

Groton Daily Independent

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Tuesday, March 4

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potato with gravy, California blend, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Mrs. White's Waffles.

School Lunch: Tacos.

Region 1A Boys Basketball

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

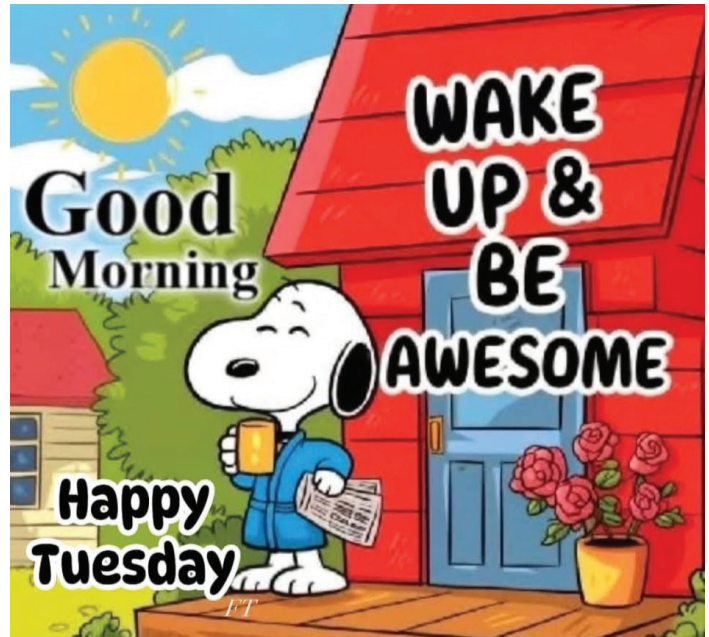
St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.

United Methodist: New Bible Study - Book of Ruth, 10 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Wednesday, March 5

ASH WEDNESDAY

Senior Menu: Baked fish, Mac n Cheese, peas, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Colonel Mustard's Muffins.

School Lunch: Mac and cheese, mixed vegetables

Groton Chamber Meeting, Noon, City Hall

Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Lenten Supper, 6 p.m. (Host-WELCA Board), worship, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lenten Service, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ash Wednesday Service, 6 p.m.

Thursday, March 6

Senior Menu: New England Ham Dinner, carrots, Mandarin Orange salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Ballroom Breakfast Pizza.

School Lunch: Hamburgers, fries.

Girls SoDak16 Basketball

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Tariffs Move Forward

Broad 25% tariffs on all imports from America's two largest trading partners, Mexico and Canada, go into effect today, according to President Donald Trump's latest comments. The tariffs were delayed for a month to facilitate talks with Mexico and Canada on addressing drug trafficking and migration at the US border.

All three major US indexes slid on the news (S&P 500 -1.8%, Dow -1.5%, Nasdaq -2.6%) yesterday, with the S&P 500 posting its biggest loss since December. Nasdaq's slump was led by Nvidia, which fell nearly 9%. The Canadian dollar and Mexican peso slipped to one-month lows after Trump's comments.

Mexico has already deployed 10,000 National Guard troops to its northern border, while Canada appointed a fentanyl czar, even though Canada accounts for less than 1% of fentanyl smuggled into the US. China also faces a broad 20% tariff on its imported goods, up from 10% imposed last month.

Separately, the US paused military aid to Ukraine following last week's heated Oval Office meeting between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Universe Mapping Mission

NASA's latest advanced telescope will embark on a yearslong mission as early as today, with a launch window opening just after 10 pm ET from California's Vandenberg Space Force Base.

Known as SPHEREx, the telescope will orbit roughly 400 miles above the Earth's surface and complement NASA's other best-in-class tools, like the James Webb Space Telescope. While the powerful Webb can provide unprecedented resolution of specific targets, SPHEREx is an "all-sky" survey that will map the entire celestial sky four times over the course of two years.

SPHEREx will collect light largely in the near-infrared range, some arriving from as early as 10 billion years ago. Researchers hope to understand the distribution of galaxies during the early universe, providing insight into cosmic expansion after the Big Bang. The mission will also study how the earliest stars formed and how much (and where) water and organic molecules are present.

Fat Tuesday Festivities

Millions around the world will celebrate Mardi Gras today, the final day before the Christian fasting and religious observance period of Lent begins. Mardi Gras, French for "Fat Tuesday," is the culmination of Carnival season, which officially starts each year on Jan. 6—the 12th day after Christmas—and concludes the day before Ash Wednesday. The celebrations include elaborate parades and feasting on traditional foods such as king cake.

Mardi Gras has roots in medieval European traditions and evolved from ancient Roman festivals into a global event. In the US, the festivities date to 1699, when French Canadian explorers arrived in the South. Though Mobile, Alabama, claims the first American Mardi Gras in 1703, New Orleans is now synonymous with the celebration—the city welcomes around 1.4 million visitors each year, generating roughly \$900M in revenue. Today, iconic krewes like Rex and Zulu will parade through the city, marking the season's grand finale.

A typical New Orleans Mardi Gras generates nearly 100,000 pounds of discarded beads.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Carl Dean, Dolly Parton's longtime husband, dies at age 82.

Adrien Brody's Oscars acceptance speech breaks all-time record at five minutes and 40 seconds.

Jay-Z files defamation lawsuit against former accuser and lawyers over sexual assault allegations; the lawsuit against Jay-Z was dropped in February.

Serena Williams joins ownership group of WNBA's newest franchise, Toronto Tempo, which is set to begin play in 2026.

Science & Technology

Google announces Gemini Live is ready to launch; feature allows the company's Gemini AI to look through a user's camera, approximate face-to-face interactions.

Chinese electric carmaker BYD debuts roof-mounted drone launchpad for all models; devices can follow the car at speeds of up to 33 mph.

New simulations reveal how corrosion of metal surfaces unfolds, offering route to development of longer-lasting materials; roughly 3% of US GDP is spent annually repairing failing materials.

Business & Markets

Amazon-backed AI startup Anthropic valued at nearly \$62B after closing latest funding round, up from \$16B a little over a year ago.

Fintech startup Ramp secures \$13B valuation in deal allowing employees, investors to sell shares.

Taiwanese chipmaker TSMC announces it will invest at least \$100B to build chip manufacturing facilities in the US over the next four years.

Nvidia-backed cloud provider CoreWeave files for US initial public offering.

Kroger Chairman and CEO Rodney McMullen resigns from his role at the nation's largest grocery chain; comes after internal probe found McMullen's personal conduct was inconsistent with Kroger's business ethics policy.

Politics & World Affairs

Senate confirms Linda McMahon to lead Education Department by a vote of 51-45; the former WWE executive previously headed the Small Business Administration during President Donald Trump's first term.

Man pleads guilty to murder and attempted murder charges for mass shooting that left seven people dead during 2022 Fourth of July festivities in Highland Park, Illinois; the 24-year-old faces sentencing April 23.

Pope Francis, 88, back on noninvasive ventilation after suffering two episodes of acute respiratory failure, Vatican says.

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Wolves Fall Short Against No. 11 Golden Bears in Semifinals

Sioux Falls, S.D. – The Northern State University women's basketball team fell to #11 Concordia-St. Paul 66-44 in the semifinals of the NSIC Tournament. An early 11-point lead by the Golden Bears kept the win out of reach for the Wolves. The day saw three Wolves hit double figures, with Rianna Fillipi leading the way with 11 points.

THE QUICK DETAILS

Final Score: NSU 44, CSP 66

Records: NSU 19-11 (NSIC 15-7), CSP 28-2 (NSIC 20-2)

HOW IT HAPPENED

Northern State recorded 13 points in the first, 13 points in the second, 12 points in the third, and six in the fourth

The Wolves tallied 22 points in the paint, nine second-chance points, five bench points, and four points off of turnovers

NSU shot 33.9% from the floor and 26.7% from beyond the three-point line

Rianna Fillipi was first on the team with 11 points and four assists on the day

Michaela Jewett followed behind with ten points, seven rebounds, four assists, and a 50.0% shooting percentage from the floor

Madelyn Bragg notched her seventh double-double with ten points and 14 rebounds

NORTHERN STATISTICAL STANDOUTS

Rianna Fillipi: 11 points, 4 assists, 1 rebounds

Michaela Jewett: 10 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists, 2 blocks

Madelyn Bragg: 10 points, 14 rebounds, 3 assists

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No Groton elections this year

There will be no election this year for either the Groton Area School Board or the Groton City Council. Petitions were due Friday.

For the Groton Area School Board, incumbents Tigh Flihs and Travis Harder turned in petitions while incumbent Deborah Gengerke did not. Samantha Weber turned in her petition and will begin her term in July. All three positions are three-year terms.

Meanwhile on the Groton City Council, incumbent Mayor Scott Hanlon turned in his petition for another three-year term as mayor. On the council, incumbent Karyn Babcock turned in her petition for Ward 3 for a two-year term. Incumbent Shirley Wells did not turn in a petition in Ward 2; however, Michael Shilhanek did and will begin his two-year term in June in Ward 2. Incumbent Kevin Nehls did not take out a petition for Ward 1. Some one will have to be appointed to filled that position for a one-year term.

Notice of Garbage Pickup- Effective the week of March 3rd

To help preserve our streets, Groton residents are asked to bring their garbage to the following locations until further notice:

Railroad Avenue, Main Street, Sixth Street, & Highway 37

Residents of the Broadway Mobile Home Park need to take their garbage to Highway 37.

Residents north of 13th Avenue (Olson and Jacobson Developments) need to bring their garbage to the Bus Barns.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated during the spring thaw.

Please bring your garbage bags and/or cans to these locations for Tuesday pickup!

Bates Township

BATES TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

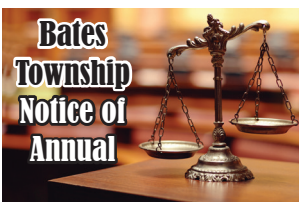
Bates Township will hold its annual meeting and election on Tuesday, March 4th, 2025 at the home of the Clerk, 14523 409th Ave, Conde.

Election of officers and business meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m.

We will be receiving bids for road maintenance and gravel. Please mail bids to Betty Geist, Bates Township Clerk, 14523 409th Ave., Conde, SD 57434 prior to meeting date.

Betty Geist, Township Clerk

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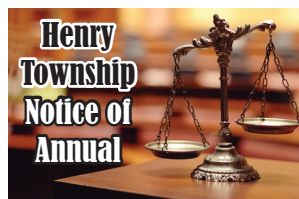


Henry Township Annual Meeting Notice

Notice is hereby given that the annual Henry Township caucus and election of officers along with the other business that may come before the board will be held Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 7 p.m., at Doug Abeln's Seed Company Office. Will also take bids for gravel and road maintenance.

Darlene Sass

Henry Township Clerk



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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

March 4, 2025 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Discussion Regarding the Transfer of Property at 105 N 3rd Street to Groton Development Corporation
4. Liquor License Transfer for Red Horse Inn
5. Department Reports
6. Baseball Scoreboard Discussion
7. Authorization to Bid 3-year Garbage Contract
8. Authorization to Bid Exterior City Hall Painting
9. Minutes
10. Bills
11. First Reading of Ordinance No. 787 – Amending Rates for Groton Municipal Electric Customers
12. Second Reading of Ordinance No. 786 – 2025 Summer Salaries
13. Select Equalization Meeting Date – March 18, 2025
14. Reminder: Applications are Open for Summer Recreational Positions:
 - Baseball Coordinator
 - Softball Coordinator
 - Girls' Softball Coaches (U8/U12/U14)
 - Day Baseball/Softball Coach
 - Concessions Manager
 - Public Works Laborer/Park Caretaker
 - Cemetery Caretaker
 - Assistant P/T Swimming Pool Manager
 - Swimming Pool Lifeguards
 - Baseball Groundskeepers
 - Baseball Gatekeepers
15. June 10-13, 2025 – HR/FO School in Pierre, SD – Douglas Heinrich
16. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
17. Swimming Pool Staff Discussion
18. Hire Summer Recreational Employees
19. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY
March 4, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Second Reading & Possible Adoption of the following Ordinances:
 - a. Ord. #289 – Rezone for Donald Johnston/Owners: Donald & David Johnston
5. Public Hearing for Temporary Alcohol Permit in conjunction with a Special Event for Stacy Gossman: DBA: Big Fella's (Wedding)
6. Becca Tullar, 4-H Advisor & Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager
 - a. 4-H Community Building Presentation
7. Rachel Kippley, Fair/Fairgrounds/Parks Manager
 - a. Contract for Small Animal Barn
8. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. Discuss Load Limits
 - b. Authorize Chairman to sign Contract Agreements for Gravel Material, Rental Equipment, and Bituminous Plant Mix
9. Patricia Kendall, Museum Director
 - a. Resolution for Museum Expansion
 - b. Museum Annual Report
10. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of February 25, 2025
 - b. Claims
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Lease Agreements
 - e. Approve & Authorize Advertising for following Bids for Landfill:
 - i. Tire Removal
 - ii. Wood Grinding
 - f. Approve & Authorize Advertising for Weed and Pest chemical bids.
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting
Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

<https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: +1 (872) 240-3311

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the county commission.

Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes (or at the discretion of the board) - Public comment will be accepted virtually when the virtual attendance option is available.

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at <https://www.brown.sd.us/node/454>



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Name change for Department of Corrections falls flat on SD House floor

BY: JOHN HULT - MARCH 3, 2025 7:04 PM

The South Dakota Department of Corrections will remain the Department of Corrections.

On Monday at the Capitol in Pierre, the state House of Representatives voted 55-14 to defeat a bill that would have changed the agency's name to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Senate Bill 192 previously sailed through the Senate without a single dissenting vote.

The bill wouldn't require any immediate changes. Instead, it would update references and things like uniforms and agency letterheads whenever those updates or reorders would've happened without the bill.

Resistance in the House began in its State Affairs Committee, where the bill passed 8-5 despite worries about potential hidden costs and the bill's failure to make more than symbolic change.

Doubts on the idea overshadowed arguments in support on the House floor. Rep. Tim Reisch, R-Howard, told his fellow lawmakers about his time as DOC secretary in the early 2000s to explain his opposition. The state had a boot camp for kids when he took the gig in 2003, but the DOC was in the process of reworking its operations.

The facility in Custer was renamed as the State Treatment and Rehabilitation Academy, or STAR Academy.

"If I'd just changed the name to STAR Academy and kept the boot camp, we'd be doing the same thing we're doing here," Reisch said.

The legislation was proposed in the Senate by Jamie Smith, a Sioux Falls Democrat. Rep. Peri Pourier, D-Rapid City, called the bill virtue signaling "at its finest."

"We have to change the way we do corrections in South Dakota to earn a name change like this," Pourier said.

But Rep. Erin Healy, D-Sioux Falls, the bill's prime sponsor in the House, said a state that's debating a new prison and the role of rehabilitation in its correctional frameworks ought to name its prison system accordingly.

"This is a change that starts a conversation," Healy said.

John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

Bill would transfer \$15 million from SD housing fund to support Air Force base expansion

BY: SETH TUPPER - MARCH 3, 2025 6:11 PM

The South Dakota Senate advanced legislation Monday at the Capitol in Pierre that would take \$15 million from a statewide housing infrastructure program and put it in a fund supporting the growth of Ellsworth Air Force Base.

The base near Rapid City is undergoing an estimated \$2 billion worth of construction to accommodate the future arrival of B-21 bomber planes, which are under development. That activity is expected to grow the base and its surrounding civilian population significantly, putting stress on local governments to ac-

commodate the growth with roads, housing, schools, and other infrastructure and services.

Sen. Helene Duhamel, R-Rapid City, introduced the bill. She said supporting the base will help ensure it never lands on a closure list, as it did temporarily two decades ago.

"It is something we must take care of, pay attention to and not take for granted," Duhamel said.

She also proposed the amendment adopted Monday that identifies the housing infrastructure fund as the source of the money, rather than the state general fund.

The Legislature created the \$200 million Housing Infrastructure Financing Program two years ago with state money and federal pandemic relief funds. Half of the fund was made available as grants to support infrastructure for housing projects, and all of that money has been awarded. The other half was made available as loans, but demand has been low, leaving more than \$80 million in loan funds still available as of December.

Duhamel's bill would capture \$15 million from the housing fund and place it in a new Ellsworth support and development fund, from which grants and loans could be made for projects "promoting the development, expansion, and support of the mission" at Ellsworth. The fund would be administered by the South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority and its board of governor-appointed members, which the Legislature created in 2009.

The Senate voted 29-6 to send the bill to the House of Representatives.

Senators rejected a related bill from Sen. Taffy Howard, R-Rapid City, that would have further supported the base's growth with state contractors' excise tax revenue generated by construction projects on the base. The vote against that bill was 21-14.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Carbon pipeline eminent domain ban advances to SD House; 'compromise' bill gutted

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MARCH 3, 2025 5:06 PM

PIERRE — South Dakota Senate Majority Leader Jim Mehlhaff – and a carbon dioxide pipeline proposal – took a political beating Monday morning at the Capitol.

The Pierre Republican watched the House State Affairs committee reject his legislation, which he described as a "compromise" on eminent domain use for pipelines, only to have the same committee revive the bill and amend it into an anti-eminent domain measure.

An hour later, more than 150 opponents of a controversial carbon pipeline murmured and laughed in agreement when he told the packed room he'd "get run over" for opposing a ban on eminent domain for the project. A proposed ban advanced out of another legislative committee Monday.

"I'm going to stand tall all the way because I think it's a terrible piece of legislation," Mehlhaff said of the ban in an interview with South Dakota Searchlight.

Summit Carbon Solutions isn't named in the legislation, but it came in response to the Iowa company's proposed \$9 billion, five-state pipeline that would pass through eastern South Dakota. It would collect carbon dioxide emitted by more than 50 ethanol plants and transport it for underground storage in North Dakota, to capitalize on federal tax credits incentivizing the prevention of heat-trapping emissions into the atmosphere.

Eminent domain ban on carbon pipelines passes committee

Mehlhaff was one of two votes against House Bill 1052 in the Senate State Affairs Committee on Monday morning. Sen. Arch Beal, R-Sioux Falls, also voted against the legislation, which would prohibit eminent domain use for carbon pipelines. Seven other committee members voted for the bill, which will head to the Senate floor next. It's already passed the House of Representatives.

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Eminent domain is a legal process for obtaining land access from unwilling landowners with just compensation determined by a court, for a project beneficial to the public — traditionally for projects such as electrical power lines, crude oil pipelines, water pipelines and highways.

A swarm of landowners clad in yellow testified in support of HB 1052, the latest in a string of bills targeting the carbon capture pipeline in the last several years. Sen. Mark Lapka, R-Leola, spoke as the prime sponsor for the bill. Lapka is a property owner, farmer and rancher. He said the bill wouldn't kill the project but would simply prohibit it from using eminent domain to pressure landowners.

"Should eminent domain be a tool in my toolbelt used to enrich myself for my own wellbeing?" Lapka said. "I don't think so."

Lapka and other critics of the Summit pipeline proposal view its potential use of eminent domain as a threat to private property rights. Pipeline opponents also have concerns about potential leaks, which could result in toxic carbon dioxide plumes.

Mehlhaff and other opponents of the legislation said it would be a "kill shot" to the pipeline project and to the positive economic impact it would have on South Dakota, corn farmers and the ethanol industry.

Eminent domain 'compromise' bill killed, revived and amended

Banning eminent domain for pipelines is "the most important issue of the year," said House Speaker Jon Hansen, R-Dell Rapids, when he suggested reviving and significantly amending Mehlhaff's Senate Bill 198 after the House State Affairs Committee voted unanimously to defeat the bill.

The original legislation would have retained eminent domain as an option, but required entities using it to first attend mediation with the affected landowner and to also have a Public Utilities Commission permit before commencing eminent domain proceedings.

The amended version of the bill duplicates the language of HB 1052, the bill banning eminent domain for carbon pipelines.

Hansen anticipates "hostile, unfriendly" amendments to HB 1052 on the Senate floor. One amendment posted on the Legislative Research Council's website would ban eminent domain unless a project obtains a permit from the Public Utilities Commission and over two-thirds of easements needed for the pipeline route.

"I'd like to have an ace in the hole just in case things go off the rails over there," Hansen said.

The amendment passed 9-4.

Rep. Tim Reisch, R-Howard, opposed the amendment and called it a "bait and switch" maneuver, adding that Summit's eligibility to use eminent domain is being litigated in state courts.

"I think this is just underhanded," Reisch said. "This is not how we should be doing business in the people's house."

The committee plans to reconsider the amended bill on Wednesday, after the Senate decides the fate of HB 1052.

Other bills challenging the pipeline project are still alive in the Legislature, including a proposed moratorium on carbon pipelines until the completion of new federal safety standards, and a bill that would authorize lawsuits by landowners who allege they've suffered from deception, fraud, harassment, intimidation or misrepresentation by a land agent for a carbon pipeline company.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Linda McMahon confirmed as Trump's secretary of Education; Thune and Rounds vote yes

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - MARCH 3, 2025 7:12 PM

WASHINGTON — Former World Wrestling Entertainment executive Linda McMahon will be the next secretary of Education, after the U.S. Senate confirmed her bid Monday.

McMahon — confirmed on a party-line vote, 51-45 — will now be responsible for the 45-year-old department that enforces civil rights cases, issues federal student aid, provides Title I funds to low-income school districts and guarantees a free public education for children with disabilities via the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

Four senators did not vote, including Republican Sens. Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia and Cynthia Lummis of Wyoming as well as Democratic Sens. Elissa Slotkin of Michigan and Peter Welch of Vermont.

But President Donald Trump campaigned on a promise to dismantle the federal agency and could soon issue an executive order diminishing the department.

He's even said he wants McMahon "to put herself out of a job." He has not yet, however, issued any orders attempting to end the department.

McMahon background

McMahon served as co-chair of Trump's transition team, led the Small Business Administration during his first White House term and is the chair of the board of the America First Policy Institute — a Trump-loyal think tank.

Her education record includes a stint on the Connecticut Board of Education, and she's on the board of trustees at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut.

McMahon's confirmation followed a procedural vote last week, where she advanced 51-47 in a party-line vote. Republican Sens. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota and Todd Young of Indiana did not vote during that round.

Opposition from Democrats

Democrats and leading education and civil rights groups have fiercely opposed McMahon's nomination. "McMahon's confirmation would be a slap in the face to students, parents, teachers — who care about our public schools," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said during remarks on the Senate floor Monday ahead of the vote.

Meanwhile, Trump's sweeping education agenda has already begun to come to fruition in the weeks since he took office.

His education-related executive orders include a ban on transgender athletes competing on women's school sports teams consistent with their gender identity; prioritizing school choice funding; ending what the administration sees as "radical indoctrination in K-12 schooling"; and taking "additional measures to combat anti-semitism."

The department has already begun to launch Title IX investigations into school districts, universities and athletic associations across the country. Maine's Department of Education and a school district in Washington state are among those being investigated.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

Pentagon to send an added 3,000 troops to the U.S.-Mexico border

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - MARCH 3, 2025 1:56 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that another round of active-duty troops will head to the U.S.-Mexico border in the coming weeks at the behest of President Donald Trump.

Despite encounters at the southern border being the lowest in recent years, an additional 3,000 troops will aid immigration officials, Hegseth said Saturday. Those military personnel will not partake in deportation operations, according to the U.S. Northern Command.

"We are dead serious about 100% OPERATIONAL CONTROL of the southern border," Hegseth wrote in a social media post.

As Trump aims to carry out his campaign promise of enacting mass deportations, he's directed the Department of Defense to become involved in immigration policy, such as the use of military planes to deport immigrants.

An executive order Trump signed on his first day of his second term declared a national emergency at the southern border, and Trump quickly sent 1,500 troops to the border.

The latest surge of members from the Stryker Brigade Combat Team and a General Support Aviation Battalion will join the more than 9,200 troops in total now stationed at the border, with 4,200 stemming from federal deployments and 5,000 from state governors.

Stryker vehicles have been used in combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan and are armored vehicles that can carry up to 11 soldiers.

"These forces will arrive in the coming weeks and their deployment underscores the Department's unwavering dedication to working alongside the Department of Homeland Security to secure our southern border and maintain the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the United States under President Trump's leadership," Sean Parnell, Department of Defense chief spokesperson, said in a statement.

The Northern Command announced that Fort Carson, based in Colorado, is sending 2,400 soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. In addition, 500 soldiers will be sent from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade at Fort Stewart in Georgia.

The tasks those activity-duty troops will partake in at the southern border include administrative support, detection and monitoring, transportation support, engineering support and warehousing and logistics support, according to the Northern Command.

The 19th Public Affairs Detachment from Fort Riley in Kansas will also be deployed to the southern border to "provide public affairs support with visual information and media relations capabilities," according to the Northern Command.

There has been a sharp dip in encounters at the southern border, according to the most recent Customs and Border Protection data from January.

In January of fiscal year 2025, there were about 65,000 encounters compared to 176,000 in January of fiscal year 2024, a reduction of more than half.

Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

Greenpeace gave intel, supplies, training to Dakota Access Pipeline protests, testimony shows

BY: MARY STEURER AND AMY DALRYMPLE - MARCH 3, 2025 9:15 AM

MANDAN, N.D. — Greenpeace provided supplies, intel and training to demonstrators who spent months camping near the Dakota Access Pipeline river crossing in south central North Dakota, employees said in video testimony played to a Morton County jury on Friday.

The organization brought supplies like tents, power tools, a van equipped with solar panels, cameras, binoculars and propane. They taught protesters about "nonviolent direct action." As colder weather ap-

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proached, they also helped to winterize the camp.

Then-executive director of Greenpeace USA Annie Leonard characterized the environmental group's support of the 2016 and 2017 protests as "massive" in two emails shown to jurors.

But Morton County Sheriff Kyle Kirchmeier, the incident commander for the monthslong protests, indicated on the witness stand Friday he was not aware of Greenpeace's involvement.

Dakota Access Pipeline Developer Energy Transfer wants hundreds of millions of dollars in damages from Greenpeace. In the lawsuit — now on trial before a Morton County jury — Energy Transfer seeks to prove the environmental group secretly backed illegal behavior by protesters and conspired to wage a misinformation campaign against the company. It claims Greenpeace's efforts halted construction of the pipeline and left the company with a litany of unplanned expenses.

Greenpeace denies Energy Transfer's allegations. Attorneys representing the environmental group say it only played a supporting role in the demonstrations, that Greenpeace does not condone violence and that its employees never spent much time at the protest camps.

The case, which started its five-week trial Monday, is before Southwest Judicial District Judge James Gion.

Evidence presented in the trial so far indicates Greenpeace wasn't high on police's radar during the protests. Attorneys for Greenpeace introduced about 1,500 pages of law enforcement intel records from the demonstrations. One record from October 2016 identified organizations involved in the protest including the American Indian Movement, Native Lives Matter, Black Lives Matter and Anonymous, but didn't list Greenpeace.

Attorneys for Energy Transfer pointed to just one reference to Greenpeace in the intel records, which connects the organization to a December 2016 protest at the Morton County Law Enforcement Center.

Kirchmeier testified that the protest grew in size after Standing Rock Chair Dave Archambault invited people to join the effort. He said it also grew after a Sept. 3, 2016 clash between protesters and private security involving dogs and after the Oct. 27, 2016 law enforcement effort to push protesters off of private property and onto Army Corps land. Other reasons the sheriff said contributed to the growth of protest were the explosion of social media and the controversial nature of where the pipeline was sited, including that it crossed unceded Sioux Nation territory.

Law enforcement first encountered in August 2016 lockbox devices — sometimes called "sleeping dragons" — which protesters used to tie themselves to equipment, Kirchmeier testified. He said the devices were used throughout the protests and were initially difficult for law enforcement to remove until they received training.

Kirchmeier testified he did not know who was providing the devices.

Depositions of Greenpeace employees that were played for jurors indicated that the organization provided 20 to 30 lockboxes to protesters.

Leonard said in her experience, lockboxes are usually used to attach people to one another. She said Greenpeace is opposed to violence and destruction of property.

Leonard, who was not at the protest, declined to answer questions about whether it would ever be appropriate for lockboxes provided by Greenpeace to be used to stop construction.

Attorneys for Energy Transfer highlighted an email Leonard wrote Nov. 30, 2016 that said: "We have provided massive support for this cause since day one in terms of people, material, support and funding."

When asked about the email, Leonard said "massive" is a relative term and that the organization's support for Standing Rock would not be considered massive when compared to how much it spends in the Arctic.

She also said in emails she raised \$90,000 from foundations to support the demonstration. She said she raised the money in her personal capacity as an environmental activist, though Energy Transfer's attorney pointed out she used her Greenpeace email.

Energy Transfer also asked Leonard if she verified claims against the pipeline listed in a November 2016 letter sent to banks urging them to pull financing for the project. Greenpeace was one of hundreds of organizations that signed the letter. Leonard testified her staff would have verified the information in the letter but she could not recall the conversation at the time of the deposition, which was about eight years later.

In a video deposition, Greenpeace employee David Khoury said he served as a "scout" during the dem-

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onstrations. His job was to gather information for other protesters, he said.

Khoury said he discovered property near Bismarck where some of the construction equipment for the pipeline was stored.

"This is some awesome spy sh-t," he wrote in one email shown to jurors. He noted at the time that the site could be a good place to set up a blockade.

Khoury acknowledged some demonstrators committed acts of vandalism, but said he was not aware of this until after the fact. He said he also observed police violence against protesters during his visits.

He said he facilitated some protester trainings at the camp, which included admonitions against using violence.

Harmony Lambert, who worked as an activist training officer for Greenpeace, wrote in a blog post that the actions were crucial in pressuring a federal agency to halt progress on the pipeline in fall 2016. In the deposition, Lambert emphasized that the pressure was applied by the entire Indigenous-led movement, not solely the efforts of Greenpeace.

None of the Greenpeace employees testified in person Friday, but Greenpeace indicated it plans to call at least two of them to testify later.

One of the Dakota Access Pipeline's head planners also took the stand this week.

Michael Futch, who was the North Dakota project manager for the pipeline, told the jury the pipeline was designed to be as safe and unobtrusive as possible. Energy Transfer hired the best contractors, construction managers, inspectors and auditors in the business for the project, he said.

Futch said he believes some of Greenpeace's public statements about the pipeline may have harmed the project, but did not claim Greenpeace had a major presence at the camps.

He said allegations that the pipeline poses a threat to the environment are unfounded and malicious.

The protests — which Futch characterized as violent — delayed the pipeline's completion for months, he said.

"It's the most complex and tortured pipeline project I've ever had experience with," Futch said.

