

Groton Daily Independent

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Saturday, April 5

State FFA Convention, SDSU
Dueling Duo at Groton Legion, 6 p.m.
State DI in Pierre at Middle School

Sunday, April 6

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Last day of Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; and Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

POPS Concert, 2 p.m. and 5 p.m.

It's Saturday

Good Morning

Today is
going to be
a good day
simply
because
God made it.



God's Spoken Word Ministries

Have a wonderful weekend!

Pancake Sunday, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Groton Community Center

Baseball at Redfield, Varsity at 2 p.m., JV at 4 p.m.

Monday, April 7

Senior Menu: Ham with pineapple, au gratin, glazed carrots, Easter cake, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: French toast.

School Lunch: Chicken pasta, cooked broccoli.

Smarter Balance Testing for Grades 6-8 and 11 (ELA and Math)

Baseball at Madison, 7 p.m.

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

Groton Daily Independent
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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.

South Korea's Yoon Removed

South Korea's highest court unanimously decided to remove impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol from office yesterday, ending five months of political uncertainty after Yoon's short-lived declaration of martial law in December. The Constitutional Court's ruling triggers a 60-day period to elect a new leader, with Prime Minister Han Duck-soo serving as acting president in the interim.

Yoon had been indicted on charges of leading an insurrection by imposing martial law, the first such declaration since the country democratized in the 1980s. Yoon declared a six-hour-long martial law Dec. 3 over allegations that the opposition was made up of "anti-state" North Korean sympathizers, leading to troops storming the National Assembly and sparking nationwide protests. Yoon was impeached Dec. 14, arrested Jan. 15, and later faced a trial.

South Korea is one of the US' biggest allies, hosting America's largest overseas military base. It is set to hold a snap election June 3. Lee Jae-myung, the leader of the Democratic Party, is considered a front-runner in the race, while the ruling Conservatives, reeling from Yoon's impeachment, have yet to decide on a candidate.

China imposes 34% tariff on imports of all US products.

The retaliatory tariff will go into effect April 10 and comes two days after President Donald Trump announced a 34% tariff on Chinese goods, which excludes some categories like semiconductors and pharmaceuticals. China's tariff doesn't include any exceptions. China sells far more to the US than it buys. Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said inflation will likely pick up due to the trade war.

South Carolina, UConn head to women's NCAA championship.

The South Carolina Gamecocks defeated the Texas Longhorns 74-57, while the Connecticut Huskies beat the UCLA Bruins 85-51. South Carolina and Connecticut will face each other in the championship game tomorrow (3 pm ET, ABC). On the men's side, the Final Four begins tomorrow, with the Florida Gators taking on the Auburn Tigers (6:09 pm ET, ABC) and the Houston Cougars taking on the Duke Blue Devils (8:49 pm ET, ABC).

Trump extends TikTok deadline by an additional 75 days.

TikTok's Chinese parent company, ByteDance, now has until June 19 to sell the popular social media app to a non-Chinese company or risk being banned in the US. The latest extension is the second one granted to the company after its original Jan. 19 deadline was delayed by 75 days to today. The administration is said to be considering a number of bids from US companies to buy TikTok, including Amazon.

Trump administration to freeze grants to Brown, sets terms for Harvard.

The Trump administration is reportedly planning to freeze \$510M in grants to Brown University over concerns about antisemitism on campus, following similar actions against other universities, including Columbia and Princeton. Meanwhile, Harvard University received a letter from the administration ordering it to adhere to a set of changes to maintain \$9B in federal funding, including eliminating its diversity, equity, and inclusion program.

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US hiring in March exceeds economist expectations.

US employers added 228,000 nonfarm jobs last month, higher than the 140,000 jobs economists had estimated and up from the revised 117,000 jobs in February. The unemployment rate increased to 4.2%, up from 4.1% in February. Average hourly earnings rose 0.3% month over month (as expected) and 3.8% year over year (below expectations and the lowest level since July 2024).

Russell Brand charged with rape and sexual assault in UK.

Prosecutors charged the British comedian and actor with offenses involving four women between 1999 and 2005. The charges come roughly a year and a half after an investigation into Brand's past behavior, fueled by media reports. Brand denies the accusations, maintaining that all his past relationships were consensual. He is set to appear in court May 2.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Sharon I. in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina.

"I was at the bank with my grandchildren exchanging their rolled coins for bills. As we were walking out, my grandson said loudly that the teller had given him \$10 too much. He said we needed to get back in line to return it. The people in line all heard him, and after we returned the money, a young couple in line gave him a \$10 bill and his very pregnant wife said she hoped that their child would grow up to be as honest as him while the others in line clapped. It warmed my heart in so many ways."



**Groton
American Legion**

GRAND REOPENING

**Groton
Legion Lounge
"Legion
Remodel
Celebration!"**

**When: Friday,
April 11**

**Time: 5-10pm
(reduced drink
prices & door
prizes)**

**Where: Groton
American Legion
Lounge, Main St,
Groton**

**Appetizers:
6 pm until gone**

**Door prices:
hourly cash
prizes (must be
present to win)**

**Music:
Karaoke 9-1 pm!
B&M Tunes**

Our Legion Post
Lounge & Hall
remodel
celebration has
been
finalized.
Please come and
celebrate with
our customers,
friends, and
Legion family.

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AprilThe South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) held their April Commission meeting at the Matthews Training Center in Pierre.

The Commission had several proposals and finalizations for upcoming seasons and regulations.

WILDLIFE PROPOSALS

Closed Area on Lake Francis Case

The Commission accepted a petition to eliminate the closed area, referenced as the "Dredge Hole" below the I-90 bridge on Lake Francis Case by Chamberlain. This area is closed December 1-April 30 and includes the area between the I-90 Bridge and Railroad Bridge. This would open this area to fishing for the entire season. Removing the Dredge Hole closure is now a Commission proposal.

Mentored Hunting

The Commission proposed the following changes to the mentored hunting process:

The mentored hunter would be issued their respective license and be the holder of their license. The license would be under the mentee's name. Previously, mentored hunters hunted under the mentor's license. Mentored hunters would need a profile in the South Dakota Go Outdoors system in order to obtain a license.

There would be no group size restriction for mentored hunting.

Consent for mentored hunting would now be verbal or written. Previously, written consent was required.

This allows the GFP Commission to establish criteria and conditions for mentored hunting seasons.

Electronic Tagging

The Commission proposed a definition of tagging to accommodate the comprehensive testing the department is conducting regarding electronic tagging. This will not replace the current locking seal tagging rule, but allow the option to switch to an electronic tagging option in the future.

Mentored/Youth/Apprentice Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 mentored/youth/apprentice deer hunting seasons. The season dates would be:

Sept. 13, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026

Sept. 12, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027

Archery Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 archery deer hunting seasons. The season dates would be:

Sept. 1, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026

Sept. 1, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027

Nonresidents may not hunt private lands leased by GFP for public hunting access or public lands until Oct. 1.

The proposal also includes the expansion of the municipal deer hunting areas around Sioux Falls and establishment of a municipal deer hunting area in Hot Springs.

Muzzleloader Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 muzzleloader deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

Dec. 1, 2025 - Jan. 1, 2026

Dec. 1, 2026 - Jan. 1, 2027

All license numbers were recommended, and final action will occur at the May GFP Commission meeting.

Black Hills Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 Black Hills deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

Nov. 1 - 30, 2025

Nov. 1 - 30, 2026

All license numbers were recommended and final action will occur at the May GFP Commission meeting.

Custer State Park Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 Custer State Park deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

Nov. 1 - 30, 2025

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Nov. 1 - 30, 2026

The Commission proposal includes keeping the "antlerless deer" season closed in Custer State Park. All license numbers were recommended, and final action will occur at the May GFP Commission meeting.

West River Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 west river deer hunting seasons with the following dates:
2025

November 15 – 30, 2025*

*Gregory County – 30A: November 8 – 11 and 24 – 30, 2025

30B: November 15 – 30, 2025

Antlerless deer tags only: December 13-21, 2025

2026

November 14 – 29, 2026*

*Gregory County – 30A: November 7 – 10 and 23 – 29, 2026

30B: November 14 – 29, 2026

Antlerless deer tags only: December 12-20, 2026

All license numbers were recommended, and final action will occur at the May GFP Commission meeting.

Refuge Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 National Refuge deer hunting seasons with the following dates:

2025 Season Dates:

Sand Lake NWR November 8-12, November 13-17, November 24 – 30, and December 1-7

Lacreek NWR October 15-21 and November 26 – December 2

Waubay NWR November 15-23, and November 29 – December 7 (includes Waubay State Game Bird Refuge)

2026 Season Dates:

Sand Lake NWR November 14-18, November 19-23, November 30 – December 6, and December 7-13

Lacreek NWR October 21-27 and November 25-December 1

Waubay NWR November 14-22, and November 28 – December 6 (includes Waubay State Game Bird Refuge).

All license numbers were recommended, and final action will occur at the May GFP Commission meeting.

East River Deer

The Commission proposed the 2025 and 2026 east river deer hunting seasons with the following dates:
2025

November 22 – December 7, 2025

Antlerless deer tags only: December 13-21, 2025

2026

November 21 – December 6, 2026

Antlerless deer tags only: December 12-20, 2026

All license numbers were recommended, and final action will occur at the May GFP Commission meeting.

Black Hills Elk

The Commission proposed the Black Hills and Custer State Park elk hunting seasons with the following dates:

Black Hills and CSP Archery: September 1 – 30

CSP Firearm: October 1 – 31

Black Hills Firearm

Any Elk Units: H1A, H2A, H3A, H4A, H5A, H7A, and H9A - Oct. 1 - 31

Antlerless Elk Units: H1B, H4B, H7B, and H9B - Oct. 15-31 and Dec. 1-16

Antlerless Elk Units: H2B, H2E, H2H, H3B, and H3E - Oct. 15 - 31

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Antlerless Elk Units: H2C, H2F, H2I, H3C and H3F - Dec. 1 - 16

Antlerless Elk Units: H2D, H2G, H2J, H3D, and H3G - Dec. 17-31.

897 any elk licenses and 1,335 antlerless elk licenses are recommended for the 2025 Black Hills and Custer State Park elk hunting seasons. This would result in 115 additional any elk licenses and 515 additional antlerless elk licenses compared to 2024.

The following recommendations represent a 15% increase in any elk licenses and a 63% increase in antlerless elk licenses from 2024 to 2025.

WILDLIFE FINALIZATIONS

Public Lands and Waters

The Commission adopted two rules to align with the United States Code of Federal Regulations, which was a recommendation made by the US Coast Guard. The first rule clarifies the usage of personal flotation devices be used in accordance with any requirements on the approval label or owner's manual. The second rule clarifies required fire extinguishers be in serviceable condition and not expired.

Prairie Elk

The Commission adopted the Prairie Elk Season with the following dates:

The Commission expanded the West River Prairie Elk unit (PRE-WRA) to include all counties west of the Missouri River not currently in an existing Prairie Elk or Black Hills Elk hunting unit and to expand the season dates for Prairie Elk Unit 9A, to expand season dates for Prairie Elk Unit 27A to Sept. 1 – Dec. 31, and to allow the use of landowner-own-land, resident-only antlerless elk license for this unit.

The Commission approved a tag allocation of 136 "any elk" and 280 "antlerless elk" licenses for the Prairie Elk Hunting Season.

Bighorn Sheep

The Commission approved the 2025 Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season dates from Sept. 1 – Dec. 31.

The Commission also approved a change to the BHS – BH4 unit to include those portions of Lawrence and Meade counties south and west of Interstate 90.

A total of 7 ram bighorn sheep licenses will be available for the Bighorn Sheep Hunting Season, which includes one auction license.

Mountain Lion

The Commission voted to allow the initiation of the pursuit of a mountain lion with dogs outside the Black Hills Fire Protection District to occur anywhere, where permitted by the landowner or managing authority.

Duck Hunting Season

The Commission approved the 2025 duck hunting season dates of:

High Plains Zone

October 11, 2025 – January 15, 2026

Low Plains North & Low Plains Middle Zone

September 27, 2025 – December 9, 2025

Low Plains South Zone

October 25, 2025 – January 6, 2026.

The 2025-26 duck hunting season will allow the take of 3 pintail ducks in the traditional bag limit and will decrease the "bonus blue-winged teal season" from 16 to 9 days. These changes are in conjunction with changes made to US Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Register.

Goose Hunting Season

The Commission approved the following dates for the 2025 goose hunting season:

Canada Geese (and Brant)

Unit 1: October 1 – December 16, 2025

Unit 2 (including Bennett County): November 3, 2025 – February 15, 2026

Light Geese

Statewide: September 27, 2025 – January 9, 2026

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White-fronted Geese

Statewide: September 27 - December 9, 2025

The Commission also voted to repeal the Special Canada Goose season in Unit 3 and include Bennett County into Unit 2.

Public Comment Opportunity and Upcoming Meeting

To hear the discussion on any of the topics on the agenda, audio from the meeting is available through South Dakota Public Broadcasting and will soon be available on the GFP website as part of the meeting archive.

To see these documents in their entirety, visit gfp.sd.gov/commission/information.

To be included in the public record and to be considered by the Commission, public comments must include a full name and city of residence and be submitted by 11:59 p.m. CDT May 4.

The next Regular Commission Meeting will be held May 8-9 at the Custer State Park Event Barn.

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**BROWN COUNTY
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY**

April 8, 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. Mike Scott, Landfill Manager
 - a. Solid Waste Management Grants
 - i. Cell 5 Construction
 - ii. Landfill Compactor
 1. Review Landfill Compactor Quotes & Award
5. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Change Order for Tuckpointing Project
6. Approve & Authorize Allison Tunheim, HR Director to sign Health Equity Contracts
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of April 1, 2025
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
 - e. Landfill Tonnage Report for March 2025
 - f. Claim Assignments
 - g. Lease Agreements
 - h. Auditor's Report of Accounts for February 2025
 - i. LEMPG 2nd Qtr. Report
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. 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>

EQUALIZATION BOARDS

11:00 AM - BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

- Organize as County Board of Equalization
- Tax Exempt
- Tax Freezes
- Stipulations and/or Corrections

1:00 PM – CONSOLIDATED BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

- Organize as Consolidated Board of Equalization
- Stipulations and/or Corrections

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Groton Chamber of Commerce April Meeting

April 2nd, 2025 ~v 12pm City Hall

- Members present: Bruce Babcock, Katelyn Nehlich, Douglas Heinrich, April Abeln and Topper Tastad
- Minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Nehlich and seconded by Abeln. All members present voted aye.
- The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$26,824.36 in addition to the \$5,000 CD. The bucks account balance is about \$2,819.80. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Tastad. All members present voted aye.
- A thank you note was received from Silver Skates.
- Email motion by Abeln and seconded by Kutter to donate \$300 to the Yelduz Shrine for Circus tickets. All members present voted aye.
- Email motion by Abeln and seconded by Babcock to invest \$5,000 into a Dacotah Bank CD for 7 months at 4.01%. All members present voted aye.
- Email motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to sponsor a special section in the Groton Independent for State A Boys Basketball for \$40. All members present voted aye.
- Further discussion was held on new advertising contracts for the Hwy 12 electronic sign. Abeln will research the exact date the current contracts are up.
- Tastad brought it to the board's attention that the west Groton sign needs to be leveled.
- Motion by Babcock and seconded by Tastad to purchase a 1/2 page in the Glacial Lakes Guide. All members present voted aye. The advertisement will include events and a picture of Summer Fest. It was also discussed adding a bowling alley instead of including it under recreation.
- Abeln mentioned other advertising deadlines for the SD Magazine and the Aberdeen Magazine. A Dakota Broadcasting ad will need to be recorded for the Spring Citywide Rummage Sale. Groton Lions have offered to have information about the Chamber on the rummage sale listing again this year. The 2025 Glacial Lakes & Prairies Lit Drop date has been scheduled for May 16th in Watertown.
- Tastad brought ideas to advertise in The Aberdeen Insider. He will present estimates at the April 2nd meeting. Discussion was held on other groups in the Groton SD Community forming a partnership for this expense.
- Donations were discussed for Princess Prom and the Legion Lounge's Grand Remodel Celebration, but none were given.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Babcock to donate \$300 to the Groton Community Historical Society for their Pancake Sunday event. All members present voted aye.
- No new business welcomes are planned.
- Next Meeting: May 7th, 12pm at City Hall

Upcoming events

04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser 6-11:30pm Legion Post #39
04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser 10am-1pm Community Center
04/11/2025 Grand Remodel Celebration, Legion Lounge, 5-10pm
04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt 10am City Park (Chamber sponsored FREE bike giveaway)
04/12/2025 Prom, GHS Arena
04/12/2025 Groton Firemen's Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am
04/13/2025 Princess Prom at GHS Arena 4:30-8pm
04/13/2025 Calvary's Love Story 6:30pm Groton C&MA Church
04/16/2025 The Living Stations 7pm St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
04/22/2025 Community Blood Drive 1:30-3:30pm
04/25/2024 Front Porch 605 Spring Shop Hop 12-5pm
04/26/2025 Front Porch 605 Spring Shop Hop 9am-3pm
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm

Names Released in Grant County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 12 and 481st Avenue, two miles east of Milbank, SD

When: 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, April 1, 2025

Driver 1: Diane Kay Schultz, 61-year-old female from Big Stone City, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2007 Toyota Corolla

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 2: Darrell Wayne Thompson, 34-year-old male from Ortonville, MN, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2017 Chevrolet Silverado

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 2a: Jillyn Thompson, 35-year-old female from Ortonville, MN, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 2b: 9-year-old female from Ortonville, MN, no injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Grant County, S.D.- One woman died and another was seriously injured in a two-vehicle crash two miles east of Milbank, SD Tuesday morning.

Preliminary crash information indicates Diane Kay Schultz, the driver of a 2007 Toyota Corolla, was traveling westbound on US Highway 12 and lost control of the vehicle, entering the eastbound lane. At the same time, Darrell W. Thompson, the driver of a 2017 Chevrolet Silverado was traveling eastbound, and the two vehicles collided near 481st Avenue.

Schultz died from her injuries. Thompson and a 9-year-old passenger in the Silverado were not injured. A second passenger in the Silverado, Jillyn Thompson, sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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Note: Records of state-reportable crashes are now available at <http://www.safesd.gov/> . Records should be available about 10 days after the investigation is complete.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State Library faces Trump threat to federal funding after escaping the Noem knife

Museums also concerned about impact of presidential executive order

BY: JOHN HULT - APRIL 4, 2025 2:46 PM



South Dakota librarians watch a debate from the gallery of the state Senate in Pierre on March 10, 2025. (Joshua Haiar/

South Dakota Searchlight)

The Trump administration's move to gut a library-supporting federal agency could make a victory for backers of the South Dakota State Library short-lived.

Last year, State Library advocates were aghast at a budget plan from then-Gov. Kristi Noem that would've hollowed out the Pierre-based organization, which operates under the umbrella of the state Department of Education.

The Legislature softened the cuts during its annual lawmaking session that ended earlier this month, keeping the State Library alive and eligible for a federal grant that funds much of the organization's budget.

Then, the day after lawmakers went home in mid-March, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing the head of the Institute for Museum and Library

Services, or IMLS — which provides the grant — to cut its operations to the "maximum extent allowable by law."

That has State Library advocates worried about its future again.

Among other duties, the State Library handles interlibrary loans, pays for databases that are accessible at no cost through any public library in the state, provides support for summer reading programs and organizes professional development workshops. It also offers Braille and talking book services for readers with disabilities.

Noem's budget plan, unveiled in December, would have pared down every piece of the State Library's operations except those last two items. The proposed cuts were deep enough to dash about \$1.3 million in federal matching dollars from the IMLS. That money, on top of the state's \$1 million contribution, was enough to fund the State Library's border-to-border operations and pay its 21 employees.

Noem wasn't around to fight for her proposal, however. She left the state to take a job as head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security before state lawmakers dug into the details of her budget.

The Legislature ultimately worked with the administration of her successor, Gov. Larry Rhoden, to fashion

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a compromise that spared the jobs of all but 3.5 State Library employees.

The \$850,000 in state funding approved in the deal with the state Education Department was enough to preserve IMLS grant funding, even as the Legislature dissolved the citizen board that oversees the State Library. Summer reading program support, training for librarians and most of the databases were saved in the deal.

Nancy Van Der Weide, the Education Department's spokeswoman, said databases from EBSCO, World Book, BookFlix, Peterson's Test Prep, SIRS Issues Research, Discoverer, Research Library, U.S. Newsstream, and CultureGrams will remain available to South Dakota citizens through the State Library.

State unsure about impact of Trump action

The IMLS dollars that buoy South Dakota's State Library serve similar purposes in every state. Grants from the organization also support curation and collection management activities at museums and local libraries.

Congress last authorized IMLS grant funding in 2018, during President Donald Trump's first term in office. There's money available through the 2025 federal fiscal year, which began Oct. 1.

Trump's order gave the agency a week to craft a plan to comply with the edict. IMLS Acting Director Keith E. Sonderling has already placed all employees of IMLS on administrative leave.

South Dakota's State Library has its funding in hand from federal fiscal year 2024, according to Van Der Weide. The department "is waiting on a grant award for FY 2025," she wrote, referring to the current round of funding.

Congress authorized grant funding through FY 2025, she said. But as a department, Van Der Weide said, "we do not have a clear indication" as to the impact of the Trump executive order.

On Friday, the attorneys general of New York and Rhode Island and 18 other states — but not South Dakota — filed a lawsuit in federal court seeking to stop what they called the "targeted destruction" of the IMLS and two other agencies targeted by Trump. The lawsuit alleges that the president illegally overrode the power of Congress to decide how federal funds are spent.

Library group reaction, union concerns

The congressional authorization is some comfort to Elizabeth Fox, head of the South Dakota Library Association. That group's membership rallied opposition to Noem's proposed cuts, both before and during the legislative session.

The words "allowable by law" in the Trump order and the knowledge that another year of federal grant money is written into the law helped calm — for her, at least — some of the "more extreme" reactions that followed news of the IMLS targeting.

Fox was thinking about the next round of IMLS funding long before Noem's December budget address. Every five-year funding cycle for the federal agency represents a moment of action for library advocates around the nation, Fox said.

"We have known for a year now that we were looking at getting that renewed," Fox said. "We knew we were going to be having this discussion."

Others remain concerned, especially after the news on administrative leave for IMLS staff. That move is likely to complicate the agency's performance of its statutory obligations, according to a federal employees union called the American Federation of Government Employees.

"In the absence of staff, all work processing 2025 applications has ended," the group's local chapter wrote in a statement to South Dakota Searchlight. "The status of previously awarded grants is unclear. Without staff to administer the programs, it is likely that most grants will be terminated."

Museum director: IMLS director statement 'terrifying'

Conor McMahon heads the Journey Museum in Rapid City. His organization got \$50,000 from IMLS a few years ago to help fund an exhibit on the historic, deadly Rapid City floods of 1972.

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The federal agency also serves as a funding source for unglamorous museum necessities like new shelving, McMahon said. That's a topic the Journey director expects to broach with the Rapid City Council in the coming months to deal with a dearth of space in the organization's building.

"If the city doesn't fund this, IMLS would have been our second source," McMahon said.

The Trump administration's administrative leave order for IMLS employees was set for 90 days. Even if those employees return to work at the end of 90 days, or at the order of a federal judge, McMahon is not encouraged by a statement from Sonderling, the IMLS acting director. Sonderling is also the deputy secretary for the Department of Labor. Sonderling said he's committed to "revitalize IMLS and restore focus on patriotism, ensuring we preserve our country's core values, promote American exceptionalism and cultivate love of country in future generations."

To McMahon and other museum and library advocates around the country, that sounds like a pledge to politicize the work of preserving and maintaining the nation's history and culture.

For museum curators and library professionals who aim to offer an honest, unvarnished and nuanced perspective to the public, McMahon said, "I don't think you could find a more terrifying statement than that."

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.

COMMENTARY

New sales tax for counties might be a tough sell, even for Rhoden by Dana Hess

During the recently completed legislative session, there were a couple of discussions in a House State Affairs Committee meeting that may have a direct bearing on South Dakota's future.

One topic was what to call a tax that has never before been implemented. At issue was House Bill 1138 which would have created a tax on advertising with the revenue to be used for property tax relief. Currently advertising is exempt from taxation.

Sen. Taffy Howard, a Rapid City Republican and a sponsor of the legislation, looked into the future and saw that opponents of the bill would call it a new tax. Howard testified that she preferred to call it a "tax shift" that was undoing an earlier tax shift that put the advertising tax on the exempt list.

Howard's prediction was correct as Steve Willard, president of the South Dakota Broadcasters Association, said it was a new tax since no one has ever had to pay it. "It's brand new to them," Willard said of the advertisers who would have to pay the tax. "They went from not having one to having one, which to me seems new."

The other discussion came just prior to the vote on the bill, while committee members listed their reasons for voting against it. Never mind that no other state in the union has a tax on advertising or that implementing the tax would certainly mean adding more personnel to the Department of Revenue. Lawmakers didn't seem put off by the constitutional argument that a tax on advertising is a tax on free speech.



South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden speaks to reporters during a press conference on March 31, 2025, at the state Capitol in Pierre. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

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What put them off was that they had not yet given enough consideration to making budget cuts. Rep. Bethany Soye, a Sioux Falls Republican, said legislators had two choices when it came to property tax relief: cut spending or increase taxes. If lawmakers insisted that taxes shouldn't go up, Soye said, then there needed to be cuts made.

Her thoughts were echoed by Rep. Jon Hansen, a Dell Rapid Republican who serves as speaker of the House. Hansen said the driver behind high property taxes was excessive growth in government and excessive spending. "We owe it to the people to look first to the cuts," Hansen said.

This conversation reflected comments made later in the session by House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, who said that property taxes were too high due to excessive spending by counties and schools.

In a South Dakota Searchlight story the Spearfish Republican said, "You're not going to get property tax relief until you look at the spending done by our public school system and our counties, because that's where local property taxes go."

The story noted that this was a change in tone for lawmakers who, two years ago, conducted a summer study about ways to help cash-strapped counties. After the summer study, the Legislature spent \$10 million to help local governments with cybersecurity and the cost to counties for public defenders or court-appointed attorneys.

These conversations point to a hard road ahead for Gov. Larry Rhoden, who proposed an optional half-percent county sales tax with the revenue to be used for reducing property taxes for homeowners.

Rhoden has already shepherded a property tax bill through the Legislature. The multifaceted law includes temporary caps on countywide increases in residential assessments, and on the amount local governments can grow their property tax collections based on new construction. By choosing a cap rather than budget cuts, and now by offering counties a sales tax, Rhoden has cast himself as a leader who would rather not disrupt county and school budgets.

Like Howard and her "tax shift" advertising tax, Rhoden is seeking a way to explain his proposal that doesn't include the words "new tax." Like Howard, he's struggling. In a South Dakota Searchlight story, the governor said tourists were likely to pay some of the county sales tax. "Realistically, it's a tax decrease for the citizens of the state," Rhoden claimed. Only in the world of politics does a new tax equal a "tax decrease."

However Rhoden explains his county sales tax for property tax relief, he's certain to run up against a budget-cutting crowd of lawmakers who believe that counties and schools aren't doing enough to restrain spending.

Rhoden has shown real political skill during his short time as governor, including his successful effort to get his property tax bill through a crowded field of competing legislation. Let's see if those skills can handle selling a new revenue source for counties to tax-shy, budget-cutting Republican lawmakers.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

GOP budget would add an 'unprecedented' \$5.8 trillion to the deficit, analysis finds

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - APRIL 4, 2025 2:32 PM

WASHINGTON — The nonpartisan Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget released an analysis Friday showing the budget resolution Republicans plan to adopt later this month would allow Congress to add up to \$5.8 trillion to the deficit during the next decade.

The organization wrote the reconciliation instructions included in the budget would allow GOP lawmakers to draft a bill later this year that could outpace the deficit impact of many big-name laws enacted during the last two administrations.

"A \$5.8 trillion deficit-increasing bill would be unprecedented," the analysis states. "It would add 14 times as much to the deficit than the bipartisan infrastructure law (\$400 billion), more than three times as much as American Rescue Plan (\$1.8 trillion), three times the 2020 CARES Act (\$1.7 trillion), and nearly four times the original score of the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (\$1.5 trillion). In fact, it would add more to the deficit than all four of these major laws combined."

That deficit impact, CRFB wrote, "would be the equivalent of adding a large new welfare program to the federal deficit."



The U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., is pictured on Thursday, March 14, 2024. (Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

No Democratic votes needed

Republicans in Congress must adopt a budget resolution in order to use the complex reconciliation process to pass many of their core campaign promises.

The special legislative pathway will let the GOP enact changes without needing the support of Democrats to get past the Senate's 60-vote legislative filibuster.

The largest deficit increase within the package would come from extending the 2017 GOP tax law, about \$4.5 trillion in deficits, and likely making other changes to the U.S. tax code, about \$1.5 trillion.

House Republicans want to try to offset some of that \$6 trillion total in new deficits by cutting about \$1.5 trillion in federal spending, though exactly how they'd do that remains under discussion.

Centrist Republicans in Congress have raised concerns about the House's instructions calling on the Energy and Commerce Committee to find at least \$880 billion in spending cuts.

That panel oversees Medicare and Medicaid and couldn't reach that level of spending cuts without making some substantial changes to one or both of the programs.

GOP leaders and President Donald Trump have repeatedly said they won't touch Medicare, leaving Medicaid, the state-federal program for lower-income people, as the likely source of the funding cuts.

Senate GOP approach

Senate Republicans wrote themselves a much lower threshold for cutting government spending in the budget resolution — a \$4 billion minimum from four different committees across the 10-year budget window.

The Senate instructions, CRFB wrote in its analysis, “would allow a reconciliation bill that is nearly as large as the largest federal spending programs.

“A bill adding \$5.8 trillion to deficits would be more than three-quarters (77 percent) as large as all projected Medicaid spending. It would equal 69 percent of base defense spending over the same time period, including being three times as large as projected spending dedicated to the Army. It would even equal half of all net spending on Medicare and a third of all spending on Social Security.”

CRFB wrote that Congress should change its course now.

“Instead of passing a bill with an historically large deficit impact, lawmakers should use this opportunity to rein in borrowing with a fiscally responsible package that can set the stage for a permanent package of thoughtful tax extensions and budget savings that grows the economy and improves our debt outlook.”

The Senate is expected to vote sometime this weekend to approve the compromise budget resolution and send it back to the House for final approval.

Once both chambers vote to adopt it, they can formally begin writing, debating, amending and voting to approve the reconciliation package.

Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.

‘Really scared’: Parents of kids with disabilities confront Education Department chaos

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - APRIL 4, 2025 12:29 PM



Children engaged in sensory exercises, often used in special education classrooms. (Photo by Getty Images)

WASHINGTON — As President Donald Trump takes drastic steps to dismantle the U.S. Department of Education, disability advocates are worried about whether the agency can carry out its responsibilities to serve students with disabilities.

Representatives of several disability advocacy groups cited “chaos,” “fear” and “uncertainty” in describing the situation to States Newsroom. They said there’s a lack of clarity about both proposed changes within the realm of special education services and the impact overall of sweeping shifts at the agency, calling into question whether the department can deliver on its congressionally mandated guarantees for students with disabilities.

“It’s only been a few weeks since these things started happening, so I don’t think we’re seeing any of the effects trickle down

right now, but we do have parents reaching out to us, calling and feeling really scared,” said Robyn Linscott, director of education and family policy at The Arc of the United States, an advocacy group for people with

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intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Among the department's chief responsibilities is guaranteeing a free public education for students with disabilities through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, and enforcing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, part of which bars programs and activities receiving federal funding from discrimination on the basis of disability.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was enacted in 1975 under a different title and later re-named in 1990.

IDEA "governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services" to students with disabilities, per the department.

The department notes that before the 1975 law, "many children were denied access to education and opportunities to learn" and in 1970, "U.S. schools educated only one in five children with disabilities."

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 15% of all public school students in the country received services through IDEA during the 2022-2023 school year.

In fiscal year 2024, \$15.4 billion was appropriated for IDEA.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that: "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States ... shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Closing the department

Trump signed an executive order in March that called on Education Secretary Linda McMahon to "take all necessary steps to facilitate the closure" of the agency to the maximum extent she's permitted to by law.

The department also announced earlier that month that it would be slashing more than 1,300 positions through a "reduction in force," or RIF effort, sparking widespread concerns about how the department could deliver on its core functions.

For special education services, advocates question significant cuts to units like the Office for Civil Rights, which is tasked with investigating discrimination complaints, including those that are disability-based.

Linscott said parents are asking questions such as: "What does this mean? Is my child still going to be able to have an (Individualized Education Program)? Is the state going to be required to uphold the IDEA? Or, I have a pending complaint with (the Office for Civil Rights), what does this mean for how long it's going to take to settle this case or to investigate this claim?"

Heather Eckner, director of statewide education at the Autism Alliance of Michigan, said it's been "all-consuming" trying to keep up with what she calls a "chaos factory," noting that it's a lot of work for advocacy groups and policy analysts "to try to sort through and figure out what's real, what's actually happening, what might happen, and where the impact might be."

"Ultimately, this is just having a significant destabilizing effect," said Eckner, whose statewide organization focuses on expanding opportunities for people with autism.

Moving special education services to HHS

That uncertainty also stems from Trump's announcement in March that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services "will be handling special needs."

The proposal sparked concern and confusion among disability advocates, both for what that transfer would look like and the legality of the proposed move.

The president offered little detail into the proposal, but HHS secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said on social media that the agency is "fully prepared" to take on that responsibility.

Meanwhile, HHS is witnessing its own drastic changes and restructuring, including beginning to lay off 10,000 workers — further calling into question how that agency could take on the Education Department's special education services.

In response to a request for comment, HHS directed States Newsroom to Kennedy's social media postre-

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garding the proposed transfer but did not provide any further details.

"We have a lot of concerns over both the legality of that, but also just what that means for kind of how we view the education of students with disabilities in general, and how do we view disability in this country, and then what those actual implications on students are," Linscott said.

Jennifer Coco, interim executive director at the Center for Learner Equity, told States Newsroom that any move to separate the education of students with disabilities from the education of all students "further pathologizes disability and is treating 15% of all the children in our public school buildings like they're medical issues — they're not."

"They are students who learn differently, a vast majority of whom could learn at the same grade level as their peers if they were provided appropriate instruction," said Coco, whose national nonprofit focuses on ensuring students with disabilities have access to quality educational opportunities, including public school choice.

Any transfer of responsibility for these federal laws, such as IDEA, would require an act of Congress — a significant undertaking given that at least 60 votes are needed to break through the Senate's filibuster and Republicans, with their narrow majority, hold just 53 seats.

The Education Department told States Newsroom that no action has been taken to move federally mandated programs out of the agency at this time.

