young children and their mother, after a shooter opened fire at a splash pad in a Detroit suburb where families gathered to escape the summer heat Saturday. Police tracked the shooter to a home, where the man apparently shot himself to death, authorities said.

An 8-year-old boy was shot in the head and in critical condition Saturday night, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said during a news conference. The boy's mother also was in critical condition after being wounded in the abdomen and leg, and his 4-year-old brother was in stable condition with a leg wound.

The other six victims, all 30 or older, were in stable condition, Bouchard said. They included a husband-and-wife couple and a 78-year-old man.

The shooting happened just after 5 p.m. at a city park featuring a recreation area with a nonslip surface where people can turn on sprays and fountains of water to play in. Bouchard said the attack appeared to be random, with the shooter driving up to the park, walking to the splash pad and firing as many as 28 times, stopping multiple times to reload.

At least one witness reported that the shooter appeared to use two handguns during the attack, but that has not yet been confirmed, the sheriff said.

In the chaos, "people were falling, getting hit, trying to run," Bouchard said. "Terrible things that unfortunately all of us in our law enforcement business have seen way too much."

The gunman was "apparently in no rush. Just calmly walked back to his car," the sheriff said.

Police heard the 911 call reporting the shooting as it came in, Bouchard said, because the agency uses a service that simultaneously sends emergency calls to first responders. An officer was at the scene within two minutes, he said.

Bouchard said the first deputies who arrived immediately began providing first aid, including tourniquets. Authorities found a handgun, three empty magazines and at least 28 spent shell casings at the splash pad.

Investigators used the handgun's registration information to obtain the suspect's likely address, the sheriff said. When police arrived at the residence they found a car matching the suspect's vehicle. Deputies surrounded the home and tried to make contact with the suspect inside, to no avail, Bouchard said. They sent a drone inside the home and then entered to find the suspect was dead.

Bouchard said the man died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Deputies discovered a handgun next to the body that may have been the second weapon the witness saw, the sheriff said.

Deputies also found a semiautomatic rifle lying on the kitchen table, Bouchard said. The quick containment of the suspect may have prevented a "second chapter" to the shooting, the sheriff said.

The suspect did not live in Rochester Hills and investigators do not yet know why he went to the splash pad, according to Bouchard.

Officials did not release the man's name. Bouchard described him as a 42-year-old man and said officials believe he lived with his mother. The man's mother was notified, Bouchard said.

The man had no prior police contacts and no criminal history, Bouchard said.

"It's our understanding that he was undergoing some mental health challenges but no one that we know of was notified," the sheriff said. He did not elaborate further on the suspect's mental health history.

The sheriff said investigators plan to search for any writings that the shooter may have left behind as well as dig into his electronic devices to piece together a motive.

"In terms of the 'why,' I don't know," Bouchard said of the gunman's motive.

Rochester Hills is about 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Oxford, where in 2021 a 15-year-old fatally shot four high school students.

"I love my community and my heart breaks today," Rochester Mayor Bryan Barnett said. "When I got on

scene I started to cry because I know what a splash pad is supposed to be. It's supposed to be a place where people gather, where families make memories, where people have fun and enjoy a Saturday afternoon, and it wasn't today. It's a mental reset and a reminder we live in a fragile place with fragile people."

Saturday's shooting came at the end of the first full week of summer vacation for students attending Rochester Community schools.

Bouchard called it "a gut punch" for the county.

"We've gone through so many tragedies," the sheriff said. "You know, we're not even fully comprehending what happened at Oxford. And, you know, now we have another complete tragedy that we're dealing with."

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said on the social platform X that she was heartbroken to learn of the shooting and was in touch with local officials.

## What to know about Trump's outreach with Arab Americans led by his daughter Tiffany's father-in-law

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Donald Trump's allies are working to win over Arab American voters who are unhappy with President Joe Biden's support for Israel.

The effort is led by Massad Boulos, whose son married Tiffany Trump, the former president's younger daughter, two years ago. Boulos, a Lebanese-born businessman, is now using his connections in the Arab American community and meeting with its leaders in Michigan, home to many Arab American Democrats who are disenchanted with Biden.