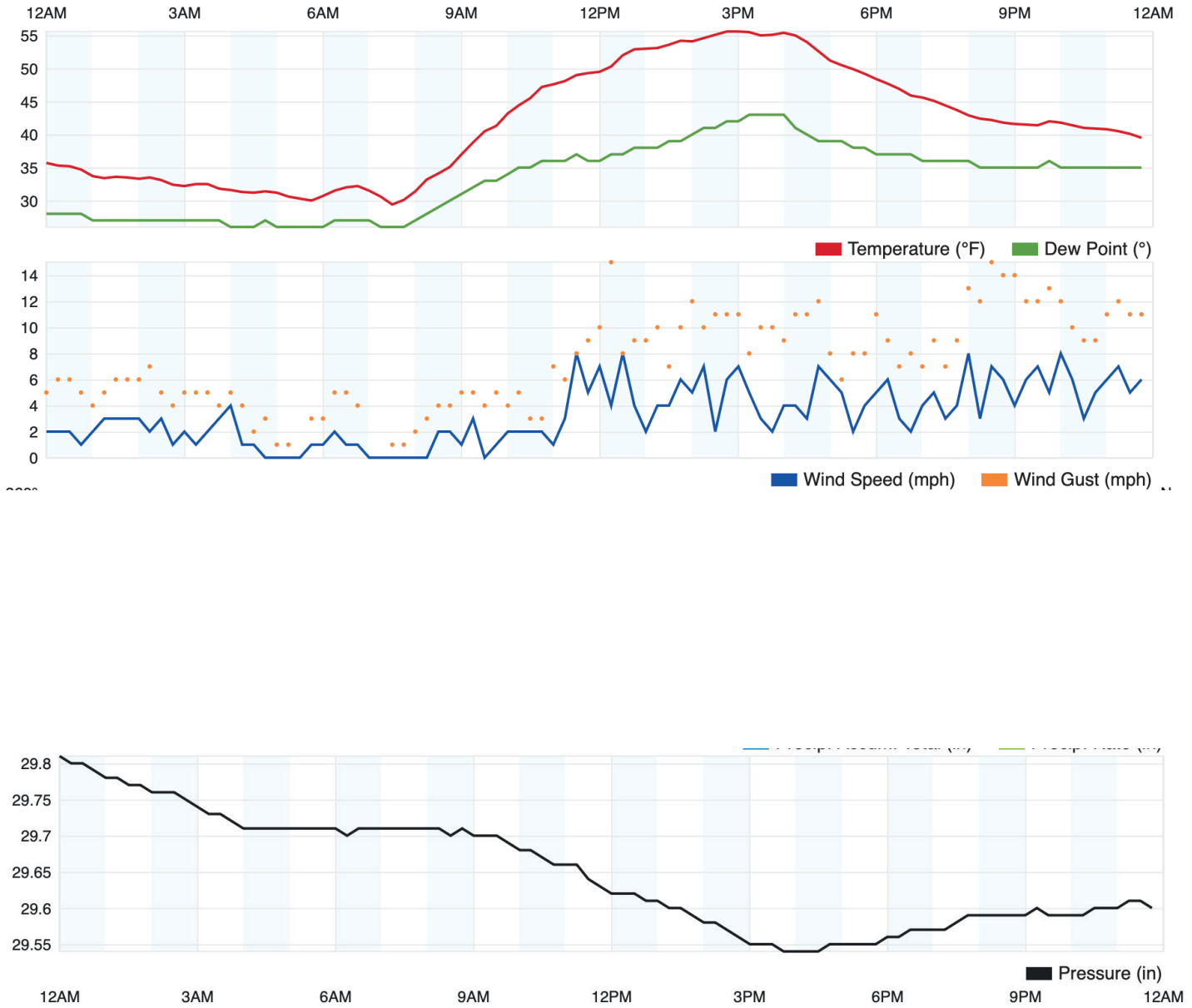
Mary Steurer is a reporter based in Bismarck for the North Dakota Monitor. A native of St. Louis, Steurer previously worked as the local government reporter for the Casper Star-Tribune newspaper in Wyoming.

Amy Dalrymple is editor-in-chief of North Dakota's States Newsroom outlet, North Dakota Monitor. She previously was editor of The Bismarck Tribune and a newspaper journalist in Williston and Fargo.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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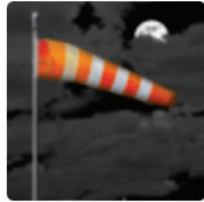
Today



High: 35 °F

Chance Snow and Windy

Tonight



Low: 18 °F

Mostly Cloudy and Blustery

Wednesday



High: 39 °F

Mostly Sunny and Breezy then Sunny

Wednesday Night



Low: 20 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 43 °F

Mostly Sunny



Rain Early This Morning Changing To Snow

March 4, 2025
4:21 AM

Associated with a strong low pressure system moving through the Central Plains

Key Points



Rain changing to snow this morning, with the **potential for ice during the transition**. Snow will come to an end this evening.



Northerly wind gusts of 35 to 50 mph will continue until Wednesday morning.

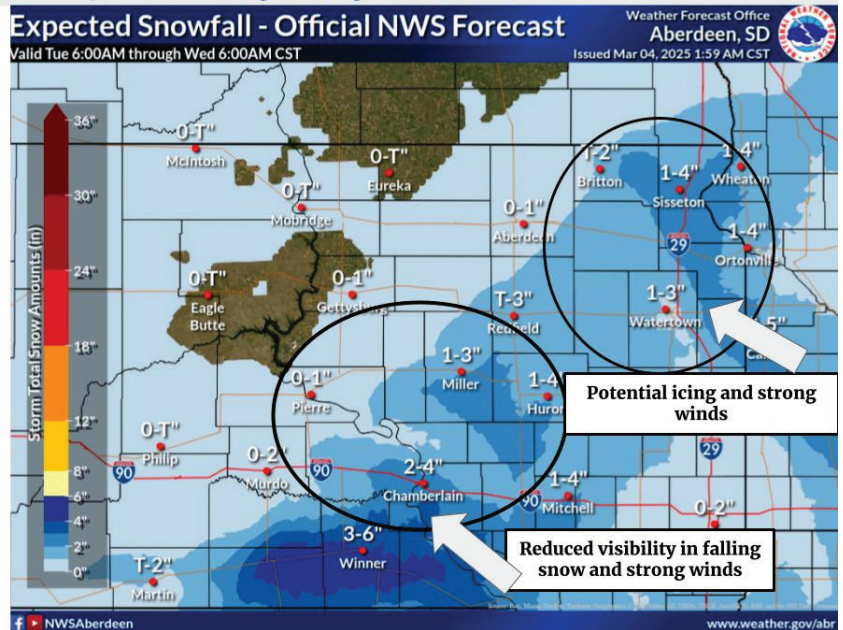
What has Changed

Location where the band will set up has shifted east, will set up east of a line between Pierre - Aberdeen

Travel Impacts



Where snow/ice falls, roads may become slushy and slippery. Strong winds will cause travel difficulties for those travelling on west & east roads.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

We're still watching a band of rain set up east of a line from Pierre to Aberdeen, and through the morning hours expect it to change to snow, with a brief period of some freezing rain mixed in there. Overall, impacts will be mainly icy road surfaces and the combination of strong winds and falling snow reducing visibility.

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Icing Potential

March 4, 2025
4:21 AM

As rain transitions to snow from north to south this morning

Icing Potential

- Temperatures hovering around the freezing mark this morning while precipitation transitions from rain to snow.
 - Results in the potential for freezing rain.
- **Elevated surfaces, untreated roads and bridges have the highest potential for icing**
 - Focus area is across the Glacial Lakes region
- 35 to 50 mph winds in combination with ice may result in power disruptions.



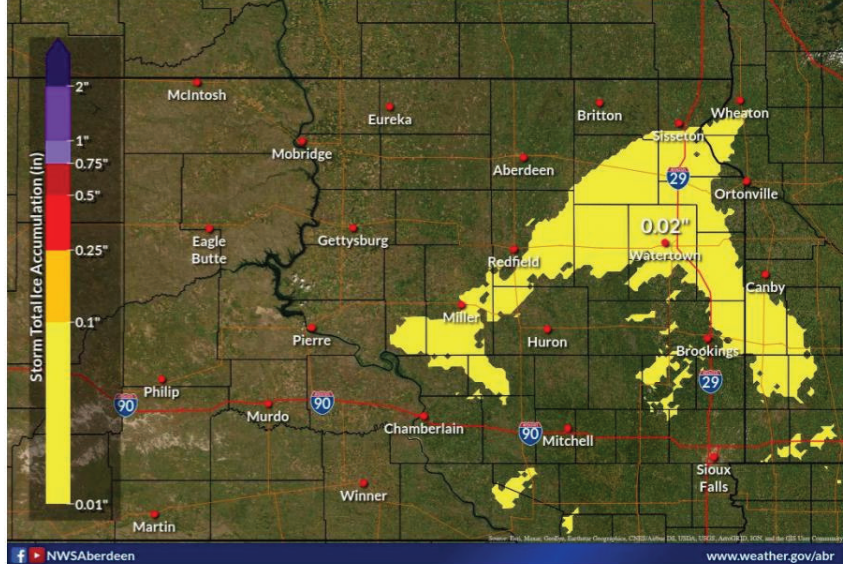
Expected Ice Accumulation - Official NWS Forecast

Valid 6 AM Tue Mar 04, 2025 through 6 AM Wed Mar 05, 2025 CST

Weather Forecast Office

Aberdeen, SD

Issued Mar 04, 2025 2:05 AM CST



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

As rain transitions to snow, we could see a brief period of freezing rain. Light ice accumulation are most likely on bridges and overpasses, untreated surfaces and power lines.



Timing Precipitation

March 4, 2025
4:21 AM

Precipitation Will Continue Through this Evening

Weather Forecast

	3/4 Tue			3/5 Wed						
	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am
Aberdeen	55%	45%	45%	50%	25%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Britton	45%	40%	50%	55%	40%	20%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Chamberlain	80%	90%	85%	70%	55%	15%	5%	0%	0%	0%
Clark	90%	85%	90%	75%	50%	25%	10%	0%	0%	0%
Eagle Butte	15%	30%	35%	25%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Eureka	15%	25%	35%	40%	20%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Gettysburg	40%	30%	35%	35%	20%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
McIntosh	10%	40%	40%	15%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Milbank	80%	80%	85%	75%	70%	55%	30%	10%	0%	0%
Miller	85%	90%	90%	55%	30%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mobridge	10%	25%	30%	25%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Murdo	80%	65%	55%	55%	40%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Pierre	65%	50%	45%	40%	25%	5%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Redfield	75%	80%	80%	55%	30%	10%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Sisseton	60%	65%	70%	75%	60%	40%	20%	5%	0%	0%
Watertown	75%	75%	85%	65%	60%	45%	20%	5%	0%	0%
Webster	65%	70%	70%	70%	45%	25%	10%	5%	0%	0%
Wheaton	60%	70%	65%	70%	60%	45%	25%	5%	5%	0%

Created: 3 am CST Tue 3/4/2025. Shows most impactful weather for the period beginning at the time shown. Weather symbols display where Probability of Precipitation ≥ 0%.

- Rain + - Fz Rain + - Winty Mix + - Snow +

Created: 3 am CST Tue 3/4/2025 |

Precipitation

- Rain mixing with and changing to snow today
- **There is a potential for ice to occur during the transition**
 - Shown in the red box
- Snow will start to diminish this evening



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 56 °F at 2:50 PM

Low Temp: 29 °F at 7:32 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 12:11 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 11 hours, 22 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 73 in 1905

Record Low: -23 in 1917

Average High: 35

Average Low: 14

Average Precip in March.: 0.10

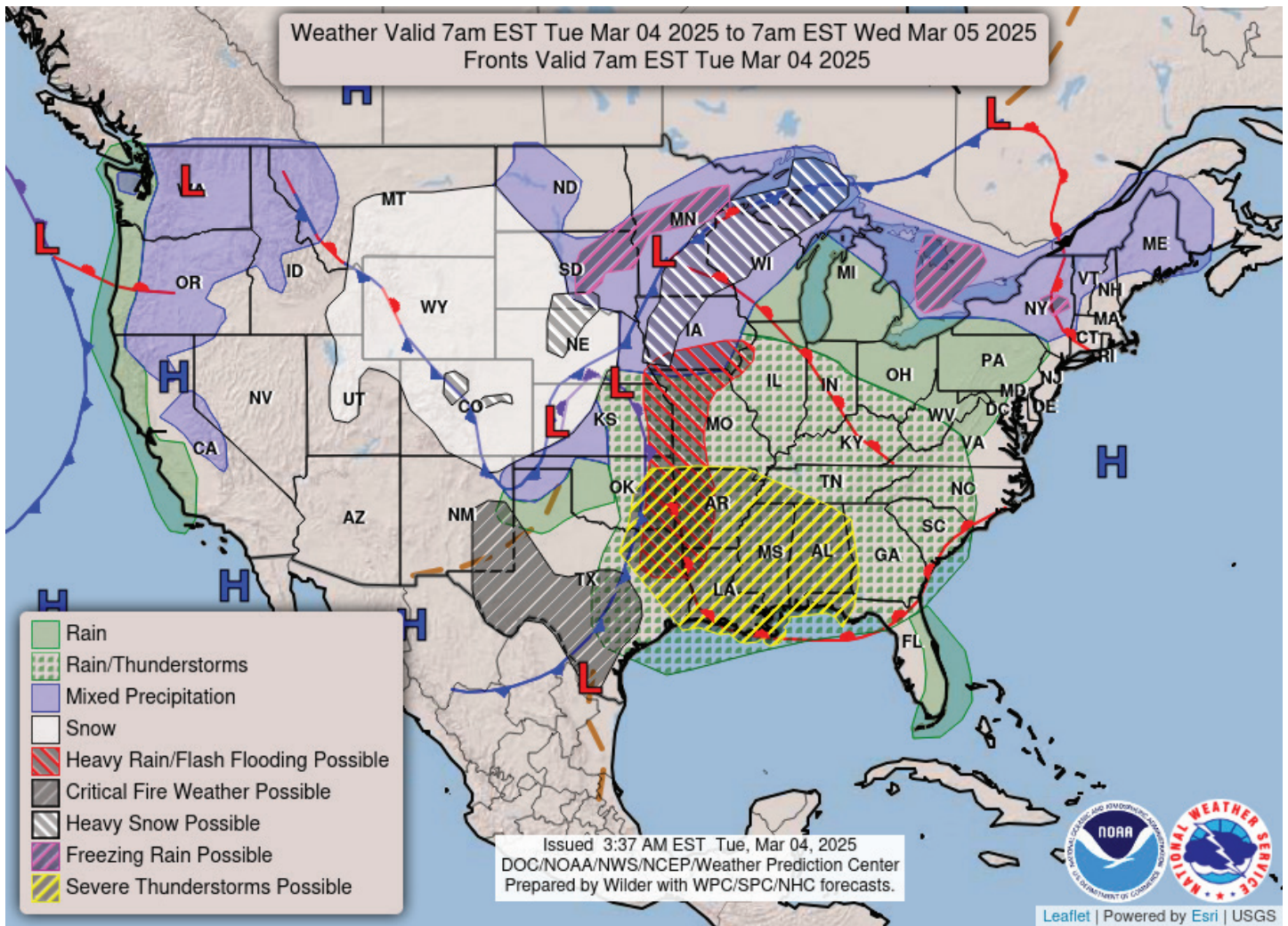
Precip to date in March.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.27

Precip Year to Date: 0.45

Sunset Tonight: 6:25:17 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:00:49 am



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Today in Weather History

March 4, 1994: Two to five inches of snow fell across northeast and part of central South Dakota from the 3rd into the 4th. This new snowfall, combined with the already deep and expansive snowpack and winds of 20 to 40 mph, brought widespread blowing and drifting snow. Visibilities were reduced to near zero at times, making travel treacherous. Snowdrifts blocked many roads. Many schools, as well as several highways, were closed. Several vehicles became stuck and had to be pulled out. Some snowfall amounts included 4 inches at Clear Lake, Britton, Waubay, and Wilmot; and 5 inches at Onida, Blunt, Highmore, Miller, and Milbank.

1841: President William Henry Harrison was sworn into office on a cloudy, cold, and blustery day. His speech lasted one hour and 40 minutes, and he rode a horse to and from the Capitol without a hat or overcoat. Unfortunately, he died from pneumonia a month later, or did he? \

1873: The second inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant remains Washington, DC's record cold March day. The low was 4 degrees, and by noon with the sunshine, the temperature was 16 degrees. Wind chills were around 30 degrees below zero. The 40 mph winds made his inaugural address inaudible to most on the platform with him.

1899: Cyclone Mahina, aka "The Bathurst Bay Hurricane" in Australia, was credited with producing the highest storm surge on record worldwide. The cyclone, with an estimated central pressure of 911 millibars or 26.90 inches of mercury, caused a 42.6-foot surge when it came ashore on the coast of northern Australia. The storm killed as many as 400 people and is Australia's deadliest cyclone.

1971: A potent storm system blasted the northeastern U.S. on March 3-5th, 1971. The barometric pressure dropped to 28.36 inches at Worcester, MA, for the lowest pressure recorded at that location.

1909 - Though fair weather was forecast, President Taft was inaugurated amidst a furious storm. About ten inches of wet snow disrupted travel and communications. The storm drew much criticism against the U.S. Weather Bureau. (David Ludlum)

1953 - Snow was reported on the island of Oahu in Hawaii. (The Weather Channel)

1960: Eastern Massachusetts' most significant March snowstorm occurred on March 4-5th, 1960. The storm produced record 24-hour snowfall totals 27.2 inches at Blue Hill Observatory, 17.7 inches at Worcester, and 16.6 inches at Boston. Winds gusted to 70 mph.

1966 - A severe blizzard raged across Minnesota and North Dakota. The blizzard lasted four days producing up to 35 inches of snow, and wind gusting to 100 mph produced snow drifts 30 to 40 feet high. Bismarck ND reported zero visibility for 11 hours. Traffic was paralyzed for three days. (2nd-5th) (The Weather Channel)

1983: Brownsville, Texas, recorded a high of 100 degrees, the earliest the city has ever hit the century mark.

1987 - Rain and high winds prevailed in the northwestern U.S. A wind gust to 69 mph at Klamath Falls OR was their highest in 25 years, and winds at the Ashland Ranger Station in the Siskiyou Mountains of northern California reached 85 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Snow and freezing rain made travel hazardous in Ohio and Indiana. A six car pile-up resulted near Columbus OH, with seven injuries reported. Up to two inches of ice glazed central Indiana. Up to ten inches of snow blanketed northern Ohio. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Lower Mississippi Valley. A strong (F-3) tornado injured five persons near Brownsville MS, and killed seven cows and two hogs in one pasture. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 90 mph at Canton MS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A Pacific cold front working its way across the western U.S. produced heavy snow over parts of Idaho, Nevada and Utah. Up to eleven inches of snow blanketed the valleys of northwest Utah, while 12 to 25 inches fell across the mountains of northern Utah. Up to six inches of snow blanketed the valleys of east central Nevada, while more than a foot of snow was reported in the high elevations. In Idaho, 6 to 8 inches of snow was reported around Aberdeen and American Falls. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004 - An F0 tornado 2 miles north of Muldrow breaks a record stretch of days without a reported tornado, 292 days.

2008 - Only two days after reaching 78 degrees, St. Louis receives nearly a foot of snow in seven hours, the biggest snowstorm in 15 years.



HERE AND HEREAFTER

Two elderly ladies were sitting on the porch rocking and talking the day away. Said one to the other, "Sally, do you ever think of the hereafter?"

"All the time," came the reply. "Every time I go into a different room I look around and say to myself, "What did I come here after?""

An amusing little story that we can use to remind ourselves of one of life's most important realities: while we live in this world, we must prepare ourselves for the next. Many live as though this life will never end, or that the next one will never begin. I recall seeing a tombstone that read: "I lived all of my life expecting to die – but not this soon."

We all marvel at the persistence and power, the determination and drive that the Apostle Paul had in presenting the message of salvation. His audience would change, his location would be different, and his conditions would vary. But one fact remained constant: "The necessity to turn from sin, get closer to God every day of his life, and grow his faith in Christ as Lord."

This message is for the "newly saved" as well as the "elders of the church." There must be that moment in everyone's life when we surrender ourselves completely to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But, there are also many other moments in life when we pause, confess our sins, repent, seek forgiveness, and prepare to meet the Lord! Are you ready to face Him?

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your salvation. We want to live life knowing that we may meet You sooner than we had planned. So, convict us every day of our sins. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. Acts 20:21

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: 02.28.25

9 19 30 35 66 16

MegaPlier: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$215,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 37 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.03.25

12 25 29 40 49 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$25,510,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 14 Hrs 52 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.03.25

10 15 21 27 45 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 7 Mins 23 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.01.25

6 16 21 31 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$52,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 7 Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.03.25

9 34 54 67 69 11

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 36 Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.03.25

18 20 50 52 56 20

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$295,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 36 Mins 24 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

- 01/05/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 01/26/2025 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed at the Community Center 10am-1pm
- 01/26/2025 87th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 02/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 02/05/2025 FB Live Electronic Hwy 12 Sign Drawing City Hall 12pm
- 03/02/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
- 04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
- 04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
- 04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
- 05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 05/12/2025 High School Girls Golf Meet at Olive Grove
- 05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
- 06/07/2025 Day of Play
- 06/13/2025 SDSU 4 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
- 06/21/2025 Groton Triathlon
- 06/23/2025 Ladies 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
- 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
- 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
- 07/16/2025 Men's Pro Am Golf at Olive Grove
- 07/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove
- 08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove
- 08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
- 08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
- 09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
- 09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
- 10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
- 11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm
- 12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

Monday's Scores

The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

SDHSAA Class B Region 1=

First Round=

Hitchcock-Tulare 63, Langford 50

Wilmot 76, Tiospa Zina 36

SDHSAA Class B Region 2=

First Round=

Iroquois-Lake Preston 63, Arlington 48

James Valley Christian School 76, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 64

SDHSAA Class B Region 3=

First Round=

Chester 81, Flandreau Indian 39

Sioux Falls Lutheran 51, Canistota 43

SDHSAA Class B Region 4=

First Round=

Alcester-Hudson 54, Avon 50

Irene-Wakonda 68, Freeman Academy-Marion 47

SDHSAA Class B Region 5

First Round=

Marty 73, Mitchell Christian 58

Burke 75, Colome 14

SDHSAA Class B Region 6=

First Round=

North Central 45, Herreid-Selby 42

Tiospaye Topa 63, Sunshine Bible Academy 52

SDHSAA Class B Region 7=

First Round=

Jones County 66, Oelrichs 19

Philip 72, Edgemont 36

SDHSAA Class B Region 8=

First Round=

Takini 68, Newell 36

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Federal money to prevent Black Hills forest fires left 'in limbo'

South Dakota News Watch undefined

Sioux Falls, SD (South Dakota News Watch)

PIEDMONT, S.D. - A \$5 million program to help private landowners in the Black Hills manage their forest lands and prevent wildfires is on hold as part of President Donald Trump's widespread freeze of federal loan and grant programs.

The forest funding for South Dakota was allocated in 2024 after getting approved by former President Joe Biden and the U.S. Congress as part of the Inflation Reduction Act.

The South Dakota funding is one small part of a much larger \$350 million federal program aimed at

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helping landowners, state and local agencies and tribal governments manage private forests, reduce fire risk and mitigate impacts of climate change across the country. Funding for the entire program appears to be on hold.

The \$5 million allocated to South Dakota is for a cost-sharing program with Black Hills landowners for "climate mitigation and/or forest resilience practices," according to the U.S. Forest Service. In all, 37 states were approved to receive about \$140 million for private landowners.

The five-year grant funding is largely aimed at thinning overgrown forests on private land, which helps prevent forest fires from starting and spreading.

About 60% of forest land in the U.S. is privately owned, according to the forest service, making the landowner forest management program a key part of overall wildfire mitigation efforts across the country. The funding freeze comes at a time when the Trump administration has fired or laid off thousands of workers, including in the forest service and wildland fire agencies.

Pennington County businessman Dean Henderson, who owns woodlands near his ranch and construction company offices north of Rapid City, saw the benefits of forest management up close in October 2021.

Henderson, who owns Blue Ladder Construction, watched that fall as a fire that broke out between Haines Avenue and Deadwood Avenue torched woodlands around his business and began to threaten buildings.

Several years prior to the fire, Henderson had obtained grant funding to manage his land. As the fire raged, it was clear to see which areas had been thinned of trees in the past, he said.

"In areas where we had thinned, it helped out immensely," Henderson said. "In areas where it was thick and overgrown, it was total devastation, totally cleared out by a very hot fire."

Henderson's buildings were saved, and he remains a supporter of government grant funding to aid private landowners with forest management. "It made it so I could afford to do that because otherwise it wasn't cost effective," he said.

Bob Burns of Piedmont is a landowner who also serves as co-chair of the South Dakota Family Forests Association, a nonprofit group committed to forest management and resiliency in the Black Hills.

The family forests group was selected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to administer the South Dakota forest management funding, which is provided as 80% reimbursement to landowners who mainly hire contractors to thin their forest lands.

The Black Hills has been hit by several small wildfires and a few major blazes in recent years. The Jasper fire south of Custer burned 83,000 acres of timberland in 2000, and the Custer State Park fire in December 2017 torched about 53,000 acres of forest.

Thinning of forests also promotes growth of healthy trees and reduces the likelihood of insect infestations, including from the mountain pine beetle, which destroyed or damaged pine trees on about 450,000 acres of the northern and central Black Hills during an epidemic lasting from the late-1990s to the mid-2010s.

Proper forest management allows for improved flow of moisture from rain or snow and leads to increased growth of mature trees that are suitable for logging, which can aid the struggling logging industry in the Black Hills, Burns said.

Until recently, Burns said his group was operating under the assumption that since the grant program was fully approved by Congress and the former president, it could begin soliciting grant applications from qualified Black Hills landowners.

After receiving about two dozen applications, however, he learned the federal money was on hold. No official notice of the funding freeze was given, but Burns said that after some investigation on his own, he figured out that, for now at least, the money is not available.

"We're in limbo right now," Burns told News Watch. "We're not going to sign people up to do this work unless we know that these funds are going to be flowing to us to reimburse them."

In one of his first executive orders after taking office, Trump froze all funding within the Inflation Reduction Act. He also paused most federal loan and grant programs in late January as his administration undergoes a review to ensure spending aligns with the president's executive orders and goals and to root out potential fraud or wasteful spending.

Burns said the forest resiliency programs are highly controlled and that grant funding is closely monitored.

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"There's nothing approaching fraud or waste in this, and every dollar will be used to do something good for the Black Hills," he said. "It seems odd to me that this came from an act passed and signed by the president and Congress, so how someone can come and stop it dead in its tracks, I don't understand that."

Burns said he has contacted representatives in the office of U.S. Sen. John Thune but has not received any updates on if or when the forest funding will be released. A spokesman for Thune told News Watch in an email that the senator's office has communicated with Burns but was unable to provide an update on funding.

"Our office has been in touch with Bob Burns and various other stakeholders in South Dakota assisting them as agencies have been transitioning and getting set up," the spokesman wrote.

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources said landowner forest management efforts help maintain and sustain healthy forests in the state.

"We (DANR) work with private landowners to draft forest management plans that identify objectives for their forests and provide management options and tools to accomplish those plans," the department said in an email to News Watch. "Proper forest management, whether on federal lands or private property, is important to reduce the risk of large disturbances such as wildfires or insect outbreaks while accomplishing other ecological services."

Forested lands in the Black Hills are naturally regenerating, meaning that seeds living in the soil do not require planting of new trees.

Fire has historically served as nature's way of thinning the forest and leading to growth of new, stronger trees, but in the modern world, with intermingling of homes and businesses in the national forest, "we can't have wildfires thinning the forests, we just can't," Burns said.

While controlled burning can help, the most effective method of reducing fire fuels is through forest management that includes regular thinning of trees that are small or too close together.

The program will benefit the forests that need management and also create jobs and revenues for professional loggers and foresters, Burns said.

"This money really benefits everyone," he said.

About 800,000 acres of forest in the Black Hills are suitable for logging, and about 290,000 of those acres are privately owned, Burns said.

To participate in the grant program, landowners must have more than 10 acres and be members of the family forests association, which means they must pay for a state-approved forest stewardship plan that guides how the land should be managed.

Grant participants must obtain three separate bids from foresters and submit the low bid for approval. Once approved, the landowner then qualifies for an 80% reimbursement of the contract costs, paying the final 20% from their own pocket. The cost of thinning trees by a professional forester can range from less than \$1,000 an acre up to more than \$3,000 an acre, so managing tracts of land averaging about 40 acres in size can get expensive, Burns said.

To date, the family forests association has about 160 members who own about 46,000 acres, Burns said. Unless the funding is unfrozen soon, forest thinning efforts could be stalled until fall because forest management efforts stop during summer.

Burns and his wife, Mary LaHood, are both active not only in managing their own tree farm located west of Interstate 90 near Piedmont but also in promoting forest management among other landowners.

For their longstanding leadership and land management efforts, the couple in 2021 was named National Outstanding Tree Farmers of the Year by the American Forest Foundation. As a team, now married more than 40 years and managing their forest together that entire time, they're committed to maintaining the quality and beauty of the Black Hills region that they and their adult children call home.

"People don't realize it, but when they drive through the Black Hills, they're driving past thousands of acres of private lands that are beautiful and well preserved," Burns said. "I understand that everyone wants to make sure that tax dollars are being spent wisely, but this is such a wonderful way to increase forest resiliency and protect the Black Hills."

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Arab leaders gather to endorse counterproposal to Trump's Gaza plan, with ceasefire's fate uncertain

By SAMY MAGDY and MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Arab leaders meeting in Cairo on Tuesday are set to endorse a counterproposal to U.S. President Donald Trump's call for the Gaza Strip to be depopulated and transformed into a beach destination, even as the continuation of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire is uncertain.

The summit hosted by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi is expected to include the leaders of regional heavyweights Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose support is crucial for any postwar plan.

Israel has meanwhile embraced what it says is an alternative U.S. proposal for the ceasefire itself and the release of hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. It has blocked the entry of food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza to try to get Hamas to accept the new proposal and has warned of additional consequences, raising fears of a return to war.

The suspension of aid drew widespread criticism, with human rights groups saying it violated Israel's obligations as an occupying power under international law.

The new plan would require Hamas to release half its remaining hostages — the militant group's main bargaining chip — in exchange for a ceasefire extension and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce. Israel made no mention of releasing more Palestinian prisoners — a key component of the first phase.

Egypt's postwar plan

Egypt has developed a postwar plan in which Palestinians would be relocated to safe areas inside Gaza equipped with mobile homes while its cities are rebuilt. Hamas would cede power to an interim administration of political independents until a reformed Palestinian Authority can assume control.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, head of the Western-backed authority and an opponent of Hamas, was attending the summit.

Israel has ruled out any role for the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and, along with the United States, has demanded Hamas' disarmament. Hamas, which does not accept Israel's existence, has said it is willing to cede power in Gaza to other Palestinians but will not give up its arms until there is a Palestinian state.

A draft statement endorsing the plan called for a "permanent and just solution" for the Palestinian cause and for the United Nations Security Council to deploy international peacekeepers in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Israel has vowed to maintain open-ended security control over both territories, which it captured in the 1967 Mideast war and which Palestinians want for their future state. Israel's government and most of its political class are opposed to Palestinian statehood.

Trump shocked the region last month when he suggested Gaza's roughly 2 million Palestinians be resettled in other countries. He said the United States would take ownership of the war-ravaged territory and redevelop it into a Middle Eastern "Riviera."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu embraced the proposal, which was roundly rejected by Palestinians, Arab countries and human rights experts, who said it would likely violate international law.

Children from Gaza head to Jordan for treatment

Trump has suggested that Egypt and Jordan, two close American allies, could take in large numbers of

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Palestinian refugees from Gaza. Both countries have adamantly rejected any such plan.