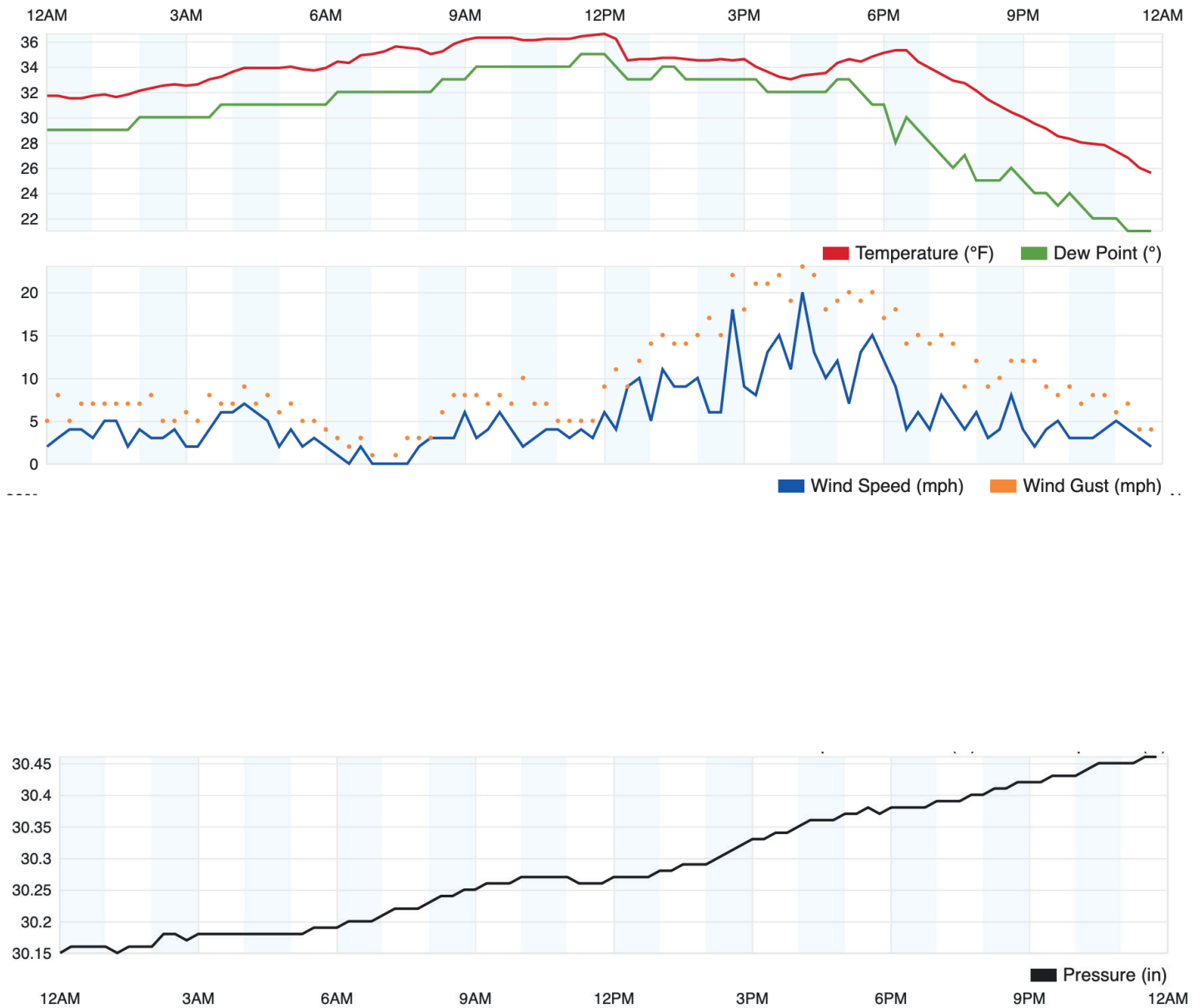
"As President Trump and Secretary McMahon have made clear, sunseting the Department of Education will be done in partnership with Congress and national and state leaders to ensure all statutorily required programs are managed responsibly and where they best serve students and families," Madi Biedermann, a spokesperson for the department, said in a statement shared with States Newsroom.

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.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 43 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 22 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 49 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Sunday Night



Low: 17 °F

Mostly Clear

Monday



High: 38 °F

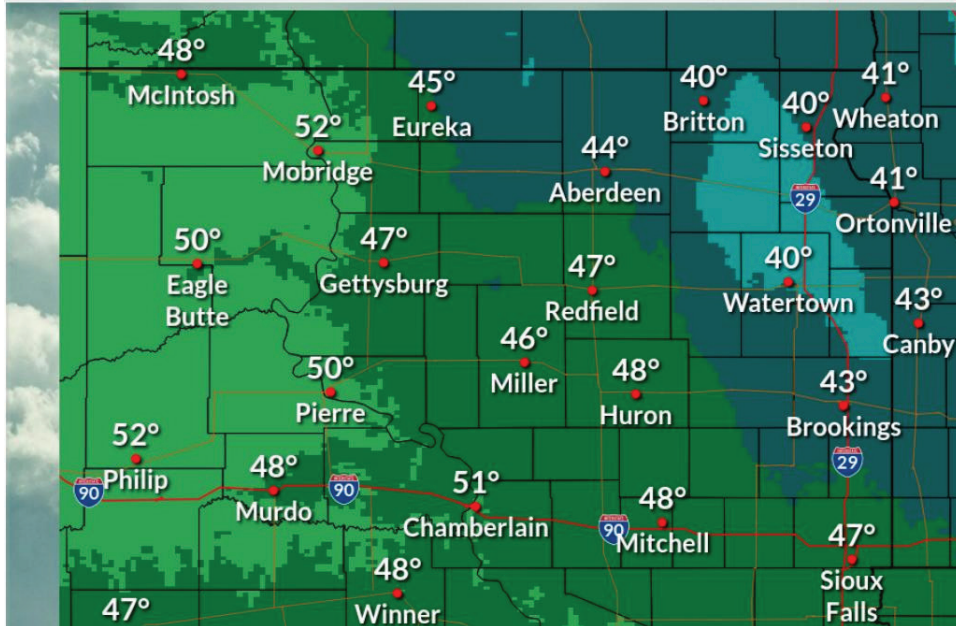
Sunny



Below Normal Temperatures Today

April 5, 2025
3:42 AM

Light Northwest Winds (10-20mph) & Clear Skies



Mild (Near-Normal) Sunday

Another Cool Down Monday

Mild (Above Normal)
Wednesday - Saturday

Dry Through Mid-Week

Light Showers Wednesday
& Thursday

National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A mostly dry forecast is expected for the next several days, with just some light shower activity mid-week with 0.10 to 0.25 inches of moisture. Temperatures will be up and down, but overall nothing too extreme.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 37 °F at 11:39 AM

Low Temp: 26 °F at 11:27 PM

Wind: 23 mph at 4:05 PM

Precip: : 0.13

Day length: 13 hours, 04 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1991

Record Low: 6 in 2007

Average High: 53

Average Low: 28

Average Precip in April.: 0.21

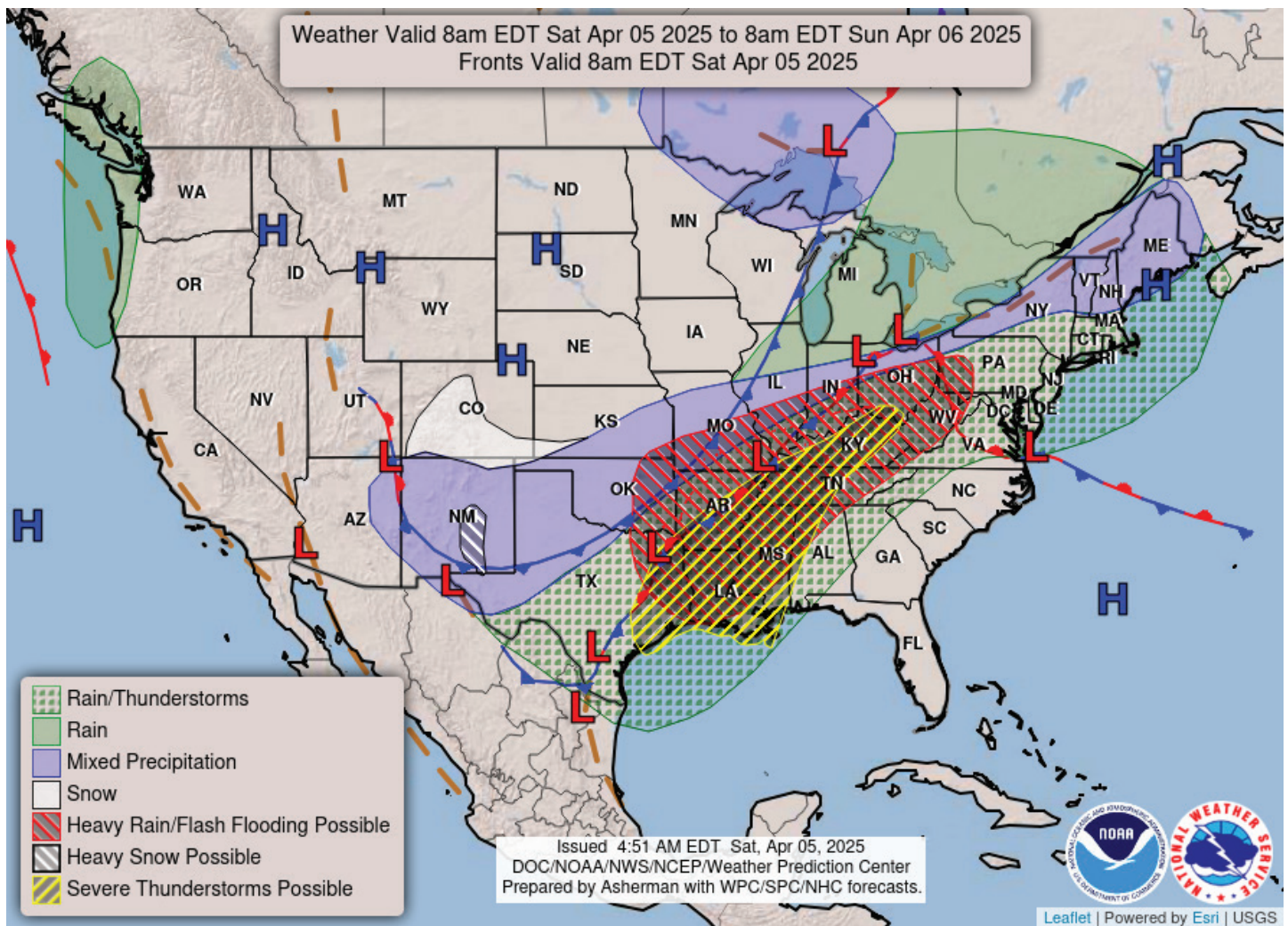
Precip to date in April.: 1.07

Average Precip to date: 2.27

Precip Year to Date: 1.70

Sunset Tonight: 8:07:23 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:00:37 am



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Today in Weather History

April 5th, 2000: High winds of 35 to 50 mph, gusting to around 70 mph, blew across central and north-central South Dakota from the late morning to the late afternoon hours. As a result, several trees and many tree branches were downed, many structures, roofs, billboards, and road signs were damaged, a few mobile homes were overturned, and some power outages occurred. The high winds made driving challenging, stirring up dirt at some locations and causing visibilities to drop to near zero. Some detours and traffic collisions resulted from low visibility in blowing dirt. Airborne objects broke some windows across the area. One house had all of the windows on the front porch blown out. Also, a few semi-trailers were tipped over by the high winds. Wind gusts included 60 mph at Pierre, 63 mph at Kennebec, 64 mph at Mobridge, 65 mph at Pollock, and 71 mph at McLaughlin. The high winds and arid conditions combined with downed and arcing electrical lines, out-of-control burns, and smoldering embers from previous fires resulted in several grassfires across central and north central South Dakota. Several thousand acres of grassland, hundreds of hay bales and haystacks, and some trees and fences were burned. Also, the smoke from some of these fires created low visibility and difficult road driving conditions.

1945 - The temperature at Eagles Nest, NM, plunged to 45 degrees below zero to establish an April record for the United States. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1955 - The Northern Rockies and the Northern High Plains were in the midst of a four day storm which produced 52 inches of snow at Lead, located in the Black Hills of western South Dakota. (David Ludlum)

1972 - A tornado, 500 yards wide at times, touched down at a marina on the Oregon side of the Columbia River, and then tore through Vancouver WA killing six persons, injuring 300 others, and causing more than five million dollars damage. It was the deadliest tornado of the year, and the worst of record for Washington. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - An unprecedented April blizzard began in the northeastern U.S. One to two feet of snow fell across Massachusetts and Connecticut, and up to 26 inches was reported in Maine. New York City received a foot of snow. Winds reached 70 to 80 mph during the storm, and the storm also produced numerous thunderstorms, which contributed to the heavy snow. (Storm Data)

1987 - A storm produced unprecedented April snows in the central Appalachians. Mount Mitchell NC received 35 inches of snow, and up to 60 inches (six feet) of snow was reported in the mountains along the border of North Carolina and Tennessee. The total of 25 inches at Charleston WV easily surpassed their previous record for the entire month of April of 5.9 inches. The 20.6 inch total at Akron OH established an all-time record for that location. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thirty-nine cities across the eastern half of the country reported record high temperatures for the date, including Saint Louis MO with a reading of 91 degrees. Laredo TX was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Afternoon highs of 100 degrees at Santa Maria CA and 105 degrees in Downtown Los Angeles established records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in southern Oklahoma, southern Arkansas, and north central and northeastern Texas. Thunderstorms spawned a dozen tornadoes in Texas, including one at Fort Worth which caused a million dollars damage. There were nearly one hundred reports of large hail and damaging winds. Thunderstorms in Texas produced hail three and a half inches in diameter west of Fort Worth, and produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Cross Plains. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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WHERE DID THE PROVERBS COME FROM?

No one has ever asked me to answer a question that had no limits. Sometimes, I have been asked questions that have encouraged me to "think big" or to "go beyond what I have thought of in the past," or to "think into the future for what could be." Those questions have been very challenging. However, no one has ever approached me and said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you, and I will!" At least, no one who had the power to give me a "whatever."

But that happened to Solomon. And, the one who asked him that question was not his father who he would replace as king. It was One who was much more powerful than his father, and One who, indeed, could grant Solomon the "whatever" he wished for. It was God Himself!

He realized and admitted to God that he was not qualified to be a king. He saw himself as "a little child." So, he asked God to "give Your child a discerning heart" – (not mind) – "to govern Your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" Then, the very next verse begins with, "The Lord was pleased that Solomon asked for this!"

And, God responded: "I will give you what you asked for and what you have not asked for: wealth and honor, and in your lifetime you will have no equal!"

What an interesting question: "Ask for whatever you want" - and what a humble answer: "Nothing for myself. My only desire is to have a discerning heart."

God granted his request and through him gave us His inspired, infallible, inerrant Proverbs as "life guides."

Prayer: Father, in Your wisdom, You gave Your servant wisdom to offer to Your children so they could "live well!" In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours? 1 Kings 3:9

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: 04.04.25

11 28 35 37 69 25

MegaPlier: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$54,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.02.25

12 28 39 41 44 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$28,720,000

NEXT DRAW: 12 Hrs 55 Mins 32
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.04.25

1 4 11 22 32 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 10 Mins 32
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.02.25

2 10 20 25 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$90,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 10 Mins 32
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.02.25

7 18 23 31 44 24

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 39 Mins 32
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.02.25

5 17 41 64 69 1

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$47,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 39 Mins 32
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
03/29/2025 Men's Singles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle 10am, 1pm & 4pm
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
04/12/2025 Groton Firemens Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
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
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
07/11-13/25 2025 VFW 12U Class B State Baseball Tournament
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
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
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park
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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Lakota artist smudges the former gold mine inside the Black Hills

By GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

When Lakota artist Marty Two Bulls Jr. looks at the Black Hills of South Dakota, he doesn't just see its natural beauty. He also sees a scar cut deep into the heart of the universe.

The mountain range is central to the origin story of several tribal nations, including his, and it has become an international symbol of the ongoing struggle for Indigenous land rights and the destruction of sacred sites. To the Lakota, Mount Rushmore is the most visible scar on the mountains. The former gold mine beneath is another, and that's what motivated Two Bulls to use his performance art to cleanse it.

"You hear 'land back', and it means a lot of different things to different people," he said, referring to the Indigenous-led movement to restore tribal self-determination through ownership and stewardship of their homelands. "It's been interesting trying to reframe some of these conversations about stewardship and land rights and treaties."

When the green pines on top meet the blue sky above, it creates the perception of a black outline, which is why the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota people call it "He Sapa", which means "black ridge." To them, it is where their creation began. But for generations, this sacred place was mined and stripped of gold, leaving lasting marks.

Today, the former Homestake Gold Mine, a 300-mile (480-kilometer) tunnel system carved inside the mountains, houses the Sanford Underground Research Facility, where scientists study particle physics and dark matter. The deep mine shafts encased in granite are ideal for research into the secrets of the stars.

As an artist in residence at SURF last year, Two Bulls felt a connection to its depths but a tremendous sense of loss when he ventured into the mine.

"I was bearing witness to the desecration that Homestake did every day. It was heartbreaking," he said. And it left him wondering: "How do you recover from a desecration or a crime?"

Two Bulls also respected the work being conducted by some of the world's top minds inside the Black Hills, and he wanted to find a way to show them that this place was important long before its value was measured in gold or scientific research. He decided the best solution was also the simplest: smudge.

Smudging is the act of cleansing, spiritually and physically, by burning plants like sage, cedar or sweetgrass and enveloping one's self or a space in the smoke. It has been a common practice across Indian Country for generations. Last week, using sage donated by Native people from as close as the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and as far away as the West Coast, Two Bulls burned several bundles, each representing the prayers of the community that donated it.

For an hour, he burned the bundles in a small stove at the entrance to the former mine, fanning the flames with eagle feathers to smudge the place that his people revere as the center of the cosmos.

Sensors in the mine nearly a mile below ground detected the smoke, a spokesperson for SURF said.

"To see how that was put together, that floored me," said Rylan Sprague, a botanist and member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe who chairs SURF's cultural advisory committee. "Leave it to an artist to take something that seems so regular and turn it into something totally different."

Two Bulls said Western science often overlooks or misunderstands Indigenous ways of thinking about the world and our origins, and that he wants his art project, called Azilya — the Lakota word for smudging — to be a way for the two to meet. An exhibition of his art from his time at SURF exploring that concept is currently on display at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology.

Several researchers and members of SURF's staff watched Two Bulls smudge the mine. Sprague said he could see from the looks on their faces that the SURF employees in attendance understood the reverence Two Bulls and his community have for the place where they work.

The room was largely quiet as Two Bulls sent smoke and prayers a mile beneath the earth's surface.

"It's not a site that I think they think about as a sacred site. It's a work site," Two Bulls said. "I hope that that happens. That's my intention."

Iran's currency falls to record low against the dollar as tensions run high

By NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's rial currency traded Saturday at a record low against the U.S. dollar as the country returned to work after a long holiday, costing over 1 million rials for a single greenback as tensions between Tehran and Washington likely will push it even lower.

The exchange rate had plunged to over 1 million rials during the Persian New Year, Nowruz, as currency shops closed and only informal trading took place on the streets, creating additional pressure on the market. But as traders resumed work Saturday, the rate fell even further to 1,043,000 to the dollar, signaling the new low appeared here to stay.

On Ferdowsi Street in Iran's capital, Tehran, the heart of the country's money exchanges, some traders even switched off their electronic signs showing the going rate as uncertainty loomed over how much further the rial could drop.

"We turn it off since we are not sure about the successive changes of the rate," said Reza Sharifi, who works at one exchange.

Tensions with US squeeze the rial

Iran's economy has been severely affected by international sanctions, particularly after U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018. At the time of the 2015 deal, which saw Iran drastically limit its enrichment and stockpiling of uranium in exchange for lifting of international sanctions, the rial traded at 32,000 to the dollar.

After Trump returned to the White House for his second term in January, he restarted his so-called "maximum pressure" campaign targeting Tehran with sanctions. He again went after firms trading Iranian crude oil, including those selling at a discount in China.

Trump meanwhile has written to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, trying to jumpstart direct talks between Tehran and Washington. So far, Iran has maintained it is willing for indirect talks, but such discussions under the Biden administration failed to make headway.

Meanwhile, Trump is continuing an intense airstrike campaign targeting the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, the last force in Tehran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" able to attack Israel after other militant groups were mauled by Israel during its war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Mehdi Darabi, a market analyst, said he believed that foreign pressures in recent months caused "expectations for the possibility of a decrease in oil sales and more inflation, and it caused a higher rate for hard currencies," according to Tehran's Donay-e-Eqtasad economic newspaper.

A pensioner who gave only his first name, Saeed, for fear of reprisals, said if Iran stopped its hostile policy toward the outside, financial relief could be possible.

"If we want to live a comfortable life, we should maintain good ties with our neighbors," he said. "We shouldn't bare our teeth at them. They will do the same."

Economic pressure inflames Iranian public and politics

Economic upheavals have evaporated the public's savings, pushing average Iranians into holding onto hard currencies, gold, cars and other tangible wealth. Others pursue cryptocurrencies or fall into get-rich-quick schemes.

Meanwhile, internal political pressure remains inflamed still over the mandatory hijab, or headscarf, with women still ignoring the law on the streets of Tehran. Rumors also persist over the government potentially increasing the cost of subsidized gasoline in the country, which has sparked nationwide protests in the past.

The falling rial has put more pressure as well on Iranian reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian. In March, when the rate was 930,000 rials to the dollar, Iran's parliament impeached his finance minister, Abdolnasser Hemmati over the crashing rial and accusations of mismanagement.

Anger over government spending also saw Pezeshkian fire his vice president in charge of parliamentary affairs, Shahram Dabiri, for taking a luxury cruise to Antarctica, state media reported. Though Dabiri reportedly used his own money for the trip with his wife, the Instagram photos posted of his trip angered

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an Iranian public scrapping by to survive.

"In a situation where the economic pressures on people are huge and the number of deprived people is massive, expensive recreational trip by officials even by their own personal fund is not defensible and reasonable," Pezeshkian said in firing Dabiri, who so far hasn't offered any public explanation for his trip.

Pezeshkian separately said Saturday that Iran wanted a "dialogue from an equal position" with the U.S.

"If you want negotiations, what is the point of threatening?" Pezeshkian asked, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. "America today is not only humiliating Iran, but the world, and this behavior contradicts the call for negotiations."

Death toll in Russian missile strike in central Ukraine reaches 18

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — The death toll from a Russian missile strike in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih has risen to 18, including nine children, regional governor Serhii Lysak said Saturday.

A further 61 people were injured in Friday's attack, ranging from a 3-month-old baby to elderly residents. Forty remain hospitalized, including two children in critical condition and 17 in serious condition.

"There can never be forgiveness for this," said Oleksandr Vilkul, head of the city's defense council. "Eternal memory to the victims."

Kryvyi Rih is the hometown of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"The missile struck an area right next to residential buildings — hitting a playground and ordinary streets," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram.

Local authorities said the strike damaged about 20 apartment buildings, more than 30 vehicles, an educational building and a restaurant.

The Russian Defense Ministry claimed Friday that it had carried out a high-precision missile strike with a high explosive warhead on a restaurant where a meeting with unit commanders and Western instructors was taking place.

Russian military claimed that the strike killed 85 military personnel and foreign officers and destroyed 20 vehicles. The military's claims could not be independently verified. The Ukrainian General Staff rejected the claims.

A later drone strike on Kryvyi Rih killed one woman and wounded seven other people.

Zelenskyy blamed the daily strikes on Russia's unwillingness to end the war: "Every missile, every drone strike proves Russia wants only war," he said, urging Ukraine's allies to increase pressure on Moscow and bolster Ukraine's air defenses.

The Ukrainian president also criticized the response of the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv to the strike. Ambassador Bridget A. Brink posted on social media Friday that she was "horrified" by the strike in Kryvyi Rih. "More than 50 people injured and 16 killed, including 6 children. This is why the war must end," the post said.

Zelenskyy, who has so far had a strained relationship with U.S. President Donald Trump, described the post as "unpleasantly surprising" for not directly naming Russia as the perpetrator of the attack.

"Such a strong country, such a strong people — and such a weak reaction. They are even afraid to say the word 'Russian' when talking about the missile that killed children," he said in a post that also praised countries including Japan, Britain, Switzerland and Germany for their "principled statements."

"Yes, the war must end. But in order to end it, we must not be afraid to call a spade a spade," he said.

Russian forces launched 92 drones into Ukraine overnight, with 51 shot down by air defenses, the Ukrainian air force wrote on social media Saturday. A further 31 decoy drones also failed to reach their targets, it said.

Elsewhere, one person died Saturday in the Russian-occupied town of Horlivka in Ukraine's Donetsk region due to shelling, Moscow-installed Gov. Denis Pushilin said. Security officials told Russian state news channels that they had destroyed 28 Ukrainian drones over the Donetsk region overnight, marking the first time that the occupied territory had been targeted by such long-range strikes.

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Trump goes all in with bet that the heavy price of tariffs will pay off for Americans

By ZEKE MILLER and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Not even 24 hours after his party lost a key Wisconsin race and underperformed in Florida, President Donald Trump followed the playbook that has defined his political career: He doubled down.

Trump's move on Wednesday to place stiff new tariffs on imports from nearly all U.S. trading partners marks an all-in bet by the Republican that his once-fringe economic vision will pay off for Americans. It was the realization of his four decades of advocacy for a protectionist foreign policy and the belief that free trade was forcing the United States into decline as its economy shifted from manufacturing to services.

The tariff announcement was the latest and perhaps boldest manifestation of Trump's second-term freedom to lead with his instincts after feeling his first turn in the Oval Office was restrained by aides who did not share his worldview. How it shakes out could be a defining judgment on his presidency.

The early reviews have been worrisome.

Financial markets had their worst week since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, foreign trade partners retaliated and economists warned that the import taxes may boost inflation and potentially send the U.S. into a recession. It's now Republican lawmakers who are fretting about their party's future while Democrats feel newly buoyant over what they see as Trump's overreach.

Democratic activists planned to participate in rallies across the country Saturday in what was shaping up as the largest demonstrations since Trump returned to office in January. "The winds are changing," said Rahna Epting, who leads MoveOn, one of many organizing groups.

Trump is unbowed.

He has promised that the taxes on imports will bring about a domestic manufacturing renaissance and help fund an extension of his 2017 tax cuts. He insisted on Thursday as the Dow Jones fell by 1,600 points that things were "going very well" and the economy would "boom," then spent Friday at the golf course as the index plunged 2,200 more points.

In his first term, Trump's tariff threats brought world leaders to his door to cut deals. This time, his actions so far have led to steep retaliation from China and promises from European allies to push back.

Even some Trump supporters are having their doubts.

Frank Amoroso, a 78-year-old resident of Dewitt, Michigan, said he is concerned about short-term rising interest rates and inflation, although he believes the tariffs will be good for the country in the long run.

Amoroso, a retired automotive engineer who voted for Trump, said he would give the president's second-term performance a C-plus or B-minus. "I think he's doing things too fast," he said. "But hopefully things will get done in a prudent way, and the economy will survive a little downfall."

Rep. French Hill, R-Ark., in a telephone town hall with constituents on Thursday night, expressed reservations about the broad nature of the tariffs.

Hill, who represents a district that includes Little Rock, said he does not back tariffs on Canada and Mexico. He said the administration should instead focus on renegotiating a U.S. trade agreement with its two neighbors.

"I don't support across-the-board tariffs as a general matter, and so I don't support those, and I will be urging changes there because I don't think they will end up raising a bunch of revenue that's been asserted," Hill said. "I wish I thought they did, but personally I don't think they will. But I do support trade diplomacy."

Still, much of Trump's "Make America Great Again" coalition remains publicly supportive.

Doug Deason, a prominent Texas-based Republican donor, said he loves the president's tariff plan, even if it causes some economic disruption.

"He told us during the election there would be pain for every American to get this ship turned around," Deason said. "It is hard to watch our portfolios deteriorate so much, but we get it. We hope he holds course."

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As Trump struggles with the economy, Democrats are beginning to emerge from the cloud of doom that has consumed their party ever since their election drubbing in November.

They scored a decisive victory in Wisconsin's high-profile state Supreme Court election on Tuesday, even after Elon Musk and his affiliated groups poured more than \$20 million into the contest. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker then breathed new life into the Democratic resistance by delivering a record 25-hour-long speech on the Senate floor that centered on a call for his party to find its resolve.

Booker told The Associated Press afterward that a significant political shift has begun even as his party tries to learn from its mistakes in the 2024 presidential election.

"I think you're seeing a lot more energy, a lot more determination, a lot more feeling like we've got to fight," Booker said. "You can't sit back any more. You can't sit on the sidelines. There's a larger, growing movement."

Booker, a 2020 presidential candidate, acknowledged he is not ruling out a 2028 run, although he said he is focused on his 2026 Senate reelection for now.

There is broad agreement among Democrats — and even some Republicans, privately at least — that what Trump has unleashed on the global economy could help accelerate the Democratic comeback.

Ezra Levin, co-founder of the progressive resistance group known as Indivisible, has been critical of Democratic officials' response in recent weeks to Trump's leadership. But on Friday, he was somewhat giddy about the political consequences for Trump's GOP after the tariffs announcement.

"Raising prices across the board for your constituents is not popular," Levin said. "It's the kind of thing that can lead to a 1932-style total generational wipe out of a party."

UN urges relief efforts in Myanmar as earthquake death toll rises

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The death toll from last week's massive earthquake in Myanmar has risen to 3,354, state media said on Saturday, as U.N. agencies and foreign aid donors continued to ramp up their emergency relief efforts.

The 7.7 magnitude quake hit a wide swath of the country, causing significant damage to six regions and states including the capital Naypyitaw. The earthquake left many areas without power, telephone or cell connections and damaged roads and bridges, making the full extent of the devastation hard to assess.

It also worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis triggered by the country's civil war that has internally displaced more than 3 million people and left nearly 20 million in need, according to the United Nations.

Myanmar's second most powerful quake in history

The military government's leader, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, has said the earthquake was the second most powerful in the country's recorded history after a magnitude 8 quake east of Mandalay in May 1912.

A report in the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar newspaper on Saturday said that the death toll from the March 28 disaster has reached 3,354, with 4,850 injured and 220 missing. It also said rescuers had saved 653 survivors trapped under the debris.

A country torn by war

Myanmar's military seized power in 2021 from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, sparking armed resistance that is now believed by analysts to control more territory than the army.

Members of the U.N. Security Council "recognized the need to strengthen rescue, relief and recovery efforts and to scale up immediate and rapid humanitarian assistance in response to the requests to help the people of Myanmar, supported by the international community," its president, Jérôme Bonnafont of France, said in a press statement on Friday.

In an apparent reference to the fighting in Myanmar and concerns its military government would block or delay aid to areas under the control of resistance forces, the statement said the council's members "affirmed the importance of a safe and conducive environment to ensure the timely and effective delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance to all those in need, without disruption or discrimination."

Aid sparks an unusual diplomatic flurry

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Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, spokesperson for the military government, told media on Saturday, as he arrived back from a regional summit held in Bangkok, that prime ministers and officials from attending countries, including India and Thailand, pledged to provide necessary assistance for relief efforts and rehabilitation in quake-hit areas.

"Everyone helped Myanmar that suffered from the earthquake. Everyone sympathized. Everyone understood. Everyone was willing to help. It can be seen everyone working together practically," Zaw Min Tun said.

He said that 18 countries were providing assistance to affected areas, and more than 60 aircraft had flown in to transport rescuers and relief supplies.

The U.K. allocated a further £10 million (about \$12.8 million) to the ongoing humanitarian response, its embassy in Yangon said in a statement Saturday, bringing its total to up to £25 million (about \$32 million) in aid.

There has been an unusual flurry of diplomatic activity in the past few days around Myanmar, usually reluctant to engage with much of the world community.

Min Aung Hlaing and senior members of his government are shunned and sanctioned by many Western countries for their 2021 takeover and human rights abuses. His visit to the meeting in the Thai capital Bangkok was his first to a country other than his government's main backers — China, Russia and Russian ally Belarus — since he attended another regional meeting in Indonesia in 2021.

Back in Myanmar on Saturday, Min Aung Hlaing received Malaysian Foreign Minister Mohamad Hasan, and Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa for discussions about relief assistance from fellow members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and cooperation in health care in quake-affected areas.

Although reports of diplomatic activity focus on earthquake relief, there is awareness that the crisis in Myanmar cannot end until the war there stops, and the country's neighbors have been leading efforts to find a path for peace, even though neither the military nor its foes have shown any serious effort to negotiate.

A fragile temporary ceasefire

However, the military and several key armed resistance groups have all declared temporary ceasefires on Wednesday in the wake of the earthquake to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid.

The U.N.'s Human Rights Office on Friday accused the military of continuing attacks, claiming there were more than 60 attacks after the earthquake, including 16 since the ceasefire.

The opposition's shadow National Unity Government, which leads resistance to army rule, accused Saturday the military of carrying out 63 airstrikes and artillery attacks since the earthquake, resulting in the deaths of 68 civilians, including one child and 15 women.

Takeaways from the Senate budget vote: Tariff pressure, debt worries and signs of GOP unease

By LEAH ASKARINAM and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The political battle lines are drawn for a debate in Washington and beyond over a Republican budget plan that's a cornerstone of President Donald Trump's domestic agenda.

With the plan's approval by the GOP-controlled Senate in a vote that ended early Saturday, Republicans hope to leverage their position of power in Washington to enact as much as \$7 trillion in tax breaks, boost border security for mass deportations and cut government funding — and do so "without one single Democratic vote," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the Senate Budget Committee chairman.

Democrats, as the minority party, were unable to halt the budget plan. But during the late-night session, they offered a preview of the political attacks likely coming not just during the lead-up to the final vote this summer, but through the 2026 campaign.

"We may not have the votes to stop them all by ourselves," Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., told The Associated Press, "but we can use what the Republicans are trying to do with this tax bill to ignite a fire all across this country."

Here's a look at what happened and what comes next:

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Tariffs shadow the debate

Trump's tariffs hung over the budget debate, interjecting economic uncertainty in ways unimaginable just days before senators prepared to vote.

Seizing on the moment, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York put forward an amendment to showcase that unease: He called for an end to those recently announced import taxes, which could result in higher prices for household goods, while keeping tariffs on China, Russia, Iran and other U.S. adversaries.

"President Trump's tariff tax is one of the dumbest things he's ever done as president, and that's saying something," Schumer said.

He repeatedly pointed out that remote islands, including one inhabited by penguins, were hit with tariffs, but not President Vladimir Putin's Russia.

"Penguins not Putin," Schumer said.

The amendment failed. The slogan lives on.

Votes to preserve Medicaid, Social Security draw some Republican support

Democrats say Republicans pose grave threats to the nation's safety net programs as they hunt for cost-savings to help offset the lost revenues from the tax breaks, and as Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency slashes through the federal government.

Among the more than two dozen amendments offered during the debate were several to protect Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, Head Start child care, Meals on Wheels for older adults, and others. Several Republicans joined Democrats in voting to preserve those programs, including Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri. Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, opposed the entire package in a warning against steep Medicaid cuts.

Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass., who offered an amendment to save Social Security's phone service, said Musk and DOGE are "revving up their chainsaw" to come after it.

"They say, 'Get online, Grandma,'" Markey said, scoffing at the notion of older people not being able to pick up the telephone.

Democrats assail tax cuts as helping the wealthy

Central to the Republican budget — and Trump's domestic policy agenda — is the effort to preserve the tax breaks approved in 2017 during his first term.

While many of the income tax breaks are popular, including the child tax credit or bolstered standard deduction, Democrats argue that much of the benefit flows to the well-off.

Democrats piled on a series of amendments trying to prohibit tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy, only to be denied by Republicans.

It's a standoff that's expected to carry on through the debate, and the campaign season ahead.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-La., shifted the conversation to what Republicans see for them as a more politically favorable direction, focused on federal spending.

"We've heard a lot about, you know, massive tax cuts for billionaires," he said as the evening dragged on. "But the one thing you don't hear a lot about is the run up in federal spending."

Debt worries linger and pose challenges for GOP leaders

The nation's debt load, now \$36 trillion, continues to climb.

At least one Republican deficit hawk, Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, said no more.

"What is it: Are we cutting spending or are we adding to the debt?" Paul said during debate, before ultimately voting against the bill.

He argued the budget plan would add \$5 trillion to the debt over 10 years, echoing an assessment from the bipartisan Joint Committee on Taxation.

"You scratch your head and say, what's up here?"

But for Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., the impact of the tariffs was a factor in his decision to vote for the budget resolution, despite his concerns that the tax breaks would add to the federal deficit.

Cassidy said he did not want to cast a vote that could "increase uncertainty in the economy."

"This vote isn't taking place in a vacuum," he said.

Senate GOP approves framework for Trump's tax breaks and spending cuts after late-night session

By LISA MASCARO, LEAH ASKARINAM and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans plugged away overnight and into early Saturday morning to approve their multitrillion-dollar tax breaks and spending cuts framework, hurtling past Democratic opposition toward what President Donald Trump calls the “big, beautiful bill” that’s central to his agenda.

The vote, 51-48, fell along mostly party lines, but with sharp dissent from two prominent Republicans. It could not have come at a more difficult political moment, with the economy churning after Trump’s new tariffs sent stocks plummeting and experts warning of soaring costs for consumers and threats of a potential recession. Republican Sens. Susan Collins of Maine and Rand Paul of Kentucky both voted against the measure.