But any apparent political opportunity for Trump may be limited. Many Arab Americans remain offended by Trump's ban, while in office, on immigration from several majority Muslim countries and other remarks they consider insulting. Trump also has criticized Biden for not being a strong enough supporter of Israel.

In interviews with The Associated Press, Boulos outlined his outreach efforts and discussed his plans. Those who have met with him shared their thoughts on whether the strategy is working.

An unknown emissary Boulos, who is frequently overseas managing a Nigerian-based conglomerate, first became directly involved in U.S. politics in 2019 when he met Trump. At the time, his son Michael was dating Tiffany Trump.

Before the 2020 election, Boulos assisted with Arab American outreach in a minor role. His involvement has significantly expanded this year as Trump allies aim to exploit divisions within Biden's Democratic base. Boulos is working closely with an Arab Americans for Trump group that has set up operations in Arizona and Michigan.

The Michigan meetings In May, Massad and Michael Boulos traveled to metro Detroit with Richard Grenell, a key foreign policy adviser to Trump and his former ambassador to Germany, to meet with a group of close to 40 Arab American activists from across the country.

A little over a week later, Boulos returned for a more extensive round of engagements. He conducted individual meetings with several prominent community leaders and organized larger gatherings, each drawing nearly 50 Arab American community members.

Those who have engaged with Boulos so far are skeptical about the impact of these efforts. They note a lack of substantial evidence supporting the assertion that Trump is the better candidate for Arab Americans.

"Massad is unable to convince people to come to Trump's side because he hasn't offered anything substantial to the community," said Osama Siblani, a publisher of the Arab American News in Dearborn.

Electoral impact Both major parties have focused on the Arab American vote due to the community's significant population in Michigan, which is expected to play a decisive role in the presidential election.

Trump won Michigan by just over 10,000 votes in 2016. Biden retook the state for the Democrats in 2020 by a roughly 154,000-vote margin.

Michigan holds the largest concentration of Arab Americans in the nation, with more than 310,000 residents of Middle Eastern or North African ancestry, according to the most recent census.

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More than 100,000 Michigan Democratic primary voters in February cast ballots for “uncommitted” in the presidential race, enough to pick up two delegates. In two Muslim-majority Michigan cities, including Dearborn, which holds close to 110,000 people, the “uncommitted” vote defeated Biden in the Democratic primary.

The Trump connection Boulos is the latest relative to rise in Trump’s political circle. The former president has a long history of putting family members and their relatives in key roles in his campaigns and at the White House.

Recently, Trump handpicked his daughter-in-law, Lara Trump, as the Republican National Committee’s co-chair.

During his first term, he appointed his daughter Ivanka as a senior White House adviser and his son-in-law Jared Kushner to oversee major issues such as Middle East peace, criminal justice reform and the government’s coronavirus response.

Boulos calls Trump a “family friend.” But Boulos insists that his outreach efforts so far have been “more of a personal effort to reconnect with friends.” He adds that the key messages emerging from meetings with Arab Americans are communicated to Trump and influenced a recent statement on the Middle East posted on Trump’s social media platform, Truth Social.

But to some attendees of the meetings, the direct connection to Trump matters little when Boulos can’t make promises on future policy.

“Family members are fine. But at the end of the day, we have to sit down with someone who’s going to be a policymaker,” Siblani said. “And knowing Trump, only Trump can sit down and talk about his policy.”

## **Trump allies hope his daughter Tiffany’s father-in-law can help flip Arab American votes in Michigan**

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — One of Donald Trump’s emissaries to Arab Americans is a Lebanese-born businessman who moved to Texas as a teenager, speaks Arabic, English and French, and recently joined the Trump family when his son married the former president’s younger daughter.

Massad Boulos has taken on the challenge of trying to convince a politically influential community angry at President Joe Biden that Trump is a better option. But many Arab Americans also note Trump has positioned himself as more pro-Israel than Biden and has made a series of comments and policy announcements that critics blast as Islamophobic.