Meeting with Trump at the White House last month, Jordan's King Abdullah II offered to take in some 2,000 children for medical treatment. The first batch of around 30 children left Gaza for Jordan on Tuesday, according to Nasser Hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis. The children are being accompanied by up to two family members.

Jordan said the children are amputees, and will return to Gaza when their treatment is complete. The kingdom has also set up field hospitals in Gaza and delivered aid by air and land.

The war began with Hamas' Oct. 7 attack on Israel, in which Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 people hostage. Hamas-led militants are still holding 59 hostages, 35 of whom are believed to be dead.

Most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements. Israel has rescued eight living hostages and recovered the remains of dozens more.

Israel's 15-month offensive killed over 48,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It does not say how many were fighters but says women and children made up more than half the dead. Israel says it killed over 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The offensive destroyed large areas of Gaza, including much of its health system and other infrastructure. At its height, the war displaced some 90% of the population, mostly within the territory, where hundreds of thousands packed into squalid tent camps and schools repurposed as shelters.

Pope Francis no longer requires mechanical ventilation after respiratory crisis

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis stabilized enough Tuesday after two respiratory crises to resume using a nasal tube for oxygen, rather than a ventilation mask, as he continued to fight pneumonia, the Vatican said.

The 88-year-old pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed as a young man, woke up after sleeping through the night, the Vatican said. The fact that Francis no longer needed the mask by Tuesday morning was a sign of some improvement after crises that required doctors to extract "copious" amounts of mucus from his lungs.

But the doctors' prognosis remained guarded, meaning he was not out of danger.

The Vatican said as of Tuesday morning, Francis no longer needed to wear the noninvasive mechanical ventilation mask that covers his nose and mouth to pump oxygen into his lungs and was just receiving supplemental oxygen through a nasal tube.

Francis suffered two respiratory crises a day earlier. Doctors performed two bronchoscopies, in which a camera-tipped tube was sent into his airways with a sucker at the tip to suction out fluid. The pope remained alert, oriented and cooperated with medical personnel during the crises, the Vatican said.

His medical team has not provided an in-person update on his condition since Feb. 21, a sign of the up-and-down nature of his hospitalization, the longest of his 12-year papacy.

Francis' treatment comes as the Vatican prepares for Lent, the solemn period leading up to Easter on April 20. As it is, a cardinal has been designated to take Francis' place this week on Ash Wednesday, which opens Lent with a traditional service and procession in Rome. The pope was also supposed to attend a spiritual retreat this coming weekend with the rest of the Holy See hierarchy.

On Tuesday, the Vatican said the retreat would go ahead without Francis but in "spiritual communion" with him. The theme, selected weeks ago and well before Francis got sick, was "Hope in eternal life."

Dr. John Coleman, a pulmonary critical care doctor at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, said Monday's respiratory episodes were more concerning than the last one on Friday, in which Francis had a coughing fit, inhaled some vomit and was put on the noninvasive mechanical ventilation for a day.

The use of bronchoscopies reflects a worrying level of mucus and phlegm in the lungs, Coleman said. "The fact that they had to go in there and remove it manually is concerning, because it means that he is

not clearing the secretions on his own," he said.

"He's taking little steps forward and then steps back," said Coleman, who is not involved in Francis' care.

Francis, who is not physically active, uses a wheelchair and is overweight, had been undergoing respiratory physiotherapy to try to improve his lung function. The accumulation of secretions in his lungs was a sign that he doesn't have the muscle tone to cough vigorously enough to expel the fluid.

Doctors often use noninvasive ventilation to stave off intubation or the use of more invasive mechanical ventilation. Francis has not been intubated during this hospitalization. It's not clear if he has provided any instructions on the limits of his care if he declines seriously or loses consciousness.

Catholic teaching holds that life must be defended from conception until natural death. It insists that chronically ill patients, including those in vegetative states, must receive "ordinary" care such as hydration and nutrition, but "extraordinary" or disproportionate care can be suspended if it is no longer beneficial or is only prolonging a precarious and painful life.

Francis articulated that in a 2017 speech to a meeting of the Vatican's bioethics think tank, the Pontifical Academy for Life. He said there was "no obligation to have recourse in all circumstances to every possible remedy." He added: "It thus makes possible a decision that is morally qualified as withdrawal of 'overzealous treatment.'"

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, who heads the academy which helps articulate the Catholic Church's position on end-of-life care, said Francis is like any other Catholic and would follow church teaching if it came to that.

"Today the pope is giving us an extraordinary teaching on fragility," he told reporters Monday. "Today the pope, not through words but with his body, is reminding all of us, we elderly people to begin with, that we are all fragile and therefore we need to take care of each other."

FACT FOCUS: A look at claims around Trump's initiatives as he prepares to address Congress

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

President Donald Trump will address a joint session of Congress on Tuesday night to highlight changes he has made since taking office six weeks ago. Among the areas he may cover are negotiations to end the Russia-Ukraine war, cutbacks to the U.S. Agency for International Development, scrutiny of Social Security recipients and border security crackdowns. But some of the Republican president's recent statements on these topics, among others, have been false and misleading.

Here's a look at the facts:

Russia-Ukraine war

Trump berated Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in an Oval Office meeting on Friday for being "disrespectful." He then abruptly called off the signing of a minerals deal that he said would have moved Ukraine closer to ending its war with Russia. The relationship between Trump and Zelenskyy has changed significantly since Feb. 19, when Trump made a number of false statements about Zelenskyy, including calling him "a dictator."

Trump, speaking at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, Florida, on Feb. 18, suggested Ukraine started the war.

THE FACTS: Russia's army crossed the border on Feb. 24, 2022, in an all-out invasion that Russian President Vladimir Putin sought to justify by falsely saying it was needed to protect Russian-speaking civilians in eastern Ukraine and prevent the country from joining NATO. The move followed Putin's 2014 illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and armed aggression in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas that grew into a long-running conflict that left thousands of people dead.

That conflict simmered until 2022, when Putin ordered what he called military exercises along Ukraine's borders. He told the world that the roughly 150,000 soldiers he had amassed would not be used to invade Ukraine. But in the early hours of Feb. 24, 2022, Russia launched widespread airstrikes and soldiers began pouring over the border.

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Vice President JD Vance, speaking during a meeting with Zelenskyy on Friday, suggested that Zelenskyy has not said thank you to the U.S. for its support.

THE FACTS: This is false. Zelenskyy has publicly thanked the U.S. numerous times since 2022.

After Trump and Vance accused Zelenskyy of doing otherwise at their meeting Friday, the Ukrainian president posted on X: "Thank you America, thank you for your support, thank you for this visit. Thank you @POTUS, Congress, and the American people."

Zelenskyy also recently thanked Trump in a Feb. 12 video, saying that he is "grateful to the president for his genuine interest in our shared opportunities."

Government cuts

USAID has been one of the biggest targets of a broad campaign by Trump and his adviser Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency to slash the size of the federal government. Workers cleared their desks at USAID's now-closed Washington headquarters on Thursday.

Also in the crosshairs: the Social Security Administration, which is preparing for significant workforce reductions.

Both agencies have faced false claims about their spending from the Trump administration amid these changes.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, speaking to reporters Feb. 7: USAID spent \$1.5 million to advance diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, "in Serbia's workplaces; \$70,000 for the production of a DEI musical in Ireland; \$47,000 for a transgender opera in Colombia, \$32,000 for a transgender comic book in Peru."

THE FACTS: Only the grant to a Serbian organization called Grupa Izadji was awarded by USAID. Its stated aim is to "to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in Serbia's workplaces and business communities."

The rest were awarded by the State Department's Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. In 2022, it granted \$70,884 to an Irish company for "a live musical event to promote the U.S. and Irish shared values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility." A grant for \$25,000 was awarded in 2021 to a university in Colombia "to raise awareness and increase the transgender representation" through the production of an opera, with an additional \$22,020 coming from non-federal funding. And \$32,000 awarded in 2022 to a Peruvian organization funded "a tailored-made comic, featuring an LGBTQ+ hero to address social and mental health issues."

Trump and Musk claimed online and during press briefings that tens of millions of dead people over age 100 are receiving Social Security payments.

THE FACTS: It is true that improper payments have been made, including some to dead people. But the numbers thrown out by Musk and the White House are overstated and misrepresent Social Security data.

Part of the confusion comes from Social Security's software system based on the COBOL programming language, which doesn't use a specific format for dates. This means that some entries with missing or incomplete birthdates will default to a reference point of more than 150 years ago. The news organization WIRED first reported on the use of COBOL programming language at the Social Security Administration.

Additionally, a series of reports from the Social Security Administration's inspector general in March 2023 and July 2024 state that the agency has not established a new system to properly annotate death information in its database, which included roughly 18.9 million Social Security numbers of people born in 1920 or earlier but were not marked as deceased. This does not mean, however, that these people were receiving benefits.

The agency decided not to update the database because of the cost to do so, which would run upward of \$9 million.

A July 2023 Social Security OIG report states that "almost none of the numberholders discussed in the report currently receive SSA payments." And, as of September 2015, the agency automatically stops pay-

ments to people who are older than 115 years old.

Israel-Hamas war

Trump has vowed to turn Gaza into a "Riviera of the Middle East" and to empty Gaza permanently of its more than 2 million Palestinians, despite the fact that Palestinians have roundly rejected the idea of leaving. He has also made baseless claims on multiple occasions about U.S. assistance in the conflict.

Trump, during a bill signing ceremony Jan. 29, claimed that his administration had "identified and stopped \$50 million being sent to Gaza to buy condoms for Hamas."

THE FACTS: Trump appeared to be referring to a grant or grants that USAID awarded to the International Medical Corps to provide medical and trauma services in Gaza.

But according to the IMC, "No US government funding was used to procure or distribute condoms."

The IMC said that it has received \$68,078,508 from USAID to support its operations in Gaza since October 7, 2023. It said the resources were used to operate two large field hospitals currently located in central Gaza — one in Deir Al Balah and one in Al Zawaida — offering a combined capacity of more than 250 beds, including 20 in the emergency room and 170 in the surgical department. These facilities have provided around-the-clock medical care to about 33,000 civilians per month.

USAID's financial year 2023 report on contraceptive and condom shipments, the most recent data available, notes that only one Middle Eastern country, Jordan, received a small shipment of injectables and oral contraceptives valued at \$45,680 for government programs only. This was USAID's first shipment to the Middle East since financial year 2019.

USAID reports from the first three-quarters of 2024 show the only family planning programs funded by the agency in the Middle East were in Jordan and Yemen.

Middle East latest: Arab leaders meet in Egypt to approve counterproposal to Trump's Gaza plan

By The Associated Press undefined

A summit of Arab leaders in Cairo is set to adopt Egypt's counterproposal to U.S. President Donald Trump's call for the Gaza Strip to be depopulated and transformed into a beach destination.

It includes an alternative plan in which Palestinians would be relocated to safe areas inside Gaza equipped with mobile homes and shelters while its cities are rebuilt. Hamas would cede power to an interim administration of political independents until a reformed Palestinian Authority can assume control.

Trump shocked the region last month when he suggested Gaza's roughly 2 million residents be resettled in other countries. He said the United States would take ownership of the war-ravaged territory and redevelop it into a Middle Eastern "Riviera."

Here's the latest:

Israeli drone strike kills a suspected Hezbollah member in Lebanon

An Israeli drone strike in southern Lebanon on Tuesday killed one person, the state-run National News Agency reported.

Local media outlets said the victim of the strike was a member of Hezbollah's elite Radwan Force.

Israel has killed several Hezbollah officials in drone strikes in different parts of Lebanon since the 14-month Israel-Hezbollah war ended in late November.

29 children evacuated from Gaza to Jordan for medical treatment

Palestinian health officials say 29 children have been evacuated from the Gaza Strip to Jordan for medical treatment.

Jordan's King Abdullah II offered to take in 2,000 children for medical treatment during a White House meeting with President Donald Trump last month.

The offer came after Trump suggested Jordan and Egypt accept large numbers of Palestinian refugees from Gaza as part of his proposal to depopulate the war-ravaged territory and redevelop it as a tourist

destination. The two Arab countries, both close U.S. allies, have adamantly rejected any such plan.

Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza said the 29 children, accompanied by 43 relatives, traveled to Israel en route to Jordan for treatment.

Jordan said the 2,000 children would be brought to the kingdom in batches, with each child accompanied by up to two family members. It said the initiative was part of its broader humanitarian efforts in Gaza, where it has established field hospitals and airdropped aid.

Arab leaders meet to approve counterproposal to Trump's Gaza plan

Arab leaders meeting in Cairo are set to endorse a counterproposal to U.S. President Donald Trump's call for the Gaza Strip to be depopulated and transformed into a beach destination, even as the continuation of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire is uncertain.

The summit hosted by Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi is expected to include the leaders of regional heavyweights Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, whose support is crucial for any postwar plan.

Israel has meanwhile embraced what it says is an alternative U.S. proposal for the ceasefire itself and the release of hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. It has blocked the entry of food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza to try to get Hamas to accept the new proposal and has warned of additional consequences, raising fears of a return to war.

Texas measles outbreak fueled by distrust in public health and personal choice

By DEVI SHASTRI/Associated Press and CARLOS NOGUERAS RAMOS/Texas Tribune undefined
SEMINOLE, Texas (AP) — Measles had struck this West Texas town, sickening dozens of children, but at the Community Church of Seminole, more than 350 worshippers gathered for a Sunday service. Sitting elbow-to-elbow, they filled the pews, siblings in matching button-down shirts and dresses, little girls' hair tied neatly into pink bows.

Fathers shushed babbling toddlers as their wives snuck out to change infants' diapers.

A little girl in this mostly Mennonite congregation was among those who'd fallen ill with the highly contagious respiratory disease, senior pastor David Klassen said — but she's doing fine, and she happily played through her quarantine. He heard that at least two Mennonite schools shut down for a bit to disinfect.

What he hasn't heard: Any direct outreach from public health officials on what to do as the number of those sickened with measles has grown to 146 and a school-age child has died. And though Klassen is a trusted church and community leader, his congregants haven't asked about whether they should vaccinate their kids — and he wouldn't want to weigh in.

"With this measles situation, I can honestly just tell you we haven't taken any steps as a church," he said. "We did leave it up to the mothers."

As measles — a preventable disease the U.S. considered eliminated in 2000 — spreads through West Texas' rural expanse, Klassen is sticking to an approach on vaccines that is a key tenet for Mennonites. Family leaders are the top decision-making authority — not outside recommendations, certainly not government mandates.

Alongside measles in this region, where voters overwhelmingly supported President Donald Trump, there's another outbreak: one of misinformation about vaccines, distrust of local public health officials and fear of governmental authority overruling family autonomy. And on the national stage, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., the country's top health official and an anti-vaccine activist, dismissed the Texas outbreak as "not unusual."

"Do I trust all the vaccines? No," Klassen said. "And I get from (Kennedy) that he doesn't trust all the vaccines, either. And he is very well educated in that; I'm not."

In an opinion piece for Fox News Digital, Kennedy wrote about the value of the vaccine but stopped short of calling on families to get it, saying the decision is "a personal one." He urged parents to speak to their health care providers about options.

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Vaccine skepticism has also been spurred by state lawmakers who this year filed more than a dozen bills that would strengthen or expand vaccine exemptions, which Texas already allows for "reasons of conscience, including a religious belief."

Doctors on the front lines

At hospitals in Lubbock, 80 miles to the north and on the front lines of the outbreak, babies with measles are struggling to breathe.

Dr. Summer Davies, a Texas Tech Physicians pediatrician, said she has treated about 10 of the outbreak's patients, most very young or teens. She said children have had to be intubated, including one younger than 6 months old. Others come in with such high fevers or severe sore throats that they refuse to eat or drink to the point of dehydration.

"It's hard as a pediatrician, knowing that we have a way to prevent this and prevent kids from suffering and even death," she said. "But I do agree that the herd immunity that we have established in the past isn't the same now. And I think kids are suffering because of that."

In Lubbock County, 92% of kindergarteners are up to date on their measles, mumps and rubella shots, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services. That's lower than the 95% threshold experts say is needed to prevent measles from spreading. Gaines County, which includes Seminole, has an 82% MMR vaccination rate, though rates for homeschooled or private school students may be much lower. The vaccine series is required for kids before entering kindergarten in public schools nationwide. Many Mennonite families don't send children to public schools.

All of the children admitted with measles to Covenant Children's Hospital in Lubbock were unvaccinated, officials said last week. Dr. Lara Johnson, the hospital's chief medical officer, told The Associated Press that Covenant has seen more than 20 patients, including children, teens and pregnant mothers, since the outbreak began in late January.

News of a measles case in Seminole, population 7,200, put doctors on a "shared high alert," said Dr. Martin Ortega, a family physician for Texas Tech Physicians in Odessa, about an hour away. The small towns of West Texas may look completely isolated on a map, with little between them beyond oil and gas facilities and sprawling desert. But the region is connected by its people, who regularly travel long distances to grocery stores, hospitals and houses of worship.

Many doctors are seeing measles cases for the first time in their careers. In Lea County, New Mexico, 30 minutes west of Seminole, nine measles cases with no clear connection to the Texas outbreak, rattled doctors and parents. An unvaccinated infant in Austin also tested positive for measles after an overseas vacation.

It's "a little bit surreal," said Dr. Rumbidzai Mutikani, a pediatrician at Nor-Lea Hospital District's Hobbs Medical Clinic. Parents were so concerned "our phones were just ringing," Mutikani said.

Katherine Wells, director of Lubbock's public health department, said West Texas' rural landscape is a major challenge, not just in getting to patients and transporting test samples, but also in getting the word out.

A lot of the messaging is word of mouth, she said, but they are working on public-service announcements featuring trusted Gaines County residents, putting up billboards about measles, handing out flyers and posting in WhatsApp groups.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused "a lot of distrust in public health" and government requirements, Wells said. On Facebook, people have accused her of making up the measles outbreak. They hope her department loses its funding.

It's "really hurtful stuff," she said. "We're really working to help encourage vaccines for our community and help those kids that are infected to make sure they get medical treatment so that we don't end up with another death."

Pro-Trump, but 'not anti-vaxxer'

The reality on the ground can be nuanced, however.

Brownfield Mayor Eric Horton is pro-Trump, he said, but also pro-MMR vaccine.

His county was hard-hit by COVID-19, Horton said, with nearly 90 deaths. So when measles cases came to his town of 8,600, Horton feared for his community. He said the local hospital has been busy adminis-

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tering vaccines since the outbreak started.

"Out here on the south plains of Texas, we are conservative people, but we also are not anti-vaxxers," he said.

Across the region, people echoed this sentiment about routine childhood vaccinations in interviews with the AP and The Texas Tribune. Often, though, they are less supportive of COVID-19 and flu shots.

"It's frustrating that (Mennonites) don't vaccinate, and they put other people's families and children at exposure for it," said Stephen Spruill, a 36-year-old trucker from Seminole.

But "this is America. People have the right to choose."

Macey Lane, 31, of Hobbs, said: "I do support Donald Trump. I don't support not requiring vaccines.""

All of Lane's kids are vaccinated. Praising Sen. Mitch McConnell's vote against Kennedy's nomination, she said the fact that "the only Republican that went against RFK was a polio survivor says a lot." But she said she voted off other issues: her religious beliefs, stance on abortion and who would be best for the region's oil and gas industry.

"As far as RFK being an anti-vaxxer, this is the most important thing: People have to make a decision for themselves and be as informed as they possibly can," Horton said.

But in doctors' offices throughout the region, pediatricians see the consequences of that stance.

Mutikani, the Hobbs pediatrician, said she's seen vaccine hesitancy increase in recent years as parents come to her with worries that line up with what's trending on social media. "Virulent" misinformation is especially worrisome in rural areas with few news sources or where many people who don't regularly see doctors live, she said.

And having "these really big, respected public figures openly going against the grain, going against research and what we know, it makes it really, really difficult," she said.

Most Texans are still vaccinating their kids, including Jennifer Sanchez, a 26-year-old Odessa resident. She took her 6-year-old and 1-year-old to the local public health department last week to get the measles vaccine.

She is disinfecting her house out of an abundance of caution, wishing she had more information on how to stop the spread.

"The government needs to give us more tools so we can protect ourselves," she said.

Ukrainians grapple with consequences of Trump's pause on military aid

By SAMYA KULLAB and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainians grappled Tuesday with the ramifications of a U.S. decision to pause military aid that is critical to their fight against Russia's invasion, as a rift between Kyiv and Washington deepens.

Days after an explosive meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the assistance halted in a bid to pressure Kyiv to engage in peace talks with Russia.

Ukraine and its allies are concerned Trump is pushing for a quick ceasefire that will favor Russia, and Kyiv is looking for security guarantees to ward off possible future Russian invasions.

A White House official said the U.S. was "pausing and reviewing" its aid to "ensure that it is contributing to a solution." The order will remain in effect until Trump determines that Ukraine has demonstrated a commitment to peace negotiations with Russia, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the assistance.

Ukraine needs help to fight Russia

Ukraine, which depends heavily on foreign help to hold back the Russian invasion that began on Feb. 24 2022, has feared that aid could be stopped since Trump took office.

U.S.-made Patriot air defense missile systems, for example, are a pivotal part of Ukraine's air defenses. Just as vital is U.S. intelligence assistance, which has allowed Ukraine to track Russian troop movements

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and select targets. Ukraine's European allies couldn't make up for a U.S. withdrawal of that asset if it proves to be part of the pause.

"I feel betrayed, but this feeling is not really deep for some reason. I was expecting something like that from Trump's side," said a Ukrainian soldier fighting in Russia's Kursk region, where Ukraine launched a daring military incursion in August 2024 to improve its hand in negotiations. The soldier spoke by phone to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to speak freely about his thoughts as he was not authorized to speak to the press.

On the frontline, where Ukraine is struggling to fend off the much larger and better-equipped Russian army, another soldier said the U.S. decision would enable Russia to make further battlefield gains.

"War is very pragmatic," he told the AP on condition of anonymity in compliance with military regulations. "If we have weapons, enough ammunition, infantry, armored vehicles and aviation — great. If not, then we're done," he said.

He recalled a seven-month delay in U.S. aid that ended in April 2024 but in the meantime opened a door for the Russian capture of the strategically important city of Avdiivka.

Others said the move has left even greater confusion about Donald Trump's intentions.

"The problem is that it's unclear what Trump wants and what the purpose of his actions is," said Oleksandr Merezhko, Ukrainian lawmaker and chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. "As of today, it appears that he is increasingly siding with Russia and trying to pressure Ukraine into accepting Russia's demands."

"This looks terrible — forcing the weaker side to accept the terms of the stronger aggressor," he told AP.

Olena Fedorova, a 46-year-old resident of the southern port city of Odesa, said she hoped Trump's decision would be "a temporary measure" because "we really need help."

The U.S.-Ukraine relationship has taken a downturn in recent weeks as Trump's team launched bilateral talks with Russia and Trump's demeanor toward Zelenskyy has become increasingly dismissive.

Trump says he wants to get traction for peace negotiations. He vowed during his campaign to settle the war in 24 hours, but in January changed that time frame and voiced hope that peace could be negotiated in six months.

Russian government backs aid pause while European allies stress support for Kyiv

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Washington's decision could act as a spur to a peace agreement.

"The U.S. has been the chief supplier in this war so far," Peskov said. "If the U.S. suspends these supplies it will make the best contribution to peace."

Russia will likely try to use the halt in supplies to extend its territorial gains and strengthen its position in prospective peace talks.

Russia's state RIA Novosti news agency quoted Andrei Kartapolov, a retired general who chairs the defense committee in the lower house of Russian parliament, predicting that Ukraine would exhaust its current ammunition reserves within months. "We need to keep up the pressure and continue to target their bases and depots with long-range precision weapons to destroy the stockpiles," he said.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's European allies reaffirmed their commitment to Kyiv.

The chief of the European Union's executive proposed an 800 billion euro (\$841 billion) plan to beef up defenses of EU nations to lessen the impact of potential U.S. disengagement and provide Ukraine with military muscle.

The British government, which has been leading European efforts to keep Trump from pushing to end the war on terms that could favor Moscow, said in a statement that it remains "absolutely committed to securing a lasting peace in Ukraine."

Malcolm Chalmers, deputy director-general of the Royal United Services Institute, a London-based defense think tank, said Washington's move could encourage Russia to ask for more Ukrainian concessions, including demilitarization and neutrality.

"This decision is not about economics. It is driven fundamentally by Trump's view that Russia is willing to do a peace deal, and only Ukraine is the obstacle," Chalmers said. "But there is no evidence that Russia would be prepared to accept a deal, and what that would be."

Trump said on Monday that he is still interested in signing a deal that would hand over a share of Ukraine's minerals to the United States, an agreement that Zelenskyy has also said he is ready to sign.

"By abruptly halting military assistance to Ukraine, President Trump is hanging Ukrainians out to dry and giving Russia the green light to continue marching west," said Razom for Ukraine, a Ukrainian advocacy group. "Razom for Ukraine urges the White House to immediately reverse course, resume military aid and pressure Putin to end his horrific invasion."

EU ponders 800 billion euro plan to beef up defenses to counter possible US disengagement

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The chief of the European Union's executive on Tuesday proposed an 800 billion-euro (\$841 billion) plan to beef up the defenses of EU nations, aiming to lessen the impact of potential U.S. disengagement and provide Ukraine with military muscle to negotiate with Russia following the freeze of U.S. aid to the embattled nation.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the massive "REARM Europe" package will be put to the 27 EU leaders. They are holding an emergency meeting in Brussels on Thursday following a week of increasing political uncertainty from Washington, where President Donald Trump questioned both his alliance to the continent and the defense of Ukraine.

"I do not need to describe the grave nature of the threats that we face," von der Leyen said. Her plan had already been in the works before Trump's decision early Tuesday to pause military aid to Ukraine.

Key to the quandary of EU nations has been an unwillingness to spend much on defense over the past decades as they hid under the U.S. nuclear umbrella and were hurt by a sluggish economy, which creates challenges for a quick ramp-up of such spending. It increasingly has left them on the world's diplomatic sidelines.

How it would work

Most of the money Von der Leyen is talking about, would come from loosening the fiscal constraints the EU puts on budgetary spending to "allow member states to significantly increase their defense expenditures without triggering" punishing rules aimed at keeping deficits from going too far into the red. It would help member states to spend on defense without being forced to cut into social spending purely to keep within EU rules.

"So if member states would increase their defense spending by 1.5% of GDP on average, this could create fiscal space of close to 650 billion euros (\$683 billion) over a period of four years," von der Leyen said. This would be topped up by a loans program, controversially backed by the common EU budget, of 150 billion euros (\$157 billion) to allow member states to invest in defense.

She said military equipment that needs to be improved includes air and missile defense, artillery systems, missiles and ammunition, drones and anti-drone systems and cyber preparedness.

Such a plan will force many EU member states to greatly increase their military spending, which is still below 2% of gross domestic product. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte has told the member states they need to move to more than 3% as quickly as possible.

The plan will now be the blueprint for Thursday's summit, although immediate decisions beyond strong commitments were unlikely.

Von der Leyen hopes her plan will aid Ukraine

Von der Leyen said her plan would also help Ukraine as it struggles now, especially with any joint purchase of military materiel. "With this equipment, member states can massively step up their support to Ukraine," she said.

Such measures are all the more essential since President Donald Trump directed a "pause" to U.S. assistance to Ukraine as he seeks to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to engage in negotiations to end the war with Russia. In sharp contrast, the EU has always said that it wants Zelenskyy to

negotiate from a position of strength, necessitating more arms for Kyiv, rather than less.

Washington's move came just days after a disastrous Oval Office meeting in which Trump tore into Zelenskyy for what he perceived as insufficient gratitude for the more than \$180 billion the U.S. has appropriated for military aid and other assistance to Kyiv since the start of Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

In Europe, Trump's move was also seen as yet more proof it could no longer count on the trans-Atlantic alliance that has been the bedrock of geopolitics since World War II.

"Some of our fundamental assumptions are being undermined to their very core," von der Leyen wrote to EU leaders ahead of Thursday's summit. "The pace of change is disconcerting and increasingly alarming."

EU leaders hope Hungary won't scuttle agreement

Within the EU, unanimity is often necessary for agreements on international affairs and Ukraine, and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán has often kept the 26 other member states back.

Over the weekend, Orbán already indicated in a letter that he would oppose draft conclusions that center on the defense of Ukraine and its place at the negotiating table. But summit host and EU Council President Antonio Costa is hopeful that on common defense, Orbán will not play the spoiler.

In a letter to Budapest, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, Costa wrote that "Regarding European defense, I welcome the fact that no objections are raised in your letter. There appears to be broad agreement on the need for Europe to become more sovereign, more capable and better equipped."

Trump pauses US military aid to Ukraine while pressuring Zelenskyy to move toward quick end to war

By AAMER MADHANI, ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday directed a "pause" to U.S. assistance to Ukraine as he seeks to pressure Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to engage in negotiations to end the war with Russia.

The move comes just days after a disastrous Oval Office meeting in which Trump and Vice President JD Vance tore into Zelenskyy for what they perceived as insufficient gratitude for the more than \$180 billion U.S. has appropriated for military aid and other assistance to Kyiv since the start of Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

A White House official said Trump is focused on reaching a peace deal and wants Zelenskyy "committed" to that goal. The official added that the U.S. was "pausing and reviewing" its aid to "ensure that it is contributing to a solution." The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the assistance.

The order will remain in effect until Trump determines that Ukraine has demonstrated a commitment to peace negotiations with Russia, the official said.

The halting of military aid comes some five years after Trump held up congressionally authorized assistance to Ukraine as he sought to pressure Zelenskyy to launch an investigation into Joe Biden, then a Democratic presidential candidate. The moment led to Trump's first impeachment.

In the leadup to the 2024 election, Trump vowed a quick end to the war in Ukraine, even once boasting that he could bring a halt to the fighting in one day. He has shown increasing frustration with Zelenskyy over the war while simultaneously expressing confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom he has long admired, can be trusted to keep the peace if a truce is reached.

Trump earlier on Monday slammed Zelenskyy for suggesting that the end of the war likely "is still very, very far away." Zelenskyy had suggested it would take time to come to an agreement to end the war as he tried to offer a positive take on the U.S.-Ukraine relationship in the aftermath of last week's White House meeting.

"This is the worst statement that could have been made by Zelenskyy, and America will not put up with it for much longer!" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform, responding to comments Zelenskyy made late Sunday to reporters.

Trump, at a White House event later Monday, referred to Zelenskyy's reported comments and asserted

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the Ukrainian leader “better not be right about that.”

Zelenskyy later took to social media in an effort to further explain his thinking. He did not directly refer to Trump’s comments, but underscored that it “is very important that we try to make our diplomacy really substantive to end this war the soonest possible.”

“We need real peace and Ukrainians want it most because the war ruins our cities and towns,” Zelenskyy added. “We lose our people. We need to stop the war and to guarantee security.”

Trump administration and Ukrainian officials had been expected to sign off on a deal during Zelenskyy’s visit last week that would have given the U.S. access to Ukraine’s critical minerals in part to pay back the U.S. for aid it has sent Kyiv since the start of the war. The White House had billed such a pact as a way to tighten U.S.-Ukrainian relations in the long term.