But with a nod from Trump, GOP leaders held on. Approval paves the way for Republicans in the months ahead to try to power a tax cut bill through both chambers of Congress over the objections of Democrats, just as they did in Trump’s first term with unified party control in Washington.

“Let the voting begin,” Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said Friday night.

Democrats were intent on making the effort as politically painful as possible, with action on some two dozen amendments to the package that GOP senators will have to defend before next year’s midterm elections.

Among them were proposals to ban tax breaks for the super-wealthy, end Trump’s tariffs, clip his efforts to shrink the federal government, and protect Medicaid, Social Security and other services. One, in response to the Trump national security team’s use of Signal, sought to prohibit military officials from using any commercial messaging application to transmit war plans. They all failed, though a GOP amendment to protect Medicare and Medicaid was accepted.

Democrats accused Republicans of laying the groundwork for cutting key safety net programs to help pay for more than \$5 trillion tax cuts they say disproportionately benefit the rich.

“Trump’s policies are a disaster,” said Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York, as is Elon Musk’s Department of Government Efficiency, he added. “Republicans could snuff it out tonight, if they wanted.”

The Republicans framed their work as preventing a tax increase for most American families, arguing that unless Congress acts, the individual and estate tax cuts that GOP lawmakers passed in 2017 will expire at the end of this year.

The Senate package pulls in other GOP priorities, including \$175 billion to bolster Trump’s mass deportation effort, which is running short of cash, and an additional \$175 billion for the Pentagon to build up the military, from an earlier budget effort.

Wyoming Sen. John Barrasso, the No. 2 ranking Republican, said voters gave his party a mission in November, and the Senate’s budget plan delivers.

“It fulfills our promises to secure the border, to rebuild our economy and to restore peace through strength,” Barrasso said.

The framework now goes to the House, where Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., could bring it up for a vote as soon as next week as he works toward a final product by Memorial Day.

The House and Senate need to resolve their differences. The House’s version has \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks over 10 years and some \$2 trillion in budget cuts, and pointed at changes to Medicaid, food stamps and other programs. Some House Republicans have panned the Senate’s approach.

Republican senators used their majority to swat back Democratic amendments, often in rambunctious voice votes.

Among the more than two dozen amendments offered were several to protect safety net programs. Several Republicans, including Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, joined Democrats in voting to preserve some of those programs, particularly regarding health care. Collins opposed the entire package in a warning against steep Medicaid cuts.

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Collins said the potential reductions for that health program in the House bill "would be very detrimental to a lot of families and disabled individuals and seniors in my state."

Paul questioned the math being used by his colleagues that he said would pile on the debt load. "Something's fishy," he said.

One Republican, Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, expressed his own misgivings about tax breaks adding to the federal deficits and said he has assurances that Trump officials would seek the cuts elsewhere.

"This vote isn't taking place in a vacuum," he said, a nod to the turmoil over Trump's tariffs.

One crucial challenge ahead will be for the House to accept the way the Senate's budget plan allows for extending the tax cuts under a scoring method that treats them as not adding to future deficits, something many House Republicans reject. A new estimate from the Joint Committee on Taxation projects the tax breaks will add \$5.5 trillion over the next decade when including interest, and \$4.6 trillion not including interest.

On top of that, the senators added an additional \$1.5 trillion that would allow some of Trump's campaign promises, such as no taxes on tips, Social Security benefits and overtime, swelling the overall the price tag to \$7 trillion.

Republicans are also looking to increase the \$10,000 deduction for state and local taxes, something that lawmakers from states such as New York, California and New Jersey say is necessary for their support.

The House and Senate are also at odds over increasing the debt limit to allow more borrowing. The House had boosted the debt limit by \$4 trillion in its plan, but the Senate upped it to \$5 trillion to push any further votes on the matter until after next year's midterm elections.

The Senate calls for just \$4 billion in spending cuts, but GOP leadership emphasizes that's a low floor and that committees will be on the hunt for far more.

Already, the GOP leaders are confronting concerns from fiscal hawks who want trillions of dollars in spending cuts to help pay for the tax breaks. At the same time, dozens of lawmakers in swing districts and states are worried about what those cuts will mean for their constituents, and for their reelection chances.

The GOP leadership has encouraged members to just get a budget plan over the finish line, saying they have time to work out the tough questions of which tax breaks and spending cuts to include.

Extending the the 2017 breaks would cut taxes for about three-quarters of households but raise them for about 10%. In 2027, about 45% of the benefit of all the tax cuts would go to those making roughly \$450,000 or more, according to the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, which analyzes tax issues.

Layoffs threaten US firefighter cancer registry, mine research and mask lab

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Government staffing cuts have gutted a small U.S. health agency that aims to protect workers — drawing rebukes from firefighters, coal miners, medical equipment manufacturers and a range of others.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a Cincinnati-based agency that is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is losing about 850 of its approximately 1,000 employees, according to estimates from a union and affected employees. Among those ousted were its director, Dr. John Howard, who had been in the job through three previous presidential administrations.

The layoffs are stalling — and perhaps ending — many programs, including a firefighter cancer registry and a lab that is key to certifying respirators for many industries.

The cuts are "a very pointed attack on workers in this country," said Micah Niemeier-Walsh, vice president of the union local representing NIOSH employees in Cincinnati.

Unions that represent miners, nurses, flight attendants and other professions have criticized the cuts, saying it will slow the identification and prevention of workplace dangers. Rallies in Cincinnati and other cities drew not only fired CDC employees but also members of unions representing teachers, postal work-

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ers and bricklayers, Niemeier-Walsh said.

NIOSH doctors review and certify that 9/11 first responders who developed chronic illnesses could qualify for care under the federal government's World Trade Center Health Program, noted Andrew Ansbro, president of a union that represents New York City firefighters.

"Dismantling NIOSH dishonors the memory of our fallen brothers and sisters and abandons those still battling 9/11-related illnesses," Ansbro said in a statement.

Agency investigates workplace hazards

NIOSH was created under a 1970 law signed by President Richard Nixon. It started operations the following year and grew to have offices and labs in eight cities, including Cincinnati; Pittsburgh; Spokane, Washington; and Morgantown, West Virginia.

In the more than 50 years since, it has done pioneering research on indoor air quality in office buildings, workplace violence and occupational exposures to bloodborne infections.

NIOSH investigators identified a new lung disease in workers at factories that made microwave popcorn, and helped assess what went wrong during the Deepwater Horizon oil rig disaster. It was recently involved in the CDC's response to measles, advising on measures to stop spread within hospitals.

Some of its best-known work is related to mining. It trains and certifies doctors in how to test for black lung disease, and the agency conducts its own mobile screenings of miners. For years, NIOSH owned an experimental mine in Pennsylvania and two years ago announced it was developing a replacement research facility near Mace, West Virginia, that would feature tunnels and other mine structures.

Its research and recommendations have served as the foundation for Department of Labor rules for worker protection, including one issued last year for coal miners that cuts by half the permissible exposures to poisonous silica dust.

Studies have concluded NIOSH research helps the nation save millions of dollars each year in avoided workers' compensation and other costs.

"Any stoppage to this type of research and recommendations can impact all segments of the workforce," said Tessa Bonney, who teaches about occupational health at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Impact of deep staff cuts are unclear

NIOSH was swept up in the massive upheaval at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that includes about 10,000 layoffs, an anticipated reorganization and proposed budget cuts.

Nonunionized NIOSH workers — mainly supervisors — were told to clean out their desks immediately. Bargaining unit employees got layoff notices, and were told their terminations would happen later this year.

"Right now we are trying to figure out chain of command," Niemeier-Walsh said.

An HHS spokesman, Andrew Nixon, said what's left of NIOSH will be moved into a newly created agency to be called the Administration for a Healthy America.

HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has said that 20% of the people laid off from federal health agencies might be reinstated as the agency tries to correct mistakes, but the department has not detailed which parts of NIOSH were reduced or eliminated, and which will remain open.

What's known about the cuts made so far was pieced together by employees affected by the layoffs and the union that represents them. They say almost every NIOSH program faced steep cuts or outright elimination.

A firefighter cancer registry website went down Tuesday "because there were no IT people left to staff the system," Niemeier-Walsh said.

And at least some of the hundreds of mice and rats at a NIOSH lab in Morgantown likely will have to be destroyed because the layoffs put an abrupt, mid-experiment end to inhalation research there, said Cathy Tinney-Zara, a public health analyst who is president of the union local representing employees there.

"Million of dollars of research, decades of research, is going down the drain," Tinney-Zara said.

Industry concerned about certification lab

Some of the outcry from unions and industry has centered on the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory, a NIOSH office that tests and certifies fitted masks that protect workers from inhaling airborne dangers. (The N95 masks that became popular during the COVID-19 outbreak are named for a

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NIOSH standard.)

Closing the lab gives a competitive advantage to companies in China and other countries that send products to the U.S. without meeting the stringent quality standards that come with certification, said Eric Axel, executive director of the American Medical Manufacturers Association.

"This decision effectively rewards foreign manufacturers who have not made the same investments in quality and safety while punishing American companies that have built their reputations on producing reliable, high-quality protective equipment," Axel said in a statement.

The cuts are "really devastating," said Rebecca Shelton, director of policy for the Appalachian Citizens' Law Center, a Kentucky-based organization that provides legal help to ill coal miners.

"Here in central Appalachia, everybody knows somebody with black lung disease," she said.

It appears NIOSH programs for coal miners are being eliminated, raising questions about who will monitor for new cases and spot trends, Shelton said.

NIOSH staff routinely visited mines and rural communities to offer free screenings and speak at public meetings about black lung disease and other workplace health issues.

"These are not out-of-touch federal workers. They are very well connected" with their communities, she said.

Many NIOSH workers come from families that have worked in occupational health for generations. Niemeier-Walsh's grandfather was an agency toxicologist for 30 years.

"It was normal dinnertime conversation in our family to talk about how you can use the power of science to protect workers," she said.

The frenzied 24 hours when Venezuelan migrants in the US were shipped to an El Salvador prison

By TIM SULLIVAN Associated Press

It was just a few sentences in a meandering, hourlong presidential speech on a Friday afternoon.

Along with talk about falling egg prices and a vow to expel "corrupt forces" from the U.S. government, President Donald Trump noted that hundreds of members of the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua had been arrested.

"You'll be reading a lot of stories tomorrow about what we've done with them," he said at the Justice Department on March 14. "These are tough people and bad people and we're getting them out of our country."

"You'll be very impressed," he added.

Trump was previewing drama to come that would involve clandestine flights to another continent, a notorious prison, innocents among criminals and a dramatic confrontation between his assertions of presidential power and a federal judge who Trump said had overreached.

The president's invocation of the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to justify deporting more than 130 Venezuelan men, some of them gang members and others who claim to have been in the United States legally and were seemingly expelled because of their ordinary tattoos, played out over a frenetic 24 hours.

By the time Trump had spoken, hundreds of detained immigrants had been quietly shuttled from across the U.S. to South Texas. Planes had been chartered to take them to their ultimate destination, El Salvador, under a deal with President Nayib Bukele, who proudly calls himself "world's coolest dictator."

The men were herded into a maximum security mega prison in El Salvador, where officials quickly made a show of the new inmates having their heads shaved, then standing shoulder to shoulder in cells so crowded that some prisoners do not have beds.

But soon, stories began to surface that the scene was not quite as it appeared. Some of them men had long insisted they had no gang ties, and their families had produced documents showing they had no criminal records.

"I've been doing this for a long time, and I've seen some pretty weird stuff," said Texas attorney John

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Dutton, who represented a man who disappeared into the Salvadoran prison. "But to do this in the middle of the night, to send people to another country, and straight to a prison when they haven't been convicted of a crime?

"It makes no sense."

Trump fulfilled a long-standing pledge on migrants

It made sense in the White House.

Trump has been promising for years that he would invoke the Alien Enemies Act to combat illegal immigration. He repeatedly insisted, falsely, that the U.S. was facing an invasion of criminal immigrants.

Tren de Aragua became the face of that threat, and the first target of that law in decades.

Crafted during the presidency of John Adams, the law gives the president broad powers to imprison and deport noncitizens in times of war. It has been used just three times: during the War of 1812 and the two world wars.

The Trump administration had begun edging closer to calling the criminal migrant issue a war, most notably by designating eight Latin American criminal groups, including Tren de Aragua, as "foreign terrorist organizations."

The administration was telegraphing its logical next move. Immigration lawyers prepared to fight back.

Government flights signal deportations to El Salvador

The flights began arriving in the small South Texas city on March 12.

Using jets chartered by a branch of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the ICE Air flights landed in Harlingen from Dallas, Phoenix, El Paso, Texas, and Nashville, Tennessee. At least three came from Alexandria, Louisiana, a hub for that state's network of immigration detention centers.

But it wasn't until Saturday, March 15, that it became clear to a retired financial executive in Ohio that something unusual was happening.

Two flights, Tom Cartwright noticed, were scheduled from Harlingen to El Salvador.

Deportations are fairly rare on Saturdays, as are deportation flights from Harlingen to El Salvador, said Cartwright, a flight data analyst for the advocacy group Witness at the Border, whose social media feeds are closely watched in immigration circles.

"All that came together and said to me: There's something weird here."

Court documents later showed that for at least the previous week, Venezuelan men in immigration detention centers in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Florida and elsewhere were being moved by bus and plane toward ICE's El Valle Detention Facility, a 40-minute drive from the Harlingen airport.

A makeup artist is caught up in the mass deportations

One of those men was a makeup artist who said he fled Venezuela last summer after his boss at a state-run news channel publicly slapped him.

In a country where political repression and open homophobia are both part of life, it's hard to be a gay man who does not support President Nicolás Maduro.

Walking and traveling by bus and taxi through Central America and Mexico, Andry José Hernández Romero hoped to find a new life in the U.S. He used a U.S. Customs and Border Protection phone app to arrange an appointment at a U.S. border crossing in San Diego.

That's where he was asked about his tattoos, and where his trouble started.

U.S. immigration authorities use a series of "gang identifiers" to help them spot members of Tren de Aragua. Some are obvious, such as trafficking drugs with known Tren members.

Some identifiers are more surprising: Chicago Bulls jerseys, "high-end urban street wear," and tattoos of clocks, stars or crowns, according to government instructional material filed in court by the American Civil Liberties Union.

Tattoos were key to marking many deported men as Tren members, according to documents and lawyers.

Romero, who is in his early 20s, has a crown tattooed on each wrist. One is next to the word "Mom." The other next to "Dad." The crowns, according to his lawyer, also pay homage to his hometown's Christmastime "Three Kings" festival, and to his work in beauty pageants, where crowns are common.

Romero, who insists he has no ties to Tren, was taken into ICE custody and transferred to a California

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detention center.

And then, around March 7, he was suddenly moved to a facility in Laredo, Texas, a three-hour bus ride from the Harlingen airport.

'The order from the president is to deport them all'

Friday, March 14, was supposed to be quiet for Javier Maldonado.

"I had come in to work late, like 10 in the morning," said Maldonado, a Texas immigration lawyer based in San Antonio. "I was having my coffee, and thought I was going to do admin work and catch up on emails and phone calls."

He was wrong.

The Alien Enemies Act was hours away from being invoked, and more than a day from being announced, but word was starting to filter out from a group of Venezuelan men held at El Valle Detention Center, near Harlingen. Around 3 a.m., roughly 100 had been roused from sleep by guards and told they were being deported. Some were told they would be flown to Mexico, some to Venezuela. Many were told nothing.

Ten hours later, the men were back in their bunks. The flight had been canceled, they were told, and they would leave soon.

But a few men contacted relatives or lawyers.

Within hours, an informal legal network was frantically at work, from a lawyer in Brooklyn to a law school professor in Los Angeles to a University of Florida law student interning with an El Paso immigrant advocacy firm. All were working with Texas lawyers like Maldonado who would file petitions in federal court.

"It's a small circle, relatively, of lawyers that do this sort of work," he said.

Even people who cross illegally into the U.S. have rights. Some of the men the lawyers were defending have Temporary Protected Status, a legal classification that shields roughly 350,000 Venezuelans from deportation.

Communication between lawyers and detainees was often chaotic. Messages sometimes were relayed through relatives in Venezuela.

But guards, said one man, had made something clear.

"The order from the president is to deport them all."

Trump invokes the Alien Enemies Act

Trump was aboard Air Force One that Friday when he invoked the Alien Enemies Act en route to his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida.

Tren de Aragua, his proclamation said, was attempting "an invasion or predatory incursion" of the United States.

Publicly, though, the administration said nothing.

Still, word was spreading about the planned flights to El Salvador. A Texas lawyer had filmed a bus leaving the El Valle facility under police escort, apparently heading to the airport.

While Trump's use of the law had not yet been announced, two legal advocacy groups, the ACLU and Democracy Forward, felt they had to file preemptively.

"We couldn't take a chance that nothing was going to happen," said Lee Gelernt of the ACLU, the lead attorney.

They spent hours drafting a petition on behalf of five detained Venezuelans who feared being falsely labeled members of Tren and deported. They crafted legal arguments until they felt time was running out.

Finally, they filed the petition with the U.S. District Court in Washington, seeking to halt all deportations under the Alien Enemies Act.

It was 2:16 a.m. Saturday.

Prisoners moved to airport as judge issues temporary restraining order?

Later that day, after Judge James E. Boasberg issued a temporary restraining order in response to the ACLU lawsuit and scheduled a 5 p.m. hearing, things in Texas began to move faster.

Guards gathered prisoners at the El Valle detention center, ordering them onto buses for the airport at about 3:30 p.m.

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The flights carried a total of 261 deportees, the White House later said, including 137 Venezuelans deported under the Alien Enemies Act, 101 under other immigration regulations, and 23 El Salvadoran members of the gang MS-13.

About 4 p.m. the White House posted Trump's proclamation.

Trump administration ignores judges order to turn planes back

Roughly an hour later Boasberg opened his hearing over Zoom.

"First, apologies for my attire," he began, dressed in a blue sweater. "I went away for the weekend and brought with me neither a robe nor tie nor appropriate shirt."

Things quickly grew more serious. Boasberg asked whether the government planned to deport anyone under the new proclamation "in the next 24 or 48 hours." The ACLU warned that deportation planes were about to take off. Deputy Assistant Attorney General Drew Ensign said he was unsure of the flight details.

Boasberg called a recess so Ensign could get more information. When Ensign came back empty-handed, the judge issued a new order to stop the deportations being carried out under the centuries-old law.

He noted specifically that any planes in the air needed to come back.

"This is something that you need to make sure is complied with immediately," he told Ensign.

It was about 6:45 p.m.

By then, two ICE Air planes were heading across the Gulf of Mexico and toward Central America. Neither turned around.

The airliners stopped in Honduras before making the short final flight to El Salvador.

Fear swept the plane when the doors opened and the prisoners realized where they were. Many knew the reputation of El Salvador's prisons.

"Everyone was scared," a Nicaraguan woman accidentally put on a flight said in a legal declaration after returning to the U.S. "Some people had to forcibly be removed from the plane."

What followed was soon set to music by the El Salvadoran government, which released videos of shackled men struggling to walk as officers forced down their heads and marched them to the immense Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT prison.

The next morning, Bukele, El Salvador's president, tweeted a New York Post headline saying Boasberg had ordered the planes turned around.

"Oopsie ... Too late," Bukele wrote, adding a laughing/crying emoji.

The Trump administration is now urging the Supreme Court for permission to resume deportations of Venezuelan migrants to El Salvador under the Alien Enemies Act. Boasberg soon could rule on whether there are grounds to find anyone in contempt of court for defying his court order.

As for Romero, the makeup artist, he's somewhere in CECOT.

The Latest: Trump's tariffs unleash trade war and calls for negotiations

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump's big raise in tariffs has triggered an escalating trade war and sent global markets plummeting.

The S&P 500 fell 6% Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 5.5% and the Nasdaq composite dropped 5.8%.

China announced Friday that it will impose a 34% tax on all U.S. imports next week, part of a flurry of retaliatory measures to Trump's new tariffs.

Trump has doubled down on his commitment to tariffs, maintaining that his new levies will bring trillions of dollars of investment to the U.S. while also criticizing other countries' retaliatory measures.

Here's the latest:

Italy's economy minister cautions against retaliatory tariffs

Italian Economy Minister Giancarlo Giorgetti warned that imposing retaliatory tariffs on the United States

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would be damaging for both Italy and Europe.

Speaking at a business forum in Cernobbio, near Milan, Giorgetti said Saturday that Italy is working for a "de-escalation" with the U.S. following Trump's announcement of a general tariff of 20% on European Union countries.

"We should avoid launching a policy of counter-tariffs that could be damaging for everyone and especially for us," Giorgetti said. "Our message is that we need to avoid pushing the panic button. ... We are following a pragmatic and rational approach."

Giorgetti proposed the EU allow member states to raise spending by relaxing the bloc's fiscal rules.

Italy has a very limited budget leeway, as the government forecast its giant debt rising through 2026 to almost 138% of GDP.

"The Italian public debt means reduced budget room for our country, a constraint that must be taken into account in any decisions we make," Giorgetti said, also referring to EU plans to increase defense spending.

Taiwan will provide support for industries hit by tariffs

Taiwan's says it will provide a \$2.65 billion fund to aid industries most affected by U.S. tariffs.

Taiwan has a trade surplus with the U.S., but much of it comes from Taiwanese industries trying to fulfill the U.S. demand for Taiwan's information technology products. Officials say Taiwan plans to negotiate with the U.S. on how the new tariff rate of 32% was determined and try to get a better deal.

Premier Cho Jung-tai has been charged with working closely with industries that are impacted and to communicate the public about their plans to stabilize the economy. Cho said Friday that electronics and information technology, steel and metal, machinery, auto parts, construction materials and home appliances will feel "significant impacts."

In the agricultural field, moth orchids, edamame and such fish as tilapia, common dolphinfish and bass will be hit the hardest, he said.

Alex Ovechkin and Wayne Gretzky are tied at 894 goals. Ovechkin can break the record Sunday

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alex Ovechkin cracked a Bud Light and casually took a sip as nearby fans chanted, "Ovi! Ovi!" He was soon joined by Wayne Gretzky to put the two greatest goal-scorers in NHL history side by side.

At this moment, they are tied at 894 goals apiece after Ovechkin scored twice Friday night to match Gretzky's total that many thought no one would ever approach. When Ovechkin was asked his feeling about breaking the record, the "Great One" had a great retort.

"Well hold on a second — he hasn't done it yet," Gretzky said. "Can you give me 24 more hours?"

Gretzky gets at least that. Ovechkin's next chance to pass Gretzky comes Sunday in a matinee at the New York Islanders.

All eyes will be on the 39-year-old Russian superstar, who soaked in the moment of celebrating No. 894 in front of Washington Capitals fans who have cheered him on for his two decades in the league and with Gretzky, his mother, wife and children in attendance. As reflective as Ovechkin was about getting there, he instantly went back to his standard answer when asked about when he might break the record.

"It's game by game; it's shift by shift," Ovechkin said. "You never know what's gonna happen. We just gonna to continue to enjoy it and continue to do our best because we still have six games left before playoffs and our mind right now is get ready for the playoffs and play the right way in the playoffs."

The playoffs are six games away, but the Capitals first want to make sure Ovechkin gets the record all to himself.

"There's a reason we try to get it to him: The guy's got 41 goals," said center Dylan Strome, who set up Ovechkin's 893rd goal four minutes into the game against Chicago. "It's incredible."

If Ovechkin is unable to score Sunday at the Islanders, the Capitals next play back at home Thursday night against division-rival Carolina. But everyone around the team would like to get this over with as

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soon as possible, something Gretzky knows from his own pursuit of Gordie Howe's then-record of 801 in the spring of 1994.

"People don't realize this — because I went through what Alex is going through — it's hard on your teammates, too," Gretzky said. "It's joyful and it's exciting, but they feel the pressure and the stress and they have to answer all the questions, also."

After Ovechkin tied Gretzky, they were more than happy to answer the questions. They could feel the anticipation building toward Ovechkin — the 2018 playoff MVP in leading the Capitals to their first Stanley Cup championship — doing something else special.

"I think the last few games you could sense it a little bit, but obviously on home ice within something extremely doable for the guy, it felt different the whole night," said longtime teammate John Carlson, who passed the puck to Ovechkin for No. 894. "From warmups, from the drop of the puck, some guys are larger than life in that regard and it just seems like only a few people are capable of it. It seemed inevitable."

Inevitable until he breaks it, as well. As Gretzky got up to leave the postgame festivities, he hugged Ovechkin and waved and said, "See you guys on Sunday."

A timeline of US-China tit-for-tat tariffs since Trump's first term

By SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — China is retaliating in a determined and at times highly detailed manner to U.S. President Donald Trump's new tariffs, led by a retaliatory 34% tax on all U.S. imports next week.

The strong response shows a degree of preparation that leaves Chinese exports in a tough spot but exacts pain from U.S. exporters that could be used as leverage in any future negotiations.

The Chinese tariffs, announced Friday and taking effect Thursday, match the rate of the ones Trump imposed this week on Chinese products flowing into the United States, coming on top of two rounds of 10% tariffs already declared in February and March, citing allegations of Beijing's role in the fentanyl crisis. China's latest retaliatory moves include more export controls on rare earth minerals, critical for various technologies, and a lawsuit at the World Trade Organization.

Beijing also suspended imports of sorghum, poultry and bonemeal from a number of U.S. companies, and added over two dozen others to a list of trade-restricted companies while launching an anti-monopoly investigation into DuPont China Group Co., a subsidiary of the multinational chemical giant.

The rapid-fire shots of tariffs and import curbs hearken back to Trump's first term in office when the U.S. and China engaged in a trade war that spanned most of his first four years in office that continued to a certain extent under his successor, Joe Biden. China responded at the time with 15% duties on coal and liquefied natural gas products, and a 10% tariff on crude oil, agricultural machinery and large-engine cars imported from the U.S.

Beijing also launched last month an anti-monopoly investigation into Google and added PVH, the owner of U.S. fashion brands Tommy Hilfiger and Calvin Klein, to its "unreliable entity" list. China also restricted the exports of five rare metals used as key components in the defense and clean energy industries among others.

As the new frictions threaten to escalate into a trade war, here are some key moments in the countries' years-long trade spat:

March 2017

Shortly after becoming U.S. president for the first time, Trump, determined to reduce trade deficits with other countries, signs an executive order calling for tighter tariff enforcement in anti-dumping cases.

April 2017

During a visit to Beijing, Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping agree to a 100-day plan for trade talks meant to reduce the U.S. trade deficit with China. The trade talks fail by July.

August 2017

Trump launches an investigation into alleged Chinese theft of U.S. intellectual property, which the U.S. estimated was costing it up to \$600 billion a year.

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January 2018

The U.S. announces 30% tariffs on imported solar panels, which come mostly from China.

April 2018

Beijing hits back with tariffs on U.S. imports worth about \$3 billion, including 15% duties on products including fruits, nuts, wine and steel pipes, and a 25% tax on pork, recycled aluminum and six other types of goods.

A day later, the U.S. ups the ante by slapping a 25% tax on Chinese goods from the aerospace, machinery and medical industries worth about \$50 billion. China retaliates with 25% duties on aircraft, automobiles, soybeans and chemicals among other imports, worth about another \$50 billion.

June-August 2018

The two countries impose at least three more rounds of tit-for-tat tariffs affecting more than \$250 billion worth of Chinese goods and more than \$110 billion worth of U.S. imports to China. These include 10% tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods that take effect in September 2018 and are supposed to increase to 25% on Jan. 1, 2019.

December 2018-May 2019

Washington and Beijing fail to iron out a trade deal after agreeing to halt new tariffs in December 2018. After the talks collapse, Trump goes ahead and raises tariffs from 10% to 25% on \$200 billion worth of Chinese goods.

May 2019

Washington bans Chinese technology company Huawei from buying parts and components from U.S. companies.

June 2019

Trump and Xi agree in a phone call to restart trade talks, but these hit numerous snags in the next five months.

January 2020

The U.S. and China sign a Phase One trade deal through which China commits to buying an additional \$200 billion of U.S. goods and services over the next two years. However, a research group later found China had bought essentially none of the goods promised.

October 2022

Biden, who had retained most of the tariffs enacted under Trump, issues sweeping new restrictions on selling semiconductors and chipmaking equipment to China. These curbs will be expanded in October 2023 and December 2024.

February 2024

On his campaign trail, Trump says that he plans to impose tariffs of at least 60% on all Chinese imports if he wins a second term in office.

May 2024

Biden raises tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, solar cells, steel, aluminum and medical equipment.

Feb. 4, 2025

New 10% tariffs on all Chinese imports to the U.S. come into effect. China retaliates the same day by announcing a flurry of countermeasures, including duties on American coal, liquefied natural gas and agricultural machinery.

March 4, 2025

Additional 10% tariffs on all Chinese goods will go into effect. China responds with additional tariffs of up to 15% on imports of key U.S. farm products, including chicken, pork, soy and beef, and expanded controls on doing business with key U.S. companies. The tariffs went into effect on March 10.

April 3, 2025

On Trump's so-called tariff "Liberation Day," he announces additional 34% duties on all Chinese imports, alongside tariffs on goods from countries around the world. The sweeping tariffs are to come into effect April 9.

April 4, 2025

China announces other retaliatory moves including more export controls on rare earth minerals, and files a lawsuit at the World Trade Organization.

China also suspends imports of sorghum, poultry and bonemeal from several U.S. companies, adds 27 firms to lists of companies facing trade restrictions, and starts an anti-monopoly probe into DuPont China Group Co.

Yoon Suk Yeol removed as South Korea's president over short-lived martial law

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea's Constitutional Court unanimously removed Yoon Suk Yeol from office Friday, ending his tumultuous presidency and setting up a new election, four months after he threw the nation into turmoil with an ill-fated declaration of martial law.

The verdict capped a dramatic fall for Yoon, a former star prosecutor who became president in 2022, just a year after he entered politics.

In a nationally televised hearing, the court's acting chief Moon Hyung-bae said the eight-member bench found Yoon's actions were unconstitutional and had a grave impact.

"By declaring martial law in breach of the constitution and other laws, the defendant brought back the history of abusing state emergency decrees, shocked the people and caused confusion in the society, economy, politics, diplomacy and all other areas," Moon said.

"Given the negative impact on constitutional order caused by the defendant's violation of laws and its ripple effects are grave, we find that the benefits of upholding the constitution by dismissing the defendant far outweigh the national losses from the dismissal of the president," the justice concluded.

Protesters erupt in jubilation and sorrow

Anti-Yoon protesters near the court erupted into tears and danced when the verdict was announced in the late morning. Two women wept as they hugged and an old man near them leapt to his feet and screamed with joy. The crowd later marched through Seoul streets.

Outside Yoon's official residence, many supporters cried, screamed and yelled at journalists when they saw the news of the verdict on a giant TV screen. But they quickly cooled down after their organizer pleaded for calm.

"We will absolutely not be shaken!" a protest leader shouted on stage. "Anyone who accepts this ruling and prepares for an early presidential election is our enemy."

No major violence has been reported by late afternoon.

"Political risks related to domestic polarization and policy instability remain," Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul, said. "But the Constitutional Court's unanimous ruling has removed a major source of uncertainty. Korean government institutions have withstood a volatile mix of legislative obstruction and executive overreach that posed the greatest challenge to democracy in a generation."

Korea faces an election with deep divisions

An election will be held within two months for a new president. But a festering divide over Yoon's impeachment could complicate South Korea's efforts to deal with crucial issues like President Donald Trump's tariffs and other "America First" policies, observers say.

Yoon said in a statement issued via his defense team that he deeply regrets failing to live up to the public's expectations, but stopped short of explicitly accepting the verdict. There have been fears he would incite efforts to resist his removal, as he earlier vowed to fight to the end.

He added that he will pray for the country and its people. "It has been the greatest honor of my life to serve our nation," Yoon said.

Yoon's ruling People Power Party said it would accept the decision, but one of Yoon's lawyers, Yoon Kap-keun, called the ruling "completely incomprehensible" and a "pure political decision."

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, the country's acting leader, vowed to maintain public safety and order and

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ensure a smooth transition to the next administration.

Surveys show Lee Jae-myung, leader of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, is the early favorite to win the upcoming presidential by-election, though he faces several trials for corruption and other charges.

"It will be an uphill battle for the conservative party to win a snap presidential election," said Duyeon Kim, a senior analyst at the Center for a New American Security in Washington. "If Lee wins, South Korea's foreign policy will likely look very different from what the U.S. and like-minded countries have enjoyed during Yoon's presidency because of the demands of the progressive base."

Lee welcomed the ruling and credited the South Korean people for "protecting our democratic republic."

Crisis started with a night of chaos four months ago

Martial law lasted only six hours, but left behind a political crisis, rattling financial markets and unsettling the country's diplomatic partners.

After announcing martial law late at night on Dec. 3, Yoon, a conservative, sent hundreds of soldiers to the liberal opposition-controlled National Assembly, election offices and other sites. Special operations soldiers smashed windows at the assembly and scuffled with protesters, evoking traumatic memories of the country's past military rules among many South Koreans.

Enough lawmakers, including some from the ruling party, managed to enter the assembly to vote down Yoon's decree unanimously.

Some senior military and police officers sent to the assembly testified Yoon ordered them to drag out lawmakers to block the vote on his decree or to detain his political rivals. Yoon says the troops were deployed to the assembly simply to maintain order.

Yoon was impeached by the National Assembly on Dec. 14. The assembly accused him of violating the constitution and other laws by suppressing assembly activities, attempting to detain politicians, and undermining peace across the country.

In his final testimony at the Constitutional Court hearing, Yoon said his decree was a desperate attempt to draw public support of his fight against the "wickedness" of the Democratic Party, which had obstructed his agenda, impeached top officials and slashed the government's budget bill. He earlier called the National Assembly "a den of criminals" and "anti-state forces."

The Constitutional Court ruled Yoon infringed upon the assembly's right to demand martial law be lifted, the freedom of political party activities and the neutrality of the military. It also said Yoon's political impasse with the opposition wasn't the type of emergency situation that required martial law and that Yoon's decree lacked required legal procedures such as deliberation by a formal Cabinet meeting.

Yoon still faces criminal charges

Yoon has been indicted on charges of rebellion in connection with his decree, a charge that carries the death penalty or a life sentence if convicted. He became the first South Korean president to be arrested or indicted while in office.

Yoon was released from jail in March after a Seoul district court cancelled his arrest. That allows him to stand trial without detention.

His removal from office also costs Yoon the presidential immunity that protected him from most criminal prosecutions. This means he could face other criminal charges, such as abuse of power, in connection with his martial law decree, some observers say.

In the race to save lives after the Myanmar quake, US rescuers are notable by their absence

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and DAVID RISING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Day after day, Chinese rescue teams haul children and elderly people from collapsed buildings as cameras beam the thanks of grateful survivors around the world. Russian medical teams show off field hospitals erected in a flash to tend the wounded.

Notably absent from the aftermath of the 7.7-magnitude earthquake in the poor Southeast Asian nation Myanmar: the uniquely skilled, well-equipped and swift search-and-rescue teams and disaster-response

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crews from the United States.

At least 15 Asian and Western government rescue teams have landed crews reaching hundreds of workers in size, alongside initial pledges of financial aid reaching tens of millions of dollars, as the death toll of the March 28 quake tops 3,000, Myanmar's government says. Cameras showed Vietnam's team on arrival, marching square-shouldered to the rescue behind their country's flag.

While Myanmar's military junta and civil war have posed challenges, the U.S. government has worked with local partners there previously to successfully provide aid for decades, including after deadly storms in 2008 and 2023, aid officials say.

The American government dwarfs other nations' rescue capacity in experience, capacity and heavy machinery able to pull people alive from rubble. But in Myanmar after the most recent quake, the U.S. has distinguished itself for having no known presence on the ground beyond a three-member assessment team sent days after the quake.

"We all worried what would be the human impact" of President Donald Trump's dismantling of the six-decade-old U.S. Agency for International Development, said Lia Lindsey, a senior humanitarian policy adviser for Oxfam, which scrambled to provide tents, blankets and other aid to quake survivors.

Now, Lindsey said, "we're seeing it in real time. We're seeing it in increased suffering and increased death."

