

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 1 of 69

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Tina's Baskets](#)
- [7- 2025 Groton Area POPS Concert](#)
- [12- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [13- Calvary's Love Story Ad](#)
- [14- PrairieDoc: "My Journey to Becoming a Hospitalist"](#)
- [15- Groton Legion Grand Reopening ad](#)
- [16- SD SearchLight: South Dakota stands to lose its live-giving waters](#)
- [18- EarthTalk - Wild Animals](#)
- [19- Weather Pages](#)
- [24- Daily Devotional](#)
- [25- Subscription Form](#)
- [26- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [27- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [28- News from the Associated Press](#)

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.

Tuesday, April 8

Senior Menu: BBQ riblet on bun, mac n' cheese, winter blend, pears, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Scones.
School Lunch: Tacos
Smarter Balance Testing for Grades 6-8 and 11 (ELA and Math)
Track at Ipswich, 2 p.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent
PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Wednesday, April 9

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes with gravy, monterey blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Oatmeal.
School Lunch: Cheese nachos, salsa, refried beans.
Smarter Balance Testing for Grades 6-8 and 11 (ELA and Math)
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (Sunday School is host), worship, 7 p.m.
Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Supper, 6 p.m.; Lent, 7 p.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 2 of 69

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.

Second Measles Death Reported

A second child has died amid an ongoing measles outbreak in West Texas and the surrounding regions, officials confirmed over the weekend, with hospital reports suggesting the 8-year-old girl in Lubbock succumbed to measles-related pulmonary failure. The two victims—both reportedly unvaccinated and part of a local Mennonite community—are the first confirmed measles deaths in the US since 2015.

The contagious airborne disease causes rashes, fever, and respiratory issues, with young children and immunocompromised people at higher risk. The deployment of a vaccine in 1963 and subsequent public health campaigns led to the disease being declared eliminated—meaning no continuous, endemic transmission—in the US in 2000.

Of the 607 measles cases reported this year, almost 90% (535 cases) are linked to the outbreak straddling West Texas and eastern New Mexico. Roughly 97% are in unvaccinated patients or those whose vaccination status is unknown.

Huskies Back on Top

The No. 2 Connecticut Huskies claimed the women's college basketball national title last night, defeating the defending champion No. 1 South Carolina Gamecocks 82-59. It marks the first title for the Huskies since winning four in a row between 2013 and 2016, and their 12th overall—the most of any women's team in the sport.

The Huskies were led by star freshman Sarah Strong, who went for 24 points, 15 rebounds, five assists, and three blocks. Paige Bueckers—widely expected to be the top draft pick—added another 17 points in her final game. Hall of Fame coach Geno Auriemma is in his 40th season with the Huskies—a full 30% of those campaigns have ended with a title win.

On the men's side, No. 1 seeds Florida and Houston will square off in the title game tonight (8:50 pm ET, CBS). Florida advanced after beating No. 1 Auburn Saturday, 79-73, while Houston stunned No. 1 Duke with a six-point comeback in the final 35 seconds.

Flash Flooding

Flooding continued across the US Midwest and South over the weekend, in storms that have claimed at least 17 lives as of yesterday. Days of severe storms have caused rivers to swell rapidly, prompting the National Weather Service to issue flash flood emergencies from Texas to Ohio. At least 45 river locations in multiple states are expected to reach "major flood stage," causing widespread damage to infrastructure, homes, and roadways.

The storms followed a week of extreme weather that included deadly tornadoes and more than a foot of rain in some locations. While the regions are prone to severe weather, the duration and intensity of the rainfall have led to saturated soil and swollen rivers.

The storms shifted eastward into the Appalachians and Southeast Sunday. Meteorologists warn that river levels will continue to rise in many areas through early this week. However, a shift to drier conditions is expected by midweek for much of the region.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 3 of 69

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Washington Capitals star Alex Ovechkin scores his 895th goal, passing Wayne Gretzky to become the NHL's all-time leading goal scorer.

Carmelo Anthony and Sue Bird headline Basketball Hall of Fame's 2025 class.

"A Minecraft Movie" hauls in \$157M in its opening weekend, the top US domestic debut of 2025 and the biggest opening ever for a video game adaptation.

Ed Sheeran and Weezer join Green Day, Lady Gaga, Travis Scott, and Post Malone as headliners for the 2025 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival (April 11-13, 18-20)

Science & Technology

Meta releases Llama 4, the latest version of its flagship family of large language models.

Anthropic researchers suggest reasoning models—where chatbots explain how they arrived at an answer—cannot always be trusted.

Researchers who discovered and characterized GLP-1, the hormone behind new weight-loss drugs like Wegovy and Zepbound, lead winners of 2025 Breakthrough Prizes.