Trump has long put family members and their relatives in key roles in his campaigns and the White House. Boulos, whose son Michael married Tiffany Trump two years ago, is the latest relative to rise in Trump’s political orbit as he uses long-standing connections in an effort to build support for the presumptive Republican nominee’s 2024 campaign.

Some Trump allies think they can capitalize on dissension within Biden’s Democratic base over his support for the Israeli offensive in Gaza, where more than 37,000 people have died since Hamas’ Oct. 7, according to health officials in the Hamas-run territory who do not give the breakdown of civilians and fighters. Biden faced a significant protest vote during the Michigan primary February in areas with high numbers of Arab Americans, who are an important Democratic bloc.

“Obviously the No. 1 point that is of high priority within the Arab American community is the current war in the Middle East,” Boulos said in an interview. “And the question is, who can bring peace and who is bringing war? And they know the answer to that.”

Several of the people who have met with Boulos also point to Trump’s statements about Arabs and Muslims. While president, Trump banned immigration from several majority-Muslim countries and questioned the loyalty of Muslim lawmakers serving in Congress. Now, as he campaigns for a second term after losing in 2020, Trump has at times criticized Biden for being insufficiently supportive of Israel and has threatened to deport pro-Palestinian protesters he labels as supporters of Hamas.

“I told Massad, ‘This isn’t about you being Lebanese and me being Lebanese,’” said Osama Siblani, a

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publisher of the Arab American News in Dearborn. "You can't just buy votes. You have to give something substantial to the community. And Trump hasn't done that yet."

A scion moves into U.S. politicsBoulos, who is of medium stature with graying black hair, square glasses, and a warm, friendly smile, is often complimented for his calm demeanor and humility — qualities not always associated with someone overseeing a billion-dollar conglomerate.

Born in Lebanon, Boulos moved to Texas shortly before attending the University of Houston and obtaining a doctor of jurisprudence degree. Boulos said he actively participated in Republican politics as a student.

After graduating, he eventually joined his family's business of three generations and became the managing director and CEO of the conglomerate SCOA Nigeria, which specializes in the assembly and distribution of motor vehicles and equipment.

Boulos has a background in politics in his home country, having run unsuccessfully for a parliamentary seat in Lebanon in 2009. He describes himself as a "friend" of Sleiman Frangieh, a Christian politician allied with the Shiite party and the militant group Hezbollah. Frangieh is currently Hezbollah's endorsed candidate for Lebanon's presidential vacancy.

A supporter of Trump from afar since his first campaign, Boulos became more directly involved after meeting Trump at a White House Christmas party in 2019. At the time, Michael Boulos was dating Tiffany Trump.

Massad Boulos has given no recent donations, according to campaign finance records. But in a trip to Michigan this month, he attended what he described as a "private fundraising event" with U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., U.S. Rep. Lisa McClain, R-Mich., and about 50 Arab Americans.

Boulos assisted with the 2020 campaign, but his role has significantly expanded since his son married Tiffany Trump in 2022, especially as Arab American dissatisfaction with Biden presented what Trump allies think is a larger political opportunity.

"One less vote for Biden is a vote for Trump," said Bishara Bahbah, chairman of the group Arab Americans for Trump.

Boulos maintains a "very close working relationship" with the group, Bahbah said.

The group, which says it is independent of the Trump campaign, has established operations in Michigan and Arizona, states identified as priority areas by "people close to Trump," Bahbah said.

A May meeting held in Troy, Michigan, included Massad and Michael Boulos as well as Richard Grenell, who was Trump's ambassador to Germany and is a key foreign policy adviser to the former president. Approximately 40 Arab American activists from across the country attended.

While Arab Americans for Trump was involved in the event, Boulos said that it had primarily been initiated by Grenell. The gathering received mixed feedback, with some attendees saying it lacked substance and failed to address their concerns regarding Trump.

"Grenell didn't say what they would do, but he kept reminding us that when Trump was president, there was no war whatsoever and that he launched the biggest peace effort in the Middle East. But most Arabs and Muslims don't consider the Abraham Accords a peace agreement," said Khaled Saffuri, an Arab American political activist who was in attendance.