A retreat from decades of American policy may be fueling the absence

The United States, the world's largest economy, long saw its strategic interests and alliances served by its standing as the world's top humanitarian donor. Myanmar's quake is as close to a no-show as the nation has had in recent memory at a major, accessible natural disaster.

Current and former senior private and government officials say the Myanmar disaster points to some of the results — for people in need on the ground, and for U.S. standing in the world — of the Trump administration's retreat from decades of U.S. policy. That approach held that Washington needs both the hard power of a strong military and the soft power of a robust aid and development program to deter enemies, win and keep friends and steer events.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, in Europe for a NATO gathering, rejected a suggestion that the administration was ceding influence abroad by canceling thousands of its aid and development contracts, including for disasters. He told reporters that those complaining were the aid groups, which he accused of profiting off past U.S. aid.

"We will do the best we can," Rubio said Friday. "But we also have other needs we have to balance that against. We're not walking away."

He pointed to "a lot of other rich countries in the world. They should all be pitching in and do their part."

Leading Senate Democrats wrote Rubio this week, urging him to scale up U.S. disaster aid to Myanmar — and fast. Separately, Delaware Sen. Chris Coons, a Democratic member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spoke of watching a news broadcast of the disaster showing Chinese government teams at work.

"It hurt my heart to see where, instead of a USAID ... team leading the response, there was a team from the PRC that was being celebrated for having saved some people in the rubble," Coons said.

The 2 1/2-month-old Trump administration, through Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency teams, has frozen USAID funding, terminated thousands of contracts and is firing all but a handful of its staff globally. It accuses the agency of waste and of advancing liberal causes. The Myanmar quake is the first major natural disaster since that work started.

The Trump administration and some Republican lawmakers say they will reassemble a reduced slate of aid and development programs under the State Department, fitting their narrower interpretation of work that serves U.S. strategic and economic interests.

The first announcement of help came days later

Days after the Myanmar quake, the U.S. made its first announcement of help: It was sending a three-member assessment team of non-specialist advisers from a regional USAID office in Bangkok, Thailand. Coincidentally, like hundreds of other USAID staffers around the world, the three had received layoff

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notices from the Trump administration on March 28 within hours of the quake, current and former USAID officials confirmed.

The administration also promised \$2 million in aid, and announced another \$7 million Friday. But there's a much larger number at play.

That \$9 million total is dwarfed by the roughly \$2 billion in payments for previously rendered services and goods that the Trump administration has owed nonprofit humanitarian groups and other contractors and government and nongovernment foreign partners, aid officials say. The Trump administration abruptly shut down USAID and State foreign assistance payments — including for work already done — on Jan. 20, Inauguration Day.

Combined with abruptly terminated aid contracts and the freeze on the USAID and State aid and development payments, the U.S. back debt is forcing larger aid operations and businesses to scale back their services to people in need and to slash staff. Some smaller organizations were driven out of business. That was even before the Myanmar quake.

Under court order, the administration is slowly making good on those back payments.

In the meantime, nonprofit groups are having to draw on reserve funds they would normally use for sudden unplanned disasters like the Myanmar quake to pay the bills that the U.S. should have paid, said Lindsey, the Oxfam official.

Asked about the burden that the non-government organizations — another name for aid groups — say USAID's unpaid back bills are placing on their work, the State Department said in an email, "The U.S. government cannot comment on how NGOs manage their financing."

Typically, the United States itself would have provided \$10 million to \$20 million in the initial phase of response to a disaster like the Myanmar quake, with more later for long-term aid and rebuilding, said Sarah Charles, who ran disaster response and overall humanitarian affairs at USAID in the Biden administration.

"We have a long history in Burma," Charles said, adding, "It's an environment that the U.S. government has been operating in over the last many decades."

Normally, the United States also would have had 20 to 25 specialized disaster workers on the ground in as few as 24 hours, Charles said. That number would have jumped to 200 or more if USAID had flown in urban rescue teams from California and Virginia. They deploy as self-contained units, with dog handlers and the capacity to feed and provide clean water to the teams, Charles said.

The Trump administration preserved contracts for the California and Virginia rescue teams under pressure from lawmakers. But the contracts for their transport are believed among the thousands of USAID contracts that the administration canceled. That left the U.S. no quick way to move search-and-rescue crews when disaster struck, Charles said.

Britain has pledged \$13 million in aid and said it will match up to \$5 million in private donations, and China and others have promised financial aid. At least 15 countries sent in dozens or hundreds of rescuers or aid workers, including Russia, China, India and the United Arab Emirates, according to Myanmar officials.

China shares a border and close ties with Myanmar. Chinese rescuers had their first success Sunday, fewer than 48 hours after the quake, when they joined hands with local people to pull an elderly man from a badly damaged hospital in the capital city of Naypyitaw.

By Wednesday, Chinese rescuers had pulled out nine survivors, including a pregnant woman and a child. In Mandalay, Chinese rescuers saved a 52-year-old man who trapped for nearly 125 hours.

More torrential rain and flash flooding expected in heavily waterlogged South and Midwest

By GEORGE WALKER IV and BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Another round of torrential rain and flash flooding was expected to hit Saturday in parts of the South and Midwest already heavily waterlogged by days of severe storms that in some cases spawned deadly tornadoes.

Round after round of heavy rains have pounded the central U.S., leading to rapidly rising waterways and

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prompting a series of flash flood emergencies Friday night in Missouri, Texas and Arkansas. Meanwhile, many communities were still reeling from tornadoes that destroyed entire neighborhoods and killed at least seven people earlier this week.

In Frankfort, Kentucky, floodwaters swept a 9-year-old boy away while he was walking to a school bus stop Friday morning, Gov. Andy Beshear said on social media. Officials said Gabriel Andrews' body was found about a half-mile from where he went missing.

The downtown area of Hopkinsville, Kentucky — a city of 31,000 residents 72 miles (116 kilometers) northwest of Nashville — was submerged Friday. A dozen people were rescued from homes, and dozens of pets were moved away from rising water, a fire official said.

Tony Kirves and some friends used sandbags and a vacuum to try to hold back rising waters that covered the basement and seeped into the ground floor of his photography business in Hopkinsville. Downtown was "like a lake," he said.

"We're holding ground," he said. "We're trying to maintain and keep it out the best we can."

Flash flood threat looms over many states

Flash flood emergencies were issued Friday night in at least seven cities in Missouri, Texas and Arkansas, according to the National Weather Service.

One was in Van Buren, Missouri, where there were at least 15 water rescues amid heavy rainfall and a rapidly rising Current River, said Justin Gibbs, weather service meteorologist. Another was in Texarkana, Texas, where the flooded streets resulted in several people having to be rescued from their vehicles, according to the city's police department.

"If you don't have darn good reason for being out (like one that involves a visit to the emergency room), please stay home and off the roads!!" the police department said on social media.

Heavy rains were expected to continue in parts of Missouri, Texas, Arkansas, Kentucky and elsewhere Saturday and could produce dangerous flash floods. The weather service said 45 river locations in multiple states were expected to reach major flood stage, with extensive flooding of structures, roads and other critical infrastructure possible.

In Christian County, Kentucky, which includes Hopkinsville, 6 to 10 inches (15.2 to 25.4 centimeters) fell since Wednesday evening, the NWS said Friday afternoon. The rain caused the Little River to surge over its banks, and 4 to 8 inches (10.2 to 20.3 centimeters) more could fall by Sunday, it said.

Hundreds of Kentucky roads were impassable Friday because of floodwaters, downed trees or mud and rock slides, and the number of closures were likely to increase with more rain Saturday, Beshear said.

Flash flooding is particularly worrisome in rural Kentucky where water can rush off the mountains into the hollows. Less than four years ago, dozens died in flooding in the eastern part of the state.

Extreme flooding across a corridor that includes Louisville, Kentucky and Memphis — which have major cargo hubs — could also lead to shipping and supply chain delays, said Jonathan Porter, chief meteorologist at AccuWeather.

Swollen rivers and tributaries also swamped some parts in Ohio on Friday, and Gov. Mike DeWine said about 70 roads were closed. The southern half of the state was expected to see moderate flooding, which has not happened in four years, he added.

Forecasters attributed the violent weather to warm temperatures, an unstable atmosphere, strong wind shear and abundant moisture streaming from the Gulf. At least 318 tornado warnings have been issued by the NWS since this week's outbreak began Wednesday.

The outburst comes at a time when nearly half of NWS forecast offices have 20% vacancy rates after Trump administration job cuts — twice that of just a decade ago.

Tornadoes leave a path of damage, and more could be coming

At least two reports of observed tornadoes were noted Friday evening in Missouri and Arkansas, according to the NWS.

"TAKE COVER NOW!" the weather service said on X in response to the one on the ground around the small Missouri town of Advance.

Earlier in the week, seven people were killed in the initial wave of storms that spawned powerful tornadoes on Wednesday and early Thursday in Tennessee, Missouri and Indiana.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said entire neighborhoods in the hard-hit town of Selmer were “completely wiped out,” after it was hit by a tornado with winds estimated by the NWS of up to 160 mph (257 kph). Advance warning of storms likely saved lives as hundreds of people sheltered at a courthouse, the governor said.

In neighboring Arkansas, a tornado near Blytheville lofted debris at least 25,000 feet (7.6 kilometers) high, according to weather service meteorologist Chelly Amin. The state’s emergency management office reported damage in 22 counties from tornadoes, wind, hail and flash flooding.

Mississippi’s governor said at least 60 homes were damaged. And in far western Kentucky, four people were injured while taking shelter in a vehicle under a church carport, according to the emergency management office in Ballard County.

You shouldn’t buy a piece of a saint. Catholic Church denounces online sale of Carlo Acutis relics

By SILVIA STELLACCI and GIOVANNA DELL’ORTO Associated Press

ASSISI, Italy (AP) — With the upcoming canonization of its first millennial saint, the Catholic Church has turned to police in Italy to investigate the online sale of some purported relics of Carlo Acutis, who already has been drawing hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to his shrine.

Since the early days of the faith, many Catholics have prayed for intercession to saints’ relics — usually small parts of their body or clothing that are authenticated by ecclesiastical authorities and preserved in churches. But their sale is strictly forbidden.

“It’s not just despicable, but it’s also a sin,” said the Rev. Enzo Fortunato, who leads the Vatican’s World Children’s Day committee and has a tiny fragment of Acutis’ hair in a chapel by his office for veneration by visiting youth. “Every kind of commerce over faith is a sin.”

An anonymous seller had put up for online auction some supposedly authenticated locks of Acutis’ hair that were fetching upward of 2,000 euros (\$2,200 US), according to the Diocese of Assisi, before being taken down. Last month, Bishop Domenico Sorrentino asked authorities to confiscate the items and added that if fraudulent, the sale would constitute a “great offense to religious belief.”

Acutis was precocious in developing and sharing his faith

Acutis died of leukemia in 2006, when he was only 15 but had already developed a precocious faith life centered on devotion to the Eucharist — which for Catholics holds the real presence of Christ. Savvy with technology, he had created an online exhibit about eucharistic miracles through the centuries.

He will formally be declared a saint at a Mass in front of the Vatican’s St. Peter’s Basilica on April 27. Over the past year, about 1 million pilgrims have flocked to the central Italian town of Assisi, where his body — wearing sneakers, jeans, and a sweatshirt — lies in a shrine in a church dedicated to a key moment in the life of medieval hometown saint, St. Francis.

Acutis’ body was exhumed during the more-than-decade-long canonization process and treated so it could be preserved for public showing, including by removing certain organs. His face, which looks as if he were asleep, was reconstructed with a silicone mask, Sorrentino said.

Acutis’ heart has been preserved at a dedicated altar in another Assisi church; it will be taken to Rome for the canonization Mass.

“The relics are little, little fragments of the body, to say that that body is blessed, and it explains to us the closeness of God,” Sorrentino said.

Handling of relics is a painstaking task for the church

There are different “classes” of relics — the most important are major body parts, such as the heart. Sorrentino gave Acutis’ pericardium — the membrane enclosing the heart — to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2022 for the duration of its multi-year Eucharistic Revival.

The bishop in charge of the saint’s body works with requests from other bishops around the world to give or lend relics — always for free — to be exhibited for veneration at parishes and other churches.

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"We give this to communities, to parishes, to priests using the relics for the cult in their parish," Sorrentino said. "It's not something magic. It's not something that works automatically, it works through faith."

The practice of gathering relics dates to the earliest days of the church, when many faithful Christians died as martyrs in religious persecutions. Witnesses to the killings would collect blood or fragments of clothing to memorialize their sacrifice and to pray for the saints' intercession, Fortunato said.

In Acutis' case, the first miracle in his canonization process was the healing of a boy in Brazil after a prayer service invoking his intercession with the presence of a relic, he added.

For clergy and pilgrims who have been visiting Acutis' shrine in Assisi this week, the relics take second place to the example of faith and the power of assisting with prayer that saints provide.

"I would never buy one," said Amelia Simone, an 18-year-old from Chicago who has been studying in Rome and credits Acutis for help smoothing out tricky visa paperwork. "I think the intercession aspect is very cool, but I don't think I'd ever want to own a first-class relic. It just would feel a bit weird to me."

Two clergy leading a Holy Year pilgrimage to Italy from the Diocese of Greensburg, Pennsylvania, said it was "a great tragedy" that online relic sales were happening.

"We continue to pray for people's conversion," said the Rev. Christopher Pujol.

Bishop Larry Kulick added that relics "are very reverent and very solemn for us as Catholics. And they are not only inspirational for us, but they are really ... opportunities to help us to pray."

"And so it's unfortunate that such a thing would happen, because that's really a misuse of the relics and actually a disrespect to him and to his memory," he added.

Some mixed views on this sainthood process

Already, the uncommon devotion and attention that Acutis' canonization process has generated has been met with some skepticism. In hundreds of social media comments to a recent Associated Press article about the phenomenon, some called his sainthood a marketing ploy by the church to lure more young people back into the pews.

Many others — and those making pilgrimage to Assisi — praised Acutis for his devotion and were glad he's become a role model for members of his generation.

"It's a joy for me to have encountered Carlo Acutis' body, and especially to ask for his intercession for the transformation and the conversion of many youth," said Juana de Dios Euceda, a missionary nun from Honduras.

Strong, Fudd help UConn blow out UCLA 85-51 in Final Four as Bueckers moves 1 win from elusive title

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Sarah Strong and Azzi Fudd didn't even need much help from superstar Paige Bueckers to propel UConn into the national title game, leading the Huskies to a remarkably easy 85-51 victory over UCLA on Friday night in the Final Four of the women's NCAA Tournament.

Strong finished with 22 points and Fudd scored all of her 19 points in the first half for the second-seeded Huskies, who are one win away from their 12th national championship and first since the team won four straight from 2013-16, led by Breanna Stewart. The eight-year title drought is the longest for the Huskies since they won their first in 1995.

"We aren't worried about the past. Every single day you walk into the gym and live up to the standard of playing UConn basketball," Bueckers said. "Not comparing yourself to other teams and players before. We want to fill their shoes and make them proud. Wear the jersey with pride."

UConn will face defending champion South Carolina on Sunday for the title after the Gamecocks beat Texas 74-57 earlier Friday night. It's a rematch of the 2022 championship game, which the Gamecocks won 64-49. The teams met in February and UConn shocked South Carolina with a 29-point road victory.

"They've played basketball at an exceptionally high level when you think about the Final Fours they've been too and the consistency in their program," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "The ability to win national championships multiple times and (they) are in a position to win back-to-back ones."

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Bueckers, the likely top pick in the WNBA draft on April 14, finished with 16 points after topping 30 in each of the previous three games for the Huskies (36-3).

"If Paige had 16 last year, we wouldn't have made it to the Final Four," Auriemma said. "If she had the game she had today the previous year, it would be almost impossible for us to win."

All-America center Lauren Betts scored 26 points for top overall seed UCLA (34-3).

UConn got off to a hot start with Strong and Fudd leading the way. Even when shots looked off, they found their way in. Fudd, one of the best shooters in the country whose career at UConn has been interrupted by multiple injuries, banked in a 3-pointer from the top of the key, prompting Auriemma to throw his arms in the air and smile.

"It's just so much fun to watch her play with joy and be at this stage," Bueckers said of Fudd. "You see all the ups and downs, the bad days, the good days and to be at this spot where it's the light at the end of the tunnel and for her to perform and be at this stage, it means everything to us."

The Huskies led 23-13 at the end of the first quarter. They continued the onslaught behind Fudd to open a 42-22 advantage at the break. Bueckers had the play of the half with a touch pass in the air to Kaitlyn Chen for a layup late in the second quarter.

UCLA never threatened in the second half as the 6-foot-7 Betts had little help. UConn ended up breaking its own record for margin of victory in the Final Four or national title game — the Huskies won the 2013 championship by 33 points over Louisville.

UCLA's run ends

The Bruins fell short in their first appearance in the NCAA Final Four. UCLA won a national title in 1978 in the pre-NCAA era of women's basketball. The Bruins were looking to become the first team from the Big Ten, a conference they joined this season, to win a championship since Purdue did it in 1999.

UCLA cruised through its best regular season, earning the No. 1 ranking in the AP Top 25 for the first time and holding the spot for 14 weeks.

The Bruins only lost twice this year before Friday, both to JuJu Watkins and USC. UCLA got a measure of revenge by beating USC to win the Big Ten Tournament in its first year in the league after the dismantling of the Pac-12. The Bruins set a program record for wins in a season and won 23 consecutive games, including 22 in a row by double digits.

"We've obviously gone to new heights this year, but we got to let the pain of this hopefully teach us to go to new heights next year," UCLA coach Cori Close said. "Learn from this and be better the next time. (It's) really unusual to be in this position at the Final Four and have zero seniors in your locker room and have an opportunity to come back stronger, more connected, learning from this experience and be better the next time."

South and Midwest pounded by rains and floods while still reeling from tornadoes

By GEORGE WALKER IV and BRUCE SCHREINER Associated Press

HOPKINSVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Torrential rains and flash flooding battered parts of the Midwest and South on Friday, killing a boy in Kentucky who was swept away as he walked to catch his school bus. Many communities were left reeling from tornadoes that destroyed entire neighborhoods and killed at least seven people earlier this week.

Round after round of heavy rains have pounded the central U.S. for days, and forecasters warned that it could persist through Saturday. Satellite imagery showed thunderstorms lined up like freight trains over communities in Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky, according to the national Weather Prediction Center in Maryland.

In Frankfort, Kentucky, a 9-year-old boy died in the morning after floodwaters swept him away while he was walking to a school bus stop, Gov. Andy Beshear said on social media. Officials said Gabriel Andrews' body was found about a half-mile from where he went missing.

The downtown area of Hopkinsville, Kentucky — a city of 31,000 residents 72 miles (116 kilometers)

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northwest of Nashville — was submerged. A dozen people were rescued from homes, and dozens of pets were moved away from rising water, a fire official said.

"The main arteries through Hopkinsville are probably 2 feet under water," Christian County Judge-Executive Jerry Gilliam said earlier.

Tony Kirves and some friends used sandbags and a vacuum to try to hold back rising waters that covered the basement and seeped into the ground floor of his photography business in Hopkinsville. Downtown was "like a lake," he said.

"We're holding ground," he said. "We're trying to maintain and keep it out the best we can."

A corridor from northeast Texas through Arkansas and into southeast Missouri, which has a population of about 2.3 million, could see clusters of severe thunderstorms late Friday. The National Weather Service's Oklahoma-based Storm Prediction Center warned of the potential for intense tornadoes and large hail.

Flash flood threat looms over many states

Flash flood emergencies were issued Friday night in at least four cities in southeastern Missouri, according to the NWS. One was in Van Buren, where there were at least 15 water rescues amid heavy rainfall and a rapidly rising Current River, according to Justin Gibbs, weather service meteorologist.

"Unfortunately it's been as bad as we were expecting it to be," he said.

Heavy rains were expected to continue in parts of Missouri, Kentucky and elsewhere in the coming days and could produce dangerous flash floods. The weather service said 45 river locations in multiple states were expected to reach major flood stage, with extensive flooding of structures, roads and other critical infrastructure possible.

In Christian County, which includes Hopkinsville, 6 to 10 inches (15.2 to 25.4 centimeters) fell since Wednesday evening, the National Weather Service said Friday afternoon. The rain caused the Little River to surge over its banks, and 4 to 8 inches (10.2 to 20.3 centimeters) more could fall by Sunday, it said.

A pet boarding business was under water, forcing rescuers to move dozens of dogs to a local animal shelter, said Gilliam, the county executive. Crews rescued people from four or five vehicles and multiple homes, mostly by boat, said Randy Graham, the emergency management director in Christian County.

"This is the worst I've ever seen downtown," Gilliam said.

Hundreds of Kentucky roads were impassable because of floodwaters, downed trees or mud and rock slides, and the number of closures were likely to increase with more rain late Friday and Saturday, Beshear said.

A landslide blocked a nearly 3-mile (4.8-kilometer) stretch of Mary Ingles Highway in the state's north, according to the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet. A landslide closed the same section of road in 2019, and it reopened last year, WLWT-TV reported.

Flash flooding is particularly worrisome in rural Kentucky where water can rush off the mountains into the hollows. Less than four years ago, dozens died in flooding in the eastern part of the state.

Extreme flooding across a corridor that includes Louisville, Kentucky, and Memphis — which have major cargo hubs — could also lead to shipping and supply chain delays, said Jonathan Porter, chief meteorologist at AccuWeather.

Swollen rivers and tributaries also swamped some parts in Ohio, and Gov. Mike DeWine said about 70 roads were closed. The southern half of the state was expected to see moderate flooding, which has not happened in four years, he added.

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The outburst comes at a time when nearly half of National Weather Service forecast offices have 20% vacancy rates after Trump administration job cuts — twice that of just a decade ago.

Tornadoes leave a path of damage, and more could be coming

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small Missouri town of Advance.

Earlier in the week, seven people were killed in the initial wave of storms that spawned powerful tornadoes on Wednesday and early Thursday in Tennessee, Missouri and Indiana.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said entire neighborhoods in the hard-hit town of Selmer were "completely wiped out," after it was hit by a tornado with winds estimated by the NWS of up to 160 mph (257 kph). Advance warning of storms likely saved lives as hundreds of people sheltered at a courthouse, the governor said.

In neighboring Arkansas, a tornado near Blytheville lofted debris at least 25,000 feet (7.6 kilometers) high, according to weather service meteorologist Chelly Amin. The state's emergency management office reported damage in 22 counties from tornadoes, wind, hail and flash flooding.

Bulldozers cleared rubble along the highway that crosses through Lake City, where a tornado with winds of 150 mph (241 kph) sheared roofs off homes, collapsed brick walls and tossed cars into trees.

Mississippi's governor said at least 60 homes were damaged. And in far western Kentucky, four people were injured while taking shelter in a vehicle under a church carport, according to the emergency management office in Ballard County.

'Hands Off!' protests against Trump and Musk are planned across the US

WASHINGTON (AP) — Opponents of President Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk plan to rally across the U.S. on Saturday to protest the administration's actions on government downsizing, the economy, human rights and other issues.

More than 1,200 "Hands Off!" demonstrations have been planned by more than 150 groups, including civil rights organizations, labor unions, LGBTQ+ advocates, veterans and fair-elections activists. The protests are planned for the National Mall in Washington, D.C., state capitols and other locations in all 50 states.

The White House did not return an email message seeking comment about the protests. Trump has promoted his policies as being in the best interest of the U.S.

Protesters are assailing the Trump administration's moves to fire thousands of federal workers, close Social Security Administration field offices, effectively shutter entire agencies, deport immigrants, scale back protections for transgender people and cut federal funding for health programs.

Musk, a Trump adviser who owns Tesla, SpaceX and the social media platform X, has played a key role in government downsizing as the head of the newly created Department of Government Efficiency. He says he is saving taxpayers billions of dollars.

Activists have staged nationwide demonstrations against Trump or Musk multiple times since the new administration took power. But the opposition movement has yet to produce a mass mobilization like the Women's March in 2017, which brought thousands of women to Washington, D.C., after Trump's first inauguration, or the Black Lives Matter demonstrations that erupted in multiple cities after George Floyd's killing in 2020.

Organizers say they hope Saturday's demonstrations will be the largest since Trump returned to office in January.

US consumers rush to buy big-ticket items before Trump's tariffs kick in

By CLAIRE RUSH and MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

John Gutierrez had been thinking about buying a new laptop for the past year. The Austin, Texas, resident needed a computer with faster processing and increased storage for his photography work and had his sights set on a product from a Taiwanese brand.

Then President Donald Trump announced expansive new import tariffs Wednesday, including a 32% tax on imports from Taiwan. That same day, Gutierrez ordered the laptop, with a base price of \$2,400, from a retailer in New York specializing in photo and video gear.

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"I thought I'd bite the bullet, buy it now, and then that way I'll have the latest technology on my laptop and don't have to worry about the tariffs," he said.

Gutierrez was among the U.S. consumers rushing to buy big-ticket items before the tariffs take effect. Economists say the tariffs are expected to increase prices for everyday items, warning of potentially weakened U.S. economic growth.

The White House hopes the tariffs prod countries to open their economies to more American exports, leading to negotiations that could reduce tariffs, or that companies increase their production in the U.S. to avoid higher import taxes.

Rob Blackwell and his wife needed a new car that could handle long drives from Arlington, Virginia, to their son's college. Their current electric vehicle is older with a limited range, and it will soon be used by his daughter, who is on the verge of getting her driver's license.

"I have been telling my wife that for some time we were going to need to do it," he said, "and I was watching to see what the president did with tariffs."

Blackwell wanted another EV, but said leasing made more economic sense because the technology is ever-changing. He had his eye on the new General Motors Optiq; it's an American car but made in Mexico, which could be subject to tariffs on supply chains that might increase the cost.

After hearing that tariffs would be announced, they made plans the weekend before to lease the car. He said the dealership honored the agreement they worked out before the tariffs were finalized. And although he said the salespeople were a pleasure to deal with, Blackwell sensed a shift in their stance.

"They know what we know, which is suddenly it flips from a buyer's market to a seller's market very quickly," Blackwell said, adding that he is happy with his choice.

"It was just a simple rational decision," he said. "If this is what the government's going to do, I need to get my act together."

Lee Wochner, CEO of the Burbank, California-based Counterintuity marketing and strategy firm, also needed a new vehicle. He wanted a more presentable car for business meetings, but kept putting it off because of his busy work schedule.

On March 27, a Thursday, he told his firm's car broker: "Ed, I need a car pronto and it's got to happen by Sunday."

The broker gave him some car and pricing options and he leased an Audi Q3, which was delivered Sunday to his house by a nearby dealership.

A quick back-of-the-envelope calculation showed how much he saved by leasing before the tariffs were implemented. If he had waited, Wochner said, it would have cost about another \$4,300.

"One of the things my car broker said was that deals that were already written, some of the dealerships were ripping them up already and renegotiating them because they were afraid that they weren't going to be able to get enough new inventory at a price anybody would buy," he said.

He believes prices will continue to increase because the U.S. has lost the trust of the international trade market.

"If you need a new car, if you can get that pre-tariff deal still, you should go get it," he said, "because who knows what next Wednesday might be like."

Voices from coal country say closures of MSHA offices will endanger mine safety

By JOHN RABY and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Retired coal miner Stanley "Goose" Stewart questions whether it's safe for anyone to work in the industry right now.

The Department of Government Efficiency, created by President Donald Trump and run by Elon Musk, has been targeting federal agencies for spending cuts. That includes terminating leases for three dozen offices in the Mine Safety and Health Administration, the agency responsible for enforcing mine safety laws.

The proposals for MSHA are "idiotic," Stewart said, and would give coal companies "the green light to

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do as they please.”

Safety laws and their enforcement played a significant role before and after the Upper Big Branch mine in southern West Virginia blew up 15 years ago Saturday, killing 29 of Stewart’s co-workers.

Stewart was there that day but soon stepped away for good, focusing on his love for hunting, fishing and tending to his chickens and his garden when the weather warms.

Coal mining in West Virginia, meanwhile, spent the ensuing years in a political fight that Republicans largely won. As a 2016 presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton was slammed for saying that her plans to shift away from carbon-based fuels like coal would put miners out of business. Trump vowed to save the industry, and while mining jobs have not made a comeback, coal states like West Virginia have become reliable Republican strongholds.

Advocates for the mining industry argue that state government is up to the task of keeping mines safe, although some lawmakers in West Virginia’s Republican majority have used the existence of federal inspectors as justification for curtailing the state inspectors’ enforcement power. They also point to the dwindling number of mining fatalities — and mines in general.

Republican Tom Clark, a West Virginia state lawmaker and a former MSHA inspector and supervisor who worked in one West Virginia office slated for closure, said he expected it to shutter years ago. Eight MSHA employees currently work in the Summersville office, Clark said, less than a third of the workforce that existed there about 10 years ago.

Clark said he doesn’t have any concerns for miners, as long as those inspectors are transferred to other coalfield-based offices. Clark, who worked on MSHA’s Upper Big Branch investigation, said he supports the Trump administration’s efforts to streamline government and stimulate the economy.

“It’s going to take time and there’s going to be some pain for all the American people, I think,” he said. “But if we can hang in there and battle through, we all may be better off. I hope so.”

Clark said the federal government should not cut down on inspectors and said black lung benefits need to be funded. He said the government should use money they’re saving to make sure those programs have what they need.

“Funding shouldn’t be a consideration for keeping people healthy,” he said. “It really shouldn’t.”

But Stewart, the former miner, said the MSHA office closures will impact safety.

“I wouldn’t recommend anybody get in the mining industry right now because of what’s going on with Trump and Musk,” he said.

Stewart said he’s never supported Trump and never would, but he struggles to explain the loyalty of many West Virginians, including coal miners, to the president. He said Trump had never done anything to help them.

“I can’t wrap my brain around why they can’t see what a con man he is. I just hope someday they’ll wake up. It may already be too late.”

What does MSHA do?

Congress created MSHA within the Department of Labor in 1978, in part because state inspectors were seen as too close to the industry to force coal companies to take the sometimes costly steps necessary to protect miners. MSHA is required to inspect each underground mine quarterly and each surface mine twice a year.

MSHA inspectors are supposed to check every working section of a mine. They examine electrical and ventilation systems that protect miners from deadly black lung disease, inspect impoundment dams and new roof bolts, and make sure mining equipment is safe, said Jack Spadaro, a longtime mine safety investigator and environmental specialist who worked for MSHA.

Mining fatalities over the past four decades have dropped significantly, in large part because of the dramatic decline in coal production. But the proposed DOGE cuts would require MSHA inspectors to travel farther to get to a mine, and Spadaro said that could lead to less thorough inspections.

“It’s a stupid proposal made by stupid people who obviously have no concept or no knowledge about mine safety,” Spadaro said.

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Robert Cash, a 55-year-old mine roof bolt operator from Foster, West Virginia, said miners feel "in the dark" about how closing offices will impact safety.

"It's just a big scare around here," he said. "If we have a disaster and they closed down an MSHA office close to us, now what's the response time to get someone out there to start the investigation?"

'Hurricane force'

Stewart was inside Upper Big Branch when it exploded on April 5, 2010, with a blast he described as "hurricane force winds." Before reaching the surface, he tried to revive some of his fallen co-workers, then covered their bodies with blankets.

Investigations determined that worn and broken cutting equipment created a spark that ignited coal dust and methane gas.

After the disaster, MSHA sent inspection teams to conduct impact inspections at mines with a history of repeated problems, many of them underground operations in West Virginia and Kentucky, which have nearly half of the nation's coal mines. Under the second Trump administration, the impact inspections have stopped.

Joe Main, MSHA's chief during the Obama administration, said on Musk's social media site X that weakened MSHA enforcement staffing contributed to the Upper Big Branch disaster and that the proposed DOGE cuts "can risk miners' lives in an agency already short staffed."

Some 34 MSHA offices in 19 states have been targeted for closure. Hundreds of federal occupational health employees doing mining-related work and research were laid off this past week as part of cuts to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"If you take away all those protections, you're kind of making the workers disposable," said Dr. Carl Werntz, a West Virginia physician who conducts black lung examinations. "That's terribly concerning."

Kentucky Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear said no federal agency has reached out to confirm that seven MSHA offices are closing there.

"My concern is that what Elon Musk is trying to do is break government, not fix it," Beshear said.

'Recipe for disaster'

Conflicts within the coal industry go back over a century. The West Virginia Mine Wars involved a long-running dispute between coal companies and miners fed up with deadly work and poor wages and living conditions. When union organizers showed up, the companies retaliated.

Membership in the United Mine Workers union peaked in 1946, then plummeted as government support waned and the industry waged an all-out war on union mines. Today, a majority of U.S. coal mines are nonunion and the UMW is a shell of the powerful safety advocate it once was.

UMW President Cecil Roberts said workers' safety will be left "solely in the hands of employers" in the absence of protections from the union and the federal government.

"History has shown us time and time again that doing so is a recipe for disaster, especially in the mining industry," he said.

Infidelity for the social media age: What is microcheating, and is it a big deal?

By ALBERT STUMM Associated Press

Liking a co-worker's photo on social media. Sending them direct messages. Checking in on Slack more often than before.

Progressively interacting in this way with someone outside your relationship may be no big deal to you. To your significant other, however, it may be microcheating, which some people consider a form of infidelity because it can involve building a bond one heart emoji at a time.

Although pushing the boundaries of what's allowed in a relationship is not a new concept, the issue has become even more common with the rise of remote work, said William Schroeder, a therapist and owner of Just Mind Counseling centers in Austin, Texas.

"People are having more digital relationships so it kind of creates more space for that," Schroeder said.

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"In this work-from-home environment, it can happen even easier because it's real low risk."

What is microcheating?

Microcheating, a term popularized by Australian psychologist Melanie Schilling, could be anything short of a physical or emotional relationship if it involves a behavior you can't talk about openly with a partner.

Besides furtive social media chatting, it also could mean lingering too long at the water cooler to talk to a co-worker, sharing personal details of your own relationship, or dressing up if you know you'll see someone.

"We've just put a newer label on it," said Abby Medcalf, a psychologist in Berkeley, California, and host of the "Relationships Made Easy" podcast.

But Medcalf noted that with most of her patients in recent years, microcheating involves texting or messages on social media. And it can be a slippery slope.

What's the big deal?

As relationship norms evolve and terms like "polyamory" come out of the shadows, liking or commenting on a photo may seem fairly innocuous. Many couples don't care, Medcalf said, but people who do shouldn't feel bad for it.

"There isn't a right and wrong in relationships," she said. "It comes down to preferences."

Even if a specific action has not been discussed and forbidden, trouble arises when it takes away energy from your primary relationship, she said.

"It's cheating if your partner doesn't like it, or doesn't know about it, or wouldn't like it if they knew about it," she said.

She advised resisting the urge to snoop, which is a sign there is a lack of trust in the relationship. "All you want to know is, how is your partner treating you?" she said. "Do you feel No. 1?"

How should couples handle it?

Schroeder said every relationship has boundaries, some of which may have been discussed and others that are implied. These days, the gray area is bigger than ever.

Particularly if a couple met on a dating app, it's important to discuss whether to disable it and be exclusive, he said. Then define what "exclusive" means, such as not dating other people, continuing conversations through an app or pursuing others on social media.

The best time to bring it up is long before a problem arises, even if it's difficult to know when or how, he said. He equated having this talk with driving.

"If you think that you have a full tank of gas, you're not going to start thinking, 'When should we stop to get gas?'" he said.

A change in behavior — if your significant other seems to be more secretive with their phone, for instance, or checks social media more often — could be a sign of an issue, he said. But try not to be accusatory. Rather, mention you have noticed they are more engaged with their phone and that it worries you because you're not sure what it means.

"Having that kind of curiosity is a much better place to have a conversation," Schroeder said.

He said microcheating happens for many reasons, but often it's because people are simply looking for that spark they feel from a new relationship. Some patients who engage in secretive behavior never cross further lines, but Schroeder said noticing if you yourself are doing it can be instructive.

Also, it doesn't necessarily mean the end of a relationship.

"It can be this crisis to rebuild," he said. "Sometimes when these little microcheating examples come up, it can be really helpful to understand, 'Alright, why is this coming up for me?'"