Vance, in an interview with Fox News’ Sean Hannity that aired Monday evening, said European allies were doing Ukraine a disservice by not pressing Zelenskyy to find an endgame to the war.

“A lot of our European friends puff him up,” Vance said. “They say, you know, you’re a freedom fighter. You need to keep fighting forever. Well, fighting forever with what? With whose money, with whose ammunition and with whose lives?”

Democrats said the pausing of aid to Ukraine was dangerous and ill-advised.

Democratic Rep. Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania, who is co-chair of the Congressional EU Caucus, said the decision “is reckless, indefensible, and a direct threat to our national security.”

The Biden administration provided Kyiv with more than \$66.5 billion in military aid and weapons since the war began. It had left unspent about \$3.85 billion in congressionally authorized funding to send more weapons to Ukraine from existing U.S. stockpiles — a sum that had not been affected by the foreign aid freeze that Trump put in place when he first took office.

“This aid was approved by Congress on a bipartisan basis — Republicans and Democrats alike recognized that standing with Ukraine is standing for democracy and against Putin’s aggression,” Boyle said in a statement. “Yet, Trump, who has repeatedly praised Putin and undermined our allies, is now playing political games with critical military assistance.”

Democratic Rep. Dan Goldman, who served as counsel to House Democrats in the first impeachment inquiry against Trump, said the pausing of aid was “another extortion” of Zelenskyy.

“This is the exact opposite of peace through strength,” Goldman said. “Instead, what it is is it’s another extortion of President Zelenskyy, illegally withholding aid in order to get President Zelenskyy to agree to a minerals deal.”

Trump’s national security adviser said Zelenskyy’s posture during Friday’s Oval Office talks “put up in the air” whether he’s someone the U.S. administration will be able to deal with going forward.

“Is he ready, personally, politically, to move his country towards an end to the fighting?” Mike Waltz said Monday on Fox News’ “America’s Newsroom.” “And can he and will he make the compromises necessary?”

Waltz added another layer of doubt about U.S. support as other high-profile Trump allies, including House Speaker Mike Johnson and Sen. Lindsey Graham, have suggested that the relationship between Trump and Zelenskyy is becoming untenable.

Angela Stent, a former national intelligence officer for Russia and Eurasia at the National Intelligence Council, said Putin is likely in no rush to end the war amid the fissures between Trump and Zelenskyy and between Europe and the U.S. about the way ahead.

“He thinks Russia is winning. ... And he thinks that as time goes on, the West will be more fractured,” said Stent, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Trump on Monday suggested he hasn’t given up on the economic pact, calling it “a great deal.” He added that he expected to speak about the deal during his Tuesday address before a joint session of Congress.

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, a Pennsylvania Republican who co-chairs the Congressional Ukraine Caucus, spoke with Zelenskyy’s chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, earlier Monday about getting the mineral rights deal back on track.

Key GOP senators also indicated before the announcement of paused aid that they see a path to put U.S.-Ukraine relations back on track.

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"We got to lower the temperature," said Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., "and get to a deal that's economically beneficial and takes care of our interests as well as the interests of the Ukrainian people."

Sen. Markwayne Mullin, an Oklahoma Republican who is a close ally of Trump, said he believes the president and Zelenskyy can "move past it."

"Getting the minerals deal done is a first step," Mullin said. After that, he said, Zelenskyy needs to be "realistic on what a peace deal looks like."

US tariffs on Canada and Mexico take effect, as China takes aim at US farm exports

By JOSH BOAK, PAUL WISEMAN and ROB GILLIES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's long-threatened tariffs against Canada and Mexico went into effect Tuesday, putting global markets on edge and setting up costly retaliations by the United States' North American allies.

Starting just past midnight, imports from Canada and Mexico are now to be taxed at 25%, with Canadian energy products subject to 10% import duties.

The 10% tariff that Trump placed on Chinese imports in February was doubled to 20%, and Beijing retaliated Tuesday with tariffs of up to 15% on a wide array of U.S. farm exports. It also expanded the number of U.S. companies subject to export controls and other restrictions by about two dozen.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his country would slap tariffs on more than \$100 billion of American goods over the course of 21 days. Mexico didn't immediately detail any retaliatory measures.

The U.S. president's moves raised fears of higher inflation and the prospect of a devastating trade war even as he promised the American public that taxes on imports are the easiest path to national prosperity. He has shown a willingness to buck the warnings of mainstream economists and put his own public approval on the line, believing that tariffs can fix what ails the country.

"It's a very powerful weapon that politicians haven't used because they were either dishonest, stupid or paid off in some other form," Trump said Monday at the White House. "And now we're using them."

The Canada and Mexico tariffs were supposed to begin in February, but Trump agreed to a 30-day suspension to negotiate further with the two largest U.S. trading partners. The stated reason for the tariffs is to address drug trafficking and illegal immigration, and both countries say they've made progress on those issues. But Trump has also said the tariffs will only come down if the U.S. trade imbalance closes, a process unlikely to be settled on a political timeline.

The tariffs may be short-lived if the U.S. economy suffers. But Trump could also impose more tariffs on the European Union, India, computer chips, autos and pharmaceutical drugs. The American president has injected a disorienting volatility into the world economy, leaving it off balance as people wonder what he'll do next.

"It's chaotic, especially compared to the way we saw tariffs rolled out in the first (Trump) administration," said Michael House, co-chair of the international trade practice at the Perkins Coie law firm. "It's unpredictable. We don't know, in fact, what the president will do."

Democratic lawmakers were quick to criticize the tariffs, and even some Republican senators raised alarms.

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she's "very concerned" about the tariffs going into effect because of her state's proximity to Canada.

"Maine and Canada's economy are integrated," Collins said, explaining that much of the state's lobsters and blueberries are processed in Canada and then sent back to the U.S.

The world economy is now caught in the fog of what appears to be a trade war.

Even after Trump announced Monday that the tariffs were going forward, Canadian officials were still in touch with their U.S. counterparts.

"The dialogue will continue, but we are ready to respond," Canadian Defense Minister Bill Blair said in Ottawa as he went into a special Cabinet meeting on U.S.-Canada relations. "There are still discussions taking place."

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Shortly after Blair spoke, Trudeau said Canada would impose 25% tariffs on \$155 billion Canadian (\$107 billion U.S.) worth of American goods, starting with tariffs on \$30 billion Canadian (\$21 billion U.S.) worth of goods immediately and on the remaining amount on American products in three weeks.

"Our tariffs will remain in place until the U.S. trade action is withdrawn, and should U.S. tariffs not cease, we are in active and ongoing discussions with provinces and territories to pursue several non-tariff measures," Trudeau said.

The White House would like to see a drop in seizures of fentanyl inside the United States, not just on the northern and southern borders. Administration officials say that seizures of fentanyl last month in everywhere from Louisiana to New Jersey had ties to foreign cartels.

Damon Pike, technical practice leader for customs and trade services at the tax and consulting firm BDO, suggested the responses of other countries could escalate trade tensions and possibly increase the economic pressure points.

"Canada has their list ready," Pike said. "The EU has their list ready. It's going to be tit for tat."

The Trump administration has suggested inflation will not be as bad as economists claim, saying tariffs can motivate foreign companies to open factories in the United States. On Monday, Trump announced that Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, the computer chipmaker, would be investing \$100 billion in domestic production.

Still, it can take time to relocate factories spread across the world and train workers with the skills they need.

Greg Ahearn, president and CEO of The Toy Association, said the 20% tariffs on Chinese goods will be "crippling" for the toy industry, as nearly 80% of toys sold in the U.S. are made in China.

"There's a sophistication of manufacturing, of the tooling," he said. "There's a lot of handcrafting that is part of these toys that a lot of people don't understand ... the face painting, the face masks, the hair weaving, the hair braiding, the cut and sew for plush to get it to look just so. All of that are very high hands, skilled labor that has been passed through generations in the supply chain that exists with China."

For a president who has promised quick results, Ahearn added a note of caution about how quickly U.S. factories could match their Chinese rivals.

"That can't be replicated overnight," he said.

Here's what tariffs are and how they work

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tariffs are in the news at the moment. Here's what they are and what you need to know about them:

Tariffs are a tax on imports

Tariffs are typically charged as a percentage of the price a buyer pays a foreign seller. In the United States, tariffs are collected by Customs and Border Protection agents at 328 ports of entry across the country.

U.S. tariff rates vary: They are generally 2.5% on passenger cars, for instance, and 6% on golf shoes. Tariffs can be lower for countries with which the United States has trade agreements. Before the U.S. began imposing 25% tariffs on good from Canada and Mexico as of Tuesday, most goods moved between the United States and those countries tariff-free because of President Donald Trump's U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade agreement.

Mainstream economists are generally skeptical about tariffs, considering them an inefficient way for governments to raise revenue.

There's much misinformation about who actually pays tariffs

Trump is a proponent of tariffs, insisting that they are paid for by foreign countries. In fact, it is importers — American companies — that pay tariffs, and the money goes to the U.S. Treasury. Those companies typically pass their higher costs on to their customers in the form of higher prices. That's why economists say consumers usually end up footing the bill for tariffs.

Still, tariffs can hurt foreign countries by making their products pricier and harder to sell abroad. Foreign

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companies might have to cut prices — and sacrifice profits — to offset the tariffs and try to maintain their market share in the United States. Yang Zhou, an economist at Shanghai's Fudan University, concluded in a study that Trump's tariffs on Chinese goods inflicted more than three times as much damage to the Chinese economy as they did to the U.S. economy.

What has Trump said about tariffs?

Trump has said tariffs will create more factory jobs, shrink the federal deficit, lower food prices and allow the government to subsidize childcare.

"Tariffs are the greatest thing ever invented," Trump said at a rally in Flint, Michigan, during his presidential campaign.

During his first term, Trump imposed tariffs with a flourish — targeting imported solar panels, steel, aluminum and pretty much everything from China.

"Tariff Man," he called himself.

Trump is moving ahead with higher tariffs in his second term.

The United States in recent years has gradually retreated from its post-World War II role of promoting global free trade and lower tariffs. That's generally a response to the loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs, widely attributed to unfettered free trade and China's ascent as a manufacturing power.

Tariffs are intended mainly to protect domestic industries

By raising the price of imports, tariffs can protect home-grown manufacturers. They may also serve to punish foreign countries for unfair trade practices such as subsidizing their exporters or dumping products at unfairly low prices.

Before the federal income tax was established in 1913, tariffs were a major revenue source for the government. From 1790 to 1860, tariffs accounted for 90% of federal revenue, according to Douglas Irwin, a Dartmouth College economist who has studied the history of trade policy.

Tariffs fell out of favor as global trade grew after World War II. The government needed vastly bigger revenue streams to finance its operations.

In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30, the government collected around \$80 billion in tariffs and fees, a trifle next to the \$2.5 trillion that comes from individual income taxes and the \$1.7 trillion from Social Security and Medicare taxes.

Still, Trump favors a budget policy that resembles what was in place in the 19th century.

Tariffs can also be used to pressure other countries on issues that may or may not be related to trade. In 2019, for example, Trump used the threat of tariffs as leverage to persuade Mexico to crack down on waves of Central American migrants crossing Mexican territory on their way to the United States.

Trump even sees tariffs as a way to prevent wars.

"I can do it with a phone call," he said at an August rally in North Carolina.

If another country tries to start a war, he said he'd issue a threat:

"We're going to charge you 100% tariffs. And all of a sudden, the president or prime minister or dictator or whoever the hell is running the country says to me, 'Sir, we won't go to war.'"

Economists generally consider tariffs self-defeating

Tariffs raise costs for companies and consumers that rely on imports. They're also likely to provoke retaliation.

The European Union, for example, punched back against Trump's tariffs on steel and aluminum by taxing U.S. products, from bourbon to Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Likewise, China has responded to Trump's trade war by slapping tariffs on American goods, including soybeans and pork in a calculated drive to hurt his supporters in farm country.

A study by economists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Zurich, Harvard and the World Bank concluded that Trump's tariffs failed to restore jobs to the American heartland. The tariffs "neither raised nor lowered U.S. employment" where they were supposed to protect jobs, the study found.

Despite Trump's 2018 taxes on imported steel, for example, the number of jobs at U.S. steel plants barely budged: They remained right around 140,000. By comparison, Walmart alone employs 1.6 million people in the United States.

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Worse, the retaliatory taxes imposed by China and other nations on U.S. goods had “negative employment impacts,” especially for farmers, the study found. These retaliatory tariffs were only partly offset by billions in government aid that Trump doled out to farmers. The Trump tariffs also damaged companies that relied on targeted imports.

If Trump’s trade war fizzled as policy, though, it succeeded as politics. The study found that support for Trump and Republican congressional candidates rose in areas most exposed to the import tariffs — the industrial Midwest and manufacturing-heavy Southern states like North Carolina and Tennessee.

On a cold northern island, a mantra rises: ‘Greenland is not for sale’

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — On a boat, surrounded by snow-covered mountains and icebergs in shades of blue, Qooqu Berthelsen points to the breaking sea ice as a worrisome sign.

Now, though, something is worrying him and many Greenlanders as much as the retreating ice that endangers their livelihood.

“My concern,” says the 23-year-old hunter, fisher and tour company owner, “is that Trump will come and take Greenland.”

He then repeats what has become a mantra for Greenlanders in the weeks since U.S. President Donald Trump pushed their Arctic homeland into the spotlight by threatening to take it over. That has ignited unprecedented interest in full independence from Denmark — a key issue in a parliamentary election on March 11.

“Greenlanders don’t want to be Danish. Greenlanders don’t want to be American,” Berthelsen says.

“Greenland,” he says, “is not for sale.”

It’s a rising argument about a strategic location

You’ll hear this declared all over the land, from the prime minister and university students in Nuuk, the world’s northernmost capital, to hunters and fishermen in sparsely populated villages across the planet’s largest island. This is, after all, Kalaallit Nunaat — Greenlandic for the “Land of the People” or the “Land of the Greenlanders.”

Most of those 57,000 Greenlanders are Indigenous Inuit. They take pride in a culture and traditions that have helped them survive for centuries in exceptionally rugged conditions. In their close link to nature. In belonging to one of the most beautiful, remote, untouched places on Earth.

Many in this semi-autonomous territory are worried and offended by Trump’s threats to seize control of their mineral-rich homeland, even by force, because he says the U.S. needs it “for national security.”

“How can a few words ... change the whole world?” asked Aqqaluk Lynge, a former president of the Inuit Circumpolar Council and founder of the Inuit Ataqatigiit party, which governs Greenland. “It can because he’s playing with fire. We’re seeing another United States here with whole new ideas and wishes.”

Greenland is vital to the world, though much of the world may not realize it. The U.S and other global powers covet its strategic location in the Arctic; its valuable rare earth minerals trapped under the ice needed for telecommunications; its billions of barrels of oil; its potential for shipping and trade routes as that ice keeps retreating because of climate change.

Not even one of Trump’s most fervent fans in Greenland — who proudly wears a MAGA hat, and a T-shirt emblazoned with Trump pumping his fist and the words: “American Badass” — wants to be American.

But like other Greenlanders, he wants stronger ties to the U.S. and to open for business beyond Denmark, which colonized them 300 years ago and still exercises control over foreign and defense policy.

“When Trump came to office, he wanted to talk to Greenlanders directly without going through Denmark. He wants to negotiate with us and that’s why the Danish are very afraid,” said Jørgen Boassen, who has visited the White House and welcomed Donald Trump Jr. when he recently visited Nuuk.

The American president’s comments set off a political crisis in Denmark. The prime minister went on a tour of European capitals to garner support, saying the continent faced “a more uncertain reality,” while

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her country moved to strengthen its military presence around Greenland.

There's consternation all around

For some, it's been dizzying, a rollercoaster of emotions since Trump's threats, since his son landed in Nuuk in January in a TRUMP-emblazoned plane and since his father posted on social media: "MAKE GREENLAND GREAT AGAIN!" with a message to Greenlanders: "We're going to treat you well."

"When that was happening, I felt like I was hit in the stomach," said Qupanuk Olsen, a mining engineer and social media influencer running in the election for the Naleraq party.

Around her, supporters gathered at a bay filled with giant pieces of ice in Nuuk waving the red and white national flag that represents the sun and the ice that covers most of Greenland.

"I could feel that the ground will no longer ever be the same again," she said. "It's as if we were on sea ice and it started to break, and we don't know what's going to happen next."

Journalists from afar have descended on Nuuk, asking locals what they think of Trump's words. Pro-Trump media influencers known as the Nelk Boys arrived handing out MAGA hats and \$100 bills to children in Nuuk's streets.

"Even though there are strong feelings of sadness, despair, confusion, I think we're also stronger than ever. We're fighting it for our people and that gives me hope," said Aka Hansen, an Inuk filmmaker and writer. She is suspicious of Trump's intentions but still thanks him for turning the world's attention to her homeland.

"We went through all the emotions — at first very funny, very light, then very serious," said Hansen, who worked with Conan O'Brien when the comedian came to Nuuk in 2019 to shoot an episode poking fun at Trump's idea of buying Greenland. "Now, with all the international press that's been here, we've been given a voice that's being taken seriously."

Like many other Greenlanders, she doesn't want to be ruled by another colonial power. But she feels Trump's rhetoric has increased the momentum for independence from Denmark.

The former colonial ruler is accused of committing abuses against her island's Inuit people, including removing children from their families in the 1950s with the excuse of integrating them into Danish society and fitting women with intrauterine contraceptive devices in the 1960s and 1970s — allegedly to limit population growth in Greenland.

"It's a historic moment for Greenland ... compared to two months ago when nobody was talking about independence," Olsen said. "Now, everybody's talking about it."

Is autonomy the way?

A former colony of Denmark, Greenland gained self-rule in 1979 and now runs itself through its parliament. A treaty with the United States, and a U.S. military base in Greenland, also gives Washington say over the territory's defense.

Greenland is massive — about one-fifth the size of the United States or three times the size of Texas. Its land mass is in North America, and its Arctic capital city is closer to New York than to Copenhagen.

"Denmark is just a middle man in that whole setup. And we don't need that middle man anymore," said Juno Berthelsen, a candidate in the election for Naleraq party. He says Trump has given Greenland leverage to negotiate with Denmark. "Our political goal is to have our own defense agreement, so that we connect directly with the U.S. in terms of defense and security."

His party, he said, aims to invoke an article in a law that would give Greenland increased autonomy and eventually a path to full independence.

Asked to describe Greenland's moment, he said: "If I had to pick one word, it would be exciting. And full of opportunities."

In his first term in office, Trump began to talk about acquiring Greenland from Denmark, a longtime U.S. ally. Back in 2019, most dismissed it. But it had a ripple effect.

"It was not taken that seriously back then as it is today. But it was important for Greenland because he, without wanting, did Greenlanders a favor," said Ebbe Volquardsen, a professor of cultural history at the University of Greenland. "He underlined the value of being in a union with Greenland."

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Greenland's economy depends on fisheries and other industries as well as on an annual grant of about \$600 million from Denmark. When Trump showed interest in buying Greenland because of its strategic location and mineral resources, he highlighted that annual sum as the amount of what other nations would be willing to pay to have a military or commercial presence in Greenland, Volquardsen said. With that, he gave Greenland leverage for more autonomy and possible reparations for abuses committed by its former colonial ruler.

"That was important because the narrative in Denmark until that date ... had been that Greenland is receiving this funding as a kind of aid or altruistic gift," Volquardsen, said.

Greenland awaits the next steps — of others

Life in Nuuk seemed to go on as usual in mid-February, except for a "heat wave." After weeks of subzero temperatures, it made the capital of Greenland several degrees hotter than Washington, D.C., the U.S. capital.

Large chunks of powder blue ice were blown by winds, blocking boats on the harbor and creating a spectacle for residents who snapped photos under the pink light of a sunset. Some nights, the sky was lit up by spectacular streaks of green and other colors from the northern lights.

You could almost forget that Greenland has become ground zero for a geopolitical showdown — if, that is, you ignored the front pages of local newspapers featuring images of Trump and the ticker tape in downtown with his name and the Greenlandic word "Amerikamiut."

On a frigid day, a group of kindergarteners in fluorescent vests walked in line behind their teacher as they crossed a road covered in ice and snow. A few blocks away, teenagers played hockey on a frozen pond.

On a hill next to a statue of the Danish-Norwegian missionary who founded the city in 1721, bells tolled, and a recently married couple laughed as family members threw rice on them for good fortune outside Nuuk's wooden Lutheran cathedral. More than 90% of Greenlanders identify as Lutherans.

After the wedding ceremony, guests converged at their home for a "Kaffemik," a traditional celebratory gathering where they share coffee and baked goods.

Some Greenlanders say they felt safe while being largely unknown to the world. Now, though, that feeling has dissipated.

Sitting with her husband at a dinner table filled with families chatting and laughing, Tukumminnguaq Olsen Lyberth, said the wave of attention and polarizing comments prompted some friends to delete Facebook accounts.

"We're not use to having this big attention about us, so it's overwhelming. Before, no one knew about us. Now, it's a blitz of attention," said Olsen Lyberth, 37, a cultural history student at the University of Greenland.

"I feel like this is the longest January," she said jokingly — in February. "It's all of it. Everything feels too overwhelming."

India's steel industry contemplates potential fallout from Trump administration tariffs

By SIBI ARASU Associated Press

BENGALURU, India (AP) — Rows of small factories line the streets of a dusty suburb in Bengaluru, where workers weld and cast Indian-made steel into everything from car parts to kitchen sinks. Here, U.S. President Trump's announcement to impose high trade tariffs on steel imports has some unexpected supporters.

Many industry workers and experts expect that the result of tariffs will be that cheap steel gets dumped in places like India. That's because the announced 25% tariff will make it too expensive for many companies in countries like China and South Korea to keep exporting to the U.S.

For B. Praveen of Sun Techpro Engineering, which makes products from steel metal sheets, it means his "wafer-thin" profit margins will probably grow as the steel he buys gets cheaper.

"For thousands of companies like mine, this can be a good thing," he said. Businesses such as Praveen's employ over 200 million Indians and are key drivers of India's economy.

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But cheaper steel in India isn't good for everyone. In February Naveen Jindal, the president of the Indian Steel Association, which represents all India's steelmakers, said that he was "deeply concerned," especially since "India is one of the few major markets without any trade restrictions," making it a target for potential steel dumping. And the increased competition could impact efforts by India to produce its own steel more cleanly. The current production of most Indian steel releases high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, which cause climate change. Reduction efforts could be cut in the interest of keeping profits up.

India's steel industry is big and dirty — and is set to keep growing

India is the world's most populous nation and one of the fastest-growing major economies. Steel demand is rising rapidly due to fast-paced urbanization, infrastructure, and industrial growth, and the government expects steel production to increase from 120 million tons to 300 million tons in the next five years.

Currently, up to 12% of India's greenhouse gas emissions come from steelmaking according to the Global Energy Monitor, an organization that tracks energy projects around the globe. It found this could likely double in five years if more steel is produced as per the government's plans.

Henna Khadeeja, a research analyst with GEM, explained that unlike China, Europe, or the United States, Indian steelmakers still mostly use coal-based blast furnaces to make steel, which are more high-emitting. In September last year, the Indian government said it would invest \$1.72 billion to help the steel industry transition to cleaner methods of steelmaking.

But Khadeeja said all the new steel expansion plans that have been announced are for coal-based steel production facilities. "Right now, the focus is mostly on producing as much steel as possible. The strategy is mostly to retroactively decarbonize the steel once the capacity is built in place," she said.

Cleaning up steel is vital for India's future

Building more coal-based blast furnaces make it more difficult for India to export its steel in the future, particularly to Europe, said Easwaran Narassimhan of the New Delhi-based think tank Sustainable Futures Collaborative. The European Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, a tax on carbon emissions that Europe will begin charging for all products imported to the bloc from next year, would likely turn off any buyers from steel made with coal-based blast furnaces.

"China's steel production is less emissions-intensive, which means it's going to face a lesser impact from European carbon taxes," said Narassimhan. "Any amount of short-term pain today is going to be worth in the long run."

India too has ambitious climate goals and wants to produce 500 gigawatts of clean power — enough to power nearly 300 million Indian homes — by the end of this decade. The South Asian nation recently crossed the milestone of installing 100 gigawatts of solar power, most of which was installed in the last 10 years.

India also aims to go net zero — that is to stop adding planet-warming gas to the atmosphere, either by preventing the emissions in the first place or removing an equivalent amount through natural or technological means — by 2070.

Indian steelmakers said they recognize the need to emit less but are apprehensive about how much it'll cost them. "If you're not financially viable, you cannot exist as a business," said Prabodh Acharya, chief sustainability officer at JSW Group, one of India's biggest steel companies.

"Steel is essential for the growth of society and economy. We need to find the right balance between growth, economy and decarbonization," he said.

Syrian refugee family that Pope Francis brought to Rome prays for him as they build new life

By GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Just before breaking the Ramadan fast on Sunday evening, Hasan Zaheda played basketball with his son in the tiny courtyard of the basement-level apartment on Rome's outskirts where the refugee family is rebuilding their lives.

They have no pictures from their native Syria — they fled Damascus at the height of the civil war with

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only one change of clothes, diapers and milk for their toddler. But there is a framed photo of little Riad meeting Pope Francis, who brought them and two other Muslim families back with him to Italy from refugee camps in the Greek island of Lesbos almost a decade ago.

"He's a gift from paradise," Zaheda said Sunday, chuckling. "Pope Francis, a gift from our God, that God sent us to save us."

As the Zahedas began to observe the holy month of Ramadan, Francis, 88, entered his third week of battling pneumonia in a hospital not far away. The least they can do, the family said, is to be close to him in prayer night and day.

"We look for his health bulletin every day," said the mother, Nour Essa, 39, after recalling meeting the pontiff suddenly in Lesbos. "What shocked me the most is that the father of the church was a modest man, who didn't have prejudices, open toward other ethnicities and religion."

The family journeyed on the pope's plane – one of the most visible moments of advocacy for migrants that marked Francis' papacy. The Zahedas remember how kindly Francis patted Riad's head as he passed down the aisle to speak with journalists.

But "miraculous" as it appeared to them, it was only the beginning of a new life in Italy to which they're still adjusting.

Essa, a biologist, and Zaheda, an architect who worked as a civil servant in Damascus, decided to leave Syria in 2015 after he was drafted into the military. They sold their house to pay for a smuggler, walking through the night trying not to make a sound in the desert and at one point riding for ten hours in different trucks.

After scrambling to get through ISIS-controlled territory, they made it into Turkey and then had three failed attempts to reach the Greek islands by boat before arriving in Lesbos in early 2016.

"I always thank God that my son was so small, and that he has no memory of all these things," Essa said as Riad watched a Syrian soap opera in the cramped living room with his grandfather, who fled about a year after them. On the walls, Hasan's haunting paintings of white faces against swirling black and red tell of the parents' all-too-vivid memories.

After more than one month in a Lesbos camp, the family was approached for an interview by a stranger – Daniela Pompei, the head of migration and integration for the Catholic charity Sant'Egidio.

She had been tasked with finding families with appropriate paperwork that Francis could bring back to Rome with him, and asked them to make a decision on the spot. They accepted, and the charity, with Vatican funds, eventually brought more than 300 refugees from Greece and 150 from another papal trip to Cyprus in 2021.

Sant'Egidio's goal was to spare migrants longer journeys by sea across different routes in the Mediterranean, which have killed tens of thousands of asylum-seekers willing to "die for hope" over the years, Pompei said.

But the real test has been integration, from processing their asylum cases to learning Italian to school and job placement. Initiatives like the pope's make all the difference because they signal to the refugees that their new communities are willing to welcome them, despite faith differences.

"The pope has long appealed to open parishes, to welcome at least one family in each parish, to push us Catholics too to counter what he called, with a very strong term in Lampedusa, 'the globalization of indifference,'" Pompei said.

In the characteristic Roman accent they've acquired, the Zaheda parents told of their challenges – having to reenroll in university so their degrees can be recognized, helping their families come to Europe, taking care of their son.

Working or studying 12 hours a day, they rarely have time to socialize with other Syrian families and the migrants who comprise most of their neighbors in the modest brick-faced apartment buildings as well as most of Riad's classmates.

His best friend is from Ecuador, and Riad plans to study Spanish in middle school. He's joined a local basketball team, and pictures from the court line his bedroom, where a large Syrian flag hangs by his bunkbed. He likes to read *The Little Prince* in English, but his Arabic is tentative, even though he spends

most afternoons with his grandfather, who loves to sketch local churches.

For Sunday's iftar – the meal breaking the day's fast – the family topped a little table with yogurt-and-chickpea tisiyeh salad and take-out pizza in typical Roman flavors like zucchini flowers and anchovies.

As Riad packed his backpack for the school week, his parents said their future hinges on the little boy – for whom they will likely stay in Italy, instead of joining relatives in France or returning to a Syria they probably couldn't recognize.

"I always wish that he can build his future, that he can build a position as the son of an undocumented migrant who arrived in Italy and who wanted to leave his mark in a new country," Zaheda said.

Refugees injured in clashes with Kenyan police during food ration protests

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — At least four people sustained gunshot wounds as police clashed with protesters in Kenya's Kakuma refugee camp, in the country's north.

Thousands of refugees in the camp, which hosts people fleeing from conflict and drought in neighboring South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi and Congo, protested Monday against food rationing due to funding constraints.

The World Food Program, which is in charge of food distribution at the refugee camp, said in last December the food rations to refugee camps were "at 45 percent of the minimum food basket due to resource constraints."

The WFP has warned for years that it is facing shortfalls in the contributions from governments it relies on for funding, and on Monday it announced that it is closing its office in South Africa due to U.S. President Donald Trump's cuts in foreign aid.

A refugee from neighboring South Sudan, John Garang, held up a roughly 4 litre (1 gallon) pot.

"This is the container they are now using to measure beans and oil and the other one for rice. And this is equivalent for one month for your food. Assume you don't have another income, it's only this. Is this enough for you," he asked.

Kenya is currently in the process of transitioning refugees into integrated settlements as opposed to the previous system of refugee camps, which are donor reliant, and has already gazetted Kakuma and Dadaab as municipalities.

New Orleans rushes to rework Mardi Gras celebrations in the face of storm and twister warnings

By JEFF MARTIN and JACK BROOK Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Officials rushed to reschedule Mardi Gras celebrations and warned revelers against brining umbrellas and tents as powerful storms with a threat of tornadoes were expected to strike Louisiana and other parts of the South on Tuesday.

New Orleans moved up its two biggest Mardi Gras Day parades and cut down their routes to try to avoid the potentially destructive weather. Police were also expected to keep the hundreds of participants and dozens of floats moving quickly so they finished before winds were predicted to pick up, according to New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick.

The alarming forecast was one of the first big tests for the National Weather Service after hundreds of forecasters were fired last week as part of President Donald Trump's moves to slash the size of the federal government. Former employees said the firing of meteorologists who make crucial local forecasts across the U.S. could put lives at risk.

Country faces a number of weather threats

The U.S. was facing multiple weather threats, including dust storms that brought near-zero visibility to parts of New Mexico and west Texas on Monday, prompting the National Weather Service to issue Dust

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Storm Warnings. "Widespread blowing dust" was expected Tuesday, said the weather service office covering Midland and Odessa, Texas.