Grenell tried to call Trump to have him address attendees by phone, according to multiple people at the meeting. The former president did not answer.

Grenell and the Trump campaign declined to comment.

Inside the outreachJust over a week later, Boulos returned for another round of engagements. This time, he had several meetings with nearly 50 members of the Arab American community, alongside one-on-one sessions with individuals identified as "high-target" leaders by Mike Hacham, the coordinator for Arab Americans for Trump in Michigan.

Boulos said his efforts so far have been "more of a personal effort to reconnect with friends." He said he typically begins meetings by speaking for close to 20 minutes, laying out the records of the Biden and Trump presidencies. He then opens the floor for any questions.

Siblani had a nearly two-hour meeting with Boulos, who was accompanied by Bahbah, the chair of Arab Americans for Trump.



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According to Siblani, Boulos argued that things were better for Arab Americans under Trump and that the world saw less conflict and fewer wars during his presidency, suggesting Trump could help resolve the Gaza conflict.

But when Siblani pushed back, he said that Boulos lacked "facts to prove his claim that Trump is better."

"Massad is unable to convince people to come to Trump's side because he hasn't offered anything substantial to the community, except that his son is married to Trump's daughter and he has access," Siblani said. "That is fine, but what we need is policy and what Trump will do."

In interviews, Boulos said that Trump "respects and admires" the Arab American community. He denied the existence of a "Muslim ban," which is how many Trump opponents refer to his ban on immigrants from several majority-Muslim countries. Boulos argued it was actually "extreme vetting from certain parts of the world."

The key messages arising from these meetings, Boulos said, are communicated to Trump. Boulos highlighted a recent social media post from Trump that promised to bring "peace in the Middle East" if reelected, as evidence. Boulos asserted that the timing of the post "wasn't a coincidence" but rather a response to "listening to the community's concerns."

Trump's statement, posted on his social media platform, Truth Social, on June 4, did not go far enough for multiple community leaders who met with Boulos.

In a statement, Trump campaign spokesperson Brian Hughes said the campaign is "grateful that supporters of President Trump are working to communicate with this community."

"We share the belief that Biden's failed Middle East policies have brought death, chaos and war to the region. That failure led tens of thousands of Democrats to vote 'uncommitted' in Michigan's Presidential primary. The Trump campaign has and will continue to communicate to those voters and remind them that President Trump's policies in the Middle East brought that region historic levels of peace and stability," Hughes said.

Just the beginningSome in the community still feel that there are other options than just Trump and Biden. Green Party candidate Jill Stein visited Dearborn this year to meet with leaders and recently had conversations with the city's mayor, Abdullah Hammoud, about the possibility of him becoming her running mate.

Hammoud, at 34 years old, is ineligible to serve as vice president. The U.S. Constitution requires both the president and vice president to be at least 35.

Officials in Biden's administration have also visited Dearborn to meet with local leaders and have maintained ongoing contact with them, including Siblani.

Ammar Moussa, a spokesperson for the Biden campaign, criticized Trump allies' outreach, saying in a statement that Trump "is the biggest threat to the Muslim and Arab community."

"He and his allies believe we don't belong in this country and Trump is openly speaking about allowing Israel to bomb Gaza without regard," said Moussa, who is Arab American. "Trump and his campaign are racists and Islamophobes. Period. President Biden, on the other hand, is working tirelessly towards a just and lasting peace."

Until the November election, Boulos said he will continue to divide his time between managing his company and meeting with the Arab American community.

He stressed that he is solely driven by being a "concerned citizen and a Republican." He has not contemplated a role in Trump's administration if the Republican were to win.

"I honestly don't have any thoughts about that at this time. I didn't give this any thought whatsoever, but definitely I do not aspire for anything," he said.

## Chinese premier promises more pandas and urges Australia to put aside differences

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Sunday promised a new pair of giant pandas to a zoo and urged Australia to set aside its differences with Beijing at the outset of the first visit to the country by China's second-highest ranking leader in seven years.