EDITOR'S NOTE: Albert Stumm writes about wellness, food and travel. Find his work at <https://www.albertstumm.com>

Costa Rica looks to El Salvador's gang crackdown for path to stopping violence

By MARCOS ALEMÁN Associated Press

TECOLUCA, El Salvador (AP) — Costa Rica's security minister toured El Salvador's maximum-security gang prison on Friday as part of his review of the measures that El Salvador has taken to reduce violence caused by powerful street gangs during a now three-year offensive under a state of emergency.

Costa Rica Justice and Peace Minister Gerald Campos Valverde said he was visiting on orders of President Rodrigo Chaves to "see the good practices of the Salvadoran people with the goal of combating crime and to returning rights to all citizens."

In November, Costa Rica bestowed its highest diplomatic honor on El Salvador President Nayib Bukele for his success in lowering levels of violence during his three-year campaign against powerful street gangs.

El Salvador has lived under a state of emergency that suspends fundamental rights like access to a lawyer. Some 84,000 people have been arrested, accused of gang ties.

Homicides have plummeted in El Salvador and the improved security has fueled Bukele's popularity.

"El Salvador's rescue from those nefarious claws is also helping the peace in our region," Chaves said when he presented Bukele with the recognition last year. "The fight against organized crime in any part of Central America is welcome. The reach and influence and bad example of the gangs must be reduced."

Campos came away impressed by the gang prison Bukele built at the start of the state of emergency where Campos said he saw fundamental rights being respected.

The prison's director Belarmino García showed Campos one of the cells holding about 70 inmates. The prison director instructed the inmates to remove their shirts to show their tattooed torsos and asked some to identify their gang affiliation to show that members of rival gangs were sharing the same cell.

After his tour, Campos said that Costa Rica would not continue allowing criminals to be arrest by police only to see them quickly freed by the judicial system.

"We are going to take all of the good practices" back to Costa Rica "to give Costa Ricans a place of peace and tranquility," he said.

El Salvador Security Minister Gustavo Villatoro said earlier Friday that El Salvador was pleased to share its experience with Costa Rica, a country that until recently had been a reference for peace, but now struggles with bloodshed like El Salvador once had.

"This is not a question of copy and paste, but rather of learning what we have done and implementing in each country what precisely can be done to rescue thousands of Costa Ricans, thousands of Salvadorans and imprisoning hundreds," Villatoro said.

El Salvador's new gang prison, where inmates are held in large cells and never allowed outside, has gained more attention in recent weeks after the U.S. government sent nearly 300 migrants, including more than 200 Venezuelans, it accused of having gang ties to be held there.

Costa Rica continues to struggle with historically high homicide numbers.

In 2023, Costa Rica set a homicide record with 907, down somewhat in 2024 to 880. So far this year, the country is on nearly the same homicide pace as last year, according to government data.

Unlike Bukele, Chaves does not hold a majority in Congress and has not remade Costa Rica's courts to remove opposition.

Costa Rica — long applauded for a robust ecotourism industry, environmental conservation and relative peace — has been wracked by violence in recent years, largely attributed to drug trafficking. Costa Rica has become a key way station for cocaine exports to Europe and the United States.

Maya Angelou memoir, Holocaust book are among those pulled from Naval Academy library in DEI purge

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Books on the Holocaust, histories of feminism, civil rights and racism, and Maya Angelou's famous autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," were among the nearly 400 volumes removed from the U.S. Naval Academy's library this week after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's office ordered the school to get rid of ones that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Navy late Friday provided the list of 381 books that have been taken out of its library. The move marks another step in the Trump administration's far-reaching effort to purge so-called DEI content from federal agencies, including policies, programs, online and social media postings and curriculum at schools.

In addition to Angelou's award-winning tome, the list includes "Memorializing the Holocaust," which deals with Holocaust memorials; "Half American," about African Americans in World War II; "A Respectable Woman," about the public roles of African American women in 19th century New York; and "Pursuing Trayvon Martin," about the 2012 shooting of the Black 17-year-old in Florida that raised questions about racial profiling.

Other books clearly deal with subjects that have been stridently targeted by the Trump administration, including gender identity, sexuality and transgender issues. A wide array of books on race and gender were targeted, dealing with such topics as African American women poets, entertainers who wore blackface and the treatment of women in Islamic countries.

Also on the list were historical books on racism, the Ku Klux Klan and the treatment of women, gender and race in art and literature.

In a statement, the Navy said officials went through the Nimitz Library catalog, using keyword searches, to identify books that required further review. About 900 books were identified in the search.

"Departmental officials then closely examined the preliminary list to determine which books required removal," said Cmdr. Tim Hawkins, Navy spokesman. "Nearly 400 books were removed from Nimitz Library to comply with directives outlined in Executive Orders issued by the President."

The books were removed shortly before Hegseth arrived Tuesday for a visit to the academy, which had already been planned and was not connected to the library purge, officials said.

The Pentagon has said the academies are "fully committed to executing and implementing President Trump's Executive Orders."

The Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, the Air Force Academy near Colorado Springs, Colorado, and the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York, had not been included in President Donald Trump's executive order in January that banned DEI instruction, programs or curriculum in kindergarten through 12th grade schools that receive federal funding. That is because the academies are colleges.

Pentagon leaders, however, turned their attention to the Naval Academy last week when a media report noted that the school had not removed books promoting DEI.

A U.S. official said the academy was told late last week to conduct the review and removal. It isn't clear if the order was directed by Hegseth or someone else on his staff.

A West Point official confirmed earlier this week that the school had completed a review of its curriculum and was prepared to review library content if directed by the Army. The Air Force and Naval academies had also done curriculum reviews as had been required.

An Air Force Academy official said the school continually reviews its curriculum, coursework and other materials to ensure it all complies with executive orders and Defense Department policies.

Last week, Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, the Air Force Academy superintendent, told Congress that the school was in the middle of its course review, but there was no mention of books.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss academy policies.

Hegseth has aggressively pushed the department to erase DEI programs and online content, but the campaign has been met with questions from angry lawmakers, local leaders and citizens over the removal of military heroes and historic mentions from Defense Department websites and social media pages.

IRS plans to cut up to 25% of staff, starting with closing its civil rights office, AP sources say

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The IRS plans to cut as many as 20,000 staffers — up to 25% of the workforce — as part of layoffs that began Friday, two people familiar with the situation told The Associated Press.

The job cuts will begin with the IRS Office of Civil Rights and Compliance, which would be reduced by 75% through layoffs, and its remaining workers would be absorbed into the agency's Office of Chief Counsel, according to those two people as well as a third person familiar with the matter. Fewer than 200 people work in the Office of Civil Rights and Compliance, formerly known as the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

The three people spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the plans. The Washington Post first reported on Friday's layoffs at the IRS, which collects revenue and enforces tax laws.

The workforce reductions are part of the Trump administration's efforts to shrink the size of the federal bureaucracy through billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency. The administration has closed agencies, laid off probationary employees who have not yet gained civil service protection and offered buyouts through a "deferred resignation program."

A Treasury spokesperson who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview Treasury plans said Friday that any staffing reductions are part of larger process improvements and tech innovations that will allow the IRS to operate more effectively.

Rolling back Biden-era hiring and consolidating support functions are intended to more efficiently serve the public, the spokesperson said in a statement.

The IRS started workforce reductions in February. Roughly 7,000 probationary employees with one year or less of service at the agency were notified they would lose their jobs.

However, a federal judge recently ordered those workers to be reinstated.

In March, IRS employees involved in the 2025 tax season were told they would not be allowed to accept a buyout offer from the Trump administration until after the taxpayer filing deadline of April 15.

Farmers fear tariffs could cost them one of their biggest markets in China

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Heading into this year, most U.S. farmers were hoping to break even or maybe record a small profit if they could find a way to limit their sky-high costs. But now they are faced with losing the biggest export market for many of their crops after China retaliated against President Donald Trump's tariffs.

"There's just not any margin for error in the current farm economy," said Kentucky farmer Caleb Ragland, who serves as president of the American Soybean Association.

Soybean and sorghum farmers have particular reason to worry because at least half of those crops are exported and China has long been the biggest buyer. China has also bought a lot of American corn, beef, chicken and other crops as part of spending \$24.65 billion on U.S. agricultural products last year. Now with China slapping 34% tariffs on all American products Friday — on top of other tariffs it imposed earlier this year — all of those products will be significantly more expensive in China.

Crop prices, much like the stock market, dropped after Trump announced his tariffs earlier this week.

Tim Dufault, whose farm is in northwest Minnesota only about 80 miles south of Canada, said in a good year soybean farmers might make \$50 to \$75 an acre. But this isn't a good year because crop prices aren't high enough to cover soaring costs, and the price drop in the past two days cost them about \$25 an acre, he said.

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Dufault said he is worried that these new tariffs might put many farmers out of business, including the young farmers he rented his land to heading into this year as he retired because they likely won't make anything in 2025.

"I just I hope to God they can stay in business," said Dufault, who is active with the Farmers for Free Trade group that pushes for open markets.

One of the biggest long-term concerns is that American farmers and ranchers will lose market share as China turns to Brazil and other countries to buy the soybeans, beef, chicken and other crops it consumes. China will buy lots of sorghum because it is distilled into the drink baijiu that is as popular there as whiskey is in the United States, but they will get it from other countries.

Farmers endured Trump's previous trade war with China during his first term. But this time, Trump's tariffs extend around the globe, so China likely won't be the last country to retaliate with tariffs of its own.

Could farmers get government aid?

The only way most farmers survived Trump's last trade war was with tens of billions of government aid payments, but it's not clear if he will do that this time. He gave them more than \$22 billion in aid payments in 2019 and nearly \$46 billion in 2020, though that year also included aid related to the COVID pandemic.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins told Fox News this week that right now she doesn't believe massive aid payments will be necessary, although she won't know that for several months. "But if it is, then this president has always said and he is resolute in his commitment to our farmers and our ranchers and our great rural communities in America, so we will we'll make sure we're ready if in fact that is necessary," she said.

"But none of us like that," said farmer Andy Hineman, who is vice president of the Kansas Grain Sorghum Producers Association. "We don't want to live on government handouts. We'd rather sell the crops we grow."

But farmer Bryant Kagay, part owner of Kagay farms in Amity, Missouri, said he doesn't "have a lot of faith that these tariffs — the way they are laid out today — will stick around long term."

He also doesn't like the idea of getting aid from the government.

"I really hate that seems to be the solution that, well, we'll just pay farmers some just off-the-cuff payment to help offset this," Kagay said. "I think a federal government that's vastly overspending today, like this is not the way to solve that problem."

The hope for farmers is that Trump's tariffs will lead to negotiations with other countries that will lower tariffs and other trade barriers.

"That's the type of positive development that we can do that's good for everybody involved, and that's what we need to look for," Ragland said. "Instead of beating each other up with higher and higher tariffs — it's just like punching each other in the face. We're not going to gain anything from it. It's just going to cause us to hurt. That would be my encouragement to the administration, is to look for opportunities and get some great deals done proactively."

Ex-assistant says filmmaker Paul Schrader sexually assaulted her and backed out of settlement deal

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Paul Schrader, the writer of "Taxi Driver" and director of "American Gigolo," has been accused in a lawsuit of sexually assaulting his former personal assistant, firing her when she wouldn't acquiesce to advances and reneging on a settlement that was meant to keep the allegations confidential.

The former assistant, identified in court documents as Jane Doe, sued the filmmaker and his production company on Thursday. She is seeking a judge's order to enforce the agreement after Schrader said he couldn't go through with it. The terms, including a monetary payment, were not disclosed.

"This is an open-and-shut settlement enforcement matter," Doe's lawyer, Gregory Chiarello, wrote in court papers accompanying the breach of contract claim.

Schrader's lawyer, Philip J. Kessler, deemed the lawsuit "desperate, opportunistic and frivolous" and said

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many of the allegations in it are false or materially misleading.

"We absolutely deny that there was ever a sexual relationship of any kind between Mr. Schrader and his former assistant, and we deny that Mr. Schrader ever made an attempt to have a sexual relationship of any kind with his former assistant," Kessler said.

The lawsuit, filed in a New York court, laid bare allegations that the confidential settlement between Doe, 26, and Schrader, 78, had been intended to keep under wraps.

They include her claim that the filmmaker trapped her in his hotel room, grabbed her arms and kissed her against her will last year while they were promoting his latest film, "Oh, Canada," at the Cannes Film Festival in France.

Two days later, the lawsuit said, Schrader called Doe repeatedly and sent her angry text messages claiming he was "dying" and couldn't pack his bags. When Doe arrived to help, the lawsuit said, Schrader exposed his genitals to her as he opened his hotel room door wearing nothing but an open bathrobe.

Doe alleges Schrader fired her last September after she again rejected his advances. Soon after, the lawsuit said, he sent her an email expressing fear that he'd become "a Harvey Weinstein" in her mind. Weinstein, the movie mogul turned #MeToo villain, was convicted of rape in Los Angeles in 2022 and is awaiting an April 15 retrial in his New York rape case.

According to the lawsuit, Schrader agreed to the settlement on Feb. 5 but changed his mind after an illness and "soul searching." Schrader conveyed through his lawyers last month that he "could not live with the settlement," the lawsuit said. Kessler disputed that.

"The agreement that they're trying to enforce against Mr. Schrader, in plain English, required both parties to sign it before it became legally effective," Kessler said. "Mr. Schrader declined to sign it. It's frankly as simple as that."

Doe worked for Schrader from 2021 until 2024, according to the lawsuit. During that time, Kessler said, she posted on social media about how much she loved her job and referred to Schrader as an extraordinary mentor and "my man."

Schrader rose to fame through his collaborations with director Martin Scorsese, beginning with "Taxi Driver" in 1976. Robert De Niro's iconic line, "You talkin' to me," is seared into the lexicon and ranked among the American Film Institute's all-time greatest movie quotes.

Schrader co-wrote Scorsese's 1980 boxing drama "Raging Bull," also starring De Niro, and authored his 1988 religious epic "The Last Temptation of Christ" and his 1999 paramedic drama "Bringing Out the Dead."

He's also directed 23 of his own films, highlighted by 1980's "American Gigolo," which he also wrote. He received his only Academy Award nomination for writing "First Reformed," a 2017 thriller about a small-town minister that he also directed.

Schrader told The Associated Press last year that he made "Oh, Canada" — the film that Doe said brought them to Cannes — as he reconciled his own mortality after a string of hospitalizations for long COVID.

In 2016, Schrader told The Hollywood Reporter police visited him after he ranted on Facebook about Donald Trump's then-looming presidency. Schrader wrote Trump's election was "a call to violence" and said people should be "willing to take arms."

In 2023, he trashed the Oscars as scrambling "to be woke" with diversity efforts and more international voters. And in 2021, in the wake of #MeToo, he decried so-called "cancel culture," telling Deadline it was "so infectious, it's like the Delta virus."

"If your friend says, 'They're saying these terrible things about me that aren't true,' you're afraid to come to their defense, because you might catch that virus too," Schrader told the entertainment news outlet.

Al Sharpton calls on PepsiCo to restore DEI initiatives, threatens boycott

By GRAHAM LEE BREWER undefined

The Rev. Al Sharpton is giving PepsiCo three weeks to meet with him — or suffer a boycott — to discuss reversing the company's recent move to do away with its diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, according to a letter shared with The Associated Press.

On Friday, Sharpton wrote to PepsiCo CEO Ramon Laguarta expressing his "profound disappointment" that the company would end inclusion commitments that both helped build its brand and fostered trust with millions of its customers.

"You have walked away from equity," Sharpton wrote in the letter, adding that removing DEI hiring and retention goals and dismantling community partnerships with minority organizations "are clear signals that political pressure has outweighed principle."

Sharpton, founder and president of the National Action Network, announced in January that the civil rights organization would identify two companies in the next 90 days that will be boycotted for abandoning their DEI pledges.

A spokesperson for PepsiCo said it had not received the letter and was unable to comment.

PepsiCo is one of the largest food and beverage companies in North America. Its brands include Gatorade, Lay's potato chips, Doritos, Mountain Dew as well as Pepsi.

In a memo sent to employees in February, Laguarta said the company will no longer set goals for minority representation in its managerial roles or supplier base.

Since President Donald Trump returned to the White House earlier this year, U.S. government agencies, companies and schools have scrambled to reevaluate policies and programs aimed at increasing diversity among its employees and reducing discrimination against members of minority groups, women and LGBTQ+ people.

Trump ended DEI programs within the federal government and has warned schools to do the same or risk losing federal money. Large retailers like Walmart and Target have also phased out DEI initiatives since Trump took office.

Following decades of activism and protests by marginalized groups, several pieces of legislation and executive orders in the 1960's laid the groundwork for what would become known today as the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion movement in the workplace. In the 1970's, in response to the new laws and regulations, affirmative action policies were introduced, employee resource groups started to emerge, and businesses began implementing diversity trainings. This led to increased hiring of women and minorities.

By the 1980's, new studies began highlighting the business incentive for fostering inclusive workplaces. Focus shifted from compliance with the law to "creating an environment where everybody feels that they can achieve their highest goal," said Mary-Frances Winters, an author and strategist focusing on diversity and organizational development. "This was really about looking at changing demographics, looking at who was coming into the workforce and also looking at how people with different backgrounds can lead to greater innovation," Winters said.

Research continued to emphasize that diversity in the workplace was a matter of business survival, with some businesses even beginning to mandate cultural competency within leadership. PepsiCo was one of those companies, Sharpton pointed out in his letter.

In the 1940s and 1950s, PepsiCo hired some of the first Black sales and marketing executives in corporate America, Sharpton wrote, and by the 1980's the company's policies led to the creation of Black consumer advisory boards.

"You did this not because it was easy — but because it was right," Sharpton wrote in the letter. "That legacy is now in jeopardy."

In the early 2000's, Sharpton sat on PepsiCo's African American advisory board.

PepsiCo's announcement in February that it would rollback inclusion efforts came as Coca-Cola reaffirmed support for its DEI efforts. In its annual report, Atlanta-based Coke warned that the inability to attract

employees that reflect its broad range of customers could negatively affect its business.

"Failure to maintain a corporate culture that fosters innovation, collaboration and inclusion ... could disrupt our operations and adversely affect our business and our future success," the company said.

The Latest: Stock market suffers worst week since 2020 after China retaliates against Trump tariffs

By The Associated Press undefined

Markets are facing their worst crisis since the COVID crash after China matched President Donald Trump's big raise in tariffs in the U.S. president's escalating trade war.

The S&P 500 plummeted 6% Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 5.5% and the Nasdaq composite dropped 5.8%.

Not even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market, which is usually the economic highlight of each month, was enough to stop the slide.

Meanwhile, Trump on Friday said he is signing an executive order to keep TikTok running in the U.S. for another 75 days to give his administration more time to broker a deal to bring the social media platform under American ownership.

Here's the latest:

It's called vote-a-rama in the Senate, and it's just what it sounds like

The Senate is about to dive into a late night — or all-nighter — of contentious debate over the GOP's plan for trillions of dollars in tax breaks and spending cuts, what Trump has dubbed a "big, beautiful bill."

But first, amendments.

It's a unique Senate process called "vote-a-rama" in which senators will be voting on dozens of amendments to shape the bill — mostly from Democrats trying to gut the GOP priorities and replace them with their own.

Expect proposals from the Democrats to stop Trump's tariffs, end tax breaks for billionaires and save Medicaid from potential cuts. None are expected to be accepted as Republicans, who have majority control of Congress, push their plan forward, and off to the House for next steps.

Navy lists books removed from Naval Academy library in new DEI purge

Books on the Holocaust, histories of feminism, civil rights and racism, and Maya Angelou's famous autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," were among those removed from the U.S. Naval Academy's library earlier this week, after Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's office ordered the school to get rid of ones that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Navy late Friday provided the list of 391 books that have been taken out of its library. The move marks another step in the Trump administration's far-reaching effort to purge so-called DEI content from federal agencies, including policies, programs, online and social media postings, and curriculum at schools.

Pentagon leaders turned their attention to the Naval Academy last week when a media report noted the school hadn't removed books that promoted DEI.

Tune in: It's Friday night live in the Senate

The pizzas have been carted in for the Republicans. Tacos on the Democratic side.

Senators are preparing to work through the night on the GOP's budget framework for Trump's "big" bill of tax breaks and spending cuts, despite the economic turmoil from his new tariffs.

Republicans are eager to take this next step toward what they hope will be the centerpiece of the GOP domestic policy agenda.

Democrats, who as the minority party don't have enough votes to stop the plan, at least intend to shine a bright light on the details — and drag out the process.

Columbia must give 30 days' notice before sharing student records with Congress' antisemitism probe

A Manhattan federal judge says Columbia University must give detained activist Mahmoud Khalil and other students 30 days' notice before handing over any more documents to Congress as it investigates

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antisemitism on college campuses.

But U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian on Friday stopped short of outright blocking the Manhattan university from providing records to the House Education and Workforce Committee, as lawyers for the activists sought.

U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg, who chairs the House committee, called the decision a "victory for credible oversight."

Lawyers for Khalil and the other students said the decision means they can continue pursuing their legal fight.

Trump administration nixes plan to cover anti-obesity drugs through Medicare

Trump's administration has decided not to cover expensive, high-demand obesity treatments under the federal government's Medicare program.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said late Friday that it would not cover the medications under Medicare's Part D prescription drug coverage.

Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, proposed a rule in late November after Trump won reelection that would have extended coverage of drugs like Zepbound and Wegovy. The rule was not expected to be finalized until Trump took office.

Medicare does pay for drugs like Wegovy for patients who have heart disease and need to reduce their risk of future heart attacks, strokes and other serious problems.

Interior secretary orders national parks to be open and accessible as workforce is cut

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum is directing national parks to "remain open and accessible" and says officials will ensure proper staffing to do so.

The order, issued late Thursday, also calls for a detailed review of each park's operating hours, trail closures and other limits on visitor services.

Burgum said his department and the National Park Service "are committed to ensuring that all Americans have the opportunity to visit and enjoy our Nation's most treasured places."

But park advocates and others questioned how park employees could comply, given the Trump administration's workforce reductions. Fewer workers can mean shorter hours, delays, closed campgrounds, overflowing trash bins, unkept bathrooms, and risks to public safety, they say.

The park service has lost around 1,500 permanent employees since the beginning of this year, Rick Mossman, president of the Arizona-based Association of National Park Rangers, said Friday in a statement. And it's "bracing for another reduction in force expected in the very near future."

US says it's providing another \$7 million for Myanmar quake victims

Criticized for a slower and smaller U.S. response than usual, the Trump administration said Friday it was providing about another \$7 million to aid victims of the 7.7 magnitude quake in Myanmar, on top of the \$2 million promised earlier.

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce announced the aid in a post on the social media site X. Bruce said the money would help stricken communities in the Southeast Asian nation with shelter, food, medical care and water.

The Trump administration has worked with Elon Musk to dismantle the main U.S. aid agency and most of its programs, and lay off almost all of its staff. While China and some other nations have sent scores or hundreds of people to help with the aftermath of the March 28 quake, the U.S. has disclosed sending only a three-member assessment team, announced days after the quake.

S&P 500 plunges 6% to close its worst week since 2020

The worldwide sell-off for financial markets slammed into a higher, scarier gear. The S&P 500 plummeted 6% Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 5.5% and the Nasdaq composite dropped 5.8%.

Markets are facing their worst crisis since the COVID crash after China matched President Donald Trump's big raise in tariffs in an escalating trade war.

TikTok deal fell apart after Trump tariff announcement, source says

Trump had a TikTok deal in place Wednesday for the app's operations to be spun off into a new com-

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pany based in the U.S. and owned and operated by a majority of American investors. Under that deal, ByteDance would maintain a minority position.

But the deal collapsed Thursday after Trump announced wide-ranging reciprocal tariffs, including against China.

ByteDance representatives called the White House to indicate that China would no longer approve the deal until there could be negotiations about trade and tariffs. That's according to a person who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive details of the negotiations.

Associated Press reporter Aamer Madhani contributed.

Washington and Oregon are latest states to ask a court to reject order overhauling US elections

The two states made the move a day after Democratic officials in 19 others filed a similar lawsuit.

Washington Attorney General Nick Brown told a news conference that Washington and Oregon sued separately because they conduct elections entirely by mail and would be particularly harmed by the president's efforts.

"Neither the Constitution nor any federal law gives the president authority to set rules for how states conduct elections," Brown said.

Friday's lawsuit is the fifth against the executive order since it was issued last week. The order includes new requirements that people provide documentary proof of citizenship when registering to vote and a demand that all mail ballots be received by Election Day.

White House spokesperson Harrison Fields responded on Friday, calling the proof-of-citizenship requirements "common sense" and objections from Democrats "insane."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to travel to Panama for meetings with country leaders

The planned meeting follows recent Trump administration complaints about alleged Chinese interference with the operations of the critical Panama Canal shipping lane.

Trump has spoken negatively about the U.S. move more than 20 years ago to relinquish control of the waterway to Panama, and has threatened to retake it. He has argued that the U.S. was being overcharged for using it.

Sean Parnell, chief Pentagon spokesperson, said Hegseth will participate in the 2025 Central American Security Conference. He said Hegseth will be in meetings that "will drive ongoing efforts to strengthen our partnerships with Panama and other Central American nations toward our shared vision for a peaceful and secure Western Hemisphere."

Judge blocks Trump from dismantling agency that funds community groups in Latin American countries

A federal judge agreed on Friday to block the Trump administration from dismantling the Inter-American Foundation, an independent agency that distributes grant money to community development groups in Latin American and Caribbean countries.

U.S. District Judge Loren AliKhan ruled that the administration doesn't have the authority to remove the head of the group. Congress created the foundation more than 50 years ago. It has disbursed \$945 million to thousands of grant recipients in roughly three dozen countries.

AliKhan, who President Biden appointed, found that only the foundation's board can fire its head.

"Because neither President Trump nor Mr. Marocco had the authority to fire her from her position as the president of the IAF, Ms. Aviel is likely to succeed on the merits of her case," AliKhan wrote.

TikTok creators react to the deadline extension

Terrell Wade, a comedian and content creator with 1.5 million followers on TikTok, is relieved to hear that the platform will continue to operate in the U.S., but he's also been hedging his bets by growing his presence on other services.

"I'm glad there's an extension, but to be honest, going through this process again feels a bit exhausting," he said.

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Singer Ellise Gitas, 26, who goes by the mononym Ellise, agrees that the unpredictability of the social platform's status makes planning difficult.

"The whiplash of uncertainty around TikTok has been creatively draining for myself and many other musicians," she said. "Artists need stability to build momentum, and right now, it feels like we're being asked to sprint on a moving treadmill."

Judge blocks Trump from dismantling agency that funds community groups in Latin American countries

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US has twice as many measles cases so far this year than in all of 2024

The once common, vaccine-preventable virus continues to spread in active outbreaks in at least five states. Health experts in Texas and elsewhere have said the outbreak could continue for months and even threaten the U.S.'s status as having eliminated measles spread.

The new count Friday from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention comes as a proposal to cut billions of dollars of health funding winds its way through the courts.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has delivered a tepid message on the importance of vaccination against measles, saying it should be encouraged while also claiming the shots cause "deaths every year." The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine has been used safely to prevent illness for more than 60 years and is 97% effective against measles after two doses.

More than 500 law firms sign brief criticizing Trump's executive orders targeting legal community

Friday's legal brief supports the law firm of Perkins Coie in its challenge to a Trump executive order meant to punish its attorneys. It urges the judge to permanently block the order.

Perkins Coie is among roughly a half-dozen law firms subject to the order, which seeks to suspend lawyers' security clearances, terminate federal contracts and block access to federal buildings. The firm won a court order temporarily blocking enforcement of several provisions, but its court case is still pending.

The brief says the executive order poses a "grave threat to our system of constitutional governance and to the rule of law itself."

EU trade commissioner met with Trump officials, says 'The EU-US trade relationship needs a fresh approach'

Maros Sefcovic said he had a "frank" two hour discussion Friday with U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, and told them the US tariffs are damaging and unjustified.

"EU's committed to meaningful negotiations but also prepared to defend our interests," Sefcovic wrote on X. In terms of concrete results from the discussion, Sefcovic could only offer, "We stay in touch."

Trump picked 20% as his rate for taxing European imports as part of a sweeping set of tariffs on countries that trade with the US.

EU officials have said they're ready to negotiate to rescind or modify the European Union's response, but will otherwise impose retaliatory tariffs on a range of U.S. goods.

The US must return a Maryland man mistakenly deported to an El Salvador prison, judge says

Kilmar Abrego Garcia was expelled last month despite a court order shielding him from deportation to

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his native El Salvador, where he faced likely persecution by local gangs.

Federal prosecutors he was mistakenly put on the plane, but they can't get him back now because the Salvadoran national is outside U.S. jurisdiction.

U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis described his deportation as "an illegal act" and questioned why he was sent to a Salvadoran prison where observers say human rights abuses are routine. "Why is he there, of all places?" the judge asked.

The ruling came after Abrego Garcia's wife, a U.S. citizen, joined dozens of supporters at a rally urging his immediate return.

The White House has alleged that he's a member of the MS-13 gang. His lawyers say there's no evidence of that.

Judge moves legal case of detained Turkish Tufts University student to Vermont

A federal judge has moved a case involving a Tufts University doctoral student being held at an immigration facility in Louisiana to Vermont.

Rumeysa Ozturk, who is from Turkey, was taken into custody as she walked along a street in a Boston suburb on March 25. After being taken to New Hampshire and then Vermont, she was moved to an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center in Basile, Louisiana.

Justice Department lawyers had argued that Ozturk's petition was filed in the wrong state, that it should be dismissed and that her case should go before an immigration judge.

A judge on Friday moved the case to Vermont, where Ozturk was being held at the time her lawyers filed the petition seeking her release.

Ozturk is among several people with ties to American universities who attended demonstrations or publicly expressed support for Palestinians during the war in Gaza and who recently had visas revoked or have been stopped from entering the U.S.

The Energy Department identifies thousands of 'nonessential' positions at risk of DOGE cuts

These workers would not be protected if there is another round of large-scale firings, according to a document obtained by The Associated Press.

The jobs at risk include more than 8,500 positions across the Energy Department and the National Nuclear Security Administration — which upgrades and maintains the nation's nuclear warheads. It was not immediately clear if every position identified as nonessential would be eliminated.

Trump abruptly fires the 4-star general who led the National Security Agency

That's according to U.S. officials and members of Congress. The White House and the Pentagon have provided no reasons for the move.

Senior military leaders were informed Thursday of the firing of Air Force Gen. Tim Haugh, who also oversaw the Pentagon's Cyber Command, the officials said. They received no advance notice about the decision to remove a four-star general with a 33-year career in intelligence and cyber operations, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel decisions.

The move has triggered sharp criticism from members of Congress. This latest dismissal of national security officials by Trump comes as his Republican administration faces criticism over his failure to take any action against other key leaders' use of an unclassified Signal messaging chat that included The Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg to discuss plans for a military strike.

Associated Press reporter Lolita C. Baldor contributed.

Congress members demand answers on Trump's NSA firings

Members of Congress are condemning Trump's decision to abruptly fire the director and deputy director of the National Security Agency. They're demanding explanations.

U.S. Rep. Jim Himes, ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, sent a letter to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth asking why Gen. Timothy Haugh and his deputy Wendy Noble were fired.

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"Public reporting suggests that your removal of these officials was driven by a fringe social media personality, which represents a deeply troubling breach of the norms that safeguard our national security apparatus from political pressure and conspiracy theories," Himes, D-Conn., wrote.

Far-right activist and commentator Laura Loomer appeared to take credit for the firings Friday in a post on X, saying she raised concerns to Trump about Haugh's ties to Gen. Mark Milley and the Biden administration and questioned the NSA chief's loyalty to the president.

Leading US Jewish group suggests Trump crackdown on foreign students has gone too far

The CEO and national director of the Anti-Defamation League said it's important to preserve the civil rights of protesters while fighting antisemitism.

"We should be holding people accountable for actual crimes, not Orwellian thoughtcrimes," Jonathan Greenblatt wrote in a Thursday op-ed for the website eJewishPhilanthropy.

The State Department has been revoking visas for international students in a crackdown on pro-Palestinian activism, and Greenblatt said it "hasn't been even remotely clear" that their due process rights have been upheld.

The op-ed marks a shift from the ADL's statement supporting the Trump administration's first arrest of a Columbia University student.

"We appreciate the Trump Administration's broad, bold set of efforts to counter campus antisemitism," the ADL posted on X on March 9. That post also called for due process in "any deportation action or revocation of a Green Card or visa."

States sue over billions of dollars in delayed NIH research

Sixteen states sued the Trump administration Friday for disrupting research funding from the National Institutes of Health, citing billions of dollars of science in limbo.

The lawsuit filed in federal court in Boston challenges "unreasonable and intentional delays" in grant applications — many that directly impact patients, such as possible Alzheimer's-preventing drugs — as well as terminations of already-issued grants.

Since January, required meetings to review NIH grant applications have been repeatedly canceled or postponed. The suit also says NIH has withheld final approvals of grants that had already passed initial steps — and withheld payments for multi-year projects that are supposed to be automatically renewed.

The suit, the latest in a string of lawsuits against research cuts and mass firings, argues that this violates congressional allocations.

Dow plunges 2,100 in a worsening global sell-off after China retaliates against Trump tariffs

The worldwide sell-off for financial markets is slamming into an even higher, scarier gear.

The S&P 500 tumbled 5.7% Friday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 2,100 points and the Nasdaq composite dropped 5.7%. Markets are facing their worst crisis since the COVID crash after China matched Trump's big raise in tariffs in an escalating trade war.

Not even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market, which is usually the economic highlight of each month, was enough to stop the slide. The price of oil slid to its lowest level since 2001.

Sell-off worsens worldwide and Dow drops 1,700 after China retaliates against Trump tariffs

Stock markets worldwide are careening even lower Friday after China matched Trump's big raise in tariffs in an escalating trade war. Not even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market, which is usually the economic highlight of each month, was enough to stop the slide.

The S&P 500 was down 4.8% in afternoon trading, after earlier dropping more than 5%, following its worst day since COVID wrecked the global economy in 2020. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 1,714 points, or 4.2%, as of 2:12 p.m. Eastern time, and the Nasdaq composite was 4.9% lower.

So far there are few, if any, winners in financial markets from the trade war. European stocks saw some of the day's biggest losses, with indexes sinking more than 4%. The price of crude oil tumbled to its lowest

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level since 2021. Other basic building blocks for economic growth, such as copper, also saw prices slide on worries the trade war will weaken the global economy.

Federal judge orders FEMA to comply with his order to release millions in funding to states

Despite Judge John McConnell's preliminary injunction last month requiring the Federal Emergency Management Agency funding to resume, nearly two dozen states said they have not received any "significant dispersal of funds since February."

The federal government argued the delays were not tied to a directive from the White House Office of Management and Budget — which was the subject of the lawsuit — but rather a FEMA decision to add "internal controls" to prevent fraud and abuse.

McConnell sided with the states who argued there has been no processing of awards and that FEMA's review process was based "covertly" on an executive order from Trump on immigration that among other things targeted so-called sanctuary cities.

Data obtained by AP shows 20% vacancy rates at nearly half of National Weather Service offices; experts warn on safety

An analysis of all 122 National Weather Service field offices following Trump administration job cuts also shows eight offices missing more than 35% of their staff as severe weather chugs across the nation's heartland, according to detailed vacancy data obtained by The Associated Press.

The weather offices issue up-to-the-minute warnings during dangerous storm outbreaks such as the tornadoes that killed seven people this week and this weekend's "catastrophic" flooding. But staffing shortages and continued severe weather left meteorologists at the Louisville office unable to immediately survey tornado damage to improve future forecasts.

"It's a crisis situation," said Brad Coleman, a past president of the American Meteorological Society.

Trump to extend TikTok closure delay

Trump on Friday posted on his Truth Social media site that he would sign an executive order to keep TikTok "up and running" for another 75 days.

"We do not want TikTok to 'go dark,'" he said. "We look forward to working with TikTok and China to close the Deal."

Congress had mandated that the platform be divested from China by Jan. 19 or barred in the U.S. on national security grounds, but Trump moved unilaterally to extend the deadline to this weekend, as he sought to negotiate an agreement to keep it running.