The week's strong weather system will bring "a threat of blizzard conditions, high winds, flash flooding, severe weather, dust storms, and critical to extreme fire weather conditions to the nation's heartland," according to a weather service update Monday.

On Tuesday, twisters, damaging winds and large hail were all possible as a strong storm system was set to move across the nation's midsection into Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi, the federal Storm Prediction Center warned.

The bullseye for a heightened risk of severe weather was an area stretching from east Texas to Alabama that's home to more than 7 million people. Cities under threat included Baton Rouge and Shreveport in Louisiana; Jackson, Mississippi; and Mobile, Alabama.

New Orleans braces for severe weather during Mardi Gras

The New Orleans area was also preparing for strong storms, though Fat Tuesday's traditionally raucous annual rite of parades of floats and costumed merrymakers remained scheduled to hit the streets, with some changes still being worked out by authorities and leaders of "krewes" — social clubs that organize the parades.

Kirkpatrick ordered parade-goers to not bring umbrellas, tents or "anything that could fly in the wind and cause mayhem." She warned that she may need to cancel the parades at the last minute if the weather gets worse.

"I hold that trump card in which I will not hesitate to cancel — I won't do it lightly, but I will do it," she said.

Two other parades that had been scheduled to roll through the city later on Tuesday with nearly 200 truck floats were postponed, Kirkpatrick said.

Just outside New Orleans in neighboring Jefferson Parish, officials canceled planned Mardi Gras Day parades due to anticipated high winds and thunderstorms.

"This is disappointing, but our top priority is ensuring the well-being of everyone in our community, and we must always prioritize safety above all else," Jefferson Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng said in a statement.

Mardi Gras floats "could become unstable" and heavy winds could "blow down trees and power lines," the National Weather Service warned, adding gusts of up to 60 mph (97 kph) were expected Tuesday afternoon.

In Pointe Coupee Parish, near Louisiana's capital city of Baton Rouge, the incoming weather forced drastic changes to one of the oldest Mardi Gras celebrations in the state. The parade there was scheduled to roll without any bands, marching teams or dance groups — a staple of Carnival Season parades.

Officials also moved the parade start time up and urged residents to immediately remove all tents and trash after the parade ends "due to the dangers they can present during weather."

Other cities with Mardi Gras parades watching forecasts

Elsewhere, large crowds were expected Tuesday for Mardi Gras celebrations in Mobile, Alabama. Police there said they were continuing to monitor the forecast and would let the public know if plans for the celebration changed.

Other cities hosting large Mardi Gras events included Biloxi, Mississippi, where an annual Mardi Gras parade was scheduled to start at 1 p.m. Tuesday.

In downtown Pensacola in the Florida Panhandle, organizers were planning a Big Easy-style Mardi Gras festival that included food trucks, dancing, live entertainment and a low country seafood boil.

Trump to stand before Congress and offer divided nation an accounting of his turbulent first weeks

By ZEKE MILLER AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will stand before a joint session of Congress on Tuesday to give an accounting of his turbulent first weeks in office as a divided nation struggles to keep pace, with some Americans fearing for the country's future while others are cheering him on.

It will be the latest milestone in Trump's total takeover of the nation's capital where the Republican-led House and Senate have done little to restrain the president as he and his allies work to slash the size of the federal government and remake America's place in the world. With a tight grip on his party, Trump has been emboldened to take sweeping actions after overcoming impeachments and criminal prosecutions.

The White House said Trump's theme would be the "renewal of the American dream," and he was expected to lay out his achievements since returning to the White House, as well as appeal to Congress to provide more money to finance his aggressive immigration crackdown.

"It's an opportunity for President Trump, as only he can, to lay out the last month of record-setting, record-breaking, unprecedented achievements and accomplishments," said senior adviser Stephen Miller.

Democrats, many of whom stayed away from Trump's inauguration in January, were largely brushing aside calls for boycotts as they struggle to come up with an effective counter to the president.

Instead, they chose to highlight the impact of Trump's actions by inviting fired federal workers as guests, including a disabled veteran from Arizona, a health worker from Maryland and a forestry employee who worked on wildfire prevention in California. They also invited guests who would be harmed by steep federal budget cuts to Medicaid and other programs.

"Rather than focusing on American families and kitchen table issues, President Trump's first month in office has focused on tax cuts for billionaires, paid for by the very people he promised to help," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement.

Trump also planned to use his speech to address his proposals for fostering peace in Ukraine and the Middle East, where he has unceremoniously upended the policies of the Biden administration in a matter of just weeks. On Monday, Trump ordered a freeze to U.S. military assistance to Ukraine, ending years of staunch American support for the country in fending off Russia's invasion.

Trump was tightening the screws after his explosive Oval Office meeting Friday with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as the U.S. leader tries to pressure the erstwhile American ally to embrace peace talks with its invader.

In the Middle East, negotiations to extend a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas have stalled, with Trump floating the permanent displacement of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and a U.S. "takeover" of the territory, straining partnerships with countries in the region and undoing longtime American support for a two-state solution to end the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

The backdrop of Trump's speech will also be new economic uncertainty unleashed after the president opened the day by placing stiff tariffs on imports from the country's neighbors and closest trading partners. A 25% tax on goods from Canada and Mexico went into effect just after midnight Tuesday — ostensibly to secure greater cooperation to tackle illicit fentanyl trafficking — triggering immediate retaliation and sparking fears of a wider trade war. Trump also raised tariffs on goods from China to 20%.

The whole scene for Trump's speech was a marked contrast to his final State of the Union address in his first term. Five years ago, Trump delivered his annual address just after the Senate had acquitted him during his first impeachment trial and before the COVID-19 pandemic had taken root across society. Tuesday's address is not referred to as a State of the Union because he is still in the first year of his new term.

The president planned to use his high-profile moment to press his efforts to reshape the country's approach to social issues, as he looks to continue to eradicate diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across the country and to roll back some public accommodations for transgender individuals.

Watching from the gallery will be first lady Melania Trump, who only Monday held her first solo public event since her husband returned to power. She pushed for passage of a bill to prevent revenge porn,

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and her guests in the chamber will include 15-year-old Elliston Berry, the victim of an explicit deepfake image sent to classmates.

The Democrats' guests also include at least one government watchdog dismissed by Trump in his bid to emplace loyalists across positions of influence.

Republicans lawmakers, too, are trying to make a point with their invited guests.

Republican Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa said she would host Scott Root, father of the late Sarah Root, who died on the night of her 2016 college graduation in a vehicle crash involving an immigrant who was in the country without legal authority.

Outside Washington, the latest round of public protest against Trump and his administration also was unfolding Tuesday. Loosely coordinated groups planned demonstrations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia timed to Trump's address.

New Orleans to celebrate Mardi Gras Day with costumes and revelry despite weather concerns

By JACK BROOK Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Thousands of revelers adorned in beads and outlandish costumes will fill the streets of New Orleans as the city celebrates Mardi Gras Day despite anticipated severe storms.

The city's two biggest parades — hosted by social clubs Krewe of Zulu and Krewe of Rex — are set to go on with earlier start times, shorter routes and no marching bands, New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick told reporters Monday. The parades will be required to wrap up by 11:30 a.m. local time to avoid diminishing weather.

"Bottom line, they gonna still get the Zulu parade and all the excitement, it's just a little earlier," said Darren Mire, a Krewe of Zulu spokesperson. "We have to err on the side of caution, we have to protect the citizens of New Orleans and the visitors, and this was the best decision possible to get things done."

Thunderstorms and winds up to 60 mph (100 kph) are expected throughout Tuesday, the National Weather Service said. In neighboring Jefferson Parish, officials canceled parades.

Kirkpatrick warned parade-goers to not bring umbrellas, tents or "anything that could fly in the wind and cause mayhem." Worsening weather Tuesday morning could still be a condition for calling off the city's parades at the last minute, she added.

"I will cancel the parades at that point, no matter what time that is," Kirkpatrick said. "I hold that trump card in which I will not hesitate to cancel — I won't do it lightly, but I will do it."

Two other parades which had been scheduled to roll through the city later on Tuesday with nearly 200 truck floats have been postponed to Sunday, Kirkpatrick said.

Other cities along the Gulf Coast, such as Mobile, Alabama, and Pensacola, Florida, hold their own Mardi Gras Day parades.

The culmination of the weeklong carnival season, Fat Tuesday festivities of feasting and drinking precede Ash Wednesday, traditionally the start of Lent, a period of fasting in Christian tradition in preparation for Easter Sunday. As a result, this year's Mardi Gras Day falls unusually late in the year.

But the outsized culture of street parties, extravagant balls and spirited parades has evolved into a decidedly secular spectacle in the Big Easy.

The day kicks off with the North Side Skull and Bone Gang, a drum-playing group which for more than 200 years has gathered before sunrise to awake neighbors in the city's historic Treme neighborhood.

Across the city, renowned Black masking Indians, whose spectacular beaded and bejeweled costumes are topped with feathered head dresses, take to the streets to represent a central part of African American culture in the city dating back to the 1800s.

One of the most beloved parades, the Krewe of Zulu, typically features hundreds of marching members tossing trinkets to spectators such as beads and highly coveted decorated coconuts.

And the Krewe of Rex, a social club led by the honorary king of carnival season, bears the traditional colors of purple, green and gold.

The festivities are also marked by enhanced security presence across the city following a devastating Jan. 1 truck attack that killed 14 people. The Department of Homeland Security upgraded Mardi Gras to its highest risk rating, leading to an influx of law enforcement agents. A zigzagging layout of barriers parallels the main parade route to guard against fast-moving vehicles and armored trucks; SWAT teams and helicopters will be present.

With the Gaza ceasefire in limbo, Israel tries to impose an alternative plan on Hamas

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

Israel this week introduced what it said was a new U.S. ceasefire plan — different from the one it agreed to in January — and is trying to force Hamas to accept it by imposing a siege on the Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu referred to it as the “Witkoff proposal,” saying it came from U.S. President Donald Trump’s Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff. But the White House has yet to confirm that, saying only that it supports whatever action Israel takes.

Netanyahu’s remarks came a day after the first phase of the negotiated ceasefire ended, with no clarity on what would come next since the agreement’s second phase has not yet been hammered out.

The new plan would require Hamas to release half its remaining hostages — the militant group’s main bargaining chip — in exchange for a ceasefire extension and a promise to negotiate a lasting truce. Israel made no mention of releasing more Palestinian prisoners — a key component of the first phase.

Hamas has accused Israel of trying to sabotage the existing agreement, which called for the two sides to negotiate the return of the remaining hostages in exchange for more Palestinian prisoners, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a lasting ceasefire. But no substantive negotiations have been held.

On Sunday, Israel halted all food, fuel, medicine and other supplies to Gaza’s population of some 2 million people and vowed “additional consequences” if Hamas did not embrace the new proposal.

Arab leaders are meanwhile finalizing a separate plan for postwar Gaza to counter Trump’s suggestion that its population be relocated so it can be transformed into a tourist destination.

But all bets are off if the war resumes.

The existing agreement is in limbo

The ceasefire reached in January, after more than a year of negotiations mediated by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, laid out a three-phase plan to return all the hostages taken by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, and ending the war triggered by the attack.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people that day, mostly civilians, and took 251 hostage. More than 100 were released in an earlier ceasefire. Israeli forces rescued eight and recovered dozens of bodies before the current ceasefire took hold.

During the first, six-week phase, Hamas released 25 living Israeli hostages and the bodies of eight more in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners. Israeli forces withdrew from most of Gaza and allowed an influx of desperately needed humanitarian aid. Each side accused the other of violations, but the deal held.

Phase 2 was always going to be far more difficult because it would force Israel to choose between securing the return the hostages and annihilating Hamas — two of Netanyahu’s main war goals.

Hamas, which remains in control of Gaza, has said it will only release the remaining hostages if Israel ends the war. But that would leave the militant group intact and with major influence over the territory, even if it hands over formal power to other Palestinians, as it says it is willing to do.

The new plan favors Israel

Hamas still has 59 hostages, 35 of whom are believed to be dead. Under the so-called Witkoff plan, it would release half the hostages on the first day — apparently without getting anything new in return.

The sides would then have around six weeks — through the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the Jewish Passover holiday ending April 20 — to negotiate a permanent ceasefire and the return of the remaining hostages.

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But with fewer hostages, Hamas' hand would be weakened, and Israel and the United States are already speaking about new conditions — like the disarmament of Hamas or the exile of its leadership — that were not part of the original agreement.

A political lifeline for Netanyahu

Netanyahu's narrow coalition is beholden to far-right allies who want to eliminate Hamas, depopulate Gaza through what they refer to as "voluntary emigration" and rebuild Jewish settlements in the territory. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich has threatened to bring down the government if Netanyahu enters Phase 2 of the existing agreement and does not resume the war.

The new plan would buy Netanyahu six weeks of breathing room and enough time to pass a budget by the end of the month — something he must do to keep his government from automatically falling. If it falls, elections would be held roughly a year and a half ahead of schedule and could see him removed from power.

Opposition parties say they would ensure Netanyahu's government is not brought down over a deal that returns the rest of the hostages. But that would still weaken him politically.

The American position is unclear

Netanyahu says his government has "fully coordinated" its approach with the Trump administration, which has publicly endorsed Israel's war goals, including the eradication of Hamas. But Witkoff has not said a word in public about the plan that supposedly bears his name, and U.S. officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Monday.

Trump himself has sent mixed signals about Gaza.

As a candidate, he pledged to end wars in the Middle East, and he took credit for pushing the ceasefire agreement past the finish line just before his inauguration.

But he has also expressed revulsion at Hamas' treatment of the captives and suggested that "all hell" should break loose if they are not immediately returned, while leaving that decision to Israel.

An Arab counterproposal to Trump's Gaza plan

Trump has also floated the idea of relocating Gaza's roughly 2 million Palestinians to other countries so the U.S. can rebuild it as a tourist destination. Netanyahu welcomed that proposal, which was universally rejected by Palestinians, Arab countries and human rights experts, who warn it could violate international law.

It's hard to see how Trump's Gaza plan would be carried out without Israel resuming the war and launching an even bloodier offensive than the last one, which left much of Gaza in ruins and killed over 48,000 Palestinians, according to local health authorities. They say more than half of those killed were women and children but do not specify how many of the dead were combatants.

Egypt has developed a counterproposal expected to be endorsed at an Arab summit in Cairo on Tuesday. Under its plan, Palestinians would remain in Gaza and relocate to "safe zones" while cities are rebuilt. Hamas would hand over power to a transitional authority of political independents while the international community works to empower the Western-backed Palestinian Authority.

But Israel, which has ruled out any role for the Palestinian Authority in postwar Gaza, is unlikely to accept such a plan. And while Trump has called on Arab countries to come up with their own proposal, it's unclear whether he would go for it either.

Pope Francis suffers new breathing crises, is back on noninvasive ventilation, Vatican says

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis suffered two new acute respiratory crises Monday and was put back on noninvasive mechanical ventilation, in another setback to his battle to fight pneumonia, the Vatican said.

Doctors extracted "copious" amounts of mucus from his lungs during two bronchoscopies, in which a camera-tipped tube was sent down into his airways with a sucker at the tip to suction out fluid. The Vatican said the mucus was his body's reaction to the original pneumonia infection and not a new infection,

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given laboratory tests don't indicate any new bacteria.

Francis remained alert, oriented and cooperated with medical personnel. The prognosis remained guarded. Doctors didn't say if he remained in stable condition, though they referred to the crises in the past tense, suggesting they were over.

The crises were a new setback in what has become a more than two-week battle by the 88-year-old pope, who has chronic lung disease and had part of one lung removed, to overcome a complex respiratory infection.

Dr. John Coleman, a pulmonary critical care doctor at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago, said the episodes were more concerning than the last one on Friday, in which Francis had a coughing fit, inhaled some vomit that needed to be extracted and then was put on the noninvasive mechanical ventilation for a day and then didn't need it anymore.

The use of bronchoscopies reflects a worrying level of mucus and phlegm in the lungs, Coleman said. "The fact that they had to go in there and remove it manually is concerning, because it means that he is not clearing the secretions on his own," he said.

"He's taking little steps forward and then steps back," said Coleman, who is not involved in Francis' care.

In a late update, the Vatican said the episodes were caused by a "significant accumulation" of mucus in his lungs and bronchial spasms. "Copious secretions," were extracted during the bronchoscopies and the pope was put back on noninvasive mechanical ventilation, a mask that covers his nose and mouth and pumps oxygen into the lungs, the Vatican said.

Francis, who is not physically active, uses a wheelchair and is overweight, had been undergoing respiratory physiotherapy to try to improve his lung function. But the accumulation of the secretions in his lungs was a sign that he doesn't have the muscle tone to cough vigorously enough to expel the fluid.

The Vatican hasn't released any photos or videos of Francis since before he entered the hospital on Feb. 14 with a complex lung infection. This has become the longest absence of his 12-year papacy.

The Vatican has defended Francis' decision to recover in peace and out of the public eye. But on Monday one of Francis' closest friends at the Vatican, Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia, urged him to let his voice be heard, saying the world needs to hear it.

"We need men like him who are truly universal and not only one-sided," Paglia said, speaking after a press conference to launch the annual assembly of his Pontifical Academy for Life, the Vatican's bioethics academy, which has as this year's theme "The End of the World?"

Francis wrote a message to the assembly in which he lamented that international organizations are increasingly ineffective to combat the threats facing the world and are being undermined by "short-sighted attitudes concerned with protecting particular and national interests." It was dated Feb. 26 and signed "from Gemelli Polyclinic."

Doctors often use noninvasive ventilation to stave off an intubation, or the use of invasive mechanical ventilation. Francis has not been intubated during this hospitalization. It's not clear if he has provided any advance directives about the limits of his care if he declines or loses consciousness.

Catholic teaching holds that life must be defended from conception until natural death. It insists that chronically ill patients, including those in vegetative states, must receive "ordinary" care such as hydration and nutrition, but "extraordinary" or disproportionate care can be suspended if it is no longer beneficial or is only prolonging a precarious and painful life.

Francis articulated that to a meeting of Paglia's bioethics body in 2017, saying there was "no obligation to have recourse in all circumstances to every possible remedy." He added: "It thus makes possible a decision that is morally qualified as withdrawal of 'overzealous treatment.'"

Paglia, whose office helps articulate the Catholic Church's position on end-of-life care, said Francis is like any other Catholic and would follow church teaching if it came to that.

"Today the pope is giving us an extraordinary teaching on fragility," he added. "Today the pope, not through words but with his body, is reminding all of us, we elderly people to begin with, that we are all fragile and therefore we need to take care of each other."

Francis' 17-night hospitalization is by no means reaching the papal record that was set during St. John

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Paul II's numerous lengthy hospitalizations over a quarter century. The longest single hospitalization occurred in 1981, when John Paul spent 55 days in Gemelli for a minor operation and then a long infection that followed.

Trump says 25% tariffs on Mexican and Canadian imports will start Tuesday, with 'no room' for delay

By JOSH BOAK, ZEKE MILLER and ROB GILLIES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Monday that 25% taxes on imports from Mexico and Canada would start Tuesday, sparking renewed fears of a North American trade war that already showed signs of pushing up inflation and hindering growth.

"Tomorrow — tariffs 25% on Canada and 25% on Mexico. And that'll start," Trump told reporters in the Roosevelt Room. "They're going to have to have a tariff."

Trump has said the tariffs are to force the two U.S. neighbors to step up their fight against fentanyl trafficking and stop illegal immigration. But Trump has also indicated that he wants to eliminate the Americas' trade imbalances as well and push more factories to relocate in the United States.

His comments quickly rattled the U.S. stock market, with the S&P 500 index down 2% in Monday afternoon trading. It's a sign of the political and economic risks that Trump feels compelled to take, given the possibility of higher inflation and the possible demise of a decades-long trade partnership with Mexico and Canada as the tariffs would go into effect at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday.

Yet the Trump administration remains confident that tariffs are the best choice to boost U.S. manufacturing and attract foreign investment. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said Monday that the computer chipmaker TSMC had expanded its investment in the United States because of the possibility of separate 25% tariffs.

In February, Trump put a 10% tariff on imports from China. He reemphasized Monday that the rate would be doubling to 20% on Tuesday.

Trump provided a one-month delay in February as both Mexico and Canada promised concessions. But Trump said Monday that there was "no room left for Mexico or for Canada" to avoid the steep new tariffs, which were also set to tax Canadian energy products such as oil and electricity at a lower 10% rate.

Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday that "there is no justification" for Trump's tariffs.

"Because of the tariffs imposed by the U.S., Americans will pay more for groceries, gas and cars, and potentially lose thousands of jobs," he said. "Tariffs will disrupt an incredibly successful trading relationship. They will violate the very trade agreement that was negotiated by President Trump in his last term."

Trudeau said his country will retaliate by putting 25% tariffs on American goods worth \$155 billion Canadian (\$107 billion U.S.) over the course of 21 days, starting with tariffs on \$30 billion Canadian (\$21 billion U.S.) after midnight Tuesday.

Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum went into Monday waiting to see what Trump would say.

"It's a decision that depends on the United States government, on the United States president," Sheinbaum said ahead of Trump's statement. "So whatever his decision is, we will make our decisions and there is a plan, there is unity in Mexico."

Both countries have tried to show action in response to Trump's concerns. Mexico sent 10,000 National Guard troops to their shared border to crack down on drug trafficking and illegal immigration. Canada named a fentanyl czar, even though smuggling of the drug from Canada into the United States appears to be relatively modest.

As late as Sunday, it remained unclear what choice Trump would make on tariff rates. Lutnick told Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures" that the decision was "fluid."

"He's sort of thinking about right now how exactly he wants to play it with Mexico and Canada," Lutnick said. "And that is a fluid situation. There are going to be tariffs on Tuesday on Mexico and Canada. Exactly what they are, we're going to leave that for the president and his team to negotiate."

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Mexico has also offered to place 20% taxes on all imports from

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China as part of talks with the United States.

Bessent told CBS News on Sunday that China would “eat” the cost of the tariffs, instead of passing them along to the U.S. businesses and consumers that import their products in the form of higher prices.

But companies ranging from Ford to Walmart have warned about the negative impact that tariffs could create for their businesses. Similarly, multiple analyses by the Peterson Institute for International Economics and the Yale University Budget Lab suggest that an average family could face price increases of more than \$1,000.

“It’s going to have a very disruptive effect on businesses, in terms of their supply chains as well as their ability to conduct their business operations effectively,” said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University. “There are going to be inflationary impacts that are going to be disruptive impacts.”

Democrats were quick to criticize the announced tariffs for making inflation worse and alienating allies.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said voters in last year’s election were primarily upset by inflation and “now Donald Trump is making it worse.”

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., predicted the cost of fertilizer will go up for farmers in her state.

“This is a crazy way to handle our allies, right? He’s literally reaching out to Russia at the same time that he’s putting a 25% tariff on Canadian goods,” she said.

Trump also plans to roll out what he calls “reciprocal” tariffs in April that would match the rate charged by other countries, including any subsidies and value added taxes charged by those countries.

The U.S. president has already announced the removal of exemptions from his 2018 tariffs on steel and aluminum, in addition to tariffs on autos, computer chips, copper and pharmaceutical drugs.

How springing forward to daylight saving time could affect your health — and how to prepare

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most of America “springs forward” Sunday for daylight saving time and losing that hour of sleep can do more than leave you tired and cranky the next day. It also could harm your health.

Darker mornings and more evening light together knock your body clock out of whack — which means daylight saving time can usher in sleep trouble for weeks or longer. Studies have even found an uptick in heart attacks and strokes right after the March time change.

There are ways to ease the adjustment, including getting more sunshine to help reset your circadian rhythm for healthful sleep.

When does daylight saving time start?

Daylight saving time begins Sunday at 2 a.m., an hour of sleep vanishing in most of the U.S. The ritual will reverse on Nov. 2 when clocks “fall back” as daylight saving time ends.

Hawaii and most of Arizona don’t make the spring switch, sticking to standard time year-round along with Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Worldwide, dozens of countries also observe daylight saving time, starting and ending at different dates.

Some people try to prepare for daylight saving time’s sleep jolt by going to bed a little earlier two or three nights ahead. With a third of American adults already not getting the recommended seven hours of nightly shut-eye, catching up can be difficult.

What happens to your brain when it’s lighter later?

The brain has a master clock that is set by exposure to sunlight and darkness. This circadian rhythm is a roughly 24-hour cycle that determines when we become sleepy and when we’re more alert. The patterns change with age, one reason that early-to-rise youngsters evolve into hard-to-wake teens.

Morning light resets the rhythm. By evening, levels of a hormone called melatonin begin to surge, triggering drowsiness. Too much light in the evening — that extra hour from daylight saving time — delays that surge and the cycle gets out of sync.

Sleep deprivation is linked to heart disease, cognitive decline, obesity and numerous other problems.

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And that circadian clock affects more than sleep, also influencing things like heart rate, blood pressure, stress hormones and metabolism.

How does the time change affect your health?

Fatal car crashes temporarily jump the first few days after the spring time change, according to a study of U.S. traffic fatalities. The risk was highest in the morning, and researchers attributed it to sleep deprivation.

Then there's the cardiac connection. The American Heart Association points to studies that suggest an uptick in heart attacks on the Monday after daylight saving time begins, and in strokes for two days afterward.

Doctors already know that heart attacks, especially severe ones, are a bit more common on Mondays generally — and in the morning, when blood is more clot-prone.

Researchers don't know why the time change would add to that Monday connection but it's possible the abrupt circadian disruption exacerbates factors such as high blood pressure in people already at risk.

How to prepare for daylight saving time

Gradually shift bedtimes about 15 or 20 minutes earlier for several nights before the time change, and rise earlier the next morning, too. Go outside for early morning sunshine that first week of daylight saving time, another way to help reset your body's internal clock. Moving up daily routines, like dinner time or when you exercise, also may help cue your body to start adapting, sleep experts advise.

Afternoon naps and caffeine as well as evening light from phones and other electronic devices can make adjusting to an earlier bedtime even harder.

Will the U.S. ever eliminate the time change?

Every year there's talk about ending the time change. In December, then-President-elect Donald Trump promised to eliminate daylight saving time. For the last several years, a bipartisan bill named the Sunshine Protection Act to make daylight saving time permanent has stalled in Congress; it has been reintroduced this year.

But that's the opposite of what some health groups recommend. The American Medical Association and American Academy of Sleep Medicine agree it's time to do away with time switches but say sticking with standard time year-round aligns better with the sun — and human biology — for more consistent sleep.

How Trump's history with Russia and Ukraine set the stage for a blowup with Zelenskyy

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As his White House meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart devolved into a stunning blowup, President Donald Trump leaned on a familiar refrain to explain his unique kinship with Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

"Putin went through a hell of a lot with me," Trump said Friday, raising his voice and gesturing with his hands as he recounted the long-since-concluded saga of a federal investigation in which both he and the Russian president played starring roles.

"He went through a phony witch hunt where they used him and Russia. Russia, Russia, Russia, ever hear of that deal?" Trump said.

The pointed reference to the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election underscored the extent to which Trump's lingering fury over an inquiry he has misleadingly branded a "hoax" remains top of mind more than eight years after it began.

It also made clear that Trump's view of a war Russia launched against Ukraine three years ago is colored not only by his relationship with Putin and the alliance he believes they share but also by his fraught past with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was a central player in the first of two impeachment cases against Trump during his first four years in office.

Here's a look at what the American president means when he says "Russia, Russia, Russia":

Investigations tied to Putin connections

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Questions over Trump's connections to Putin followed him into his first presidency and hung over him for most of his term, spurring investigations by the Justice Department and Congress and the appointment of a special counsel who brought criminal charges against multiple Trump allies.

While running for office, Trump cast doubt on the idea that Russian government hackers had stolen the emails of Democrats, including his 2016 rival Hillary Clinton, and orchestrated their public release in an effort to boost his candidacy and harm hers.

Then, as president, he broke with his own intelligence community's firm finding that Russia and Russia alone was to blame for the hack. Even when he begrudgingly conceded that Russia might be responsible, he also suggested the culprit might be a "400-pound genius sitting in bed and playing with his computer."

In July 2018, while standing alongside Putin in Helsinki, Trump appeared to embrace the Russian leader's protestations over the conclusions of U.S. intelligence officials by saying, "I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today."

He added that "I don't see any reason why it would be" Russia.

All the while, he memorably raged against the investigation, calling it a "hoax" and "witch hunt" and, as he did at the White House last week, repeatedly deriding all the "Russia, Russia, Russia" attention.

Special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation wrapped up in 2019 and left no doubt that Russia had interfered in the 2016 election in sweeping and criminal fashion and that the Trump campaign had welcomed the help. But the inquiry did not find sufficient evidence to prove that the two sides had illegally colluded to tip the outcome of the election.

'Do us a favor'

If Trump's history with Russia appears to have contributed to his worldview of the current conflict, so too has his past with Ukraine.

He held a call in 2019 with Zelenskyy and pushed him to investigate corruption allegations against Democratic rival Joe Biden and Biden's son Hunter ahead of the 2020 election, which Joe Biden went on to win.

The call — which included Trump's memorable line: "I would like you to do us a favor, though" — was reported by a CIA officer-turned-whistleblower who alleged that the president appeared to be soliciting interference from a foreign country in the U.S. election.

After Trump's call with Zelenskyy, the White House temporarily halted U.S. aid to the struggling ally facing hostile Russian forces at its border. The money was eventually released as Congress intervened.

Trump was subsequently impeached by the House but acquitted by the Senate.

The president's skepticism of Ukraine went beyond the call. During his first term, he also seemingly bought into a long-discredited conspiracy theory that connects Ukraine, not Russia, to the 2016 political interference and the hacking of the Democratic National Committee and repeatedly accused the FBI of a lackluster investigation that led to the blaming of the Kremlin.

What happens next?

The long-term repercussions of the Oval Office spat, in which Trump called Zelenskyy "disrespectful" in the most hostile public exchange in memory between world leaders at the White House, remain to be seen.

But the immediate consequences are clear, with Trump on Monday directing a "pause" to U.S. assistance to Ukraine as he seeks to pressure Zelenskyy to engage in peace talks with Russia. Earlier, the U.S. president again blasted the Ukrainian leader after Zelenskyy noted that a deal to end the war "is still very, very far away."

Zelenskyy, meanwhile, left Washington without signing a minerals deal that Trump said would have moved Ukraine closer to ending its war with Russia. He's not welcome back, Trump said on social media, until he's "ready for Peace."

With the U.S.-Ukraine relationship now in jeopardy, Zelenskyy has used a series of posts on X to express his thanks to the American people, Trump and Congress for "all the support."

European leaders, including British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, have embraced Zelenskyy in the aftermath of the White House fight.

In Russia, officials are relishing the conflict, sensing an opportunity to move closer to the U.S. That window

seemed to open last month when the U.S., in a dramatic reversal in position, split from European allies by refusing to blame Russia for its invasion of Ukraine in votes on U.N. resolutions seeking an end to the war.

In an interview with a Russian state TV reporter that aired Sunday, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the new U.S. administration is "rapidly changing all foreign policy configurations."

"This largely coincides with our vision," he added.