China's most powerful politician after President Xi Jinping arrived late Saturday in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia state, which has produced most of the Australian wine entering China since crippling tariffs were lifted in March that had effectively ended a 1.2 billion Australian dollar (\$790 million) a year trade since 2020.

Li's trip has focused so far on the panda diplomacy, rebounding trade including wine and recovering diplomatic links after China initiated a reset of the relationship in 2022 that had all but collapsed during Australia's previous conservative administration's nine years in power.

Relations tumbled over legislation that banned covert foreign interference in Australian politics, the exclusion of Chinese-owned telecommunications giant Huawei from rolling out the national 5G network due to security concerns, and Australia's call for an independent investigation into the causes of and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Beijing imposed an array of official and unofficial trade blocks in 2020 on a range of Australian exports including coal, wine, beef, barley and wood that cost up to AU\$20 billion (\$13 billion) a year.

All the trade bans have now been lifted except for Australian live lobster exports. Trade Minister Don Farrell predicted that impediment would also be lifted soon after Li's visit with Chinese Commerce Minister Wang Wentao.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong said Li's visit was the result of "two years of very deliberate, very patient work by this government to bring about a stabilization of the relationship and to work towards the removal of trade impediments."

"We will cooperate where we can, we will disagree where we must and we will engage in our national interest," Wong said before joining Li at Adelaide Zoo, which has been home to China-born giant pandas Wang Wang and Fu Ni since 2009.

Li announced that the zoo would be loaned another two pandas after the pair are due to return to China in November.

"China will soon provide another pair of pandas that are equally beautiful, lively, cute and younger to the Adelaide Zoo, and continue the cooperation on giant pandas between China and Australia," Li said in Mandarin, adding that zoo staff would be invited to "pick a pair."

Wong thanked Li for ensuring that pandas would remain the zoo's star attraction.

"It's good for the economy, it's good for South Australian jobs, it's good for tourism, and it is a signal of goodwill, and we thank you," Wong said.

Li's visit is the first to Australia by a Chinese premier in seven years and marks an improvement in relations since Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's center-left Labor Party was elected in 2022.

Li noted that Albanese in November was the first Australian prime minister to visit China since 2016.

"China-Australia relations were back on track after a period of twists and turns," Li said on arrival on Saturday, according to a translation released by the Chinese Embassy in Australia on Sunday. "History has proven that mutual respect, seeking common ground while shelving differences and mutually beneficial cooperation are the valuable experience in growing China-Australia relations."

Hundreds of pro-China demonstrators, human rights protesters and democracy activists gathered outside the zoo before Li's visit.

Among the protesters was former Hong Kong lawmaker Ted Hui, who fled to Australia three years ago to avoid a prison sentence for his activism. He said the panda offer was a cynical move to soften China's image and to distract from the government's human rights failings.

"It's a public relations move by the Chinese regime and, disappointingly, the Australian government is

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reciprocating by welcoming him and shaking hands," Hui said.

Hui said Li showed cowardice by entering the zoo by a rear entrance while most of the protesters and China supporters had gathered at the main entrance. But Hui and other protesters were able to shout slogans at Li from a distance inside the zoo.

Li's agenda became more contentious after he left Adelaide and arrived in the national capital, Canberra, late Sunday for Parliament House meetings on Monday with Albanese and other political figures. Li will visit a Chinese-controlled lithium processing plant in resource-rich Western Australia state on Tuesday.

Albanese has said he will raise with Li recent clashes between the two countries' militaries in the South China Sea and Yellow Sea that Australia argues endangered Australian personnel.

Albanese will also raise the fate of China-born Australian democracy blogger Yang Hengjun, who was given a suspended death sentence by a Beijing court in February. Australia is also concerned for Hong Kong-Australia dual national Gordon Ng, who was among 14 pro-democracy activists convicted by a Hong Kong court last month for national security offenses.

Li's visit to Tianqi Lithium Energy Australia's processing plant south of the Western Australia capital of Perth will underscore China's interest in investing in critical minerals. The plant produces battery-grade lithium hydroxide for electric vehicles.