US Attorney General predicts a Supreme Court victory on deportation flights

Pam Bondi defended the Trump administration's actions to rush hundreds of immigrants to El Salvador while a federal judge sought to block their deportations.

Whether the Trump administration ignored U.S. District Judge James Boasberg's orders to turn around planes deporting immigrants is a question likely to land before the Supreme Court, Bondi said. And if it does, she anticipates a Trump administration victory.

When asked at a Fort Lauderdale press conference whether she was involved in that decision to ignore Boasberg's order, Bondi did not answer.

"We should be concerned about the victims of these crimes here in our states more than these defendants," Bondi said.

Senators gripe at tariff restrictions, express optimism for change in policy

"We've heard from businesses across New Hampshire, from the tourism industry to manufacturing, who are very worried about the ability to continue to operate, about the losses that they're incurring," said Sen. Jeanne Shaheen.

Some said the uncertainty led their Canadian suppliers and customers to cancel contracts, the New Hampshire Democrat said.

But some GOP senators expressed optimism over the tariffs levied against U.S. trading partners.

Montana Republican Steve Daines said he's "encouraged" by reports that the Vietnamese government

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is "actively engaged at the moment with the administration finding ways to lower tariffs."

Daines said that he hoped the White House will "find ways to reduce some of these tariff and non tariff barriers that's affecting a lot of our American businesses, American farmers and ranchers."

Senate Democrats pin blame for plunging markets squarely on Trump

"Regular people cannot ride this out," said Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii.

He noted that the first day's trading after Trump's tariffs announcement was the worst in five years, and that stock values were still plummeting, wiping out retirement savings, as he prepared to speak on the Senate floor.

S&P 500 companies lost \$2.4 trillion in value on Thursday, Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich., said, and "as I speak right now, another \$2 trillion lost."

"He's playing poker with Americans' livelihoods, with Americans' retirement savings and with Americans' hard-earned income," Peters said.

California governor hopes trading partners won't retaliate against his state

"California leads the nation as the #1 state for agriculture and manufacturing — and it's our workers, families, and farmers who stand to lose the most from this Trump tax hike and trade war," Gavin Newsom said in a statement.

"To our international partners: As the fifth largest economy in the world, the Golden State will remain a steady, reliable partner for generations to come, no matter the turbulence coming out of Washington. California is not Washington, D.C."

Under Newsom's direction, the state will seek "new strategic trade relationships" with key partners, including Mexico, Canada and China, since over 40% of California imports come from the three countries, his office said.

Brazil sees other big trade agreements sidelining the US

Brazil's Vice President Geraldo Alckmin said Trump's sweeping tariffs could accelerate the Mercosur-European Union trade agreement, which was signed in December and awaits ratification by each member nation in Europe and South America.

Alckmin — who also serves as Brazil's minister of industry, development and trade — told the podcast Direto de Brasilia Thursday night that the government will continue to negotiate and doesn't intend to use a fast-tracked retaliation bill that President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva has yet to sign.

"It's a good and necessary piece of legislation, but we don't intend to use it. What we want to do is engage in dialogue and negotiation," Alckmin said. "Even though Brazil got the lowest tariff, 10%, it's still bad. No one wins in a tariff war."

Democratic leader says Trump's tariffs trap American families. Republican wants more dealmaking

Sen. Chuck Schumer called them "a brutal pincer move with American families trapped in the middle."

"Trump's tariffs raise costs on one side, and Trump's budget cuts rob people of health care, nutrition, Medicaid, more on the other, and it squeezes them," Schumer said.

GOP senate leaders meanwhile gave room for what they hope are presidential parleys with each nation's leaders.

"The president is a dealmaker if nothing else, and he's going to continue to deal country by country with each of them," said Sen. John Barrasso, a Wyoming Republican who is no. 2 in GOP Senate leadership.

Barrasso said Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Senate Republicans this week that the tariffs would be a "high level mark with the ultimate goal of getting them reduced" unless other countries retaliate.

Federal Reserve chair says Trump tariffs likely to raise inflation and slow US economic growth

Jerome Powell said the tariffs and their likely economic and inflationary impacts are "significantly larger than expected" and are "highly likely" to lead to "at least a temporary rise in inflation."

"Our obligation is to ... make certain that a one-time increase in the price level does not become an ongoing inflation problem," Powell said in remarks delivered in Arlington, Virginia.

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Powell's focus on inflation suggests that the Fed will likely keep its benchmark interest rate unchanged at about 4.3% in the coming months. He emphasized that the Fed will likely stay on the sidelines until the full impact of the tariffs on the economy become clear.

"That just seems like the right thing to do in this period of uncertainty," Powell said.

Federal labor unions sue Trump over union-busting executive order

The federal lawsuit filed in Oakland, California on Thursday challenges his order to end collective bargaining in agencies with national security missions.

The unions say Trump's March 27 order applies the national security exemption too broadly and seeks to punish them for speaking out against his agenda.

"AFGE is not going to be intimidated by a bully who is throwing a temper tantrum because our union is beating them in the court of law and in the court of public opinion," said Everett Kelley, national president of the American Federation of Government Employees.

The National Treasury Employees Union is challenging the same order in Washington, D.C. federal court, and the Justice Department has a pending suit in the Western District of Texas on behalf of eight federal agencies that want to end their collective bargaining agreements.

Trump pressures Fed chair Powell to cut interest rates

Trump suggested that the stock market turmoil caused by worldwide tariffs makes it the "PERFECT time" for Fed Chairman Jerome Powell to cut interest rates.

"He is always 'late, but he could now change his image, and quickly," Trump wrote on his social media platform.

Presidents of both political parties have respected the Federal Reserve's status as an independent agency, but Trump continues to pressure Powell. Trump nominated Powell in 2017 to serve as chair.

"CUT INTEREST RATES, JEROME, AND STOP PLAYING POLITICS!" he wrote.

US attorney general on MS-13 arrests: 'We're coming after you'

Pam Bondi announced federal charges Friday against three men arrested last month in the 2015 killing of a man who was stabbed about 100 times and shot. The cases were reopened in 2020 after going cold.

Bondi joined law enforcement officials in Fort Lauderdale to promote the Justice Department's efforts to go after the MS-13 gang, which the Trump administration has labeled a "foreign terrorist organization" to justify deportations.

"More arrests are coming," Bondi said. "If you are a gang member living in this country, I'd self-deport right now."

The announcement comes a week after Bondi lauded the arrest of the alleged East Coast leader of the MS-13 gang.

Trump tariff threatens Madagascar's vanilla industry

Madagascar's export-dependent economy now faces one of the Trump administration's highest tariffs, at 47%. This threatens the Indian Ocean nation's vital vanilla industry, which exports 70% of its produce to the U.S.

The country's textile sector, which exports 40% of its total production to US markets, is also bracing for challenging times.

Madagascan ministers are feverishly trying to limit the harm, meeting with U.S. ambassador Claire Pierangelo this week as they try to mobilize "all diplomatic and commercial levers to guarantee fair access" for the nation's products.

Judge rebukes Wisconsin Democrat's rapid response to Musk's millions

The state's Attorney General Josh Kaul had sued in a last-minute effort to stop Elon Musk from handing out \$1 million checks to voters before the state's Supreme Court election, which was ultimately won by Democratic-backed candidate Susan Crawford.

Columbia County Circuit Judge Andrew Voigt's order dismissed Kaul's lawsuit as "woefully deficient" and said "it is this Court's opinion that Wisconsin's system of justice was abused by this case."

The judge dismissed the case at Kaul's request after the state Supreme Court rejected it without com-

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ment. Musk then gave out checks to two Wisconsin voters, declaring them spokespeople for his political group after Kaul accused him of violating state law by inducing voters with money.

Kaul's statement Friday says he's proud of his "rapid action" to "help protect the integrity of the recent election."

College officials worry crackdown tactics will turn foreign students away

The Association of Public and Land-grant Universities is requesting a meeting with the State Department, alarmed that the Trump administration's widening crackdown will persuade sought-after foreign students to stay away from the United States.

College officials say the new, harsher tactics and vague justifications being used to push some students out of the country will have much broader consequences.

America's universities have long been seen as a top destination for the world's brightest minds — and they've brought important tuition revenue and research breakthroughs to U.S. colleges. But international students also have other options, said Fanta Aw, CEO of NAFSA, an association of international educators.

National Endowment for the Humanities staff getting forced leave notices, sources say

Staff members at the NEH have begun receiving notices that they have been placed on administrative leave, The Associated Press has learned. Just how many employees receiving the notices has yet to be determined, according to two officials with knowledge of the NEH's operations. The officials were not authorized to discuss the notices and asked not to be identified.

The NEH did not immediately respond Friday to a request for comment.

The NEH, which each year provides hundreds of millions of dollars for educational and cultural projects, has also been sending notices to grant recipients informing them that their funding has been cancelled. The cutbacks follow other Trump administration moves against cultural organizations, including the Kennedy Center, the Institute of Museum and Library Services and the Smithsonian Institution.

— Hillel Italie

Dow drops another 1,000 points amid global selloff as China matches Trump's tariffs

The S&P 500 dropped 2.7% early Friday, coming off its worst day since COVID wrecked the global economy in 2020. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1,000 points, and the Nasdaq composite tumbled 3%.

Not even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market was enough to stop the slide.

European stocks saw some of the day's biggest losses, and the price of crude oil tumbled to its lowest level since 2021 on worries about how a trade war could cause a recession.

Harvard gets list of demands as feds threaten billions in funding

The letter asserts that Harvard University has "fundamentally failed to protect American students and faculty from antisemitic violence and harassment" and must take immediate action to keep receiving almost \$9 billion in federal grants and contracts.

Officials at three federal agencies outlined in the letter to Harvard's president Thursday demands including a mask ban on campus, clarified restrictions on protests and firmer enforcement of discipline policies, among others. A Harvard spokesperson said the university received the letter.

It's similar to a demand letter that recently prompted changes at Columbia University under threat of billions of dollars in cuts.

Trump defends tariff moves on social media

Although experts have harshly criticized the president's economic policies, he's finding support on TikTok. He shared a video on Friday morning that said "Trump is crashing the stock market" and "he's doing it on purpose" as part of "secret game he's playing, and it could make you rich."

Trump is at Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Florida, for the weekend. In another all-caps post, Trump said he would stay the course despite fears about a potential recession.

"TO THE MANY INVESTORS COMING INTO THE UNITED STATES AND INVESTING MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF MONEY, MY POLICIES WILL NEVER CHANGE. THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO GET RICH, RICHER THAN EVER BEFORE!!!" he wrote.

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Later Friday morning, Trump criticized China's decision to match his tariffs with a 34% tariff on U.S. imports.

"CHINA PLAYED IT WRONG, THEY PANICKED - THE ONE THING THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO DO!" he wrote in a social media post

Wall Street appears on track for another day of crushing losses

Major U.S. indexes plunged sharply before Friday's opening bell, then doubled their losses after China matched Trump's tariffs.

Futures for the S&P 500 fell 3.6% before the bell, while futures for the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 3.4%, falling below the 40,000 mark. Nasdaq futures tumbled 4%. That follows Thursday's wipeout, Wall Street's worst day in five years.

Markets in Europe were having an even rougher time — by midday Friday, Germany's DAX had lost 5%, the CAC 40 in Paris slipped 4.2% and Britain's FTSE 100 gave up 3.8%.

Oil prices fell as much as 8%.

South Africa plans to diversify exports

South Africa's government said it intends to diversify exports to cushion its economy from unilateral tariff hikes such as the 30% imposed by the U.S. this week.

International Relations Minister Ronald Lamola said the country's diversification strategy would focus on increasing its exports to Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

"This diversification supports South Africa's industrial strategy and reduces dependency on single destination markets for our exports or single sources for our intermediate input requirements," said Lamola.

The U.S. is South Africa's second largest trading partner after China, accounting for 7.45% of the country's total exports last year, while South Africa accounted for 0.4% of total U.S. exports. South Africa has also questioned the U.S. calculations that resulted in the 30% tariff.

The tariff announcement follows the freezing of all financial assistance to South Africa through an executive order by U.S. President Donald Trump in February this year.

US tariffs calculations are not based on standard economics, analyst says

A top trade analyst says the Trump administration's calculations that led to the tariffs are "not standard economics" and in many cases impose rates far higher than those that the targeted countries apply to U.S. goods.

Julia Spies, chief of trade and market intelligence at the International Trade Center, said uncertainties remain about the exact way the U.S. Trade Representative's office and other U.S. officials came up with the tariffs.

She said the figures presented by Trump roughly match the U.S. trade balance — or imbalance — with a specific country, divided by imports from that country, "and that, divided by two, gives us the reciprocal tariff" imposed by the U.S.

"This is not standard economics," Spies told reporters by video to a U.N. briefing in Geneva.

The U.S. calculation included countries' tariffs on American exports plus other regulations and policies in those countries, like currency manipulation, sanitary measures, and technical barriers to trade, and "all of that led to this — what they call 'tariffs'."

The ITC, based in Geneva, is a joint agency of the United Nations and the World Trade Organization that aims to help small businesses in the developing world to trade.

China retaliates and announces a 34% tariff on imports of all U.S. products

China announced Friday that it will impose a 34% tariff on imports of all U.S. products beginning April 10, part of a flurry of retaliatory measures following U.S. President Donald Trump's "Liberation Day" slate of double-digit tariffs.

The new tariff matches the rate of the U.S. "reciprocal" tariff of 34% on Chinese exports Trump ordered this week.

The Commerce Ministry in Beijing also said in a notice that it will impose more export controls on rare earths, which are materials used in high-tech products such as computer chips and electric vehicle batteries.

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Included in the list of minerals subject to controls was samarium and its compounds, which are used in aerospace manufacturing and the defense sector. Another element called gadolinium is used in MRI scans.

China's customs administration said it had suspended imports of chicken from two U.S. suppliers, Mountaire Farms of Delaware and Coastal Processing. It said Chinese customs had repeatedly detected furazolidone, a drug banned in China, in shipments from those companies.

Additionally, the Chinese government said it has added 27 firms to lists of companies subject to trade sanctions or export controls.

Among them, 16 are subject to a ban on the export of "dual-use" goods. High Point Aerotechnologies, a defense tech company, and Universal Logistics Holding, a publicly traded transportation and logistics company, were among those listed.

Beijing also announced it filed a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization over the tariffs issue.

Asian and European shares slide further, US dollar takes a hit

In European trading, Germany's DAX lost 2% to 21,289.53 after the country reported factory orders were unchanged in February as manufacturers prepared for steeper duties on their exports.

The CAC 40 in Paris slipped 1.6% to 7,478.17 while Britain's FTSE 100 gave up 1.7% to 8,331.44.

Markets in Shanghai, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Indonesia were closed for holidays, limiting the scope of Friday's sell-offs in Asia.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 2.8% to 33,780.58, while South Korea's Kospi sank 0.9% to 2,465.42.

The two U.S. allies said they were focused on negotiating lower tariffs with Trump's administration.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dropped 2.4%, closing at 7,667.80.

In other trading early Friday, the U.S. dollar rose to 146.46 Japanese yen from 146.06. The yen is often used as a refuge in uncertain times, while Trump's policies are meant in part to weaken the dollar to make goods made in the U.S. more price competitive overseas. The euro edged lower, to \$1.0976 from \$1.1055.

China car association says prices will go up

The China Association of Automobile Manufacturers called on the U.S. to "correct its wrong actions." It said the tariffs "will further raise car prices, and impose additional burdens on consumers in various countries including Americans and have a negative impact on global economic recovery."

China is one of the major exporters of car parts, many used in car repairs. For example, about 6 in every 10 auto replacement parts used in U.S. auto shop repairs are imported from Mexico, Canada and China. The new taxes are also estimated to make cars imported into the U.S. thousands of dollars more expensive.

Chinese industry groups say new tariffs destroyed normal order of trade with US

Chinese industry groups on Friday sharply criticized the U.S. tariffs as well as the closing of the de minimis loophole which had allowed low value goods to be imported tax-free.

"America's action crudely destroyed the normal order of trade between the U.S. and China, severely impacted cooperation between global industries, and greatly harmed the rights of consumers, including American citizens," said a statement from the China Light Industry Association, which represents the interests of light manufacturing businesses.

The tax exemption, which applies to packages valued at \$800 or less, has helped China-founded e-commerce companies like Shein and Temu to thrive while cutting into the U.S. retail market.

"We call on the international community to jointly resist this trade bullying, and firmly safeguard an equal and mutually beneficial international trade system."

The China National Textile and Apparel Council chimed in as well, with a statement Friday saying they "supported the Chinese government's forceful measures" as the U.S. has "Damaged the resilience of the global textile industry's supply chain."

Vietnam says tariffs fail to reflect the spirit of the comprehensive strategic partnership

Vietnam said it regretted the U.S. decision to impose reciprocal tariff of 46% on its exports to America, "We believe that the decision is not in line with the reality of mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation between the two countries," Pham Thu Hang, the spokesperson for Vietnam's foreign ministry said Friday in a statement reported by state media.

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She said Vietnam had actively engaged with the U.S. to address concerns, promote ties on trade and work towards fair, mutually beneficial trade. She added that it failed to reflect the spirit of the comprehensive strategic partnership that the two countries had signed in 2023.

Former President Joe Biden visited Hanoi when the southeast Asian nation elevated the U.S. to its highest diplomatic status, comprehensive strategic partner. At the time, Biden stressed this showed how far the relationship has evolved from what he described as the "bitter past" of the Vietnam War.

"If enforced, would negatively impact bilateral economic and trade relations as well as the interests of businesses and people in both countries," said Hang.

The tariffs imposed on Vietnam are among the highest of any country, more than competitors like Thailand and Malaysia. Analysts say that the tariffs will harm Vietnamese export sectors like electronics, textiles, footwear and seafood.

Vietnam will continue discussions with the U.S. to "find practical solutions" for developing sustainable bilateral economic relations that ensure the interest of businesses and people in both countries.

Deputy Prime Minister and former finance minister Ho Duc Phoc is scheduled to visit the U.S. and Cuba from April 6 to 14 to discuss and negotiate on trade matters.

Vietnamese exports to the U.S. in 2024 totally nearly \$120 billion, making up nearly a third of the country's total export turnover.

Taiwan's president will support impacted industries, says tariffs 'unreasonable'

Taiwan's President Lai Ching-te said he will offer the "greatest support" to industries impacted by the new tariffs. Lai acknowledged that Taiwan had a trade surplus with the U.S., but that much of it came from Taiwanese industries trying to fulfill the U.S. demand for Taiwan's information technology products.

"We feel that this is unreasonable and are also worried about the subsequent impact these measures may have on the global economy," Lai said in a statement on his Facebook page Thursday night.

Lai said he instructed Premier Cho Jung-tai to work closely with industries that are impacted and to communicate with the public about their plans to stabilize the economy.

LA County reaches \$4 billion agreement to settle sexual abuse claims at juvenile facilities

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD and AMY TAXIN Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles County has reached a \$4 billion agreement to settle nearly 7,000 claims of sexual abuse in juvenile facilities since 1959, officials said Friday.

The agreement, which still needs approval from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, far surpasses a \$2.6 billion settlement reached in 2022 with Boy Scouts of America that was the largest aggregate sexual abuse settlement in U.S. history at the time.

"On behalf of the County, I apologize wholeheartedly to everyone who was harmed by these reprehensible acts," Fesia Davenport, the county's chief executive, said in a statement.

The agreement would settle lawsuits filed by thousands of people who alleged they were mistreated and sexually abused in foster care and juvenile detention facilities in Los Angeles County. The plaintiffs were able to sue because of a California law that took effect in 2020 and suspended the statute of limitations for childhood sex abuse victims to bring cases for three years.

Many of the claims involved the MacLaren Children's Center, which was closed in 2003. The facility, which was intended to be a safe space for children awaiting placement in foster homes, opened in 1961 and was overseen by probation officials until it was placed under the county's Department of Children and Family Services in 1976.

One man said he was sexually abused by a physician at the facility when he was 8 years old, while another said he was assaulted by a male staff member in a bathroom when he was 5. Children were routinely placed in solitary confinement, drugged and restrained in chairs at the facility, according to court papers filed by plaintiffs.

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"It is bittersweet for the survivors, because nothing is ever going to take away what was done to them, and how badly their lives were altered and how much they have suffered," said Adam Slater, one of the plaintiffs' attorneys. "However, the settlement hopefully gives them some measure of justice and provides them with some measure of closure."

Other private and public entities have been rocked by allegations of wide-ranging abuse and subsequent settlements.

The 2022 settlement by Boy Scouts of America, which recently renamed itself Scouting America, involved more than 80,000 men who said they were molested as children by scouting leaders and others.

And last year the Archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to pay \$800 million to victims of clergy sexual abuse, bringing the total payout to more than \$1.5 billion.

Disclosure of the massive tentative payout by Los Angeles County comes at a time when the nation's largest county — home to about 10 million residents — is facing a tightening bind of financial obligations on its \$49 billion annual budget. Officials fear hundreds of millions of dollars for public services could vanish in Trump administration cutbacks, while the county has seen additional costs from January's historic wildfires as it also deals with an ongoing homeless crisis.

Davenport recently said the county is facing a "large amount of uncertainty" with its budget — some agencies are largely funded by federal dollars.

The proposed agreement includes creating a countywide hotline for reporting child sexual abuse allegations against employees and developing a system to expedite investigations, officials said.

"By balancing justice for the victims with a commitment to reform, this resolution ensures both acknowledgment of past wrongs and a pathway to a safer, more accountable future," Patrick McNicholas, one of the plaintiffs' attorneys, said in a statement.

The county's claims board will consider the proposed settlement Monday. If approved, it would be considered by the Board of Supervisors on April 29.

Trump administration nixes plan to cover anti-obesity drugs through Medicare

By TOM MURPHY AP Health Writer

President Donald Trump's administration has decided not to cover expensive, high-demand obesity treatments under the federal government's Medicare program.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services said late Friday that it would not cover the medications under Medicare's Part D prescription drug coverage. Medicare covers health care expenses mainly for people age 65 and older.

Trump's predecessor, Joe Biden, proposed a rule in late November after Trump won re-election that would have extended coverage of drugs like Zepbound and Wegovy. The rule was not expected to be finalized until Trump took office.

Trump returned to office in January. The Senate confirmed Dr. Mehmet Oz to lead the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services on Thursday.

CMS did not offer an explanation Friday for its decision, and federal spokespeople did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Trump's Health and Human Services secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has been an outspoken opponent of the injectable drugs, which have exploded in popularity due to the potentially life-changing weight loss that some patients experience.

Polls show Americans favor having Medicaid and Medicare cover the costs. But many insurers, employers and other bill payers have been reluctant to pay for the drugs, which can be used by a wide swath of the population and can cost hundreds of dollars a month.

Biden's proposal was expensive: It would have included coverage for all state- and federally funded Medicaid programs for people with low incomes, costing taxpayers as much as \$35 billion over next decade.

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Proponents of the coverage have argued that treating obesity can actually reduce longer-term costs by cutting down on heart attacks and other expensive health complications that can arise from the disease.

The benefits consultant Mercer has said that 44% of U.S. companies with 500 or more employees covered obesity drugs last year.

Medicare does pay for drugs like Wegovy for patients who have heart disease and need to reduce their risk of future heart attacks, strokes and other serious problems. The federal program also covers versions of the drugs that treat diabetes.

More than a dozen state Medicaid programs already cover the drugs for obesity.

Trump abruptly fires the 4-star general who headed the National Security Agency

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has abruptly fired the director of the National Security Agency, according to U.S. officials and members of Congress, but the White House and the Pentagon have provided no reasons for the move.

Senior military leaders were informed Thursday of the firing of Air Force Gen. Tim Haugh, who also oversaw the Pentagon's Cyber Command, the officials said. They received no advance notice about the decision to remove a four-star general with a 33-year career in intelligence and cyber operations, according to the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel decisions.

The move has triggered sharp criticism from members of Congress and demands for an immediate explanation. And it marks the latest dismissal of national security officials by Trump at a time when his Republican administration faces criticism over his failure to take any action against other key leaders' use of an unclassified Signal messaging chat that included The Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg to discuss plans for a military strike.

It's unclear who now is in charge of the NSA and the Cyber Command.

Also fired was Haugh's civilian deputy at the NSA, Wendy Noble.

The NSA notified congressional leadership and top lawmakers of the national security committees of the firing late Wednesday but did not give reasons, according to a person familiar with the situation who insisted on anonymity to discuss the matter. The person said Noble has been reassigned to the office of the defense undersecretary for intelligence.

The White House did not respond to messages seeking comment. The NSA referred questions about Haugh to the Defense Department. The Pentagon did not respond to questions about why he was fired or provide other details.

Sean Parnell, the chief Pentagon spokesman, would only say, in a statement, that the department thanks Haugh "for his decades of service to our nation, culminating as U.S. Cyber Command Commander and National Security Agency Director. We wish him and his family well."

Far-right activist and commentator Laura Loomer appeared to take credit Friday in a post on X, saying she raised concerns to Trump about Haugh's ties to Gen. Mark Milley and the Biden administration and questioned the NSA chief's loyalty to the president. Milley served as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Trump's first term but has since become an outspoken critic.

"Given the fact that the NSA is arguably the most powerful intel agency in the world, we cannot allow for a Biden nominee to hold that position," Loomer wrote. "Thank you President Trump for being receptive to the vetting materials provided to you and thank you for firing these Biden holdovers."

It's unclear what Loomer meant about Haugh's ties to Milley — who served in the Army. Milley retired in September 2023, a few months before Haugh took over at the NSA. Haugh would not have been a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Milley's tenure. As chairman, Milley could have provided input or advice on dozens of military nominations for senior officer slots, so it remains to be seen if any or all officers who were promoted during that time are also considered vulnerable.

Loomer, who has claimed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks were an "inside job," had discussed staff loyalty

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with Trump in an Oval Office meeting Wednesday, according to several people familiar with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive personnel matter. A day later, Trump said he fired "some" White House National Security Council officials.

Rep. Jim Himes, ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, sent a letter to Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth demanding to know why Haugh and Noble were fired.

"Public reporting suggests that your removal of these officials was driven by a fringe social media personality, which represents a deeply troubling breach of the norms that safeguard our national security apparatus from political pressure and conspiracy theories," Himes, D-Conn., wrote.

Sen. Jack Reed, a Democrat from Rhode Island, said Friday that he has "long warned about the dangers of firing military officers as a political loyalty test."

"In addition to the other military leaders and national security officials Trump has fired, he is sending a chilling message throughout the ranks: don't give your best military advice, or you may face consequences," Reed said in a statement.

He added that Trump "has given a priceless gift to China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea by purging competence from our national security leadership."

Another Democrat, Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said the U.S. was "facing unprecedented cyber threats" and asked how firing Haugh, who has served in the military for more than 30 years, makes America safer.

Haugh's firing sets off a 60-day process. Unless he is moved to another three- or four-star job in 60 days he would automatically revert to a two-star.

Any new high-level job would be unlikely since that would require a nomination from Trump, who just fired him. As a result, Haugh, who was confirmed for the NSA job in a unanimous Senate vote in December 2023, would likely retire.

Trump hasn't commented on Haugh or Noble, but on Thursday he dismissed the National Security Council firings as normal.

"Always we're letting go of people," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One as he made his way to Miami on Thursday afternoon. "People that we don't like or people that we don't think can do the job or people that may have loyalties to somebody else."

The firings come as Trump's national security adviser, Mike Waltz, fights calls for his ouster after using the publicly available encrypted Signal app to discuss planning for a sensitive March 15 military operation targeting Houthi militants in Yemen.

Warner called it "astonishing" that Trump "would fire the nonpartisan, experienced leader of the National Security Agency while still failing to hold any member of his team accountable for leaking classified information on a commercial messaging app — even as he apparently takes staffing direction on national security from a discredited conspiracy theorist in the Oval Office."

Haugh met last month with Elon Musk, whose Department of Government Efficiency has roiled the federal government by slashing personnel and budgets at dozens of agencies. In a statement, the NSA said the meeting was intended to ensure both organizations are "aligned" with the new administration's priorities.

Haugh had led both the NSA and Cyber Command since February 2024. Both departments play leading roles in the nation's cybersecurity. The NSA also supports the military and other national security agencies by collecting and analyzing a vast amount of data and information globally.

Cyber Command is known as America's first line of defense in cyberspace and also plans offensive cyberoperations for potential use against adversaries.

Retirees keep their eyes on the economy as Trump's tariffs roil financial markets

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — When retired school counselor Don Herneisen meets up with friends each week for breakfast at a hole-in-the-wall restaurant, the conversation often turns to the economy. With financial markets in turmoil as President Donald Trump unveiled his latest tariffs this week, the popularity of that topic is unlikely to change anytime soon.

"There's political uncertainty, there's economic uncertainty, and if you're retired, you don't much like uncertainty at this point," said Herneisen, 77, as he and his wife made a stop at Union Station in Kansas City, Missouri, on Friday while visiting family.

Stock markets worldwide careened even lower Friday after China matched Trump's big raise in tariffs in an escalating trade war. The sweeping new tariffs, on top of previous levies and retaliation worldwide, are also expected to increase prices for everyday items.

Herneisen, who lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and his wife, Cathy Herneisen, a 74-year-old retired Verizon worker, are living on a mix of pension, Social Security and an individual retirement account, or IRA. He said that for now they aren't cutting back, but his wife clarified that even holding steady means cutting back.

"Prices are higher, but I am still spending the same amount of money," she said. "I am sticking with the grocery budget, and that means that I'm cutting back on prepared food, so I'm buying the products themselves so it is hurting people who run a small business that sell their pre-made food."

They live in a Republican-leaning area of the swing state but neither voted for Trump, who has said Americans may feel "some pain" because of tariffs, but that the long-term goals, including getting more manufacturing jobs back to the U.S., are worth it.

Chad NeSmith, a portfolio manager at Tobias Financial Advisors in Plantation, Florida, just outside of Fort Lauderdale, said that they'd been fielding calls from clients for the last couple of days and the calls were increasing on Friday.

"Fear is really picking up, especially since we have the retaliatory tariff from China," he said.

NeSmith said most clients just had general questions, checking up on what they should be doing with their portfolios. "We're taking it on a call-by-call basis," he said.

NeSmith said retirees generally have a little bit less risk in their portfolios and bonds have been performing well in the volatility.

"The overall theme that we're really getting at is you really have to be aware of your risk tolerance and your financial plan, and you needed to do that going into this so that way you can ride through this volatility that we're seeing right now," he said.

Colleen Power, a 57-year-old payroll specialist from Kansas City, Missouri, is hopeful the market will recover before she retires.

"We have our things situated in a way that we will probably survive," she said. "Now, in general, yes, I am definitely worried for the country. But I mean, on a personal level, I don't have a whole lot of stress about that at the moment."

But Power, a Democrat, finds the situation frustrating nonetheless. "None of this is in any way surprising on any level, in any way, and all I can do is do the best I can in my local area and hope for the best," she said.

Paul Brahim, an advisor at Wealth Enhancement Group in Pittsburgh, said, "Uncertainty is frightening, not knowing is scary and people are asking the same question all the time: 'Am I going to be OK?'"

He said that for a recent retiree who hasn't started taking Social Security yet and is living off the cash flow from assets, watching that value decline in just a few days is "frightening."

But, he said, if they have prepared well, there should be reserves in place. "We should have cash in reserve that we can use while we allow that portfolio to heal," he said.

Brahim, president of the Financial Planning Association, a membership organization for certified financial

planners, said most of his clients have broadly diversified portfolios and, looking back over the last year, they've had positive returns. "It's good to just put it into perspective, that helps with the fear," he said.

"I think it's important that we take a breath and that we pause through uncertainty before we make adjustments to our portfolio," he said. "Let the dust settle."

The US must return a Maryland man mistakenly deported to an El Salvador prison, a judge says

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — A federal judge on Friday ordered the Trump administration to arrange for the return of a Maryland man to the United States after he was mistakenly deported to a notorious El Salvador prison, while a U.S. government attorney was at a loss to explain what happened.

The ruling rejected the White House's claim that it lacks the power to retrieve Kilmar Abrego Garcia, a Salvadoran national, because he is no longer in the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement has corrected deportation errors in previous years, according to Abrego Garcia's attorney and legal experts.

The government filed an appeal immediately after the decision, while Trump administration officials repeated assertions that Abrego Garcia is a dangerous gang member and that U.S. courts have no control over the matter.

"We are unaware of the judge having jurisdiction or authority over the country of El Salvador," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement following the ruling by U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis.

ICE expelled the 29-year-old Abrego Garcia last month despite an immigration judge's 2019 ruling that shielded him from deportation to El Salvador, where he faced likely persecution by local gangs.

His mistaken deportation, described by the White House as an "administrative error," has outraged many and raised concerns about expelling noncitizens who were granted permission to be in the U.S.

"The record reflects that Abrego Garcia was apprehended in Maryland without legal basis ... and without further process or legal justification was removed to El Salvador," Xinis wrote in her order.

Before she issued the ruling, Xinis described the deportation as "an illegal act" and pressed Justice Department attorney Erez Reuveni for answers, many of which he didn't have.

Reuveni conceded to Xinis that Abrego Garcia should not have been removed from the U.S. and shouldn't have been sent to El Salvador. He couldn't tell the judge upon what authority he was arrested in Maryland.

"I'm also frustrated that I have no answers for you for a lot of these questions," he said.

The judge also questioned why Abrego Garcia was sent to the prison in El Salvador, which observers say is rife with human rights abuses.

"Why is he there, of all places?" asked Xinis, who was nominated by President Barack Obama.

"I don't know," Reuveni replied. "That information has not been given to me."

Reuveni had asked the judge for more time — 24 hours — for the government to possibly broker Abrego Garcia's return.

Abrego Garcia's attorney, Simon Sandoval-Moshenberg, told the judge he was dismayed that the government had done nothing to get his client back, even after admitting its errors.

"Plenty of tweets. Plenty of White House press conferences. But no actual steps taken with the government of El Salvador to make it right," he said.

Sandoval-Moshenberg said the government's response to its error was essentially to say, "We've tried nothing, and we're all out of options."

"This is not something that's outside of the government's power," he said, noting that the U.S. routinely extradites gang leaders, drug traffickers and other imprisoned people from other countries.

In legal briefs, Sandoval-Moshenberg asked the court to remove Abrego Garcia from the "torture prison" and "return him to the custody of the United States."

The White House has cast Abrego Garcia as an MS-13 gang member and doubled down on that claim after Friday's hearing. Tricia McLaughlin, Department of Homeland Security assistant secretary, stated that

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the U.S. has "intelligence reports that he is involved in human trafficking."

McLaughlin did not comment on whether the administration would comply with the judge's order or when and where Abrego Garcia might be returned to the U.S. But she said that he would be "locked up and off America's streets."

"MS-13 gang members murder, rape, and maim for sport," she said. "It's shameful that the mainstream media chooses to do the bidding of these vicious gangs while ignoring their victims."

Abrego Garcia's attorneys have countered that there is no evidence he was in MS-13. The allegation is based on a confidential informant's claim in 2019 that Abrego Garcia was a member of a chapter in New York, where he has never lived.

Abrego Garcia had a permit from DHS to legally work in the U.S., his attorney said. He served as a sheet metal apprentice and was pursuing his journeyman license.

He fled El Salvador around 2011 because he and his family were facing threats by local gangs. In 2019, a U.S. immigration judge granted him protection from deportation to El Salvador. He was released and ICE did not appeal the decision or try to deport him to another country.

Abrego Garcia later married Jennifer Vasquez Sura, a U.S. citizen. The couple are parents to their son and her two children from a previous relationship.

The judge's ruling on Friday came shortly after Vasquez Sura joined dozens of supporters at a rally in the city of Hyattsville to urge her husband's immediate return.

Vasquez Sura, who hasn't spoken to her husband since his deportation, urged her supporters to keep fighting for him "and all the Kilmars out there whose stories are still waiting to be heard."

"To all the wives, mothers, children who also face this cruel separation, I stand with you in this bond of pain," she said during the rally at a community center. "It's a journey that no one ever should ever have to suffer, a nightmare that feels endless."

Markets plunge with S&P 500 down 6% and Dow down 2,200 after China retaliates against Trump tariffs

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street's worst crisis since COVID slammed into a higher gear Friday.