Man pleads guilty to murder and attempted murder in shooting at suburban Chicago July 4 parade

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

WAUKEGAN, Ill. (AP) — An Illinois man pleaded guilty Monday to killing seven people and injuring dozens more when he opened fire on a 2022 Independence Day parade in a Chicago suburb, a stunning development moments before opening statements in his trial on murder and attempted murder charges.

Appearing in a Lake County circuit courtroom, Robert E. Crimo III, 24, withdrew his earlier not-guilty plea in the Highland Park shooting.

Prosecutors initially charged him with 21 counts of first-degree murder — three counts for each person killed — as well as 48 counts of attempted murder. Prosecutors dropped 48 less serious counts of aggravated battery before jury selection last week.

On Monday, Judge Victoria Rossetti read the charges to Crimo and asked questions to be sure he understood before accepting the plea. He was sitting next to his lawyers wearing a dark suit.

"Is that what you went over with your attorneys?" Rossetti asked.

"Yes," Crimo replied.

He gave mostly one-word answers to her follow-up questions. His mother, Denise Pesina, had a brief outburst at the news and the judge gave her a warning.

"We're going to move forward," the judge said to her. "You are not a party to this proceeding. If you would like to stay in the courtroom please have a seat and be quiet."

She was allowed to stay.

The judge said with the plea change, there would be no trial or further motions. Jurors were never even let into the courtroom.

The legal proceedings have moved slowly, partly due to Crimo's unpredictable behavior. Last year, Crimo was expected to accept a plea deal and give victims and relatives a chance to address him publicly, but changed his mind at the last minute, shocking even his attorneys.

He also fired his public defenders and said he would represent himself. Then he abruptly reversed himself. As potential jurors were questioned last week, he sporadically appeared in court, at times refusing to leave his jail cell.

"He has knowingly and voluntarily waived those rights and pleaded guilty," Rossetti said Monday.

Prosecutors read the names of all those killed in the shooting and of those injured, with the judge stopping to ask questions to make sure Crimo understood. They went over the substantial evidence, including DNA samples and a video-taped confession to police.

"Our community may never heal from the defendant's calculated and heinous actions that destroyed so many lives," Lake County State's Attorney Eric Rinehart told reporters after court. "He received nothing in exchange for his plea. We were 1000% ready to go to trial and prove him guilty to the jury. We have been working for years to prepare our evidence."

Sentencing will come April 23, but Crimo is certain to spend the rest of his life behind bars. Each count of first-degree murder carries a maximum natural life prison sentence. Prosecutors said survivors would get the chance to address Crimo at the sentencing.

Crimo didn't further address the court before leaving the courtroom.

His public defenders did not address reporters after the hearing.

Security was tight at the courthouse, with bag checks and observers required to lock up their phones.

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The change of plea shocked those gathered in the courtroom, including survivors and their families. Ashbey Beasley, who attended the 2022 parade with her son, said it was a huge relief. She said they had to run for their lives and even though they weren't injured, they have had to heal. Seeing Crimo at hearings has added to their trauma.

"Every single time I see him, it's stressful. It's upsetting for everyone in our community," she told reporters after court. "We all just wanted this to be over."

A spokeswoman for a law firm representing dozens of survivors in a lawsuit said they were ready to "pursue civil justice." Survivors and their families have filed multiple lawsuits, including against the maker of the semiautomatic rifle used in the shooting and against authorities they accuse of negligence.

"They have all gone home to process," said Jennifer McGuffin with Chicago-based Romanucci & Blandin LLC. "They each expressed an individual and a collective sense of relief, but today was a very emotional event and they are asking for some time and space to come to terms with what happened.

The trial was expected to last about a month.

Dozens of people were wounded in the shooting in the suburb about 30 miles (50 kilometers) north of Chicago. The wounded ranged in age from their 80s down to an 8-year-old boy who was left partially paralyzed.

Witnesses described confusion as the shots began, followed by panic as families fled the downtown parade route, leaving behind lawn chairs and strollers to find safety inside nearby businesses or homes.

Authorities said Crimo perched on a roof and fired into crowds.

His father, Robert Crimo Jr., a onetime mayoral candidate, was charged in connection with how his son obtained a gun license. He pleaded guilty in 2023 to seven misdemeanor counts of reckless conduct and served less than two months in jail.

Residents in the wealthy Highland Park community of roughly 30,000 set along Lake Michigan have mourned the losses deeply. Some potential jurors were excused because of their connections to the case.

City leaders canceled the usual parade in 2023, opting for a "community walk." The parade was reinstated last year on a different route and with a memorial for the victims.

Highland Park Mayor Nancy Rotering called the plea change an important step towards justice.

"Our thoughts and hearts remain with the families whose loved ones were senselessly taken," she told reporters Monday.

The victims killed in the shooting included Katherine Goldstein, 64; Jacquelyn Sundheim, 63; Stephen Straus, 88; Nicolas Toledo-Zaragoza, 78; Eduardo Uvaldo, 69; and married couple Kevin McCarthy, 37, and Irina McCarthy, 35.

Storms, possible twisters to threaten the South just as New Orleans celebrates Mardi Gras

By JEFF MARTIN and JACK BROOK Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Powerful storms with a threat of tornadoes are expected to punch through Louisiana and other parts of the South on Tuesday just as costumed revelers celebrate Mardi Gras with huge parades and partying in the streets of New Orleans and other cities in the region.

New Orleans moved up its two biggest Mardi Gras Day parades and cut down their routes to try to avoid the potentially destructive weather. Police are also expected to keep the hundreds of participants and dozens of floats moving quickly so they finish before winds are expected to pick up, according to New Orleans Police Superintendent Anne Kirkpatrick.

The alarming forecast will be one of the first big tests for the National Weather Service after hundreds of forecasters were fired last week under President Donald Trump's moves to slash the size of the federal government. Former employees say the firing of meteorologists who make crucial local forecasts across the U.S. could put lives at risk.

MULTIPLE WEATHER THREATS LOOM THIS WEEK

Multiple weather threats loom this week for the U.S., starting with dust storms that brought near-zero

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visibility to parts of New Mexico and west Texas, prompting the National Weather Service to issue Dust Storm Warnings. "Widespread blowing dust," was expected Tuesday, said the weather service office covering Midland and Odessa, Texas.

The week's strong weather system will bring "a threat of blizzard conditions, high winds, flash flooding, severe weather, dust storms, and critical to extreme fire weather conditions to the nation's heartland," according to a weather service update Monday.

On Tuesday, twisters, damaging winds and large hail are all possible as a strong storm system moves across the nation's midsection into Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi, the federal Storm Prediction Center warns.

The bullseye for a heightened risk of severe weather is an area stretching from east Texas to Alabama that's home to more than 7 million people. Cities under threat include Baton Rouge and Shreveport in Louisiana; Jackson, Mississippi; and Mobile, Alabama.

New Orleans braces for severe weather during Mardi Gras

The New Orleans area is also bracing for strong storms, though Fat Tuesday's traditionally raucous annual rite of parades of floats and costumed merrymakers remain scheduled to hit the streets, with some changes still being worked out by authorities and leaders of "krewes" — social clubs that organize the parades.

"We're going to start off with an earlier start time," said Elroy James, president of the Zulu Social Aid and Pleasure Club. "All krewes have been willing to lean in and make whatever adjustments necessary."

Yet just outside New Orleans in neighboring Jefferson Parish, officials canceled planned Mardi Gras Day parades due to anticipated high winds and thunderstorms.

"This is disappointing, but our top priority is ensuring the well-being of everyone in our community, and we must always prioritize safety above all else," Jefferson Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng said in a statement.

Mardi Gras floats "could become unstable" and heavy winds could "blow down trees and power lines," the National Weather Service warned, adding gusts of up to 60 mph (97 kph) are expected Tuesday afternoon.

In Pointe Coupee Parish, near Louisiana's capital city of Baton Rouge, the incoming weather forced drastic changes to one of the oldest Mardi Gras celebrations in the state. The parade there is scheduled to roll without any bands, marching teams or dance groups — a staple of Carnival Season parades.

Officials also moved the parade start time up and urged residents to immediately remove all tents and trash after the parade ends "due to the dangers they can present during weather."

In New Orleans, Kirkpatrick ordered parade-goers to not bring umbrellas, tents or "anything that could fly in the wind and cause mayhem." She warned that she may need to cancel the parades at the last minute if the weather gets worse.

"I hold that trump card in which I will not hesitate to cancel — I won't do it lightly, but I will do it," she said.

Two other parades which had been scheduled to roll through the city later on Tuesday with nearly 200 truck floats have already been postponed, Kirkpatrick said.

Other cities with Mardi Gras parades watching forecasts

Elsewhere, large crowds were expected Tuesday for Mardi Gras celebrations in Mobile, Alabama. Police there said they were continuing to monitor the forecast and would let the public know if plans for the celebration change.

Other cities hosting large Mardi Gras events included Biloxi, Mississippi, where an annual Mardi Gras parade was scheduled to start at 1 p.m. Tuesday.

In downtown Pensacola in the Florida Panhandle, organizers are planning a Big Easy-style Mardi Gras festival that includes food trucks, dancing, live entertainment and a low country seafood boil.

Dust storms hit New Mexico

Across the country in New Mexico, visibility was poor as strong winds kicked up dust, spread pollen everywhere and aggravated already critical fire weather. The dust storms were enough to force the temporary closure of some roads in the southern part of the state and block out views of the Sandia

Mountains in the Albuquerque area. Forecasters issued numerous dust storm and red flag warnings for the state, where gusts were expected to be even stronger Tuesday. Forecasters said they were tracking the dust storms via satellite.

Drivers shared photos and videos on social media that showed tumbleweeds racing across roadways and near-zero visibility in walls of blowing sand.

Hegseth orders suspension of Pentagon's offensive cyberoperations against Russia

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has paused offensive cyberoperations against Russia by U.S. Cyber Command, rolling back some efforts to contend with a key adversary even as national security experts call for the U.S. to expand those capabilities.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive operations, on Monday confirmed the pause.

Hegseth's decision does not affect cyberoperations conducted by other agencies, including the CIA and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency. But the Trump administration also has rolled back other efforts at the FBI and other agencies related to countering digital and cyber threats.

The Pentagon decision, which was first reported by The Record, comes as many national security and cybersecurity experts have urged greater investments in cyber defense and offense, particularly as China and Russia have sought to interfere with the nation's economy, elections and security.

Republican lawmakers and national security experts have all called for a greater offensive posture. During his Senate confirmation hearing this year, CIA Director John Ratcliffe said America's rivals have shown that they believe cyberespionage — retrieving sensitive information and disrupting American business and infrastructure — to be an essential weapon of the modern arsenal.

"I want us to have all of the tools necessary to go on offense against our adversaries in the cyber community," Ratcliffe said.

Cyber Command oversees and coordinates the Pentagon's cybersecurity work and is known as America's first line of defense in cyberspace. It also plans offensive cyberoperations for potential use against adversaries.

Hegseth's directive arrived before Friday's dustup between President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in the Oval Office. It wasn't clear if the pause was tied to any negotiating tactic by the Trump administration to push Moscow into a peace deal with Ukraine.

Trump has vowed to end the war that began when Russia invaded Ukraine three years ago, and on Monday he slammed Zelenskyy for suggesting the end to the conflict was "far away."

The White House did not immediately respond to questions about Hegseth's order.

Cyber warfare is cheaper than traditional military force, can be carried out covertly and doesn't carry the same risk of escalation or retaliation, making it an increasingly popular tool for nations that want to contend with the U.S. but lack the traditional economic or military might, according to Snehal Antani, CEO of Horizon3.ai, a San Francisco-based cybersecurity firm founded by former national security officers.

Cyberespionage can allow adversaries to steal competitive secrets from American companies, obtain sensitive intelligence or disrupt supply chains or the systems that manage dams, water plants, traffic systems, private companies, governments and hospitals.

The internet has created new battlefields, too, as nations like Russia and China use disinformation and propaganda to undermine their opponents.

Artificial intelligence now makes it easier and cheaper than ever for anyone — be it a foreign nation like Russia, China or North Korea or criminal networks — to step up their cybergame at scale, Antani said. Fixing code, translating disinformation or identifying network vulnerabilities once required a human — now AI can do much of it faster.

"We are entering this era of cyber-enabled economic warfare that is at the nation-state level," Antani

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said. "We're in this really challenging era where offense is significantly better than defense, and it's going to take a while for defense to catch up."

Meanwhile, Attorney General Pam Bondi also has disbanded an FBI task force focused on foreign influence campaigns, like those Russia used to target U.S. elections in the past. And more than a dozen people who worked on election security at the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency were put on leave.

These actions are leaving the U.S. vulnerable despite years of evidence that Russia is committed to continuing and expanding its cyber efforts, according to Liana Keesing, campaigns manager for technology reform at Issue One, a nonprofit that has studied technology's impact on democracy.

"Instead of confronting this threat, the Trump administration has actively taken steps to make it easier for the Kremlin to interfere in our electoral processes," Keesing said.

Dow drops nearly 650 points on worries that Trump's latest tariffs will slow the economy more

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks tumbled Monday and wiped out even more of their gains since President Donald Trump's election in November, after he said that tariffs announced earlier on Canada and Mexico would take effect within hours.

The S&P 500 dropped 1.8% after Trump said there was "no room left" for negotiations that could lower the tariffs set to begin Tuesday for imports from Canada and Mexico. Trump had already delayed the tariffs once before to allow more time for talks.

Trump's announcement dashed hopes on Wall Street that he would choose a less painful path for global trade, and it followed the latest warning signal on the U.S. economy's strength. Monday's loss shaved the S&P 500's gain since Election Day down to just over 1% from a peak of more than 6%. That rally had been built largely on hopes for policies from Trump that would strengthen the U.S. economy and businesses.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 649 points, or 1.5%, and the Nasdaq composite slumped 2.6%.

Monday's slide punctuated a rocky couple of weeks for Wall Street. After the S&P 500 set a record last month following a parade of fatter-than-expected profit reports from big U.S. companies, the market began diving following weaker-than-expected reports on the U.S. economy, including a couple showing U.S. households are getting much more pessimistic about inflation because of the threat of tariffs.

The latest such report arrived Monday on U.S. manufacturing. Overall activity is still growing, but not by quite as much as economists had forecast. Perhaps more discouragingly, manufacturers are seeing a contraction in new orders. Prices, meanwhile, rose amid discussions about who will pay for Trump's tariffs.

"Demand eased, production stabilized, and destaffing continued as panelists' companies experience the first operational shock of the new administration's tariff policy," said Timothy Fiore, chair of the Institute for Supply Management's manufacturing business survey committee.

The hope on Wall Street had been that Trump was using the threat of tariffs as a tool for negotiations and that he would ultimately go through with potentially less damaging policies for the global economy and trade. But Trump's going forward with the Mexican and Canadian tariffs hit a market that wasn't certain about what would happen next.

The market's recent slump has hit Nvidia and some other formerly high-flying areas of the market particularly hard. They fell even more Monday, with Nvidia down 8.8% and Elon Musk's Tesla down 2.8%.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, Kroger fell 3% after the grocery chain's Chairman and CEO Rodney McMullen resigned following an internal investigation into his personal conduct.

Wall Street's blue Monday even pulled down stocks of companies enmeshed in the cryptocurrency economy, which had risen strongly in the morning. They initially bounced after Trump said over the week-end that his administration was moving forward with a crypto strategic reserve.

But MicroStrategy, the company that's now known as Strategy and has been raising money to buy bitcoin, slid to a loss of 1.8%. Coinbase, the crypto trading platform, fell 4.6%.

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All told, the S&P 500 fell 104.78 points to 5,849.72. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 649.67 to 43,191.24, and the Nasdaq composite slumped 497.09 to 18,350.19.

Across the Pacific in China, manufacturers reported an uptick in orders in February as importers rushed to beat higher U.S. tariffs and a Chinese state media report said that Beijing was considering ways to retaliate.

Trump had imposed a tariff of 10% on imports from China, and that's scheduled to rise to 20% beginning Tuesday. He also ended the "de minimis" loophole that exempted imports worth less than \$800 from tariffs.

In Hong Kong, Chinese bubble tea chain Mixue Bingcheng's stock soared 43% following its \$444 million debut on the market. The company claims to be the world's largest food retail chain, with more than 45,000 outlets, and its jump came as the Hang Seng index rose 0.3%.

Indexes rose by even more across Europe and in Tokyo. European markets leaped after a report showed an easing of inflation in February. That should help the European Central Bank, which investors widely expect will deliver another cut to interest rates later this week.

Germany's DAX surged 2.6%, and France's CAC 40 jumped 1.1%. Stocks outside the United States have performed better than the S&P 500 this year, even with Trump's promises for "America First" policies.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.16% from 4.24% just before the manufacturing report's release. It's come down sharply since January, when it was approaching 4.80%, as worries have built about the possibility of a slowing U.S. economy.

Often, drops in Treasury yields can give a boost to stock prices because they make loans cheaper to get and give a boost to the economy. But the reason for this recent drop in yields, softer economic growth expectations, may mean that's not the case this time, according to Morgan Stanley strategists led by Michael Wilson.

Typically, the Federal Reserve would cut interest rates if the economy needs help. But when inflation is high, or at least worries about it are, the Fed has less leeway to ease rates.

Senate confirms McMahon to lead Education Department as Trump pushes to shut it down

By ANNIE MA AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate voted Monday to confirm former wrestling executive Linda McMahon as the nation's education chief, a role that places her atop a department that President Donald Trump has vilified and vowed to dismantle.

McMahon will face the competing tasks of winding down the Education Department while also escalating efforts to achieve Trump's agenda. Already the Republican president has signed sweeping orders to rid America's schools of diversity programs and accommodations for transgender students while also calling for expanded school choice programs.

At the same time, Trump has promised to shut down the department and said he wants McMahon "to put herself out of a job."

The Senate voted to confirm McMahon 51-45.

A billionaire and former CEO of World Wrestling Entertainment, McMahon, 76, is an unconventional pick for the role. She spent a year on Connecticut's state board of education and is a longtime trustee at Sacred Heart University but otherwise has little traditional education leadership.

McMahon's supporters see her as a skilled executive who will reform a department that Republicans say has failed to improve American education. Opponents say she's unqualified and fear her budget cuts will be felt by students nationwide.

"Americans believe in public education," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said before the confirmation vote. "They don't want to see the Department of Education abolished. If the Trump administration follows through on cuts to education, schools will lose billions in funding."

At her confirmation hearing, McMahon distanced herself from Trump's blistering rhetoric. She said the goal is to make the Education Department "operate more efficiently," not to defund programs.

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She acknowledged that only Congress has the power to close the department, and she pledged to preserve Title I money for low-income schools, Pell grants for low-income college students, and the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. Yet she suggested some operations could move to other departments, saying Health and Human Services might be better suited to enforce disability rights laws.

Weeks before McMahon's confirmation hearing, the White House was considering an executive order that would direct the education secretary to cut the agency as much as legally possible while asking Congress to shut it down completely. Some of McMahon's allies pressed the White House to hold the order until after her confirmation to avoid potential backlash.

Created by Congress in 1979, the Education Department's primary role is to disburse money to the nation's schools and colleges. It sends billions of dollars a year to K-12 schools and oversees a \$1.6 trillion federal student loan portfolio.

Trump argues the department has been overtaken by liberals who press their ideology on America's schools.

Schools and colleges have been navigating a demand to eliminate diversity programs or risk having their federal funding pulled. The Trump administration gave them a Feb. 28 deadline to comply. The Education Department addressed questions about its guidance in a document released Saturday, saying in part that changing program names that reference "diversity" or "equity" alone is not enough if they treat students differently by race.

During the presidential campaign, Trump vowed to close the department and grant its authority to states. Schools and states already wield significantly greater authority over education than the federal government, which is barred from influencing curriculum. Federal money makes up roughly 14% of public school budgets.

Already, the Trump administration has started overhauling much of the department's work.

Trump adviser Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency has cut dozens of contracts it dismissed as "woke" and wasteful. It gutted the Institute of Education Sciences, which gathers data on the nation's academic progress, and the administration has fired or suspended scores of employees.

Some of the cuts have halted work that's ordered under federal law. At her hearing, McMahon said the agency will spend money that's directed by Congress, and she played down DOGE's cuts as merely an audit.

McMahon is a longtime Trump ally who left WWE in 2009 to launch a political career, running unsuccessfully twice for the U.S. Senate. She has given millions of dollars to Trump's campaigns and served as leader of the Small Business Administration during his first term.

Giant chipmaker TSMC to spend \$100B to expand chip manufacturing in US, Trump announces

By DIDI TANG and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Chip giant Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. plans to invest \$100 billion in the United States, President Donald Trump said Monday, on top of \$65 billion in investments the company had previously announced.

TSMC, the world's biggest semiconductor manufacturer, produces chips for companies including Apple, Intel and Nvidia. The company had already begun constructing three plants in Arizona after the Biden administration offered billions in subsidies. Its first factory in Arizona has started mass production of its 4-nanometer chips.

Trump, who appeared with TSMC's chief executive officer C. C. Wei at the White House, called it a "tremendous move" and "a matter of economic security."

"Semiconductors are the backbone of the 21st century economy. And really, without the semiconductors, there is no economy," the president said. "Powering everything from AI to automobiles to advanced manufacturing, we must be able to build the chips and semiconductors that we need right here in American factories with Americans skill and American labor."

Wei said the investment will be for three more chip manufacturing plants, along with two packaging

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facilities, in Arizona.

The \$165 billion investment "is going to create thousands of high-paying jobs," Wei said.

Former President Joe Biden in 2022 signed a sweeping \$280 billion law, the CHIPS and Science Act, to try to reinvigorate chip manufacturing in the U.S., especially after the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the pandemic, chip factories, especially those overseas making the majority of processors, shut down. It had a ripple effect that led to wider problems, such as automobile factory assembly lines shutting down and fueled inflation.

Trump has criticized the law and taken a different approach, instead threatening to impose high tariffs on imported chips to bring chip manufacturing back to the U.S.

Trump also has said companies like TSMC do not need federal tax incentives.

At the Commerce Department, 40 people who worked on the implementation of the Chips Act were fired Monday as part of the Trump administration's sweeping moves to cut the size of the federal workforce, according to a person familiar with the move who was not authorized to speak publicly.

When asked if the new investment could minimize impact on the U.S. should China either isolate or seize Taiwan, Trump said he couldn't say "minimize" because "that would be a catastrophic event obviously."

Taiwan is an island that broke away from mainland China in 1949 following a civil war. Beijing claims sovereignty over the island and has ratcheted up military and diplomatic pressure on its leaders.

"It will at least give us a position where we have, in this very, very important business, we would have a very big part of it in the United States," Trump said of the chip manufacturing.

He did not say if the investment would provide security for the self-governed island that Beijing considers to be part of Chinese territory.

Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office, the island's de-facto embassy in the United States, said investments by Taiwanese businesses in the U.S. have exceeded 40% of the island's total foreign investments and that the Taiwanese government is "glad" to see Taiwanese businesses to expand investments in the U.S. and to deep cooperation on supply chain between the two sides.

"It also brings the economic and trade relations closer," the office said.

Bonnie Glaser, managing director of the Indo-Pacific program at German Marshall Fund of the U.S., said Taipei is hoping the increased investment pledge will help keep the U.S.-Taiwan relationship strong. "Taiwan is evidently stepping up in a way that supports and advanced President Trump's priorities," she said. "The US will benefit greatly from TSMC's investment."

Trump has yet to indicate his stance on U.S. support for Taiwan's security since he took office, and he has said Taiwan should pay the U.S. for its military defense.

Trump has hosted multiple business leaders at the White House since he took office in January to tout a series of investments that aim to demonstrate his leadership is a boon for the U.S. economy. He's also pointed to the tariff threats as prodding the investments.

"It's the incentive we've created. Or the negative incentive," Trump said.

In January, he appeared with the heads of OpenAI, Oracle and SoftBank at the White House as they announced plans for a new partnership to invest up to \$500 billion for infrastructure tied to artificial intelligence. He also announced in January a \$20 billion investment by DAMAC Properties in the United Arab Emirates to build data centers tied to AI.

Last week, after Apple CEO Tim Cook met with Trump at the White House, the company announced plans to invest more than \$500 billion in the U.S. over the next four years, including plans for a new server factory in Texas. Trump said after their meeting that Cook promised him Apple's manufacturing would shift from Mexico to the U.S.

"I don't have time to do all of these announcements," Trump joked Monday as he listed some of the other investments.

The Wall Street Journal first reported the planned announcement Monday.

Melania Trump says it's 'heartbreaking' to watch teens grapple with the fallout from revenge porn

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

Melania Trump on Monday lobbied on Capitol Hill for a bill that would make it a federal crime to post intimate imagery online, whether real or fake, and said it was "heartbreaking" to see what teenagers and especially girls go through after they are victimized by people who spread such content.

It was her first solo public appearance since she resumed the role of first lady on Jan. 20. She called on the Republican-controlled Congress to prioritize the well-being of young people.

"This toxic environment can be severely damaging. We must prioritize their well-being by equipping them with the support and tools necessary to navigate this hostile digital landscape," she said during a roundtable discussion about the "Take It Down Act" at the U.S. Capitol.

"Every young person deserves a safe online space to express themselves freely, without the looming threat of exploitation or harm," she said.

The Senate passed the "Take It Down Act" in February, and Melania Trump's public backing could help usher it through the Republican-controlled House and to President Donald Trump's desk to become law. The bill's chief sponsors are Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., and Reps. Maria Salazar, R-Fla., and Madeleine Dean, D-Pa.

Cruz, who hosted the discussion in the Capitol's Mansfield Room, told the first lady that her leadership "is incredibly important and I'm confident it's going to play a critical role in accelerating the passage of this bill and getting it passed into law."

He said the measure was inspired by Elliston Berry and her mother, who visited his office after Snapchat refused for nearly a year to remove an AI-generated nonconsensual graphic image, also known as a "deepfake," of the then 14-year-old. Elliston and other victims shared their stories Monday.

Meta, which owns and operates Facebook and Instagram, supports the legislation.

The bill would make it a federal crime to knowingly publish or threaten to publish intimate imagery online without an individual's consent, including realistic, computer-generated intimate images of people who can be identified. Social media platforms would have 48 hours to remove such images and take steps to delete duplicate content after a victim's request.

"Having an intimate image – real or AI-generated – shared without consent can be devastating and Meta developed and backs many efforts to help prevent it," communications director Andy Stone said on X.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., also attended the roundtable and expressed his support for the bill but offered no timetable for a vote.

"We are anxious to put it on the floor in the House, to get it to President Trump's desk for his signature because we've got to do what we can to stop this, and I am a full supporter of it," Johnson said.

The first lady also took a swipe at Democrats, saying she expected more of them to participate in the discussion. California Rep. Ro Khanna was the only Democrat in the room.

"Surely as adults, we can prioritize America's children ahead of partisan politics," she said.

The first lady's appearance alongside Cruz came years after the senator and her husband campaigned bitterly for the 2016 Republican presidential nomination. At one point, Trump falsely accused Cruz of being behind an ad released by an anti-Trump super PAC that featured a racy photo of Melania Trump, a former fashion model, that was taken during a GQ photo shoot.

In the first Trump administration, Melania Trump led a youth initiative she named "Be Best," which included a focus on online safety. She has said she's interested in reviving the program.

Middle East latest: Arab countries are working on a postwar plan for Gaza

By The Associated Press undefined

Arab foreign ministers met in Cairo on Monday for talks focusing on Egypt's plan to rebuild the war-ravaged Gaza Strip, hoping to counter President Donald Trump's proposal to expel Palestinians from the coastal enclave and take it over.

In Israel, an attacker fatally stabbed a man in his 60s and wounded four others in the northern city of Haifa, police said. Israeli authorities said the assailant was a Palestinian citizen of Israel and that bystanders killed him. The militant group Hamas praised the attack but stopped short of claiming responsibility for it.

The attack took place as regional tensions are high surrounding the fate of the ceasefire in Gaza. Israel has stopped the entry of all food and other supplies into Gaza and warned of "additional consequences" for Hamas if the ceasefire's first phase isn't extended. Hamas accused Israel of trying to derail the second phase. Mediators Egypt and Qatar accused Israel of violating humanitarian law by using starvation as a weapon against the Palestinians in Gaza.

Here's the latest:

Palestinians say Israel blocking aid is a death sentence for Gaza

Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are deeply concerned that their already dire situation will get much worse now that Israel has cut off all food and humanitarian aid from entering Gaza.

"This is a decision of genocide ... Our children are being starved," said Mohammed Abu Shalhoub, a displaced man from Rafah, who was waiting alongside dozens of people to receive a hot meal from a charity in the Muwasi area, west of the city of Khan Younis.

He urged other countries to pressure Israel to give Palestinians their most basic rights: "food, clothing, and drink — nothing more."

A displaced woman, Umm Akram Shalhoub, said Israel's decision to cut off aid was "an execution."

The war has displaced at least 90% of Gaza's population of over 2 million and left them dependent on international aid.

Price of food skyrockets after Israel closes Gaza's borders, UN says

Foods like flour and vegetables are 100 times more expensive in Gaza than before Israel halted all food from entering a day earlier, the United Nations says.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the price increases were reported by the U.N.'s humanitarian partners on the ground Monday who are currently assessing stocks that are still available in the Gaza Strip.

Dujarric said the United Nations has not received reports that militants or other groups were diverting aid meant for civilians. "What we have seen since the ceasefire is a much freer and more direct flow of aid, and we have not seen any of the looting that we had seen prior to the ceasefire," he told reporters.

Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has accused Hamas of selling aid and preventing Palestinians from getting it.

Fight breaks out in the Israeli parliament between hostages' families and security guards

Chaos erupted in the Israeli parliament on Monday when security guards scuffled with relatives of people killed or taken hostage in the Hamas attack that triggered the war in Gaza.

Relatives of people killed tried to enter the parliament hall as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared for a debate about a governmental inquiry into the events of October 2023. Security guards blocked them from entering the observation area. Some family members wailed in frustration and grief before the two sides began pushing and hitting one another outside the hall, including on a crowded stairwell.

"You are hitting bereaved parents!" one person screamed in footage of the episode released by the October Council, a group representing the families. "Our children were killed and murdered!" One family member fainted, according to Israeli media.

A spokesperson for Israel's parliament said too many people had attempted to enter the hall and they would examine the episode. The families were eventually allowed in.

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The heated scene reflects the heightened emotions in Israel as Netanyahu's government debates whether to resume the war against Hamas after a six-week ceasefire. It also came a day before a group of newly freed Israeli hostages are expected to press President Donald Trump at a White House meeting to continue the ceasefire and bring home all remaining hostages from Hamas captivity.

Israel strikes a military post in Syria

There was no immediate word on casualties. Israel has carried hundreds of airstrikes in different parts of the country since President Bashar Assad was overthrown by Islamist rebels in December, destroying much of the Syrian army's assets.

The Israeli military said Thursday it struck a military site where weapons belonging to the previous government were stored in the area of Qardaha.

Al-Watan newspaper said an apparent Israeli airstrike struck a post near the highway linking Tartus with the coastal town of Baniyas.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, said residents in the area received messages on the cellular telephones asking them to stay away from military posts. It added that shortly afterward an explosion was heard and smoke billowed from the area.

Stabbing attack in Israel kills 1

A man in his 60s was killed and four other people were wounded in a stabbing attack Monday in the northern Israeli city of Haifa, police said. Israeli authorities said the assailant was killed.