Australia shares U.S. concerns over China's dominance in the critical minerals, which are essential components in the world's transition to renewable energy sources.

Citing Australia's national interests, Treasurer Jim Chalmers recently ordered five Chinese-linked companies to divest their shares in the rare earth mining company, Northern Minerals.

Asked if Chinese companies could invest in processing critical minerals in Australia, Wong replied that Australia's foreign investment framework was "open to all."

"We want to grow our critical minerals industry," Wong said.

Australia is the second stop of Li's tour after New Zealand, and will end in Malaysia.

## Today in History: June 17, O.J. Simpson charged with murder

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, June 17, the 169th day of 2024. There are 197 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 17, 1994, after leading police on a slow-speed chase on Southern California freeways, O.J. Simpson was arrested and charged with murder in the slayings of his ex-wife, Nicole, and her friend, Ronald Goldman. (Simpson was later acquitted in a criminal trial but held liable in a civil trial.)

On this date:

In 1775, the Revolutionary War Battle of Bunker Hill resulted in a costly victory for the British, who suffered heavy losses.

In 1885, the Statue of Liberty arrived in New York Harbor aboard the French ship *Isere* (ee-SEHR').

In 1930, President Herbert Hoover signed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which boosted U.S. tariffs to historically high levels, prompting foreign retaliation.

In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Abington (Pa.) School District v. Schempp*, struck down, 8-1, rules requiring the recitation of the Lord's Prayer or reading of Biblical verses in public schools.

In 1967, China successfully tested its first thermonuclear (hydrogen) bomb.

In 1972, President Richard Nixon's eventual downfall began with the arrest of five burglars inside the Democratic headquarters in Washington, D.C.'s, Watergate complex.

In 2008, hundreds of same-sex couples got married across California on the first full day that gay marriage became legal by order of the state's highest court.

In 2009, President Barack Obama extended some benefits to same-sex partners of federal employees.

In 2012, Rodney King, 47, whose 1991 videotaped beating by Los Angeles police sparked widespread outrage and who struggled with addiction and repeated arrests, died in Rialto, California, in an apparent

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accidental drowning.

In 2013, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 7-2 that states can't demand proof of citizenship from people registering to vote in federal elections unless they get federal or court approval to do so.

In 2017, the jury in Bill Cosby's sexual assault case declared itself hopelessly deadlocked, resulting in a mistrial for the 79-year-old TV star charged with drugging and groping a woman more than a decade earlier; prosecutors immediately announced they would pursue a second trial. (That trial resulted in Cosby's conviction, but Pennsylvania's highest court later overturned it.)

In 2019, Iran announced that it was breaking compliance with the international accord that kept it from making nuclear weapons; the announcement meant that Iran could soon start to enrich uranium to just a step away from weapons-grade levels. The Trump administration followed Iran's announcement by ordering 1,000 more troops to the Middle East.

In 2021, the Supreme Court, in a 7-2 ruling, left intact the entire Affordable Care Act, rejecting the latest major Republican-led effort to kill the national health care law known as "Obamacare."

Today's Birthdays: Actor Peter Lupus is 92. Movie director Ken Loach is 88. Singer Barry Manilow is 81. Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich is 81. Comedian Joe Piscopo is 73. Actor Mark Linn-Baker is 70. Actor Jon Gries (gryz) is 67. Rock singer Jello Biafra is 66. Movie producer-director-writer Bobby Farrelly is 66. Actor Thomas Haden Church is 64. Actor Greg Kinnear is 61. Actor Kami Cotler is 59. Olympic gold medal speed skater Dan Jansen is 59. Actor Jason Patric is 58. Actor-comedian Will Forte is 54. Latin pop singer Paulina Rubio is 53. Tennis player Venus Williams is 44. Actor Arthur Darvill is 42. Actor Jodie Whittaker is 42. Actor Manish Dayal is 41. Country singer Mickey Guyton is 41. Actor Marie Avgeropoulos is 38. Rapper Kendrick Lamar is 37. NHL forward Nikita Kucherov is 31. Actor KJ Apa is 27.