The S&P 500 lost 6% after China matched President Donald Trump's big raise in tariffs announced earlier this week. The move increased the stakes in a trade war that could end with a recession that hurts everyone. Not even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market, which is usually the economic highlight of each month, was enough to stop the slide.

The drop closed the worst week for the S&P 500 since March 2020, when the pandemic ripped through the global economy. The Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 2,231 points, or 5.5% and the Nasdaq composite tumbled 5.8% to pull more than 20% below its record set in December.

So far there have been few, if any, winners in financial markets from the trade war. Stocks for all but 14 of the 500 companies within the S&P 500 index fell Friday. The price of crude oil tumbled to its lowest level since 2021. Other basic building blocks for economic growth, such as copper, also saw prices slide on worries the trade war will weaken the global economy.

China's response to U.S. tariffs caused an immediate acceleration of losses in markets worldwide. The Commerce Ministry in Beijing said it would respond to the 34% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imports from China with its own 34% tariff on imports of all U.S. products beginning April 10. The United States and China are the world's two largest economies.

Markets briefly recovered some of their losses after the release of Friday morning's U.S. jobs report, which said employers accelerated their hiring by more last month than economists expected. It's the latest signal that the U.S. job market has remained relatively solid through the start of 2025, and it's been a linchpin keeping the U.S. economy out of a recession.

But that jobs data was backward looking, and the fear hitting financial markets is about what's to come.

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"The world has changed, and the economic conditions have changed," said Rick Rieder, chief investment officer of global fixed income at BlackRock.

The central question looking ahead is: Will the trade war cause a global recession? If it does, stock prices may need to come down even more than they have already. The S&P 500 is down 17.4% from its record set in February.

Trump seemed unfazed. From Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Florida, he headed to his golf course a few miles away after writing on social media that "THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO GET RICH."

The Federal Reserve could cushion the blow of tariffs on the economy by cutting interest rates, which can encourage companies and households to borrow and spend. But the Fed may have less freedom to move than it would like.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell said Friday that tariffs could drive up expectations for inflation. That could prove more damaging than high inflation itself, because it can drive a vicious cycle of behavior that only worsens inflation. U.S. households have already said they're bracing for sharp increases to their bills.

"Our obligation is to keep longer-term inflation expectations well anchored and to make certain that a one-time increase in the price level does not become an ongoing inflation problem," Powell said.

That could indicate a hesitance to cut rates because lower rates can give inflation more fuel.

Much will depend on how long Trump's tariffs stick and what kind of retaliations other countries deliver. Some of Wall Street is holding onto hope that Trump will lower the tariffs after prying "wins" from other countries following negotiations.

Trump has given mixed signals on that. On Friday, he said Vietnam "wants to cut their Tariffs down to ZERO if they are able to make an agreement with the U.S." Trump also criticized China's retaliation, saying on his Truth Social platform that "CHINA PLAYED IT WRONG, THEY PANICKED - THE ONE THING THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO DO!"

Trump has said Americans may feel "some pain" because of tariffs, but he has also said the long-term goals, including getting more manufacturing jobs back to the United States, are worth it. On Thursday, he likened the situation to a medical operation, where the U.S. economy is the patient.

"For investors looking at their portfolios, it could have felt like an operation performed without anesthesia," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management.

But Jacobsen also said the next surprise for investors could be how quickly tariffs get negotiated down. "The speed of recovery will depend on how, and how quickly, officials negotiate," he said.

On Wall Street, stocks of companies that do lots of business in China fell to some of the sharpest losses.

DuPont dropped 12.7% after China said its regulators are launching an anti-trust investigation into DuPont China group, a subsidiary of the chemical giant. It's one of several measures targeting American companies and in retaliation for the U.S. tariffs.

GE Healthcare got 12% of its revenue last year from the China region, and it fell 16%.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 322.44 points to 5,074.08. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 2,231.07 to 38,314.86, and the Nasdaq composite fell 962.82 to 15,587.79.

In stock markets abroad, Germany's DAX lost 5%, France's CAC 40 dropped 4.3% and Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 2.8%.

In the bond market, Treasury yields fell, but they pared their drops following Powell's cautious statements about inflation. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.01% from 4.06% late Thursday and from roughly 4.80% early this year. It had gone below 3.90% in the morning.

Nearly half of National Weather Service offices have 20% vacancy rates, and experts say it's a risk

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — After Trump administration job cuts, nearly half of National Weather Service forecast offices have 20% vacancy rates — twice that of just a decade ago — as severe weather chugs

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across the nation's heartland, according to data obtained by The Associated Press.

Detailed vacancy data for all 122 weather field offices show eight offices are missing more than 35% of their staff — including those in Arkansas where tornadoes and torrential rain hit this week — according to statistics crowd-sourced by more than a dozen National Weather Service employees. Experts said vacancy rates of 20% or higher amount to critical understaffing, and 55 of the 122 sites reach that level.

The weather offices issue routine daily forecasts, but also urgent up-to-the-minute warnings during dangerous storm outbreaks such as the tornadoes that killed seven people this week and "catastrophic" flooding that's continuing through the weekend. The weather service this week has logged at least 75 tornado and 1,277 severe weather preliminary reports.

Because of staffing shortages and continued severe weather, meteorologists at the Louisville office were unable to survey tornado damage Thursday, which is traditionally done immediately to help improve future forecasts and warnings, the local weather office told local media in Kentucky. Meteorologists there had to choose between gathering information that will help in the future and warning about immediate danger.

"It's a crisis situation," said Brad Colman, a past president of the American Meteorological Society who used to be the meteorologist in charge of the weather service's Seattle office and is now a private meteorologist. "I am deeply concerned that we will inevitably lose lives as a result of the added risk due to this short-staffing."

Former National Weather Service chief Louis Uccellini said if the numbers are right, it's trouble.

"No one can predict when any office gets stretched so thin that it will break, but these numbers would indicate that several of them are there or getting close, especially when you factor that large segments of the country are facing oncoming threats of severe weather, flooding rains while others are facing ominous significant fire risks," Uccellini said in an email.

The vacancy numbers were compiled in an informal but comprehensive effort by weather service workers after the cuts spearheaded by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency. They checked on individual office staffing levels and looked at how they compared to the past. Staffing levels, including vacancies, are detailed and cross-referenced by offices, regions, positions and past trends, with special notes on whether efforts are being made to fill them.

The AP, after obtaining the list from a source outside the weather service, sought to verify the numbers by calling individual weather offices, checking online staff lists and interviewing other employees not involved in the data-gathering effort. The workers' data sometimes varied slightly from data shown on weather service websites, though employees said those could be out of date.

Rep. Eric Sorensen, an Illinois Democrat and the only meteorologist in Congress, said his office independently obtained the data and he verified parts of it with weather professionals he knows in Midwestern weather service offices, which are called WFOs. The Davenport-Quad Cities office near his home has a 37.5% vacancy rate.

"They're doing heroic effort. Just with what happened the other day with the tornado outbreak, the killer tornado outbreak, I saw incredible work being done by the WFOs down around Memphis and up to Louisville. Incredible work that saved people's lives," Sorensen told the AP on Friday. "Going forward with these types of cuts, we can't guarantee that people are going to be as safe as they were."

"I'm incredibly concerned because this affects everyone in every part of the country," Sorensen said, noting the potential for severe storms Friday in House Speaker Mike Johnson's home district near Shreveport, Louisiana, where the data shows a 13% vacancy rate, well below the average for the south and the rest of the country.

The employees' data, which goes back to 2015, showed that in March 2015 the overall vacancy rate was 9.3%. Ten years later, as of March 21, it was 19%.

The weather service did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Some northern and central stations — such as Rapid City, South Dakota, with a 41.7% vacancy rate, Albany, New York, at 25%, Portland, Maine, at 26.1% and Omaha, Nebraska at 34.8% — have been so short-staffed that they've curtailed weather balloon launches that said provide vital observations for accurate forecasts.

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The vacancies go beyond meteorologists who do forecasts. Twenty-three offices are without the meteorologist-in-charge who oversees the office. Sixteen have vacancies in the crucial warning coordination meteorologist job which makes sure emergency officials and the public prepare for oncoming weather disasters. The Houston office, with a 30% vacancy rate, is missing both those top positions, according to the data and the office's own website.

Houston has so much damage from flooding, hurricanes and even a derecho that "their (damage) numbers are through the roof," said Bernadette Woods Placky, chief meteorologist for Climate Central and a former television meteorologist.

"The National Weather Service employees are still going to do everything they can to keep people safe and prepared. It's just that much harder and it puts lives at risk," Placky said. "This time of the year and in this situation, this is when severe weather season peaks and we're heading into the season of the biggest extremes with wildfires, with hurricanes, with extreme heat, which is our deadliest of all of extreme weathers."

One weather service field office chief, who asked not to be identified because of fears of job loss, said the lack of technicians to fix radar and other needed equipment could be critically dangerous.

"People are bending over backwards" to cope with the lack of staffing, the chief meteorologist said. "The burden is going to kill us."

Northern Illinois atmospheric sciences professor Victor Gensini and others compared being stretched thin to cracks in aviation safety.

"The question becomes, what falls through the cracks because they're busy doing other things or they're short-staffed," Gensini said. "Maybe they can't answer the phone to take a critical weather report that's coming in. Maybe there's so many storms in the counties that they're responsible for that they can't physically issue warnings for every single storm because they don't have enough people working on the radar."

"These are all theoretical concerns, but it's sort of like when you read about aircraft disasters and how they occur," Gensini said. "It's the cascading of risk, right? It's the compounding, like the pilot was tired. The pilot missed the cue."

A list of the largest settlements reached by organizations and victims of sexual abuse

By The Associated Press undefined

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles County has reached a \$4 billion agreement to settle nearly 7,000 claims of sexual abuse in juvenile facilities since 1959. Officials say the agreement still needs approval from the Los Angeles County board of supervisors. It would be the largest such settlement in U.S. history.

Here is a list of the largest settlements reached in recent years by organizations and victims of sexual abuse:

2024 - Church abuse in LA

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles agreed to pay \$800 million to victims of clergy sexual abuse, bringing the total payout by the Catholic archdiocese, which covers Santa Barbara, Ventura and Los Angeles counties, to more than \$1.5 billion.

2022 - Boy Scouts

The Boy Scouts of America reached a \$2.6 billion agreement with more than 80,000 men who said they were molested as children by Scout leaders and others. At the time, it was the largest aggregate sexual abuse settlement in U.S. history.

2021 - USC gynecologist

The University of Southern California agreed to an \$852 million settlement with more than 700 women who accused the college's longtime campus gynecologist of sexual abuse. When combined with an earlier settlement of a separate class-action suit, USC agreed to pay out more than \$1 billion for claims against Dr. George Tyndall, who worked at the school for nearly three decades.

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2018 - Larry Nassar and Twin Cities church abuse

Michigan State University agreed to pay \$500 million to settle claims from more than 300 women and girls who said they were assaulted by sports doctor Larry Nassar. Separately, the U.S. Justice Department agreed to a \$138.7 million settlement with more than 100 people who accused the FBI of grossly mishandling allegations of sexual assault against Nassar in 2015 and 2016.

The Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis announced a \$210 million settlement with 450 victims of clergy sexual abuse as part of its plan for bankruptcy reorganization.

2007 - Church abuse in Southern California

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles settled clergy sex abuse cases with 508 victims for \$660 million. That same year, the Catholic Diocese of San Diego agreed to pay \$198 million to settle 400 lawsuits alleging priests and others sexually abused children.

2003 - Church abuse in Boston

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston, one of the nation's most influential dioceses, agreed to pay \$85 million to settle more than 500 clergy sex-abuse lawsuits. The landmark case set off reports around the United States and the world of widespread abuse by priests, and efforts by the church to hide it.

How Trump's latest tariffs could affect your wallet

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and CORA LEWIS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump has unveiled his latest tariffs, and they could have significant implications for your wallet.

Trump's sweeping new tariffs, on top of previous levies and retaliation worldwide, are expected to increase prices for everyday items. The trade wars have already roiled financial markets and plunged businesses into uncertainty — all while economists warn of potentially weakened economic growth and heightened inequality.

Which impacts will be felt by consumers and workers first? And what can households do in the face of so much uncertainty? Here's what you need to know:

What are tariffs and how will they affect me?

Tariffs are taxes on goods imported from other countries. Companies buying foreign products pay the tariffs imposed on them — and, as a result, face higher costs that are typically passed on to customers.

Trump has argued tariffs will protect U.S. industries from unfair foreign competition and raise money for the federal government. But since so much of what we buy today relies on a global supply chain, steeper tariffs mean you'll likely see more expensive prices from the grocery aisle to your next car repair.

"It is going to affect everything in the economy," said Josh Stillwagon, an associate professor of economics and chair of the Economics Division at Babson College. "There's this immediate price increase that's going to be passed on to consumers here, basically as soon as the retailers have to buy new product."

Will the tariffs affect everyone equally?

No. Experts warn that these tariffs could escalate inequities. Low-income families in particular will feel the costs of key necessities, like food and energy, rise with fewer savings to draw on — significantly straining budgets.

Low-income households often "spend a larger share of their income on essential goods — whether it's food or other basic products ... (like) soap or toothpaste," said Gustavo Flores-Macias, a professor of government and public policy at Cornell University whose research focuses on economic development. Because of this, he said, "even relatively small price increases" will have disproportionate impacts.

Evidence of that disparity will only mount for big-ticket items. Dipanjan Chatterjee, vice president and principal analyst at Forrester, points to now-imposed auto tariffs, explaining that projected price hikes of thousands of dollars for a new imported car will be easier for those with larger salaries to absorb.

"That tax is more severe for people who earn less money," said Chatterjee. "So it's a regressive tax."

What about jobs?

Beyond more immediate price pressures, experts also warn that tariffs could contribute to unemploy-

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ment or lower incomes down the road. Trump has argued that tariffs will bring manufacturing back to the U.S., but if businesses take profit hits or change their supply sources, there could be layoffs worldwide.

"It's not just the price aspect and purchasing power decreasing," said Flores-Macías. "As tariffs start to work their way through the economy low-income families' jobs often will be the first to go. And those sectors of the population are most vulnerable."

Economist Susan Helper, former senior adviser for industrial strategy at the White House Office of Management and Budget, said that there are some cases where tariffs could raise wages, but this doesn't look likely to be one of them.

"There isn't enough certainty for businesses to invest and create new and better jobs," she said. "It takes a few years at minimum to profit off a new facility or factory, and I don't think people have the confidence that the tariffs will be stable enough that they will have a return on that investment."

Which consumer goods will be affected?

The tariffs announced by Trump Wednesday, on top of other levies that are already in effect, tax imports from nearly all of America's trading partners. And U.S. shoppers currently rely on a lot of goods made abroad.

Fruits and vegetables, your next phone purchase, a pharmacy order, new clothes, or a trip to a mechanic who uses auto parts made outside of the U.S. could all be impacted.

The timing of when prices will go up comes down to inventory, Stillwagon said. Much of that will also depend on how businesses prepare and respond to the new levies. While companies may have stocked up on goods in anticipation of these tariffs, he expects some stores to see more immediate price increases.

Prices on perishable groceries will likely increase first, because supermarket inventories need to be replenished more frequently. But a range of other items — like electronics, household appliances, clothing and footwear — could also be affected in the coming weeks and months.

"Annual losses for households at the bottom of the income distribution are estimated to be \$980 under the April 2 policy alone," according to John Breyault, vice president of public policy, telecom and fraud at the National Consumers League, who cited an analysis from the Budget Lab at Yale. He said that tariffs will disproportionately affect clothing and textiles, with apparel prices predicted to rise 17%.

Consumers are also likely to feel the pinch of tariffs in home buying, Breyault said. The new taxes on building materials are estimated to increase the average costs of a new home by \$9,200, according to an analysis by the National Association of Home Builders.

Rerouting supply chains to reemphasize domestic production is also very complex — and could take years. Stillwagon said there are some products, like bananas and coffee, that the U.S. simply can't substitute to the same scale of production other countries provide. And even for goods that can be made in the U.S., there will still likely be inflation.

"A real worry here is that this won't just be a one-time price jump," he said.

For products like coffee, Helper predicts people will likely absorb costs, while changing their shopping choices when it comes to other products.

"I guess you could switch to Coca-Cola if all you want is the caffeine," she said, lightly. "It will probably be good for California wines."

Can I do anything to prepare?

Stocking up on what you know you need is a start — but with limits.

"If there are things that you're buying on a consistent basis — week to week, month to month — I think it's not a bad idea to try to stock up in advance," Stillwagon said. But it's important to avoid panic buying like that seen at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, he and others added. That could cause shortages to emerge sooner and prices to go up faster.

You also don't want to buy a bunch of items that will eventually go to waste.

"If you do plan stock up on consumables, make sure you have a plan on how to store them properly so you don't end up having to throw out that 20-pound bag of shrimp, for example, in a few weeks," said Breyault.

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It may also be time to look for substitutes. From electronics to clothing, Flores-Macías says that there could be more affordable secondhand or refurbished options to turn to. And Chatterjee noted consumers may want to start comparing prices of name-brands versus “private,” or generic, labels in major retailers. Others may turn to at-home solutions, he said, such as growing their own vegetables.

Overall, experts say you’ll need to evaluate your budget and consumption habits for the road ahead.

“This is not a hurricane that’s going to be around for seven days and everything goes back to normal afterward. And you stock up on toilet paper (temporarily),” said Chatterjee. “For all you know, this thing could be around until a different administration comes in and changes trade policy.”

Is there anything to watch out for in the coming months?

Consumers should be on the lookout for even greater use of so-called “shrinkflation” on the grocery aisle, according to Breyault. Shrinkflation is a tactic consumer goods manufacturers use to hide cost increases by changing the design of packaging.

“Consumers can prepare for the inflation that the tariffs are likely to exacerbate by getting into the habit of checking the unit price of items on the grocery shelf,” said Breyault. “While not all states require it, where it is required, consumers can more easily compare the per unit price of one item — cereal, for example — to another item.”

As stock market continues plummeting over tariffs, Trump spends the day at his golf course

By FATIMA HUSSEIN, CHRIS MEGERIAN and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Two days after sending the economy reeling by announcing widespread tariffs, President Donald Trump insisted his trade policies will never change as he remained ensconced in a bubble of wealth and power in Florida.

He woke up on Friday morning at Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Palm Beach, and headed to his nearby golf course a few miles away after writing on social media that “THIS IS A GREAT TIME TO GET RICH.”

Several supporters stood on the sidewalk as Trump, wearing his signature red “Make America Great Again” hat and white polo shirt, glided down a street lined with palm trees. They waved to him and he waved back, part of a ritual that plays out every weekend that he’s in town.

The Republican president was not expected to appear publicly, although he’s scheduled to attend a candlelit dinner for MAGA Inc., an allied political organization, on Friday evening. He spent Thursday in Miami at a different one of his golf courses, where he attended a Saudi-funded tournament. He landed in Marine One and was picked up in a golf cart driven by his son Eric.

Trump has often proved impervious to the kind of scandals or gaffes that would damage another politician, but his decision to spend the weekend at his gilded properties could test Americans’ patience at a time when their retirement savings are evaporating along with the stock market. The tariffs are expected to increase prices by thousands of dollars per year and slow economic growth, and there are fears about a potential recession.

Democrats called out Trump for being in a “billionaire bubble,” as Sen. Chuck Schumer put it, while millions watched their investments sink.

“While the American people are trying to put food on the table, I see that Donald Trump’s out there playing golf,” said Sen. Ben Ray Lujan, a Democrat from New Mexico. “The president should be listening to people across the country. Maybe he should go into a grocery store, do some walking, talking to folks.”

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said Friday that the tariffs were “significantly larger than expected” and are “highly likely” to cause more inflation — at least in the short term but possibly in the long term as well.

However, Trump has described his policies as a painful yet necessary step to encourage companies to relocate their operations to the United States. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent told Tucker Carlson in an interview released Friday that “I think we have to try this, and I have a high confidence ratio it’s going

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to work.”

The president spent Friday morning defending himself on Truth Social, his social media platform, and vowing to stay the course.

“TO THE MANY INVESTORS COMING INTO THE UNITED STATES AND INVESTING MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF MONEY, MY POLICIES WILL NEVER CHANGE,” he wrote.

Although experts have harshly criticized the tariffs, he’s found some support on TikTok. He shared a video that said “Trump is crashing the stock market” and “he’s doing it on purpose” as part of a “secret game he’s playing, and it could make you rich.”

The video featured a supposed quote from legendary investor Warren Buffett praising Trump, but Buffett’s company issued a statement saying it was fabricated. The video also said that Trump’s goal is to push the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates, something that the president explicitly called for later in the morning.

“This would be a PERFECT time” for Powell to cut interest rates, he wrote. “CUT INTEREST RATES, JEROME, AND STOP PLAYING POLITICS!”

With foreign leaders scrambling in response to Trump’s announcement this week, the president lashed out and looked to cut deals.

He said he spoke with Vietnamese leader To Lam and claimed Vietnam wants to eliminate its tariffs on U.S. goods if it can make a deal with the U.S.

He also criticized China for announcing its own tariffs on U.S. imports.

“CHINA PLAYED IT WRONG, THEY PANICKED - THE ONE THING THEY CANNOT AFFORD TO DO!” he wrote.

Republicans suggested that Trump’s policies would be the start of a parley with foreign countries.

“The president is a dealmaker if nothing else, and he’s going to continue to deal country by country with each of them,” said Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming. He added that Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had told Senate Republicans this week that the tariffs would be a “high level mark with the ultimate goal of getting them reduced” unless other countries retaliate.

Meanwhile, Trump also celebrated a new report showing the U.S. added 228,000 jobs in March, beating expectations. Although the numbers were a snapshot of the economy before the tariff announcement, Trump claimed vindication, saying they already show his moves are working.

“HANG TOUGH,” he wrote. “WE CAN’T LOSE!!!”

Duke freshman star Cooper Flagg named the AP men’s college basketball player of the year

By AARON BEARD AP Basketball Writer

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Cooper Flagg and his Duke teammates were days away from clinching a spot in the Final Four, and the Blue Devils’ freshman star was planning ahead.

It wasn’t about anything on the court, though. It was to be ready the next time teammates Khaman Maluach and Patrick Ngongba broke out water guns at the cold tubs.

“I’m definitely ordering one as well,” Flagg said with a grin, a nod to the fact that he’s still “just being a kid.”

Maybe so, but the the 18-year-old’s game has been far more advanced than his age from the opening tip of his college debut. Scoring. Rebounding. Setting up teammates as a playmaker, then aiding them as a defender. He did it all amid high expectations as the potential No. 1 overall NBA draft prospect, the driving force with a relentless competitive edge and mature focus for a team now two wins from a national championship.

It is why Flagg was named The Associated Press men’s college basketball national player of the year on Friday, becoming only the fourth freshman to win the award in its 64-year history.

The 6-foot-9, 205-pound forward from Newport, Maine, won a two-man race with Auburn star Johni

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Broome. Both players were unanimous first-team AP All-Americans with teams at the Final Four, and they were the only two to receive player-of-the-year votes — though Flagg earned 41 of 61 votes from AP Top 25 voters.

Flagg joins Duke's Zion Williamson (2019), Kentucky's Anthony Davis (2012) and Texas star Kevin Durant (2007) as freshman winners. Each went either No. 1 or No. 2 overall in the NBA draft a few months later. Flagg is the eighth Duke player to win the award, most of any program.

Roughly 15 family members and friends came to San Antonio to be there for Flagg's news conference for the awards. The Duke team and staff joined as well, with coach Jon Scheyer watching with a big smile and teammates offering their own fist-pumping cheers from a back row of chairs.

"He plays so hard, he's competitive, a great teammate," Scheyer said after the Blue Devils' home finale, "and obviously his ability is special."

'High standard, high expectations'

Flagg was just 17 when he arrived at Duke after reclassifying to graduate early from high school. Yet he has exceeded all hype as the nation's top-ranked recruit, with Flagg leading Duke in scoring (18.9 points per game), rebounding (7.5), assists (4.2) and steals (1.4) while ranking second in blocks (1.3) entering Saturday's national semifinal against Houston.

"I hold myself to a high standard, high expectations," Flagg told the AP. "Just because I know how much work I've put in and how many hours I've spent grinding and putting that work in. ... It's those expectations of just trusting what you do and just doing it to the highest level."

And he repeatedly did that.

He scored an Atlantic Coast Conference freshman-record 42 points against Notre Dame. There was his highlight-reel transition dunk against Pittsburgh. The big game to help the Blue Devils beat Broome's Tigers, along with going for 30 points in an NCAA Sweet 16 win against Arizona that Scheyer called "one of the best tournament performances I've ever coached or been a part of."

Cohesive play is the hallmark of this Blue Devils team, the only one ranked in KenPom's top five for both adjusted offensive and defensive efficiency.

It has offered ways for Flagg to improve in his first and possibly lone college season as he learned "the level of the details" required to thrive. It was ensuring he got in for pre-practice recovery sessions. Or listening when graduate transfer Mason Gillis and junior Tyrese Proctor pushed the importance of sleep, prompting Flagg to nix a high-school habit of late-night phone scrolling.

"As far as outside expectations, I couldn't really care less," Flagg said. "For me, it's more about following the expectations of my teammates, my coaches, my family. Everybody's human so I'm going to make mistakes. I'm not going to be at my best all the time."

"But that's what having great teammates and great coaches does for you. They just always have my back and are always there for me."

Support within reach

His mother, Kelly, almost envies how her son handles that.

"I think he sees it but he really doesn't let it bother him," she told the AP. "And I wish I was more like that. He's so comfortable with who he is, and he's always been that way. That's why he doesn't get rattled easily, because he believes in himself and it doesn't really matter to him what other people think."

"That's a special ability to be able to drown out the noise when the noise can be overwhelming at times for somebody like him. I'm really proud of him for being able to do that."

She and husband Ralph have kept a close eye on how he's been doing after moving to North Carolina for this year while Ace, Cooper's twin brother, completes his final season of high school basketball in Greensboro, an hour away. Flagg said it helped to have family close, including when he visited for a few days around Christmas and got multiple days in the gym with his father and brothers.

"When you are able to step back and just take a break, it can be really good to just get your mind clear and kind of refocus," he said.

It showed up on the court, notably as he elevated his scoring (20.1 points, up from 16.9), assists (4.5,

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up from 3.7), shooting percentage (51%, up from 43.8%) and 3-point percentage (.434, up from 27.1) after Jan. 1.

Indeed, Flagg seems wired for big moments when the stakes rise, something his mother has seen going back to his childhood. There was his hatred of losing from early on, such as demanding to keep playing after losing in a driveway game of H-O-R-S-E with Kelly — who played in college at Maine — or a board game like Trouble.

He always wanted to be first to do anything even when it seemed a bit much, such as the family working with eldest brother Hunter to ride a bike without training wheels — only to have the then-3 Cooper announce “I can do it, Momma” and back it up.

When it came to basketball, he tested his parents’ nerves by constantly dribbling on the hardwood floors at home. But success came quickly, too, with whispers soon spreading around Maine about the prodigy playing up several grade levels.

“When he was younger, if somebody stole the ball from him or he turned it over or got fouled or did something (wrong), we would say it was a 50/50 shot whether he was going to pick up a crazy foul or he was going to do something spectacular,” Kelly said. “And as he’s gotten older, it was more the chances of something really good was about to happen.”

Savoring this moment

Flagg noted multiple times how much he has enjoyed Duke. He has talked about making connections and fitting in with other students he called “elite in their own respects.”

That’s offered a respite from the spotlight, even as he’s featured in ads and commercials as a leading-man star for college basketball with players permitted to profit from their athletic fame. He is now used to requests for autographs and selfies, shrugging that “there could be worse problems to have.”

Flagg has avoided saying he is making the expected jump to the NBA after the season. For now, there are more pressing things to deal with, from the Final Four to ordering that water gun.

“I have to,” Flagg insisted. “What am I going to do? I’m going to be unarmed?”

Officials say a Russian strike in central Ukraine kills 14 people, including six children

By HANNA ARHIROVA and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian ballistic missile strike Friday on a central Ukrainian city killed at least 14 people, including six children, Ukrainian officials said, as U.S. and European leaders pressed Russia to accept a ceasefire in the conflict.

At least 50 people were wounded in the strike on Kryvyi Rih — the hometown of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — in what the region’s leader Serhii Lysak described as an “assault against civilians.”

“The missile struck an area right next to residential buildings — hitting a playground and ordinary streets,” Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram.

Local authorities said the strike damaged about 20 apartment buildings, more than 30 vehicles, an educational building and a restaurant. They said emergency responders were at the scene and psychologists were helping survivors.

Zelenskyy blamed the daily strikes on Russia’s unwillingness to end the war: “Every missile, every drone strike proves Russia wants only war.” He urged Ukraine’s allies to increase pressure on Moscow and bolster Ukraine’s air defenses.

“The United States, Europe, and the rest of the world have enough power to make Russia abandon terror and war,” he said.

Russia resists calls for an immediate ceasefire

Russia has effectively rejected a U.S. proposal for a full and immediate 30-day halt in the fighting, and the U.K. and French foreign ministers on Friday accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of dragging his feet in ceasefire talks to halt Russia’s all-out invasion of Ukraine.

“Our judgment is that Putin continues to obfuscate, continues to drag his feet,” U.K. Foreign Secretary

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David Lammy told reporters at NATO headquarters, standing alongside French counterpart Jean-Noël Barrot in a symbolic show of unity.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said that Russia's real intentions in the negotiations will become clear within weeks.

"We will know from their answers very soon whether they are serious about proceeding with real peace or whether it's a delay tactic," Rubio told reporters. "Now we've reached the stage where we need to make progress."

A Kremlin envoy who visited Washington this week for talks with Trump administration officials said Friday that further meetings would be needed to resolve outstanding issues.

Kirill Dmitriev told Russian reporters that "the dialogue will take some time, but it's proceeding positively and constructively."

He criticized what he called a "well-coordinated media campaign and attempts by various politicians to spoil Russia-U.S. relations, distort what Russia says, and cast Russia and its leaders in a negative way."

Dmitriev, the head of Russia's sovereign wealth fund, was sanctioned by the Biden administration after Moscow launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. The U.S. had to temporarily lift the restrictions to allow him to travel to Washington this week.

Kharkiv is struck by drones

The missile strike on Kryvyi Rih followed a drone attack late Thursday on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, that killed five civilians. Emergency crews carried black body bags from a burning apartment building as onlookers wept and hugged in the dark.

Some of the 32 wounded, bloodied and in shock, limped out into the street or were carried on stretchers as flames shot from the windows of their homes.

Civilian areas in three other Ukrainian regions were also hit in Russian attacks overnight, officials said. The Ukrainian air force said that Russia fired 78 strike and decoy drones.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that its air defenses destroyed 107 Ukrainian drones.

'Russia has been flip-flopping'

Barrot said that Ukraine had accepted ceasefire terms three weeks ago, and that Russia now "owes an answer to the United States."

U.S. President Donald Trump has expressed frustration with Putin and Zelenskyy, after he promised last year to bring the war to a swift conclusion.

"Russia has been flip-flopping, continuing its strikes on energy infrastructure, continuing its war crimes," Barrot said. "It has to be a quick answer."

He said that Russia shows no intention of halting its military campaign, noting that Putin on Monday ordered a call-up intended to draft 160,000 conscripts for a one-year tour of compulsory military service.

The two foreign ministers pledged to continue helping to build up Ukraine's armed forces — the country's best security guarantee since the U.S. took any prospect of NATO membership off the table.

Moscow's measured approach to the ceasefire negotiations hasn't surprised Western observers, because its army has momentum on the battlefield.

That momentum allows Russia "some strategic patience," according to U.S. intelligence community annual threat assessment, published last month. It said Russia had seized the "upper hand," giving it "greater leverage" in negotiations to end the war.

'Coalition of the willing' needs more time

Zelenskyy said Friday that Ukraine and its allies need "one more month — no more" to complete the infrastructure needed for a so-called "coalition of the willing," a multinational force that could secure a truce against further Russian aggression.

The U.K. and France have been leading efforts to build the coalition over the past two months. A senior Ukrainian official said earlier this week that between 10 and 12 countries have said they are ready to join.

"We are discussing a presence on land, in the air, and at sea," Zelenskyy said at a news conference in Kyiv on Friday following an organizational meeting for the coalition. Defense ministers from the group will meet at NATO headquarters next Thursday.

Russia rebuilds its military

Gen. Christopher Cavoli, the top U.S. general in Europe, said at a hearing before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington on Thursday that Russia is rebuilding its military strength.

Russian forces on the front line in Ukraine now number more than 600,000 troops, he said. That is the highest number in the war and almost double the size of the initial invasion force, he said, and Russia is on track to replace all the tanks, armored vehicles, artillery and air defense systems it has lost so far.

In addition, Cavoli said, Russia is set to produce 250,000 artillery shells a month, allowing it to build a stockpile three times bigger than those of the U.S. and Europe combined.

Four space tourists return to Earth after a private flight over the poles

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Four space tourists who orbited the north and south poles returned to Earth on Friday, splashing down in the Pacific to end their privately funded polar tour.

Bitcoin investor Chun Wang chartered a SpaceX flight for himself and three others in a Dragon capsule that was outfitted with a domed window that provided 360-degree views of the polar caps and everything in between. Wang declined to say how much he paid for the 3 1/2-day trip.

The quartet, who rocketed from NASA's Kennedy Space Center on Monday night, returned off the Southern California coast. It was the first human spaceflight to circle the globe above the poles and the first Pacific splashdown for a space crew in 50 years.

The Chinese-born Wang, now a citizen of Malta, invited Norwegian filmmaker Jannicke Mikkelsen, German robotics researcher Rabea Rogge and Australian polar guide Eric Philips, all of whom shared stunning vistas during their voyage.

"It is so epic because it is another kind of desert, so it just goes on and on and on all the way," Rogge said in a video posted by Wang on X while gazing down from orbit.

Mikkelsen packed the capsule with camera equipment and spent much of her time behind the lens.

All four suffered from space motion sickness after reaching orbit, according to Wang. But by the time they woke up on day two, they felt fine and cranked open the window cover right above the South Pole, he said via X.

Besides documenting the poles from 270 miles (430 kilometers) up, Wang and his crew took the first medical X-rays in space as part of a test and conducted two dozen other science experiments. They named their trip Fram2 after the Norwegian sailing ship that carried explorers to the poles more than a century ago. A bit of the original ship's wooden deck accompanied the crew to space.

Their medical tests continued at splashdown. All four got out of the capsule on their own, heaving bags of equipment so researchers could see how steady returning space crews are on their feet. They pumped their fists in jubilation.

SpaceX said its decision to switch splashdown sites from Florida beginning with this flight was based on safety. The company said Pacific splashdowns will ensure that any surviving pieces of the trunk — jet-tisoned near flight's end — falls into the ocean.

The last people to return from space to the Pacific were the three NASA astronauts assigned to the 1975 Apollo-Soyuz mission.

US has twice as many measles cases so far this year than in all of 2024

By DEVI SHASTRI AP Health Writer

The U.S. now has more than double the number of measles cases it saw in all of 2024, with Texas reporting another large jump in cases and hospitalizations on Friday.

Other states with active outbreaks — defined as three or more cases — include New Mexico, Kansas,

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Ohio and Oklahoma. The virus has been spreading in undervaccinated communities, and since February, two unvaccinated people have died from measles-related causes.

The multi-state outbreak confirms health experts' fears that the virus will take hold in other U.S. communities with low vaccination rates and that the spread could stretch on for a year. The World Health Organization said last week that cases in Mexico are linked to the Texas outbreak.

Measles is caused by a highly contagious virus that's airborne and spreads easily when an infected person breathes, sneezes or coughs. It is preventable through vaccines, and has been considered eliminated from the U.S. since 2000.

Here's what else you need to know about measles in the U.S.

How many measles cases are there in Texas and New Mexico?

Texas' outbreak began more than two months ago. State health officials said Friday there were 59 new cases of measles since Tuesday, bringing the total to 481 across 19 counties — most of them in West Texas. The state also logged 14 new hospitalizations, for a total of 56 throughout the outbreak.

More than 65% of Texas' cases are in Gaines County, population 22,892, where the virus spread in a close-knit, undervaccinated Mennonite community. The county now has logged 315 cases since late January — just over 1% of the county's residents.