Police said they were treating the stabbing, which took place in a central transit hub, as a militant attack. A security guard and a civilian killed the attacker, who police said was an Arab citizen of Israel who had recently returned to Israel after some time abroad.

The attack took place as regional tensions are high surrounding the fate of the ceasefire in Gaza. The militant group Hamas praised the attack but stopped short of claiming responsibility for it.

3-phase ceasefire is the only way of getting hostages back, Hamas warns Israel

A senior Hamas official said Monday the three-phase ceasefire deal is Israel's sole way to get its hostages back from the militant group in Gaza.

Ossama Hamdan said that Israel "is pushing to return things to square one and overturn the agreement through the alternatives it is proposing."

He said that implementation of the deal, including by engaging immediately in the second phase, is the sole way to return the hostages.

The first phase expired over the weekend. Israel said that a new U.S. proposal calls for extending the ceasefire through Ramadan — the Muslim holy month that began over the weekend — and the Jewish Passover holiday, which ends April 20.

Hamas accused Israel of trying to derail the second phase during which Hamas is set to release living hostages, while Israel ends the war and withdraws its forces from Gaza.

Israel holds one of the last funerals for 8 hostages killed in Gaza

Mourners in Israel attended one of the last funerals for eight hostages whose bodies were returned from Gaza during the first phase of the ceasefire.

Crowds lined the long route of the funeral procession for Itzhak Elgarat, who was 68 when he was abducted by Hamas militants from his home in Kibbutz Nir Oz.

Israel has said that Elgarat was killed in captivity but the circumstances surrounding his death are not known. His brother, Danny Elgarat, told mourners at the funeral that in their last phone conversation, on Oct. 7, 2023, his brother had said to him, "Danny, this is the end."

"Unfortunately you were right," Danny Elgarat said in the eulogy for his brother. "We fought with all our might to prove you wrong. We failed. We didn't do enough."

A prominent and outspoken figure in the public struggle for the release of the hostages, Danny Elgarat also railed against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for failing to bring back his brother alive.

"The enemy who caused your death was not the one who abducted you but the one who abandoned you," he said. "You managed to survive the kidnapping, the kidnapers, and the injury for many months, and in

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the end, did not survive your own prime minister's torpedoing (of the hostage deal) and abandonment."

This post has been corrected to show that Elgarat's funeral is not the final hostage funeral this week. Israeli forces strike boat off Gaza, killing 2 Palestinian men
Hospital officials in Gaza said Monday that two Palestinian men were killed in an Israeli strike. The Israeli military said the men posed a threat to troops, who opened fire.

Naser hospital in Khan Younis received the two bodies. The deaths come as the fate of the ceasefire that paused the war in Gaza is unclear.

The Israeli military also said Monday forces struck a "suspicious motorized boat" off the coast of Khan Younis which it said was violating security restrictions.

Arab foreign ministers discuss Gaza plan to counter Trump's proposal

Arab foreign ministers are meeting in Cairo Monday for talks focusing on an Egyptian plan to rebuild the war-ravaged Gaza Strip that is meant to counter President Donald Trump's proposal to transfer Palestinians out of the coastal enclave and take it over.

The ministers' meeting comes ahead of an Arab summit Tuesday in Cairo which is meant to adopt the Egyptian plan, Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said.

The Egyptian plan would not remove the population from Gaza. It designates three zones within Gaza to relocate Palestinians during an initial six-month period. The zones will be equipped with mobile houses and shelters, with humanitarian aid streaming in.

The proposal also includes the establishment of an interim Palestinian administration that is not aligned with either Hamas or the Palestinian Authority, to run the strip and oversee the reconstruction efforts until a revamped PA, which administers parts of the occupied West Bank, takes over.

Netanyahu apologizes to freed Israeli hostage for taking so long to secure his release

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu apologized to a freed Israeli hostage for taking so long to secure his release, his office said Monday.

According to a statement from Netanyahu's office, the Israeli leader told Eli Sharabi, who was released last month as part of a ceasefire with Hamas: "I am sorry that it took us so long. We fought hard to get you out." They spoke Sunday.

A gaunt looking Sharabi was released after 16 months in captivity to discover that his wife and two teenage daughters were killed in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack.

Sharabi, who has spoken of the tough conditions in captivity, is set to meet with President Donald Trump in Washington on Tuesday. Netanyahu said the meeting was important and Sharabi responded, according to the statement, that perhaps "with joint efforts, we will bring this whole saga to an end."

Trump's tariff tactics carry higher economic risks than during his first term

By PAUL WISEMAN and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Donald Trump started the biggest trade war since the 1930s in his first term, his impulsive combination of threats and import taxes on U.S. trading partners created chaos, generated drama -- and drew criticism from mainstream economists who favor free trade.

But it didn't do much damage to the U.S. economy. Or much good. Inflation stayed under control. The economy kept growing as it had before. And America's massive trade deficits, the main target of Trump's ire, proved resistant to his rhetoric and his tariffs: Already big, they got bigger.

The trade war sequel that Trump has introduced in his second term is likely to be a different matter altogether. Trump appears to have grander ambitions and is operating in a far more treacherous economic environment this time.

His plans to plaster tariffs of 25% on goods from Mexico and Canada and to double a 10% levy on China Tuesday -- and to follow those up by targeting other countries -- would threaten growth, and push

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up prices in the United States, undermining his campaign pledge to eliminate the inflation that plagued President Joe Biden.

The tariffs would be paid by U.S. importers, who would then try to pass along the higher costs to consumers through higher prices.

Trump himself has warned of possible fallout. "WILL THERE BE SOME PAIN? YES, MAYBE (AND MAYBE NOT!)," Trump said in a social media post last month. "BUT WE WILL MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN, AND IT WILL ALL BE WORTH THE PRICE THAT MUST BE PAID."

For a while, most of the hostilities were on hold. Trump, who had said he would hit Canada and Mexico on Feb. 4, delayed imposing the tariffs for 30 days. Now they're scheduled to start Tuesday. He went ahead with 10% import taxes on Chinese goods — and Beijing promptly retaliated by hitting U.S. coal, big cars and other items — and plans to double them Tuesday.

Trump views tariffs — taxes on imports — as an economic elixir that can restore factories to the American heartland, raise money for the government and pressure foreign countries to do what he wants.

During his first term, Trump put tariffs on most Chinese goods and on imported solar panels, washing machines, steel and aluminum. The tax increases might have raised prices on those items, but they had little or no impact on overall inflation, which remained modest. Nor did they do much to restore factory jobs.

Economists agree that a second Trump trade war could be far costlier than the first.

"That was then. This is now," said trade analyst William Reinsch of the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

During Trump's first term, his trade team carefully focused its tariff hit list to avoid or at least delay the impact on consumers. They targeted industrial products and not those "that would show up on Walmart's shelves," said Reinsch, a former U.S. trade official. "That tamped down the impact."

This time, by contrast, the tariffs are across the board — although the tariffs Trump plans Tuesday would limit the levy on Canadian energy to 10%, showing that he was mindful of how much Americans in northern and midwestern states depend on oil and electricity from north of the border.

In Boca Raton, Florida, the toy company Basic Fun is preparing to raise prices and absorb a hit to profits when the tariffs land.

Ninety percent of Basic Fun's toys come from China, including Tonka and Care Bears. CEO Jay Foreman says the price on the Tonka Classic Steel Mighty Dump Truck is likely to rise later this year from \$29.99 to as much as \$39.99.

Five years ago, the Trump administration spared toys, exempting them from its China tariffs. This time, Foreman said, "we are now just going to forecast a lot of money draining out of the company."

Also worrying, economists say, is a retaliation clause the Trump team inserted in the tariff orders he signed last month.

If other countries retaliate against Trump's tariffs with tariffs of their own — as China did and Canada and Mexico have threatened -- Trump will lash back with still more tariffs. That risks "setting off a spiraling trade war" of tit-for-tat tariffs and counter-tariffs, said Eswar Prasad, professor of trade policy at Cornell University.

Economists gathered Monday at a conference of the National Association for Business Economics were generally wary of the import taxes and their impact on the economy. Michael Strain, an economist at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, estimated that the proposed duties could drag down economic growth by as much as a half-percentage point.

One big difference between Trump's first term is that he's likely to get less pushback from his own aides. "This is true religion inside the White House right now, unlike the first term, when many of the president's advisers were deeply skeptical of this policy," Strain said.

Diane Swonk, chief economist at the giant accounting firm KPMG, said the impact of tariffs this time would likely be much bigger than in 2018-2019. Among other things, the president is planning to impose what he calls "reciprocal tariffs" — and raise U.S. import taxes to match higher tariffs charged by other countries.

"The breadth and scope are different," Swonk said. "The goals are different. It's not just one country,

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we're talking about multiple countries at the same time. And the rest of the world is ready to retaliate."

One of those goals that Trump has cited more often than last time is using tariffs to raise revenue for the government, Swonk noted. Trump and some of his officials have talked about substituting tariff revenue for income taxes. If so, that would mean keeping the tariffs in place even if countries like Canada and Mexico agreed to Trump's demands on other issues, such as immigration restrictions.

Perhaps the biggest difference is the economic backdrop Trump must contend with this time.

Six years ago, inflation was low — maybe even too low, the Federal Reserve fretted. Trump's first-term tariffs didn't make a dent.

Inflation isn't so benign anymore. Prices surged in the unexpected boom that followed the end of COVID-19 lockdowns. Inflation has come down from the four-decade high it hit in mid-2022, but it's still stuck above the Fed's 2% target and hasn't shown much improvement since summer.

Trump's tariffs could rekindle the inflationary trend and convince the Fed to cancel or postpone the two interest rate cuts it had anticipated this year. That would risk keeping "interest rates at their current elevated level for a longer period in 2025. That will push up mortgage and loan borrowing rates ... and reduce real growth," said Boston College economist Brian Bethune.

Outside a Harris Teeter supermarket near downtown Raleigh, North Carolina, Jacobs Ogadi had in his shopping bag an avocado, which almost certainly came from Mexico.

The 62-year-old mechanic said it "doesn't take a rocket scientist" to know that Trump's tariffs run counter to his promises to rein in inflation. "If it goes up 25%, it's not the government, it's not the Mexican people paying for it," he said. "Who pays for it? Us."

Trump's speech to Congress comes as he wields vast power almost daring lawmakers, courts to stop him

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump arrives this week on Capitol Hill to deliver a speech to Congress, a coequal branch of government he has bulldozed past this first month in office, wielding unimaginable executive power to get what he wants, at home and abroad.

The Tuesday night address will unfold in the chamber where lawmakers crouched in fear four years ago while a mob of his supporters roamed the halls, and where Nancy Pelosi, Liz Cheney and others vowed to prevent him from ever holding office again. It's the same House chamber where Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy received a hero's welcome for fighting off Russia's invasion, in the first year of that war.

Since his reelection, Trump has blazed across the federal government, dismantling not just norms and traditions but the very government itself. With billionaire aide Elon Musk by his side, he is firing thousands of federal workers, closing agencies established by law and publicly badgering Zelenskyy while positioning the U.S. closer to Russia.

As legal cases mount, more than 100 so far challenging the legality of the Trump administration's actions, the Republican president is daring the other branches of government — Congress and the courts — to try to stop him.

"This whole thing about approaching a constitutional crisis is not quite true," said Rep. James Clyburn, of South Carolina, a senior Democrat in the House. "We're already there."

Trump revels in going it alone, but there are limits

Reveling in the might of going it alone, Trump is about to test the limits of his executive branch authority as he turns to Congress to deliver tax cuts and other key aspects of his agenda. Only Congress, by law, can allocate funds — or pull them back — but the Trump administration's actions have been testing that foundational rule, enshrined in the Constitution.

Trump also needs lawmakers to fund the government and ensure federal operations don't shut down when money runs out March 14. And he will need Congress to pass legislation to prevent an economically

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damaging debt default, something he has pushed lawmakers to resolve.

While Trump enjoys the rare sweep of power in Washington, with the Republicans controlling the White House, the House and the Senate, he relies on political fear as well as favor to motivate lawmakers. With Musk having poured \$200 million into electing Trump, the president has a ready patron whose vast political funds can influence any resisters.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, who has positioned himself as a partner to the president, has said he's excited about what Trump is accomplishing in rooting out waste, fraud and abuse to downsize government.

"Fireworks," is what Johnson, R-La., said he expects from Trump's speech, dismissing as "nonsense" concerns that Congress is ceding too much power to the White House.

"The president is doing what he said on the campaign trail he would do," Johnson said Sunday on Fox News Channel's Sunday Morning Futures show.

Democrats, after their stunning rejection by voters, are slowly beginning to mount a resistance. They are fighting Trump in court, with amicus briefs to protect federal workers, and filing legislation to serve as a check on what House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York calls the "parade of horrors."

But as the minority party, they are limited in their power. Jeffries brushed off calls for Democrats to boycott Trump's address. "It's the people's House. It's the House of Representatives," he said on CNN.

Instead, Democrats are inviting fired federal workers as their guests.

Tax cuts and mass deportation funds all at stake

One of Trump's top campaign promises, extending the tax breaks approved during his first term in 2017, is posing one of his party's biggest challenges.

Johnson and Senate Majority Leader John Thune of South Dakota are marshalling the GOP majority to deliver what Trump calls a "big, beautiful bill" extending those tax breaks — and providing new ones. But Republicans also want some \$2 trillion in budget cuts with changes to Medicaid and other services that millions of Americans count on, which Trump could decide is too much to bear.

Trump's other big campaign promise — the biggest deportation operation in U.S. history — is running short of cash, and border czar Tom Homan has implored Republicans on Capitol Hill to loosen the purse strings to give the Homeland Security and Defense departments the money needed.

Those budget debates all come as the Trump administration is ripping the federal government apart and freezing federal funds. It's challenging the Nixon-era Impoundment Control Act, which prevents the executive branch from halting allocations Congress has already approved, setting up a showdown that could wind up at the Supreme Court.

"Testing the boundaries a little, I would expect that," said Rep. Steve Womack, R-Ark., who said he supports much of what the Trump administration is doing, to a point.

"We've got separate but equal branches of government," said Womack, whose committee controls vast funding. "What we don't want is, we don't want a constitutional crisis."

Lives, livelihoods and the echoes of Jan. 6

It's not just constitutional issues at stake but the lives and livelihoods of Americans. Communities depend on federal dollars — for health care clinics, school programs and countless contracts for companies large and small that provide goods and services to the federal government. Many are watching that money evaporate overnight.

Republican Sen. Jim Justice of West Virginia, a former governor, said voters back home have concerns even as they support the idea of downsizing government.

"People are always afraid of the dark," he said, citing potential changes to Medicaid and preschool programs in particular. "Let's give it time to see really what materializes before we run through the streets with our hair on fire."

And the threat of Jan. 6, 2021, hangs over the building.

Trump will stand on the dais where Pelosi, then the House speaker, was whisked to safety as the mob ransacked the Capitol. He will look out over the rows of lawmakers, some of whom blocked the back door to the chamber as Capitol Police were fending off rioters, steps away from where Trump supporter Ashli

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Babbitt was shot and killed. Visitors will be watching from the galleries where representatives crouched on the floor in gas masks before being evacuated.

The Supreme Court granted Trump's presidential actions wide immunity from prosecution, and the four-count criminal indictment against him over Jan. 6 was withdrawn once he was reelected, in line with Justice Department policy.

In one of his first acts on Inauguration Day, Trump issued a sweeping pardon of all the rioters, including extremist leaders Stuart Rhodes and Enrique Tarrio, who were convicted of sedition. They have both returned to make appearances at the Capitol since their release from prison.

Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., was in the Capitol on Jan. 6.

"I acknowledge that he won and he's got the right to use all the executive authority to pursue his policies. He doesn't have a right to exceed constitutional authority," Welch said. "So how he does this should be of great concern to all of us."

Ariana Grande goes full Glinda, 'Wicked' bestie Erivo does Elphaba proud in green on Oscars carpet

By LEANNE ITALIE and BEATRICE DUPUY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ariana Grande did her Glinda proud in a pale pink stunner, and her "Wicked" bestie Cynthia Erivo honored Elphaba in deep forest green on the Oscars carpet as high glam took over Sunday. Others went for bold red, classic black and pops of pink.

Grande wore a look from the Schiaparelli spring-summer 2025 collection. It was a perfect Glinda ode with no straps and a structured skirt that fell into airy pleats. Erivo, always a fashion darling, wore custom Louis Vuitton with a high triangular collar and huge shoulders, her signature long nails the usual on-point complement.

"Cynthia Erivo is a true fashionista who understands how beauty also plays into the overall look. I'm always impressed by her otherworldly nails. Tonight they were obviously an homage to 'Wicked,' a full set of black, gold, and emerald-hued stiletto nails handcrafted by Mycah Dior," said Julee Wilson, Cosmopolitan's beauty editor-at-large.

In gowns, metallics also had a strong showing in body-con looks: Demi Moore in sexy silver custom Giorgio Armani Privé and Mindy Kaling in a silver Oscar de la Renta gown with chunky embellishment among them. Emma Stone went for slinky metallic nude. Felicity Jones was in steel gray worthy of her film, "The Brutalist." And Selena Gomez was a bombshell in a Ralph Lauren look of full crystals in metallic pink.

"The Oscars red carpet style really leaned into old Hollywood glamour, which is a trend that's been building throughout the last year on the red carpet and on the runways," said Brooke Bobb, fashion news director for Harper's Bazaar.

"Right now in fashion we're seeing a return to elegance and to intentional dressing, with designers tracking away from quiet luxury and moving towards something much more bold and, dare we say, exciting," she added.

Lupita Nyong'o, a fashion "it" girl from her start, got that memo. She wore white custom Chanel with more than 22,000 pearls. Whoopi Goldberg wore an off-the-shoulder liquid metallic blue gown that she spotted on the runway while sitting front row at Christian Siriano's recent New York Fashion Week show.

Most kept their jewels demure.

How did the men do?

Timothée Chalamet, never afraid to go his own fashion way, wore a custom Givenchy look by the company's new creative director, Sarah Burton. It was a soft yellow trouser and short jacket leather combo. Chalamet is never afraid to go his own fashion way. Jeff Goldblum added an orchid flower arrangement to his off-white Prada tuxedo jacket lapel. The "Wicked" star walked the Prada runway in 2022.

Derek Guy, a menswear specialist known for his dieworkwear.com blog and Instagram feed, had his personal favorites.

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"Mario Lopez was among the best dressed. He wore a midnight navy, single breasted, peak lapel dinner suit with a fly front shirt and black bow tie," Guy said. "Nowadays, midnight navy is a subtle way to make a dinner suit look more distinctive from the sea of black."

He also had kind words for "Wicked" director Jon Chu.

"He looked great in an olive dinner jacket. When guys try to innovate on classic formalwear, or, technically speaking, semi-formalwear since black tie is a notch below white tie, they often go a little too far and too wacky," Guy said.

Chu kept it simple, he said, with good tailoring, a pleated formal shirt and beautiful cufflinks.

"But the slightly more unique fabric made the look distinctive. The quality of the tailoring is always going to be more important than gimmicks, and his outfit fit very well," Guy said.

Color trends: Red, red and more red

Red endured at the Oscars as a strong trend. Among walkers wearing the color: Zoe Saldaña in a maroon strapless tiered look with a crystal-embellished bodice by Saint Laurent and Storm Reid in a bright shortie dress with a long cape. Saldaña accessorized with sheer black opera gloves. She debuted a Cartier emerald, onyx and diamond short necklace with a panther motif from the company's High Jewelry collection.

Others stuck to black, including Marlee Matlin in Yara Shoemaker Couture and Coco Jones in sexy Coach, a custom look using vintage fabric. Yasmin Finney also chose black, peaking out from tall black feathers attached to the top of her dress. Fernanda Torres, the "I'm Still Here" star, stood out in body-skimming black feathers. The look was Chanel Haute Couture.

Miley Cyrus was a literal rock queen in a black, high-neck custom McQueen with shredded tulle, glass beads and sequin details. She paired the look with short black lace gloves.

Elle Fanning, meanwhile, also wore Sarah Burton's Givenchy, the first to do so in public since Chalamet arrived later. It was a classic Hollywood white gown with a sweetheart neckline and black belt with long tails.

The men brought out the color from Chalamet to actor Colman Domingo. Domingo has become a red-carpet standout for all his refreshing looks. He wore a bright red Valentino tuxedo jacket with a matching belt and black trousers. Jeremy Strong and Andrew Garfield both wore variations of the color brown.

Julianne Hough kicked things off in an elegant light beige ethereal look straight off the Christian Dior spring 2025 runway. Joan Chen also went fairy-like in green chartreuse, an off-shoulder number from the Elie Saab resort 2025 collection. Monica Barbaro joined the pink club in Dior.

Some celebs added messaging to ensembles

Belgian musician Zap Mama lifted up her black heel to reveal the words "free Congo" on the red carpet, advocating for the conflict-ridden African nation.

"Conclave" writer Peter Straughan showed his support for Ukraine with a Ukrainian flag pin accent on his tuxedo.

"Just to say, let's not turn our backs on Ukraine," he told Variety's Marc Malkin.

The pin carries extra significance after a tense meeting unfolded between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the White House with President Donald Trump and Vice President JD Vance on Friday.

The team behind best documentary nominee "Porcelain War," the story of Ukrainian artists who trade their paintbrushes for guns to fight against the Russian invasion, also sported Ukrainian flag pins.

"The Brutalist" actor Guy Pearce showed up wearing a "FREE PALESTINE" pin featuring a white dove and a gold branch. The award show comes as Israel stopped the entry of all food and other supplies into Gaza on Sunday. Pearce, who has expressed his support throughout the awards season with various pins, said "it's the least we can do." "I'm just always on the case of trying to recognize Palestine and it having as much support as it possibly can because it's what it absolutely needs.

How was the beauty game on the carpet?

Kathleen Hou, beauty director for Elle, saw an easy glamour.

"Nothing looked forced, fussy or overly dramatic," she said. "The makeup featured a lot of nude glow, like the awards-season version of no-makeup-makeup, as seen on stars like Zoe Saldaña, Selena Gomez, Halle Berry and Demi Moore."

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Hairstyles, Hou said, "were very polished and modern, with details like glass-like shine and slickness, and a mix of knotted updos and loose styles."

Wilson gave makeup props to Halle Berry and Moore.

"It's not about them rocking a particular trend," she said. "It's about their timeless beauty. I mean, do they age?"

Wilson also noted all the tight hair.

"Lots of beauties in buns. Ariana Grande, Elle Fanning, Lupita Nyong'o, Scarlett Johansson and more stepped out in the sleek 'do. You can't go wrong with such a classic look, especially in the stunning gowns they were wearing," she said.

How stars have dressed this awards season

Mikey Madison, Moore, Chalamet, Grande and Erivo had a lot of red carpet wow momentum heading into the Oscars.

The 97th Oscars come less than two months after the devastating Los Angeles fires subdued carpet dressing for a time. As the city moves into rebuild mode, stars have been upping their fashion games heading into the biggest awards night of the season.

Some are notable for playing it glam but safe.

Like Margot Robbie's Barbie pink, Grande has been mostly sticking to a far paler hue, her signature and an homage to her "Wicked" good witch. Castmate Erivo has always taken fashion risks. She ditched her Elphaba black for last week's Screen Actors Guild awards, opting for a silver Givenchy look with a high shaggy collar worthy of her bad witch role.

Chalamet has been all over the place on carpet dressing as he navigates his Bob Dylan attention from "A Complete Unknown." At the SAGs, he married a bright brat green button-up shirt from Chrome Hearts with a shiny black leather suit and a bolo tie as he continues to channel the real-life icon he plays.

Madison, a new fashion darling, wore a baby pink and black satin gown by Dior. She was among several stars to go vintage at the recent dinner for Oscar nominees. The star of "Anora" wore a dark blue velvet gown by Bill Blass from 1987. She collected a BAFTA award earlier this month in a custom Prada in ivory, accessorizing with a long matching stole and a vintage Tiffany & Co. diamond necklace.

She also went Hollywood bombshell at the SAGs with a strapless silver Louis Vuitton look with a large pleated bow at the waist. She's been working with stylist Jamie Mizrahi, who has dressed Adele and Jennifer Lawrence, among many other celebs.

Serena Williams joins ownership group of Toronto Tempo, the WNBA's 1st Canadian franchise

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

Serena Williams is joining the ownership group of the WNBA's first Canadian franchise, the Toronto Tempo, the team announced Monday.

She will partner with Larry Tanenbaum, Chairman of Kilmer Sports Ventures for the Tempo, who will begin play in the 2026 season.

"I am thrilled to announce my ownership role in the first Canadian WNBA team, the Toronto Tempo," said Williams. "This moment is not just about basketball; it is about showcasing the true value and potential of female athletes — I have always said that women's sports are an incredible investment opportunity. I am excited to partner with Larry and all of Canada in creating this new WNBA franchise and legacy."

Williams, one of the greatest tennis players in history, will play an active role in future jersey designs.

She made her professional tennis debut at age 14 at a tournament in Canada in 1995, and her last event was the 2022 U.S. Open. Williams won 23 Grand Slam singles titles — the most by a woman in the sport's Open era — plus another 14 major trophies in women's doubles alongside her older sister, Venus.

"Serena is a champion," said Tempo President Teresa Resch. "She's the greatest athlete of all time, and her impact on this team and this country is going to be incredible. She's set the bar for women in sport, business and the world — and her commitment to using that success to create opportunities for other

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women is inspiring — we're thrilled to be marking the lead-up to International Women's Day with this announcement."

Williams is the latest former pro athlete to join a WNBA ownership group. Magic Johnson, Tom Brady, Dwyane Wade and Renee Montgomery already are owners.

This isn't the first ownership venture for Williams. She has a stake in the Angel City FC women's soccer team. She also holds minority stakes in the Miami Dolphins as well as TGL's Los Angeles Golf Club, the virtual golf league headed by PGA stars Tiger Williams and Rory McIlroy.

Williams' husband, Alexis Ohanian, donated millions of dollars to Virginia's women's basketball program last year. He graduated from the school.

Ukraine's Zelenskyy says end of war with Russia is 'very, very far away'

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A deal to end the war between Ukraine and Russia "is still very, very far away," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, adding that he believed Ukraine's long-term partnership with the U.S. was strong enough that American support would continue despite recent fraught relations with U.S. President Donald Trump.

"I think our relationship (with the U.S.) will continue, because it's more than an occasional relationship," Zelenskyy said late Sunday, referring to Washington's support for the past three years of war.

"I believe that Ukraine has a strong enough partnership with the United States of America" to keep aid flowing, he said at a briefing in Ukrainian before leaving London.

Zelenskyy publicly was upbeat despite the recent heated Oval Office blow up with Trump and Vice President JD Vance during which they accused him of being "disrespectful" and said he should show more gratitude for America's help. The turn of events is unwelcome for Ukraine, whose understrength army is having a hard time keep bigger Russian forces at bay.

The Ukrainian leader was in London to attend U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's effort to rally his European counterparts around continuing — and likely much increased — support for Ukraine from the continent amid political uncertainty in the U.S., and Trump's overtures toward Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Asked by a reporter to comment about the outlines of a new European initiative to end Russia's war, Zelenskyy said: "We are talking about the first steps today, and therefore, until they are on paper, I would not like to talk about them in great detail."

"An agreement to end the war is still very, very far away, and no one has started all these steps yet. The peace that we foresee in the future must be just, honest, and most importantly, sustainable," he added.

Trump slammed Zelenskyy later Monday for suggesting that the end of Russia's war against Ukraine is still far off.

"This is the worst statement that could have been made by Zelenskyy, and America will not put up with it for much longer!" Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform.

"It is what I was saying, this guy doesn't want there to be Peace as long as he has America's backing and, Europe, in the meeting they had with Zelenskyy, stated flatly that they cannot do the job without the U.S. — Probably not a great statement to have been made in terms of a show of strength against Russia," Trump added in his post. "What are they thinking?"

The White House wants Zelenskyy to show more openness to potential concessions in order to bring the fighting to an end, but Zelenskyy resisted that idea while pressing for security guarantees from Washington during last Friday's meeting.

Friedrich Merz, Germany's likely next leader after the recent election, said Monday that he didn't think last Friday's Oval Office blow-up was spontaneous.

He said that he had watched the scene repeatedly. "My assessment is that it wasn't a spontaneous reaction to interventions by Zelenskyy, but apparently an induced escalation in this meeting in the Oval Office," Merz said.

He said that he was "somewhat astonished by the mutual tone," but there has been "a certain continuity to what we are seeing from Washington at the moment" in recent weeks.

"I would advocate for us preparing to have to do a great, great deal more for our own security in the coming years and decades," he said.

Even so, Merz said that he wanted to keep the trans-Atlantic relationship alive.

"I would also advocate doing everything to keep the Americans in Europe," he said.

Musk's embrace of right-wing politics risks turning off car buyers and sinking Tesla's stock

By BERNARD CONDON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Elon Musk's car company is required each year to report to investors all the bad things that could happen to it, and the latest version lists every imaginable threat from costly lawsuits to out-of-control battery fires to war and another epidemic.

But there's barely any mention in the latest annual update of Musk's full-bore entry into right-wing politics, which some experts say is turning off potential customers who don't share his views.

"It's marketing 101: Don't involve yourself in politics," said New York brand consultant Robert Passikoff. "People will stop buying your products."

It may be too late.

Tesla sales plunged 45% in Europe in January, according to research firm Jato Dynamics, even as overall electric vehicle sales rose. That comes after a report of falling sales in California, its biggest U.S. market, and the first annual drop globally for the company last year.

"I don't even want to drive it," said Model 3 owner John Parnell, a Democrat from Ross, California, adding that he also is cancelling his order for the company's Cybertruck, losing a \$100 deposit. "He's destroying the brand with his politics."

Car industry analysts say it's too early to say for sure how much damage Musk is causing to Tesla because so many other factors could explain its current troubles. It's best selling vehicle, the Model Y, is coming out with a new version this year, leading potential Tesla buyers to hold off purchases right now. And European and Chinese manufacturers are finally catching up to the world's EV leader, offering cars with battery life and dependability that are competitive.

But, if anything, that makes Musk's political comments even more reckless, auto analysts say.

"Musk thinks he can say anything he wants to and doesn't think Tesla will suffer any consequences," said Morningstar analyst Seth Goldstein. "Tesla was in the sweet spot. Now it has competition."

The sales numbers were particularly bad in Germany and France in January, down roughly 60% each, more than the average decline for the more than two-dozen European countries surveyed. Sales in France fell another 26% in February.

More worrisome was the breakdown for Tesla's individual models. Sales of Tesla's Model 3 dropped 33% across all European countries even though that car is not being updated and there is no reason for buyers to wait

"Part of the population is not happy with his views, his political activism," said Jato senior analyst Felipe Munoz who had shrugged off the boycott threat earlier this year, but is now having second thoughts.

Many Tesla buyers used to be wealthy, environmentally-conscious professionals, often liberal, who were attracted to Musk's talk about how his EVs could help save the planet from fossil-fuel destruction.

Not anymore.

"I used to be adored by the left," Musk said in an interview with Tucker Carlson on February 18 as his stock was halfway through a nearly 30% plunge for the month. "Less so these days."