New Mexico announced six new cases Friday, bringing the state's total to 54. New Mexico health officials say the cases are linked to Texas' outbreak based on genetic testing. Most are in Lea County, where two people have been hospitalized, and two are in Eddy County.

A school-age child died of measles in Texas in late February, and New Mexico reported its first measles-related death in an adult on March 6.

How many cases are there in Kansas?

Kansas has 24 cases in six counties in the southwest part of the state as of Wednesday. Kiowa and Stevens counties have six cases each, while Grant, Morton, Haskell and Gray counties have five or fewer.

The state's first reported case, identified in Stevens County on March 13, is linked to the Texas and New Mexico outbreaks based on genetic testing, a state health department spokesperson said. But health officials have not determined how the person was exposed.

How many cases are there in Oklahoma?

Cases in Oklahoma remained steady Friday: eight confirmed and two probable cases. The first two probable cases were "associated" with the West Texas and New Mexico outbreaks, the state health department said.

A state health department spokesperson said measles exposures were confirmed in Tulsa and Rogers counties, but wouldn't say which counties had cases.

How many cases are there in Ohio?

Ohio reported one new measles case Thursday in west-central Allen County. Last week, there were 10 in Ashtabula County in the northeast corner of the state. The first case was in an unvaccinated adult who had interacted with someone who had traveled internationally.

In central Ohio, Knox County officials reported two new measles cases in international visitors, for three cases in international visitors total. Those cases are not included in the state's official count because they are not in Ohio residents. A measles outbreak in central Ohio sickened 85 in 2022.

Where else is measles showing up in the U.S.?

Measles cases also have been reported in Alaska, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, and Washington.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention defines an outbreak as three or more related cases. The agency counted six clusters that qualified as outbreaks in 2025 as of Friday.

In the U.S., cases and outbreaks are generally traced to someone who caught the disease abroad. It can then spread, especially in communities with low vaccination rates. In 2019, the U.S. saw 1,274 cases and almost lost its status of having eliminated measles. So far in 2025, the CDC's count is 607.

Do you need an MMR booster?

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The best way to avoid measles is to get the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine. The first shot is recommended for children between 12 and 15 months old and the second between 4 and 6 years old.

People at high risk for infection who got the shots many years ago may want to consider getting a booster if they live in an area with an outbreak, said Scott Weaver with the Global Virus Network, an international coalition. Those may include family members living with someone who has measles or those especially vulnerable to respiratory diseases because of underlying medical conditions.

Adults with "presumptive evidence of immunity" generally don't need measles shots now, the CDC said. Criteria include written documentation of adequate vaccination earlier in life, lab confirmation of past infection or being born before 1957, when most people were likely to be infected naturally.

A doctor can order a lab test called an MMR titer to check your levels of measles antibodies, but health experts don't always recommend this route and insurance coverage can vary.

Getting another MMR shot is harmless if there are concerns about waning immunity, the CDC says.

People who have documentation of receiving a live measles vaccine in the 1960s don't need to be re-vaccinated, but people who were immunized before 1968 with an ineffective measles vaccine made from "killed" virus should be revaccinated with at least one dose, the agency said. That also includes people who don't know which type they got.

What are the symptoms of measles?

Measles first infects the respiratory tract, then spreads throughout the body, causing a high fever, runny nose, cough, red, watery eyes and a rash.

The rash generally appears three to five days after the first symptoms, beginning as flat red spots on the face and then spreading downward to the neck, trunk, arms, legs and feet. When the rash appears, the fever may spike over 104 degrees Fahrenheit, according to the CDC.

Most kids will recover from measles, but infection can lead to dangerous complications such as pneumonia, blindness, brain swelling and death.

How can you treat measles?

There's no specific treatment for measles, so doctors generally try to alleviate symptoms, prevent complications and keep patients comfortable.

Why do vaccination rates matter?

In communities with high vaccination rates — above 95% — diseases like measles have a harder time spreading through communities. This is called "herd immunity."

But childhood vaccination rates have declined nationwide since the pandemic and more parents are claiming religious or personal conscience waivers to exempt their kids from required shots.

The U.S. saw a rise in measles cases in 2024, including an outbreak in Chicago that sickened more than 60.

Think twice before bailing out of the stock market, financial advisers say

By STAN CHOE and CORA LEWIS AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) —

The huge swings rocking Wall Street and the global economy may feel far from normal. But, for investing at least, drops of this size have happened throughout history.

Stomaching them is the price investors have had to pay in order to get the bigger returns that stocks can offer over other investments in the long term. Here's a glimpse at what's behind the market's wild moves and what experts advise investors young and old to consider:

HOW BAD IS THE MARKET?

Wall Street's main benchmark, the S&P 500, has lost more than 16% since setting an all-time high on Feb. 19, mostly because of worries about President Donald Trump's tariffs.

Any kind of uncertainty around the economy will give Wall Street pause, but the trade war is making it more difficult for companies, households and others to feel confident enough to invest, spend and make

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long-term plans.

The tariffs announced on "Liberation Day" sent stocks reeling to their worst day since the COVID crash of 2020 because they were much harsher than investors had been expecting. They also raised the fear that Trump may push through with them to win long-term gains, such as more manufacturing jobs in the United States.

The hope among investors had been that Trump was using tariffs merely as a bargaining chip to win concessions from other countries. Some big names on Wall Street still think that's the case, and a moderation of tariffs would help stocks recover, but it's less of a certainty now.

STOCKS DO THIS OFTEN?

Regularly enough. The S&P 500 has seen declines of at least 10% every year or so. Often, experts view them as a culling of optimism that can otherwise run overboard, driving stock prices too high.

Before this recent downswing, many critics were saying the U.S. stock market was too expensive after prices rose faster than corporate profits. They also pointed to how only a handful of companies drove so much of the market's returns. A group of just seven Big Tech companies accounted for more than half of the S&P 500's total return last year, according to S&P Dow Jones Indices.

SHOULD I SELL AND GET OUT?

Anytime an investor sees they're losing money, it feels bad. This recent run feels particularly unnerving because of how incredibly calm the market had previously been. The S&P 500 is coming off a second straight year where it shot up by more than 20%, the first time that's happened since baggy pants were last in style before the millennium.

Selling may offer some feeling of relief. But it also locks in losses and prevents the chance of making the money back over time. Historically, the S&P 500 has come back from every one of its downturns to eventually make investors whole again. That includes after the Great Depression, the dot-com bust and the 2020 COVID crash.

Some recoveries take longer than others, but experts often recommend not putting money into stocks that you can't afford to lose for several years, up to 10. Emergency funds, for things like home repairs or medical bills, should not be invested in stocks.

"Data has shown, historically, that no one can time the market," said Odysseas Papadimitriou, CEO of WalletHub. "No one can consistently figure out the best time to buy and sell."

SHOULD I CHANGE ANYTHING WITH MY INVESTMENTS?

For years, the U.S. stock market was the best by far to invest in worldwide. Now, more investors are questioning wither U.S. exceptionalism is dead.

But it could all be a reminder that investors often do best when they have a mixed set of investments rather than going all-in on just a few. And investors may no longer be as diversified as they thought after years of sheer dominance by the Magnificent Seven over the U.S. stock market and by Wall Street over global markets.

"It is hard to roll with the punches when some days you feel like your portfolio is being pummeled," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management. "But those moments should pass. A diversified strategy that is thoughtfully adapting to changing circumstances can't prevent the punches, but it can help soften the blows."

Phil Battin, CEO of Ambassador Wealth Management, advises investors to make sure they diversify their investments across regions and sectors to reduce risk. He says to lean towards "resilient sectors such as consumer staples, utilities and health care, which are less reliant on international trade."

I JUST STARTED INVESTING IN STOCKS. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

The proliferation of online trading platforms and the ease of smartphones has helped create a new generation of investors who may not be used to such volatility.

But the good news is younger investors often have the gift of time. With decades to go until retirement, they can afford to ride the waves and let their stock portfolios hopefully recover before compounding and eventually growing even bigger.

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Stephen Kates, financial analyst at Bankrate, says "now is not the time to make emotional decisions." Young investors should "re-anchor to your (long-term) goals," and consider using a financial advisor to help navigate uncertain times. "Investors with ample time to stay invested should remember how lucrative patience has been over the last 15 years," Kates said.

WHAT IF I'M NEAR RETIREMENT?

Older investors have less time than younger ones to allow their investments to bounce back. But even in retirement, some people will need their investments to last 30 years or more, said Niladri "Neel" Mukherjee, chief investment officer of TIAA Wealth Management.

People who have already retired may want to cut back on spending and withdrawals after sharp market downturns, because bigger withdrawals will remove more potential compounding ability in the future. But even retirees, at least in the early part of retirement, should still be invested in stocks to prepare for the possibility of decades of spending ahead.

"You may want to slow that down and pick that back up once the market recovers," Mukherjee said, "but it all comes down to having that conversation with your adviser and your portfolio manager."

HOW LONG WILL THIS LAST?

No one knows, and don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

British police charge comedian Russell Brand with rape and sexual assault

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British police on Friday charged Russell Brand with rape and sexual assault following an 18-month investigation sparked when four women alleged they had been assaulted by the controversial comedian.

London's Metropolitan Police force said Brand, 50, faces one count of rape, one of indecent assault, one of oral rape and two of sexual assault.

Brand denied engaging in "non-consensual" sexual activity.

The alleged offenses involve four women and took place between 1999 and 2005 — one in the English seaside town of Bournemouth and the other three in the Westminster area of central London.

Police said the investigation remains open and urged anyone with relevant information to contact the force.

In September 2023, British media outlets Channel 4 and the Sunday Times published claims by four women of being sexually assaulted or raped by Brand. The accusers have not been identified.

The comedian, author and "Get Him To The Greek" actor has been interviewed by police about the allegations, which he denies.

In a video posted Friday on X, Brand said "I've never engaged in non-consensual activity. I pray that you can see that by looking in my eyes."

He added that "I am now going to have the opportunity to defend these charges in court and I'm incredibly grateful for that."

Known for his unbridled and risqué standup routines, Brand hosted shows on radio and television, wrote memoirs charting his battles with drugs and alcohol, appeared in several Hollywood movies and was briefly married to pop star Katy Perry between 2010 and 2012.

In recent years, Brand has largely disappeared from mainstream media but has built up a large following online with videos mixing wellness and conspiracy theories. He recently said he had moved to the United States.

Brand is due to appear in a London court on May 2.

Jaswant Narwal, of Britain's Crown Prosecution Service, said prosecutors "carefully reviewed the evidence after a police investigation into allegations made following the broadcast of a Channel 4 documentary in September 2023.

"We have concluded that Russell Brand should be charged with offences including rape, sexual assault

and indecent assault," Narwal said.

"The Crown Prosecution Service reminds everyone that criminal proceedings are active, and the defendant has the right to a fair trial."

In January the BBC apologized to staff members who felt unable to complain about Brand's conduct because of his celebrity status. Brand had two weekly radio shows on the BBC from 2006 to 2008 and worked periodically on a number of short-term projects.

The BBC acknowledged that it was "clear that presenters have been able to abuse their positions" in the past.

A week after catastrophic earthquake, focus turns to a growing humanitarian crisis in Myanmar

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Search teams in Myanmar recovered more bodies from the ruins of buildings on Friday, a week after a massive earthquake killed more than 3,300 people, as the focus turns toward the urgent humanitarian needs in a country already devastated by a continuing civil war.

United Nations humanitarian chief Tom Fletcher, who is also the emergency relief coordinator, arrived Friday in Myanmar in an effort to spur action following the March 28 quake.

Ahead of the visit, U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed to the international community to immediately step up funding for quake victims "to match the scale of this crisis," and he urged unimpeded access to reach those in need.

"The earthquake has supercharged the suffering with the monsoon season just around the corner," he said.

Myanmar's military and several key armed resistance groups have all declared ceasefires in the wake of the earthquake to facilitate the flow of humanitarian aid.

But the U.N.'s Human Rights Office on Friday accused the military of continuing attacks, claiming there were more than 60 attacks after the earthquake, including 16 since the military announced a temporary ceasefire on Wednesday.

"I urge a halt to all military operations, and for the focus to be on assisting those impacted by the quake, as well as ensuring unhindered access to humanitarian organizations that are ready to support," said U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk said. "I hope this terrible tragedy can be a turning point for the country towards an inclusive political solution."

Announcing its ceasefire, the military also said it would still take "necessary" measures against resistance groups, if they use the ceasefire to regroup, train or launch attacks, and the groups have said they reserved the right to defend themselves.

Myanmar's military seized power in 2021 from the democratically elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, sparking what has turned into a civil war.

The quake worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis, with more than 3 million people displaced from their homes and nearly 20 million in need even before it hit, according to the United Nations.

Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, head of the military government, said the quake's death toll has reached 3,301, with 4,792 injured and about 221 missing, according to a report on state television MRTV. He is in Bangkok attending a summit meeting of leaders from the Bay of Bengal region.

It is a rare visit for the general, who usually restricts his few foreign trips to allies Russia and China. He and his government are shunned and sanctioned by Western nations for usurping power and their alleged human rights violations in repressing opposition and carrying out a brutal war.

Britain, which had already given \$13 million to purchase emergency items like food, water and shelter, pledged an additional \$6.5 million in funds to match an appeal from Myanmar's Disasters Emergency Committee, according to the U.K. Embassy in Yangon.

The World Food Program said so far it has reached 24,000 survivors, but was scaling up its efforts to

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assist 850,000 with food and cash assistance for one month.

Many international search and rescue teams are now on the scene, and eight medical crews from China, Thailand, Japan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Philippines, Indonesia and Russia were operating in Naypyitaw, according to Myanmar's military-run government. Another five teams from India, Russia, Laos and Nepal and Singapore were helping in the Mandalay region, while teams from Russia, Malaysia and the ASEAN bloc of nations were assisting in the Sagaing region.

The Trump administration has pledged \$2 million in emergency aid and sent a three-person team to assess how best to respond given drastic cuts to U.S. foreign assistance.

On Friday, five bodies were recovered from the rubble in the capital Naypyitaw and the second-largest city of Mandalay, near the epicenter of the 7.7 magnitude earthquake March 28, authorities said. The last reported rescue came Wednesday, some 125 hours after the quake struck, when a man was saved from the wreckage of a hotel in Mandalay.

The quake also shook neighboring Thailand, bringing down a high-rise under construction in Bangkok, where recovery work continued Friday. Overall, 22 people have been found dead and 35 injured in Bangkok, primarily from the construction site.

Auburn's Pearl and St. John's' Pitino share AP coach of the year honors, 1st tie in history of award

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Sports Writer

Bruce Pearl has turned Auburn into a basketball school and may have his best team yet. Rick Pitino has done what he does best at St. John's, ushering in a quick turnaround.

Their successes this season led to the first tie in the 58-year history of The Associated Press men's college basketball coach of the year award.

Pearl and Pitino each received 20 votes in balloting released Friday from the national media panel that picks the AP Top 25 during the season. Louisville's Pat Kelsey received eight votes and Duke's Jon Scheyer got five. Dennis Gates (Missouri) and Tom Izzo (Michigan State) each received three and Drake's Ben McCollum and UC San Diego's Eric Olen each got one vote.

Pitino is the first St. John's coach to be named AP coach of the year and the sixth in Big East Conference history. Marquette's Shaka Smart won the award two years ago.

When Pitino was hired in 2023, the Red Storm had been mired in mediocrity. St. John's hadn't been to the NCAA Tournament since 2019 and the March Madness trips had been sporadic since the late 1990s.

Pitino led the Red Storm to 20 wins his first season and back into national prominence this year. St. John's won the Big East regular-season title by going 18-2 and took its first Big East Conference Tournament title since 2000.

The Red Storm matched a school record with 31 wins — marks set in the 1980s under Lou Carnesecca — and had their highest ranking in the AP Top 25 in 34 years by reaching No. 5 in the final regular-season poll. St. John's was a No. 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament and opened with a win over Omaha before losing to Arkansas in the second round.

Pitino's quick success follows a pattern he set in previous stops at Boston University, Providence, Kentucky, Louisville and Iona. He is the first coach to lead six different programs to the NCAA Tournament.

"I have been blessed for a long period of time — fifty-plus years of coaching," Pitino said. "It's going to stop, so why not have a blast? Why not get the most out of it? Laugh, have fun, get great experiences."

Pearl has certainly been doing that since taking over at Auburn in 2015.

The Tigers had not been to the NCAA Tournament since 2003 and Pearl got them back into the bracket by his fourth season. Auburn took a huge leap the following year, earning the program's first trip to the Final Four in 2019.

The Tigers have been close to unstoppable this season.

Led by All-American Johni Broome, Auburn spent eight straight weeks at No. 1 this season, earned the

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SEC regular-season title and has won a school-record 32 games. The Tigers were the No. 1 overall seed in the NCAA Tournament and bulldozed their way through the bracket, beating Michigan State 70-64 to reach the Final Four for the second time.

Pearl joins Cliff Ellis in 1999 as the only Auburn coaches to win AP coach of the year honors. He is first SEC coach to win the award since Kentucky's John Calipari 10 years ago.

"You want to be on a great team, you've got to make sacrifices," Pearl said. "You've got to share and you've got to hold each other accountable. I think that's a big part of what this locker room is all about. This is a team of faith."

With a national coach of the year — just like St. John's.

China punches back as world weighs how to deal with higher US tariffs

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — China hit back with a stiff import tax on U.S. goods as countries and industries around the world weighed their responses to President Donald Trump's latest tariff hikes that are roiling global trade and world markets.

China on Friday took the retaliation route by imposing a 34% tariff beginning April 10 on the imports of all U.S. products, matching the added 34% imposed on Wednesday by Trump on Chinese imports along with increased tariffs on other countries and major trading partners.

Trump was swift to criticize Beijing's move. "China played it wrong, they panicked -- the one things they cannot afford to do," he wrote in a social media post, adding: "My policies will never change. This is a great time to get rich."

Countries were taking different approaches as they sought a way to deal with the potential disruption to trade and supply chains. Taiwan's president promised to provide support to industries most vulnerable to the 32% tariffs Trump ordered in his "Liberation Day" reciprocal tariffs announcement.

Vietnam, where the US is a major trade partner, said its deputy prime minister would visit the U.S. for talks on trade.

Some, like the head of the EU's European Commission, have vowed to fight back while promising to improve the rules book for free trade. Others like Britain said they were hoping to negotiate with the Trump administration for relief.

Fighting back

As with earlier countermoves to U.S. trade penalties, Beijing hit back with targeted action, as well as its universal 34% tariff on all products from the U.S.

The Commerce Ministry in Beijing said it will impose more export controls on rare earths, which are materials used in high-tech products such as computer chips and electric vehicle batteries. Included in the list was samarium and its compounds, which are used in aerospace manufacturing and the defense sector. Another element called gadolinium is used in MRI scans.

China's customs administration said it had suspended imports of chicken from two U.S. suppliers, Mountaire Farms of Delaware and Coastal Processing. It said Chinese customs had repeatedly detected furazolidone, a drug banned in China, in shipments from those companies.

Additionally, the Chinese government said it has added 27 firms to lists of companies subject to trade sanctions or export controls.

For good measure, China also filed a lawsuit with the World Trade Organization, saying the U.S. tariffs were "a typical unilateral bullying practice that endangers the stability of the global economic and trade order."

Seize the day

India was hit by a 26% tariff rate, lower than the 34% for Chinese exports and 46% for Vietnam. Its Commerce Ministry said it was "studying the opportunities that may arise due to this new development in

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U.S. trade policy." It said talks were underway on a trade agreement, including "deepening supply chain integration."

The U.S. was New Delhi's biggest trading partner in 2024 with two-way trade estimated at \$129 billion, according to U.S. data. They have set an ambitious target of more than doubling their bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. Most pharmaceuticals and other medicines, important Indian exports to the U.S., are exempt from the reciprocal tariffs.

However, diamonds and other gems, another major export industry, are subject to the higher duties.

Business groups said they viewed the challenge as a chance to improve India's competitiveness. "At a time when global trade dynamics are shifting rapidly, Indian exporters must be equipped with the right policies, strategies, and support to compete effectively," S.C. Ralkan, head of the Federation of Indian Export Organizations, said in a statement.

We need to talk

Most U.S. trading partners have emphasized they hope negotiations can help resolve trade friction with Washington. Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said he was prepared to fly to Washington, in a last-ditch effort to forestall the 24% tariffs Trump ordered for exports from the biggest Asian U.S. ally.

"The global trading system has serious deficiencies," the president of the EU's European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said Thursday while on a visit to Uzbekistan. But she chided Trump, saying that "reaching for tariffs as your first and last tool will not fix it. This is why from the onset we have always been ready to negotiate with the United States."

In Italy, Premier Giorgia Meloni told state TV she believes the 20% U.S. tariffs on exports from Europe were wrong, but "it is not the catastrophe that some are making it out to be." Her government planned to meet next week with representatives of affected sectors to formulate plans. "We need to open an honest discussion on the matter with the Americans, with the goal, at least from my point of view, of removing tariffs, not multiplying them," Meloni said.

Vietnam's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Pham Thu Hang, said Hanoi would keep talking with the U.S. to "find practical solutions" as 46% U.S. tariffs threatened to decimate exports of footwear, electronics, textiles and seafood.

"If enforced, would negatively impact bilateral economic and trade relations as well as the interests of businesses and people in both countries," Hang said in comments cited by state-run media, which reported that the deputy prime minister and former finance minister Ho Duc Phoc was scheduled to visit the U.S. for trade talks next week.

A helping hand

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said he will offer the "greatest support" to industries most impacted by the new tariffs. Taiwan's trade surplus with the U.S. is relatively high partly because the island is a major source of computer chips and other advanced technology. Lai said in a statement on his Facebook page that "We feel that this is unreasonable and are also worried about the subsequent impact these measures may have on the global economy."

Lai said he instructed Premier Cho Jung-tai to work closely with industries that are impacted and to communicate with the public about their plans to stabilize the economy.

Japan's leader Ishiba and other governments also said they were preparing countermeasures to help industries cope.

Likewise, von der Leyen said the EU was consulting with steel and auto makers, pharmaceutical companies and other industries about how to give them more "breathing space."

Looking elsewhere

Trump's decision to sharply raise tariffs on countries spanning the globe is "self-defeating," Wang Huiyao, president of the Chinese think tank Center for China and Globalization, said in an interview.

The latest tariffs impose heavy burdens on some countries in Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

It's a trade war with the world, Wang said, while China's strategy is to trade more with Southeast Asia

and Latin America, with Europe, the Middle East and other developing nations.

"The likely outcome is that China will become the largest trading nation and its economy will be trading more with other nations and the U.S. may ... become more isolated," Wang said.

Europe will work to build more bridges and as a regional economic bloc of 450 million people, larger than the United States, it also has its own huge market, said von der Leyen, the EC president.

The EU is its own "safe harbor in tumultuous times," she said.

Israeli strikes kill at least 17 in Gaza as ground troops enter Palestinian territory's north

By WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL BALAH, Gaza (AP) — Israeli strikes killed more than a dozen people in the Gaza Strip early Friday, as Israel sent more ground troops into the Palestinian territory to ramp up its offensive against Hamas.

At least 17 people, some from the same family, were killed after an airstrike hit the southern city of Khan Younis, according to hospital staff. Hours later, people were still searching through the rubble, looking for survivors.

The attack came a day after Israeli strikes killed at least 100 Palestinians. Hundreds more have died in the past two weeks, as Israel has intensified operations, intended to pressure Hamas to release remaining hostages it took during its attack on Israel in October 2023. On Friday, Israel said it had begun ground activity in northern Gaza, in order to expand its security zone.

Israel's military had issued sweeping evacuation orders for parts of northern Gaza before expected ground operations. The U.N. humanitarian office said around 280,000 Palestinians have been displaced since Israel ended the ceasefire with Hamas last month.

In recent days, Israel has vowed to seize large parts of the Palestinian territory and establish a new security corridor across it.

To pressure Hamas, Israel has imposed a monthlong blockade on food, fuel and humanitarian aid that has left civilians facing acute shortages as supplies dwindle — a tactic that rights groups say is a war crime. Israel said earlier this week that enough food had entered Gaza during a six-week truce to sustain the territory's roughly 2 million Palestinians for a long time.

Hamas says it will only release the remaining 59 hostages — 24 of whom are believed to be alive — in exchange for the release of more Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli pullout from Gaza. The group has rejected demands that it lay down its arms or leave the territory.

The predawn strike on Friday hit a three-story building. In addition to the dead, the attack wounded at least 16 people from the same family. Associated Press reporters saw bodies being carried out in blankets, while others searched for people trapped under the rubble and collected charred remains.

"We don't know how to collect them and how to bury them. We don't know whose remains these are. They were burned and dismembered," said Ismail Al-Aqqad, whose brother died in the strike, as well as his brother's family.

On Thursday, more than 30 bodies, including women and children, were taken to hospitals in and around Khan Younis, according to hospital staff.

Israel said Friday that it had killed a top Hamas commander in a strike in Lebanon's coastal city of Sidon. Israel said that Hassan Farhat was a commander of Hamas' western area in Lebanon and that he was responsible for numerous attacks against Israel, including one in February 2024, which killed an Israeli soldier and injured others.

In Israel's renewed offensive, troops have expanded the buffer zone, retaking the eastern section of the Netzarim corridor and partially disconnecting northern and southern Gaza.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, known as ACLED, reported there were over 300 airstrike events during 10 days at the end of March — nearly 10 times the number in February.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200

people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 hostages, most of whom have since been released in ceasefire agreements and other deals. Israel rescued eight living hostages and has recovered dozens of bodies.

More than 50,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza as part of Israel's offensive, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't say whether those killed are civilians or combatants. The ministry says more than half of those killed were women and children. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has left most of Gaza in ruins, and at its height displaced around 90% of the population.

Sri Lanka's target to be free of land mines by 2028 is under threat as US reviews aid

By ERANGA JAYAWARDENA and KRISHAN FRANCIS Associated Press

MANKULAM, Sri Lanka (AP) — Thavarathnam Pushparani fought on the front lines for the now-defeated Tamil Tiger rebels against the Sri Lankan forces in its decadeslong separatist war and later took to clearing the land mines on the same battle lines.

But the Trump administration's suspension of aid threatens Sri Lanka's demining operations, pushing the livelihoods of thousands like Pushparani into uncertainty.

What is more uncertain for Sri Lanka now is its obligation to rid the island nation of mines by 2028 under the Ottawa Treaty, which it ratified in 2017.

Pushparani has experienced the civil war in its full fury. In her family, her husband, father and two brothers died fighting for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, as the rebel group was formally known. Two other siblings are missing.

She was born in eastern Sri Lanka and while still in school, her family had to move to the northern parts of the nation after a countrywide ethnic pogrom against minority Tamils by majority Sinhala mobs in 1983.

The incident stirred up emotions among many Tamil youth who joined militant organizations to fight for an independent state for the Tamils. Pushparani too joined the Tamil Tigers while still a teenager in school.

"Because the whole of my family was with the organization they arranged my marriage. My eldest daughter was born in 1990 and the younger one was born in 1992. My husband died in battle in 1996 and my children were raised in the "Sencholai" home, run by the organization," said Pushparani.

She was reunited with her children when the fighting ended in 2009 and started working with demining groups for a living.

Funds pending review

Demining operations in Sri Lanka started in 2002 during a ceasefire period and the U.S. has been the major donor among 11 countries supporting the effort, contributing about 34% of the \$250 million grants received for the projects so far.

The U.S. contribution was 45% of the grants received last year, according to M.M Nayeemudeen, director of the state-run National Mine Action Center.

Thanks to the international generosity, the demining operations continue to date despite being interrupted for a few years because of the break down of the ceasefire. They have so far managed to clear more than 2.5 million anti-personnel, anti-tank, small arms ammunition and unexploded ordnance.

Out of 254 square kilometers of land that originally needed to be cleared, only about 23 square kilometers are left to deal with. Whether that can be achieved by the 2028 deadline will depend on continued funding.

Nayeemudeen said once the aid suspension was announced, Sri Lanka's foreign ministry appealed and the U.S. allowed the usage of its allocated funds pending a review, a decision on which is expected on May 1.

"We hope that on completion of the 90-day review period that commenced from Jan. 24, 2025, the U.S. government funding assistance will continue," said Ananda Chandrasiri head of Delvon Assistance for Social Harmony, one of the four demining groups operating in the country.

"Otherwise it will create a grave problem for Sri Lanka to achieve mine-free status by the end of 2027 as targeted ... A huge reduction of staffing levels of the four operators would be inevitable."

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'It looked like perfumed powder'

There are around 3,000 workers, most of them recruited from among the civil war-affected communities. With the uncertainty, some groups have already started terminating their staff, Nayeemudeen said.

Sri Lanka's civil war ended in 2009 when government troops crushed the Tamil Tiger rebels, ending their quarter-century separatist campaign. According to conservative U.N. estimates, about 100,000 people were killed in the conflict.

Civilian properties were demined, but large areas were still contaminated when hundreds of thousands of civilians who were displaced by the conflict came back to resettle. Mine awareness campaigns were held, but there were many accidents.

Kumarakulasingham Dinojan has lost his left hand below his wrist and has damaged fingers in his right hand from a mine blast. As a 9-year-old boy, he tried to open a metal container that he found in the woods. His brother, who was playing with him, also suffered wounds.

"My grandmother went into the woods to get firewood and we also followed her. We did not know that she had reached home through another way. We found a container which looked like a perfumed powder, and when we tried to open it, it exploded," said Dinojan.

There were people who were injured or killed trying to open mines and use the explosives for fishing.

Vidya Abhayagunawardena, coordinator of the Sri Lanka Campaign to Ban Land Mines, said it's critical for Sri Lanka to ratify Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War. He also called for the enactment of domestic legislation to enforce the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2016, to bolster the legal rights of the country's disabled population.

Dinojan's older brother, Vilvaraj Vinothan, said his brothers becoming land mine victims made him take action and become involved in mine clearance. He has worked with the Mine Advisory Group for six years.

"Only when the land was being cleared that I understood how we should deal with the mines," he said. "That's when I decided to help, knowing it would benefit the entire community."

Pushparani is grateful that her demining income has allowed her to fulfill her family's needs. She financed one daughter's university education and her marriage. However, she also cares for a daughter injured in crossfire and an elderly mother.

"The reason for my choosing demining for livelihood is not only because of poverty. I also have a desire to see this land to be free of mines," she said.

"I don't want to see our future generations being injured or affected by war. I can say that I am carrying the burden of both my family and of the country on my shoulders."

US electric vehicle industry is collateral damage in Trump's escalating trade war

By ALEXA ST. JOHN Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — President Donald Trump's tariff blitz has sent shock waves throughout every aspect of the global economy, including the auto sector, where multi-billion-dollar plans to electrify in the United States are especially at risk.

Here's what consumers should know about the impact of tariffs on electric vehicles.

Where does EV adoption stand in the U.S.?

EVs accounted for about 8% of new car sales in the U.S. in 2024, according to Motorintelligence.com.

Some of those sales can be attributed to expanded tax credits for EV purchases, a Biden-era policy that spurred car buyer interest.

Tesla held a majority of U.S. EV market share in 2024, at 48%. But that share has declined in recent years, as brands including Ford (7.5%), Chevrolet (5.2%) and Hyundai (4.7%) began to offer a wider variety of electric models at better price points, according to Kelley Blue Book.

Electric vehicles remain more expensive than their gasoline-powered equivalents. New gas vehicles sold for \$48,039 on average last month, Kelly Blue Book data says, while EVs sold for \$55,273 on average.

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Tariffs add on to the costs of an EV transition that was already volatile and uncertain, said Vanessa Miller, a litigation partner focused on automotive manufacturing at law firm Foley & Lardner.

What makes U.S. EV manufacturing so challenging?

Biden's tax credits essentially required automakers to get more and more of their EV content from the U.S. or trade allies over the coming years in order for their vehicles to qualify. Automakers have worked to build an EV supply chain across the country and significant investment has gone toward these efforts.

EVs assembled here include Tesla models, the Ford F-150 Lightning and more. Tesla actually might be least vulnerable given how much of its vehicles come from the U.S.

Though the industry is growing, tariffs mean costs for automakers and their buyers will stay high and might go higher, as well as hike up the prices of the many parts of EVs still coming from China and elsewhere. From the critical minerals used in battery production to the vehicles themselves, China laps the U.S. industry.

Automakers were already pulling back on ambitious electrification plans amid shrinking federal support and are strapped for cash on what is the less lucrative side of their businesses.

What do the tariffs mean for EV pricing and inventory?

Higher prices might push car buyers to the used car market, but they aren't likely to find much respite there.

If consumers don't buy as many vehicles, automakers will have to prioritize their investments and manufacturing. That means the cars that buyers want and that are most profitable. Automakers still lose thousands of dollars on each EV they make and sell, but they make money from big, popular gas-guzzling pickup trucks and SUVs.

These manufacturers "have put a certain amount of investment into EVs, and it would probably be even more wasteful to completely walk away from them than it is to find the new level at which it makes sense to maintain production of them," said Karl Brauer, executive analyst at auto research site iSeeCars.com. That level "will assuredly be lower than what it was," he added.

Making fewer EVs won't help bring their cost down further anytime soon.

Albert Gore, executive director of the Zero Emission Transportation Association, said in a statement the EV and battery sector is working to ensure that the American auto industry grows and that his group will work with the administration on productive trade policy.

"Tariffs on our longstanding trade partners, many of whom have committed billions in direct investment into U.S. factories, introduces uncertainty and risk into an industry that is creating jobs and bringing new economic opportunities to communities across the country," Gore said.

How else have Trump's policies stifled U.S. EV growth?

Trump has already taken a hatchet to federal EV policy. He campaigned on a vow to end what he called former President Joe Biden's "EV mandate."

Biden's EV policies did not require automakers to sell EVs or consumers to buy them, but they did incentivize manufacturers to increase their electric offerings in the coming years. Trump put an end to Biden's target for 50% of all new vehicles sold in the U.S. to be electric by 2035 in his first days in office.

Also under Biden, Environmental Protection Agency and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration rules on vehicle greenhouse gas emissions and fuel economy were to get increasingly tougher, but could be met by automakers selling a growing number of EVs alongside more fuel-efficient gasoline-powered vehicles. Trump's administrators are already reevaluating emissions standards.

He's also likely to seek to repeal the tax credits.

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Today in History: April 5

FDR establishes Civilian Conservation Corps

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, April 5, the 95th day of 2025. There are 270 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 5, 1933, as part of his New Deal programs, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an executive order establishing the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a Depression-era work relief program for single men aged 18-25; the program employed more than 2.5 million men for federal conservation and safety projects over its nine-year history.

Also on this date:

In 1614, Pocahontas, the daughter of Tsenacommacah chief Powhatan, married Englishman John Rolfe, a widower, in the Virginia Colony.

In 1764, the British Parliament passed the American Revenue Act of 1764, also known as the Sugar Act.

In 1887, in Tuscumbia, Alabama, teacher Anne Sullivan achieved a breakthrough as her 6-year-old deaf-blind pupil, Helen Keller, learned the meaning of the word "water" as spelled out in the Manual Alphabet.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death following their conviction in New York on charges of conspiring to commit espionage for the Soviet Union. (They were executed in June 1953.)

In 1986, two American servicemen and a Turkish woman were killed in the bombing of a West Berlin discotheque, an incident that prompted a U.S. air raid on Libya nine days later.

In 1991, former Sen. John Tower, R-Texas, his daughter Marian and 21 other people were killed in a commuter plane crash near Brunswick, Georgia.

In 1994, Nirvana lead singer Kurt Cobain died by suicide in his Seattle, Washington home at age 27.

In 2010, a coal dust explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine near Charleston, West Virginia, killed 29 workers.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Michael Moriarty is 84. Actor Max Gail is 82. Singer Agnetha Fältskog (ABBA) is 75. Rapper-actor Christopher "Kid" Reid (Kid 'n Play) is 60. Rock musician Mike McCready (Pearl Jam) is 59. Country musician Pat Green is 53. Musician-producer Pharrell Williams is 52. Rapper-producer Juicy J is 50. Actor Sterling K. Brown is 49. Actor Hayley Atwell is 43. Actor Lily James is 36.