His decision to spend \$270 million on Donald Trump's presidential campaign and publicly back him was risky enough for his business. Then he doubled down, pursuing a slash-and-burn strategy as head of Trump's government efficiency team and taking his political revolution and incendiary talk abroad.

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He has backed the far-right, pro-Russian, anti-Muslim party in Germany, called the British prime minister an "evil tyrant" who runs a "police state," and stated recently about a U.S. neighbor and major Tesla market, "Canada is not a real country."

The backlash has been fierce.

Tesla showrooms in the U.S. have been besieged by protesters, its vehicles vandalized and bumper stickers appearing on its cars with sayings such as, "I bought it before Elon went nuts."

An effigy of Musk was hung in Milan and image of him doing a straight-arm salute projected on a Tesla factory outside Berlin. In London, a bus stop poster of him above the word "swasticators" lit up social media. A Polish government minister called for a Tesla boycott.

"I will not buy a Tesla again," said Jens Fischer, a 50-year-old microscope salesman in Witten, Germany, who thinks Musk is "destabilizing democracy" and has slapped one of those "Elon went nuts" stickers on his Model 3. "I'd sell if I got a good offer."

Tesla investor Ross Gerber says Musk has somehow managed to marry the world's best product with the world's worst marketing.

"People want to buy stuff that makes them feel good, you don't want politics involved," said Gerber, a money manager whose portfolios hold nearly \$60 million in Tesla stock. "It's even worse when you have such divisive issues, whether it's firing climate scientists or taking aid away from starving African children."

Boycotts have a habit of fizzling out, and Morningstar's Goldstein says that buying a car is too big a decision and costs too much to make them successful targets, anyway.

One Tesla owner, Londoner Harry Chathli, is unmoved by the backlash, saying he has no intention of getting rid of his Tesla S. He has nothing but praise for Musk who he calls a visionary for transforming "the way we think about transportation and the future of our planet."

But if Tesla's stock is any indicator, the company's prospects are deteriorating, and Musk's position in the Trump administration isn't helping. As of Friday, it has dropped 37% since its Inauguration Day, a loss of \$550 billion in investor wealth.

Key Oscar moments, from Zoe Saldaña's emotional win and 'Oz' opening to Kieran Culkin's baby wish

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

There were a lot of smiling faces at the Oscars but one had to stand out — Sean Baker saw his film "Anora" go home with the top film prize and he took four for himself. Its star Mikey Madison was crowned best actress.

Twenty-two years after winning best actor for "The Pianist," Adrien Brody won the same Oscar again for his performance as another Holocaust survivor in Brady Corbet's "The Brutalist." He somehow kept the playoff music at bay.

On Sunday, firefighters who battled recent wildfires got applauded, Mick Jagger handed out the best original song Oscar and John Lithgow was tasked with looking "slightly disappointed" when speeches ran long. One highlight was Timothée Chalamet — literally. His yellow suit got more than one comment.

Here were some other telecast highlights:

'Proud child of immigrant parents'

Zoe Saldaña was the favorite but that didn't diminish her emotional win.

After accepting the Oscar for best supporting actress for her work in "Emilia Pérez," Saldaña spoke emotionally about her family and her grandmother, tearing up during her speech.

"My grandmother came to this country in 1961 — I am a proud child of immigrant parents," she said. "With dreams and dignity and hard-working hands, and I am the first American of Dominican origin to accept an Academy Award, and I know I will not be the last. I hope. The fact that I'm getting an award for a role where I got to sing and speak in Spanish — my grandmother, if she were here, she would be so delighted, this is for my grandmother."

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The accolade comes after Saldaña swept awards season, taking home the Golden Globe, Critics' Choice, BAFTA and SAG awards for playing lawyer Rita Mora Castro.

A 'Wicked' opening

Host Conan O'Brien took a back seat at the Oscars' opening number, ceding the floor to a "Wizard of Oz"-themed, 8-minute musical medley led by Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo.

Grande, in a red sparkly dress, performed a rendition of "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" from "The Wizard of Oz." Then Erivo, in a white gown with floral embellishments, took the stage to sing a staggering rendition of "Home" from "The Wiz." They joined up for "Wicked's" "Defying Gravity," with Grande kissing Erivo's ring.

Wildfire-battered Los Angeles, on this night, stood in for Oz, with the graphic "We Love LA" showing after the pair were finished. The show began with a medley of film moments that used Los Angeles as a backdrop, including "La La Land," "Straight Outta Compton," "Iron Man 2" and "Mulholland Drive."

Then it was O'Brien's turn, comically pulling himself — and a missing shoe — from within the body of Demi Moore, in a take on her film "The Substance."

A very — maybe too — public family discussion

While accepting an Emmy Award in January 2024, Kieran Culkin used his time onstage to plead with his wife for more kids. They have two, Kinsey Sioux and Wilder Wolf. "You said maybe if I win," he said, cheekily.

On Sunday, he upped the demand.

Culkin from the Oscar stage repeated the story and then said that he and Jazz Charton made a deal in the parking lot at the Emmys: If he won an Oscar, she'd not only give him a third, they could plan for a fourth. They even shook on it.

"I just have to say this to you, Jazz, love of my life, ye of little faith," he said as the crowd roared. "No pressure, I love you. I'm really sorry I did this again. Now let's get cracking on those kids, what do you say?"

The moment got an echo later in the night when "I'm Not A Robot" director Victoria Warmerdam said she wasn't following Culkin's lead.

"To my producer and partner in life, Trent: I'm not having your babies because of this statue," she said after winning best live action short.

007, celebrated by women

There was no James Bond movie nominated in 2024 but there was a big James Bond section at the Oscars that ate up a lot of telecast time.

To honor transfer of the franchise to Amazon, three singers — Lisa, Doja Cat and Raye — each sang a different 007 title song. Lisa sang "Live and Let Die," Doja Cat tackled "Diamonds Are Forever" and Raye did "Skyfall."

Amazon MGM announced Thursday that the studio has taken the creative reins of the 007 franchise after decades of family control. Longtime Bond custodians Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli said they would be stepping back. On Sunday, Halle Berry thanked them for being the "heart and soul" of Bond.

The tribute began with "The Substance" nominee Margaret Qualley in a red gown taking to the stage to dance acrobatically with a team of male dancers to the James Bond theme.

Gene Hackman honored

Morgan Freeman made an understated tribute to a friend: Gene Hackman

Freeman, who starred with Hackman in two movies, kicked off the in memoriam section with a somber note about Hackman, who was found dead last week alongside his wife.

"This week, our community lost a giant. And I lost a dear friend, Gene Hackman," Freeman began in his speech. "I had the pleasure of working alongside Gene on two films, 'Unforgiven' and 'Under Suspicion.' Like everyone who ever shared a scene with him, I learned he was a generous performer and a man whose gifts elevated everyone's work."

"Gene always said, 'I don't think about legacy. I just hope people remember me as someone who tried to do good work,'" Freeman continued. "I think I speak for us all when I say, 'Gene, you will be remembered for that, and so much more.' Rest in peace, my friend."

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The in memoriam section would honor such luminaries as Terri Garr, Donald Sutherland, Louis Gossett Jr, Shelley Duvall, David Lynch, Bob Newhart, Gena Rowlands, Maggie Smith and James Earl Jones. A separate section in the telecast honored Quincy Jones.

How to stop the wrap-up music

It has been an endless torment to winners everywhere whenever they hear the music swelling. It means one thing: Stop talking.

Brody had a novel response to the playoff music Sunday. He looked sternly into the camera and said: "I'm wrapping up, please turn the music off. I've done this before. Thank you. It's not my first rodeo, but I will be brief."

It's true. He won the Oscar in 2003 for "The Pianist," memorably kissing Halle Berry at the podium. But that time he was pleading, not demanding, more time from producers.

When the music started rolling during his emotional speech back then, Brody said: "One second, please. One second. Cut it out. I got one shot at this." He added, "I didn't say more than five names, I don't think." He went on for more than a minute more.

Oscar winners — and losers — laugh, drink and dance together at after-parties

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP) — Were it not for the absence of an Oscar in his hands, you wouldn't have known Timothée Chalamet lost best actor to Adrien Brody as he sauntered with a smile into the Vanity Fair party.

Once he got inside, Chalamet's grin grew even bigger as he was surrounded with love on all sides at the Beverly Hills bash that is the most luminescent of the post-Oscar parties, where winners and losers alike kicked up their heels, downed champagne and ate In-N-Out Burger late Sunday and early Monday to celebrate the end of a long night and a long awards season.

Changed out of the bright yellow tuxedo he wore to the ceremony into a simpler white shirt and black suit, Chalamet hugged his girlfriend's sisters, Kim Kardashian and Kendall Jenner, who had awaited his arrival from the ceremony. He put his phone to his ear and struggled to hear over the thumping bass, but then waved over an arriving Kylie Jenner, who joined him with a kiss.

Chris Rock was indignant on Chalamet's behalf, loudly declaring he was robbed when he didn't win for playing Bob Dylan in "A Complete Unknown" as the two posed for a picture.

Chalamet for his part was looking ahead to his next film, "Marty Supreme" where he'll be playing ping-pong instead of folk songs.

Hugging the famously petulant tennis legend John McEnroe, Chalamet told the people around them, "For my next project, he was a big inspiration. I play a very intense table tennis player."

Oscars host Conan O'Brien stood next to a couch nearby and thanked a parade of people who came up to give him rave reviews. One fan said he loved a bit he'd done mocking Amazon and its CEO, Jeff Bezos. "I'll never get a package again," O'Brien said.

Governors Ball is a must stop for newly minted Oscar winners

Winners abounded at the Governors Ball, including those from the night's undisputed champion, "Anora."

It's the first stop of the night, just up the escalators from the ceremony's Dolby Theatre home. It's where they get their Oscar statuettes engraved, and dig into some food and drinks before heading off to other parties.

The engraving station is always buzzing with activity as people try to get a glimpse of the victors. Zoe Saldaña, best supporting actress winner for "Emilia Pérez," stood proudly at the table, waiting for her golden statuette to be forever hers, dancing a little bit to pass the time.

When it was finished, her husband, Marco Perego-Saldaña — whom she embarrassed during her acceptance speech when she praised his beautiful long hair — snapped a photo of her on his phone.

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Afterwards, the "Anora" team, including Sean Baker with his four Oscar trophies, and best actress winner Mikey Madison with hers, lugged their Oscars up to the station, as David Bowie's "Modern Love" played on the speakers.

Brody, best actor winner for "The Brutalist," was close behind, taking the spot next to Baker.

Mick Jagger, Olivia Rodrigo and a shining 'Severance' star

If the Governors Ball is the first stop of the night for the evening's celebrities, the Vanity Fair party is often the last.

Hosted by the magazine's editor, Radhika Jones, at a custom-built space connecting the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts with Beverly Hills City Hall, it begins as a dinner and viewing party for about 100 people before growing into a banger of a bash and the night's most sought-after invitation.

This year's design had a 1970s vibe, with gold carpets and a giant disco ball.

Mick Jagger was at the initial dinner, left long enough to present the Oscar for best original song, then came back for the big party.

The night's music included a drum-machine remix of his "Satisfaction."

Saldaña showed up holding her freshly engraved Oscar and posed for pictures with Jessica Alba.

Many less famous faces walked the room holding the Oscars that got them an instant invitation. They included a beaming costume design winner Paul Tazewell.

Nearly as popular as Chalamet was Britt Lower, star of "Severance," the TV show that is so much in the zeitgeist that she was constantly approached by people who lit up when they saw her.

"Oh my god, we are such huge fans!" Olivia Rodrigo, with her boyfriend Louis Partridge, told Lower.

Chappell Roan lights up Elton John's party, and duets with the host

For entertainment, no party could match the annual Oscars affair hosted by Elton John, where Chappell Roan brought her pop stardom to a special performance.

She had the crowd jumping as she sang her hits "Hot to Go" and "Good Luck, Babe" before bringing up the host.

Wearing a bedazzled pink cowboy hat Roan gifted him onstage, John sang two duets with the recent Grammy winner, including his "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me" and her "Pink Pony Club." The latter song celebrates West Hollywood, where the 33rd annual incarnation of the event was held in large white tents.

It's a fundraiser, co-hosted by John's longtime partner David Furnish, supporting the Elton John AIDS Foundation's efforts to end new cases of HIV and AIDS.

Singer-songwriter Brandi Carlile was sitting with John during the party, after the two lost the Oscar for best original song for their collaboration, "Never Too Late."

Young Hollywood hangs together, and leaves together

On the patio at the Vanity fair party, Rodrigo and Partridge hung out with a swath of young stars. They included "The Substance" star Margaret Qualley, who danced during a James Bond tribute at the ceremony; her husband, singer-songwriter-producer Jack Antonoff; actor Jenna Ortega; and model and actor Kaia Gerber.

Another tennis legend, Serena Williams, walked by while eating a slice of pizza from chef Evan Funke, who supplies pies for the party.

Even the valet-and-Uber pickup spot was buzzy with celebrity.

"Car for Andrew Garfield!" an attendant yelled.

Garfield and Monica Barbaro, a best supporting actress nominee for "A Complete Unknown," have been the subject of dating rumors. They left together in an SUV.

Crews battle wildfires in North and South Carolina amid dry conditions and gusty winds

By The Associated Press undefined

Crews battled wildfires in North and South Carolina on Sunday amid dry conditions and gusty winds as residents were forced to evacuate in some areas.

The National Weather Service warned of increased fire danger in the region due to a combination of critically dry fuels and very low relative humidity.

In South Carolina, where more than 175 fires burned 6.6 square miles (17 square kilometers), Gov. Henry McMaster declared a state of emergency on Sunday to support the wildfire response effort, and a statewide burning ban remained in effect.

Crews made progress containing a fire in the Carolina Forest area west of the coastal resort city of Myrtle Beach, where residents had been ordered to evacuate several neighborhoods, according to Horry County Fire Rescue. Video showed some people running down the street as smoke filled the sky. But by late Sunday afternoon, the fire department announced that Carolina Forest evacuees could return home.

The South Carolina Forestry Commission estimated Sunday evening that the blaze had burned 2.5 square miles (6.5 square kilometers) with 30 percent of it contained. No structures had succumbed to the blaze and no injuries had been reported as of Sunday morning, officials said.

In North Carolina, the U.S. Forest Service said fire crews were working to contain multiple wildfires burning in four forests across the state on Sunday. The largest, about 400 acres (162 hectares), was at Uwharrie National Forest, about 50 miles (80.47 kilometers) east of Charlotte. The Forest Service said Sunday afternoon that it had made progress on the fire, reaching about one-third containment.

The small southwestern town of Tryon in Polk County, North Carolina, urged some residents to evacuate Saturday as a fire spread rapidly there. The evacuations remained in effect Sunday. A decision on whether to lift them was expected to be made Monday after intentional burns are set to try to stop the fire from spreading.

That fire has burned about 500 acres (202 hectares) as of late Sunday, with zero percent containment, according to the Polk County Emergency Management/Fire Marshal's office. The North Carolina Forest Service was conducting water drops and back-burning operations on the ground, and area residents should expect a lot of smoke during those operations, officials said.

Officials have not said what caused any of the fires.

How to watch the first joint address to Congress of Trump's second term

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday night will deliver the first joint congressional address of his second presidency.

It's not officially called the State of the Union, a title reserved for a president's annual address to Congress during other years of an administration. But it is an opportunity for Trump to lay out his priorities for the year.

Here's information on how to tune in to Trump's joint address on Tuesday:

What time is the joint address?

Trump's remarks to Congress are slated to begin Tuesday at 9 p.m. ET.

What channel will carry the address?

A number of networks have said they plan to air the Republican president's address across their broadcast and streaming platforms, with special programming before and afterward. The Associated Press will air a livestream of the address online at apnews.com and on its YouTube channel.

Where does the address happen?

Trump's speech will take place in the U.S. House chamber. Larger than the Senate chamber, it can ac-

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commodate both House and Senate lawmakers as well as other officials who are typically invited to such events.

Who else will be there?

Members of the U.S. Supreme Court and Trump's Cabinet will attend.

There's always one Cabinet member missing, though. Called the "designated survivor," that person — who by position is in the presidential line of succession — is intentionally left out of such events to ensure that someone could assume the office of the president in case of a catastrophic or mass-casualty event.

The president typically invites guests who join the event from the balcony above the House floor and are seated with the first lady. Sometimes, there are personal connections, and other times the guests have an association with an issue the president intends to highlight in his remarks.

In his first joint address after taking office in 2017, Trump invited the widow of late Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, as well as the widows of two California police officers killed by a man living in the country illegally.

What happens afterward?

As there is a post-State of the Union address, the opposing party — in this case, the Democrats — will offer a message in response to the joint congressional address.

This year, Michigan Sen. Elissa Slotkin, who previously served in the House, will give the Democrats' response, which is also televised. Democratic leaders have said that in her message, Slotkin will likely focus on economic issues.

The party has also tapped Rep. Adriano Espaillat of New York, chair of the Hispanic Caucus, to give a Spanish-language response. On Saturday, Trump signed an executive order designating English as the official language of the United States, a measure that allows government agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to choose whether to continue to offer documents and services in languages other than English.

Why isn't this called the State of the Union?

By tradition, a State of the Union address is intended as a look back on the prior year. Trump just took office — albeit for a second time — on Jan. 20, so he's only been in office this go-round for just over a month.

Instead, newly inaugurated presidents typically use their first joint congressional addresses to look forward, setting a tone for their legislative agenda. According to the Congressional Research Service, the average number of policy requests in a first-year address is 42.

Trump's past speeches to Congress asked them to pass his agenda. Now, he's willing to go it alone

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Judging by his past speeches to Congress, President Donald Trump once felt the need to ask lawmakers to pass his agenda. Not so much anymore.

Trump, who is addressing Congress on Tuesday night, has asserted his authority to reshape the federal government without needing to consult the legislative branch. That's a break from his previous remarks to Congress in which he specifically sought lawmakers' backing on many of the actions he's now taking unilaterally.

On his own, Trump has signed orders to levy punishing taxes on imports, deport immigrants in the country illegally, fire hundreds of thousands of federal workers and freeze congressionally approved spending. There are limits to that approach as he will still need lawmakers' help to extend his 2017 tax cuts.

But the speeches delivered during Trump's first term show his evolution as a leader. His hopeful rhetoric in 2017 gave way to a 2020 State of the Union address in which Democrats were socialists. The event that defined the United States that year — the coronavirus pandemic — received only a brief mention by Trump.

'The torch of truth, liberty and justice'

Going into his 2017 speech, Trump had already shocked the public with his decidedly bleak "American

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carnage" inaugural address. But for his address to Congress, Trump was more optimistic.

He started with a celebration of civil rights as February is Black History Month, an event the president at the time saw as creating a moral obligation for the country.

"Each American generation passes the torch of truth, liberty and justice in an unbroken chain," Trump said. "That torch is now in our hands. And we will use it to light up the world. I am here tonight to deliver a message of unity and strength, and it is a message deeply delivered from my heart."

This year, Trump goes into his speech after launching a wholesale effort to eliminate any diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives in the government, corporations and schools.

In his 2017 address, Trump laid out a seemingly bold set of promises to stop crime, secure the southern border, cut taxes and restore manufacturing as the engine of the U.S. economy. It was still a moment when the president himself was trying to navigate a Washington in which he was an outsider and stranger.

In his remarks, he suggested that tariffs would help iconic American companies such as Harley-Davidson, the motorcycle manufacturer. It was both an expression of his core belief in tariffs and a sign to critics that import taxes might not be the cure-all that Trump claimed.

When Trump spoke in 2017, stock in Harley-Davidson sold for more than \$55 a share. The price fell jaggedly after his remarks and bottomed out during the 2020 pandemic. Since the start of 2025 with Trump's return, the motorcycle maker's share price has fallen further to \$26.

'Our new American moment'

In his 2018 State of the Union, Trump was coming off a big legislative victory with his Tax Cuts and Jobs Act.

Signed in December 2017, it permanently lowered the corporate tax rate to 21% and included a series of individual income tax cuts set to expire after 2025. Republicans stressed the breadth of the \$2 trillion in tax cuts, while Democrats noted how they were tilted toward the wealthy.

"This is our new American moment," Trump promised. "There has never been a better time to start living the American Dream."

The president noted that employers had paid roughly 3 million workers "tax cut bonuses" and that median family incomes would increase by \$4,000 (which they more than did in 2019, only to fall with the pandemic and the spike in inflation during President Joe Biden's first two years in office).

Trump also noted that "Apple has just announced it plans to invest a total of \$350 billion in America, and hire another 20,000 workers." If that claim sounds familiar, it's because over the past few days, the White House has highlighted Apple's plans to invest \$500 billion over the next four years, even though the company had already planned to increase its domestic manufacturing.

Trump also asked Congress to give the executive branch the power "to remove federal employees who undermine the public trust or fail the American people." The president sought more than \$1 trillion in infrastructure investments (which Biden ultimately provided with a bipartisan law) as well as an immigration bill that would lock down the border but give "a path to citizenship for 1.8 million illegal immigrants who were brought here by their parents at a young age."

'Greatness or gridlock'

By Trump's 2019 State of the Union, Democrats had recaptured the House majority after a midterms shellacking of the Republicans. The president adjusted his rhetoric and called for bipartisan partnership.

"We must choose between greatness or gridlock, results or resistance, vision or vengeance, incredible progress or pointless destruction," he said. "Tonight, I ask you to choose greatness."

But embedded in that message was also a request that Democrats not investigate the actions of his administration. He suggested without evidence that inquiries into his taxes, conflicts of interest and other matters could undermine economic growth.

"An economic miracle is taking place in the United States — and the only thing that can stop it are foolish wars, politics, or ridiculous partisan investigations," Trump said.

The president again pushed for harsher measures to stop illegal immigration and asked Congress to give him the authority to impose "reciprocal" tariffs, such that the import taxes charged by the United States

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would match those of other countries.

By December of 2019, the House had impeached Trump for withholding congressionally approved military aid to Ukraine unless that country's leadership investigated Biden's family.

'A socialist takeover'

Having avoided conviction for his first impeachment, Trump took on a decidedly partisan tone in his 2020 State of the Union address as he sought reelection. He bashed the "radical left" and said that Democratic cities were harboring unauthorized immigrants who were violent criminals.

The start of Trump's speech was an unabashed highlight reel of the economy's strength, with him taking sole credit for gains that had technically begun under President Barack Obama and continued through early 2020. The president told the country that Democrats wanted to take away their health insurance in "a socialist takeover."

"To those watching at home tonight, I want you to know: We will never let socialism destroy American health care," Trump said.

In the text of his early February speech, Trump still portrayed the coronavirus pandemic as a problem for China, against which he would safeguard the United States. He ignored economic data showing a loss of momentum in the U.S. manufacturing sector. There was no mention of the national debt or deficits.

"The best is yet to come," Trump promised.

Then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., tore up her copy of the speech afterward. About six weeks after Trump's speech, the country would be in a lockdown as millions of people were laid off due to the pandemic and the government borrowed trillions of dollars to stabilize an ailing economy.

What to watch when Trump gives his big speech to Congress

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump loves a good spectacle, and it's hard to top a speech to a joint session of Congress. The House chamber is packed with lawmakers, and the president's arrival is announced in a booming voice by the sergeant-at-arms, triggering cacophonous applause.

Trump's speech on Tuesday evening isn't technically considered a State of the Union address — that comes next year, after he's been on the job for longer — but there's no distinguishable difference for anyone watching at home.

Almost no detail is left to chance in these situations. Here's an idea of what to look and listen for:

Where is Elon Musk?

The most powerful people in American government are usually on the dais during an event like this. While the president addresses the nation, the House speaker and the vice president, who doubles as the ceremonial leader of the Senate, sit behind him.

However, they've been largely overshadowed by Elon Musk, the billionaire entrepreneur overseeing the Department of Government Efficiency and serving as a top adviser to Trump. There's no precedent for Musk's operation, which has burrowed into federal agencies, led to thousands of firings and counting, and rewired how Washington works.

Special guests at presidential speeches often sit above the chamber in the gallery. Will Musk, the world's richest person, be there — or somewhere else?

What does Trump say about Ukraine?

It's been only a few days since the most dramatic encounter in the Oval Office in recent memory. Trump welcomed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to solidify a partnership involving critical minerals, only for a deal to fall apart after Trump and Vice President JD Vance laced into Zelenskyy over a perceived lack of respect.

Now the future of U.S. support for Ukraine, which has been fending off a Russian invasion for three years, is increasingly in doubt. "You either make a deal or we are out," Trump told Zelenskyy.

Will Russia try to press its advantage on the battlefield? Does Zelenskyy patch things up with Trump?

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Will fragile U.S. relationships with European allies deteriorate further?

There are no clear answers right now. But Tuesday's speech will be a high-profile opportunity for Trump, a Republican, to explain his vision for the war and his approach to foreign policy.

How do lawmakers behave?

Presidential speeches to Congress have become rowdier affairs. Rep. Joe Wilson, a South Carolina Republican, famously shouted "You lie!" at President Barack Obama's address to Congress in 2009, and decorum hasn't improved much since then.

President Joe Biden got into his own back-and-forth with Republicans, and Trump is known for deviating from his script with attempts to stir outrage among his opponents.

How will Democrats respond? Sometimes their protests have been quiet, such as when women wore white, the color of the suffragette movement, to previous events. But at a time when Democratic voters have been eager for their representatives to be more aggressive, it's possible that they become more vocal.

Reaction from Republicans is more predictable. Expect them to try to outdo one another with their embrace of the president.

Does Trump spell out a legislative plan?

Trump has demonstrated his desire to push the limits of presidential power during his second term in office, but there are some things that he still needs congressional help to accomplish.

The president wants spending cuts, border security funding and tax cuts — a politically sensitive combination at a time when Republicans have only slim majorities in the House and the Senate. The party will need almost complete unanimity to move forward.

So far, Trump has followed his typical approach of playing one side off against the other, sometimes endorsing the House plan for one massive piece of legislation and sometimes supporting the Senate strategy of breaking the proposals into multiple bills.

Don't expect a lot of details from the president — that's not something that usually happens in speeches like this, regardless of who occupies the Oval Office. But Trump could reveal more about his goals or prod lawmakers to work faster. Given the power that Trump has over the party, any remark could reshape the debate.

Which version of Trump shows up?

The president is in his element when he's delivering freewheeling remarks, bouncing from topic to topic in what he likes to call "the weave."

But that's not usually how these kinds of speeches go. They're often carefully scripted, the kind of monologue that Trump might label "BORING" in a post on Truth Social if he were watching it on television.

How long will Trump stick to the teleprompter this time? And how much does he veer off track?

A hint could be Trump's speech at the Republican National Convention last summer, when he accepted the party's presidential nomination. He started off subdued, even somber, as he shared the story of his assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania.

But the appeal for national unity eventually gave way to a flood of grievances more typical of Trump's stump speeches.

Austria's new government takes office after a record 5-month wait

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — Austria's new government took office on Monday, with Christian Stocker taking over as chancellor at the head of a previously untried three-party coalition after a record five-month wait for a new administration.

The new government will have to deal with rising unemployment, a recession and a creaking budget. Its coalition agreement, reached on Thursday after the longest negotiations in post-World War II Austria, foresees strict new asylum rules in the European Union country of 9 million people.

"I stand in front of you today with great respect for the tasks that await, and I am very well aware of the great responsibility that comes with these tasks," Stocker said at a handover ceremony. "I aspire to

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be a chancellor for everyone.”

The end of a long road

This is the country’s first three-party government, bringing together Stocker’s conservative Austrian People’s Party, the center-left Social Democrats and the liberal Neos. The alliance in the political center came together only at the second attempt, after the far-right, anti-immigration and euroskeptic Freedom Party emerged as the strongest political force in a parliamentary election on Sept. 29.

A first attempt collapsed in early January, prompting the resignation of then-Chancellor Karl Nehammer, who had said that his party wouldn’t work under Freedom Party leader Herbert Kickl.

Stocker took over from Nehammer as leader of the People’s Party and went into negotiations with Kickl on a possible coalition, but those collapsed on Feb. 12 amid mutual finger-pointing.

The three parties in the center then renewed their effort to find common ground, heading off the possibility of an early election. On Sunday, the coalition deal received strong backing from members of Neos, which is entering a federal government for the first time — the final step before the government could take office.

“One could say ‘good things come to those who wait’ — that, in any case, is my hope in view of the many days it took to form this government,” President Alexander Van der Bellen said as he swore in the new government.

“This process certainly took a long time; whether it will turn out well now isn’t yet decided, but we are positive and optimistic,” he added. “That is down to us all.”

A new team with some familiar faces

Stocker, 64, becomes chancellor although he wasn’t running for the job when Austrians voted in September and has not previously served in a national government. Social Democratic leader Andreas Babler became the new vice chancellor.

Neos leader Beate Meini-Reisinger took over as foreign minister from Alexander Schallenberg, who also served as interim chancellor for the past two months after Nehammer’s resignation.

Schallenberg says he is leaving politics, at least for now. He told Stocker that it would have been hard to imagine such a friendly handover when he took over temporarily in January, at a time when a Kickl-led government with a more skeptical attitude toward the EU looked likely

“We have a strong, pro-European government with you at the helm that understands clearly that pulling up bridges and closing hatches isn’t a policy that makes sense for our country,” he said.

Some conservative ministers from the old government kept their jobs, notably Interior Minister Gerhard Karner and Defense Minister Klaudia Tanner. But the important Finance Ministry went from the People’s Party to the Social Democrats, with Markus Marterbauer taking the job.

Today in History: March 4, Abraham Lincoln’s final inauguration

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, March 4, the 63rd day of 2025. There are 302 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 4, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated for a second term of office. With the end of the Civil War in sight, and just six weeks before his assassination, Lincoln declared:

“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the fight as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Also on this date:

In 1789, the Constitution of the United States went into effect as the first Federal Congress met in New York.

In 1801, Thomas Jefferson became the first president to be inaugurated in Washington, D.C.

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In 1933, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated for his first term as president; he was the last U.S. president to be inaugurated on this date. In his inaugural speech, Roosevelt stated, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

In 1966, John Lennon of The Beatles was quoted in the London Evening Standard as saying, "We're more popular than Jesus now," a comment that caused an angry backlash in the United States.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan addressed the nation on the Iran-Contra affair, acknowledging that his overtures to Iran had "deteriorated" into an arms-for-hostages deal.

In 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that workplace sexual harassment laws are applicable when the offender and victim are of the same sex.

In 2015, the Justice Department cleared Darren Wilson, a white former Ferguson, Missouri, police officer, in the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, a Black 18-year-old, but also issued a scathing report calling for sweeping changes in city law enforcement practices, which it called discriminatory and unconstitutional.

In 2017, President Donald Trump wrote a series of Twitter posts accusing former President Barack Obama of tapping his telephones during the 2016 election; an Obama spokesman declared that the assertion was "simply false."

Today's birthdays: Film director Adrian Lyne is 84. Author James Ellroy is 77. Musician-producer Emilio Estefan is 72. Actor Catherine O'Hara is 71. Actor Mykelti (MY'-kul-tee) Williamson is 68. Actor Patricia Heaton is 67. Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn., is 67. Actor Steven Weber is 64. Rock musician Jason Newsted is 62. Author Khaled Hosseini is 60. Author Dav Pilkey is 59. Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., is 57. NBA forward Draymond Green is 35.