Scientists uncover new cellular mechanism that weakens bones as we age; cells that have stopped replicating release chemicals that make bone structures more brittle.

Business & Markets

US stock markets plunge Friday (S&P 500 -6.0%, Dow -5.5%, Nasdaq -5.8%) as countries respond to President Donald Trump's tariff plan.

Universal 10% tariff went into effect Saturday, additional tariffs that vary by country kick in Wednesday; see breakdown.

Trump adviser says multiple countries have signaled interest in beginning trade talks.

Payment processor Klarna and ticket platform StubHub delay initial public offerings amid economic uncertainty.

Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics manufacturer, reports highest first quarter revenue on record and 24% year-over-year growth; growth driven by demand for AI products.

Politics & World Affairs

"Hands off!" protests held in cities across the US Saturday; estimates say hundreds of thousands of demonstrators call for end to Trump administration efforts, from federal cuts to deportations.

Pope Francis makes surprise visit to crowds at the Vatican's St. Peter's Square; appearance comes two weeks after the 88-year-old pontiff was released from the hospital after a severe respiratory infection.

Death toll from Myanmar quake rises above 3,350 as storms continue to slow rescue efforts.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 4 of 69

Tina's Baskets - for Easter 605-397-7285

Cow basket - \$20



Includes - green drink cup, light up football, play dough, dinosaur bubble, bubbles, and 4 filled eggs

Teenager or adult Easter basket - \$25



Includes- cross word, sudoku book, word find, col-
or pencils, three color books, pack of pens, Rease's
pieces candy, solid chocolate bunny, neopolition
flavored Lindt candy, and Dunkin chocolate brownie
batter crème filled eggs

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 5 of 69

Rainbow basket - \$25



Includes- two color books 7 filled eggs, pink drink cup crayons, Reese's candy , egg chalk, playdough, bubbles fan bubbles and a rabbit bubble

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 6 of 69

Blue basket - \$20

Pink basket - \$20



Blue bunny includes bubble machine, bluey and his friend bingo, small Pail for the sand , bubbles, 6 filled eggs

Includes a pink bear with hugs in it , bubble machine, bubbles, side chalk bunny book, 6 eggs filled Reeses pieces candy

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 7 of 69



The pit crew was made up of Liam Johnson on the trap set, Desiree Yeigh on the piano and Aspen Beto on the bass keyboard. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The tech crew was made up of Kyleigh Kroll, Libby Cole and Jeslyn Kosel. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

2025 Groton Area POPS Concert



The seniors presented Desiree Yeigh a parting gift as this will be her last year at GHS after about 10 years of teaching music. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Landon Brown and Amy Warrington announced the winners of the silent auction items. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Carlee Johnson had a piano solo entitled, "Arabesque No. 1." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 8 of 69



The flex band, under the direction of Desiree Yeigh, performed "The Best of Smash Mouth," "Soul Bossa Nova," "and Born to be Wild." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Rebecca Poor sang, "Grow As We Go." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Teagan Hanten had a piano solo entitled, "Stay." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 9 of 69



The Prismatic Sensations performed, "Larger Than Life," "Sucker," "Breakaway," "Baby One More Time" and "I Want It that Way." (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 10 of 69



The Chamber Choir sang, "Times Area A Changin'." They are Natalia Warrington, Mya Feser, Addison Hoeft, Corbin Weismantel, Axel Warrington, Logan Clocksene, Kira Clocksene, Gentry Pigors, Ashlyn Feser and Rebecca Poor. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Abby Yeadon sang, "Rescue." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Natalia Warrington sang, "Never Enough." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 11 of 69



Mya Feser sang, "The Man Who Can't Be Moved." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Kayla Lehr had a piano solo entitled, "Chasing Cars." (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Addison Hoeft sang, "Forever and Ever Amen." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 12 of 69

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

As the Minnesota Vikings prepare for the 2025 season, one of the most intriguing position groups to monitor is the defensive secondary. After an offseason filled with roster turnover and strategic additions, the Vikings' back end looks noticeably different than it did a year ago. With key veterans moving on and a handful of fresh faces stepping in, Minnesota is betting on a revamped unit to help elevate Brian Flores' aggressive, high-pressure scheme.

Last season, the secondary played a critical role in Flores' defensive identity — blitz-heavy packages that required smart, disciplined play on the back end. That style won't change, but the personnel certainly has. With a few familiar names no longer in the mix, this year's group will lean on a combination of young ascending players, veteran leadership, and potential breakout candidates to hold down the fort. The Vikings aren't just hoping to replace production — they're hoping to evolve.

The Vikings' cornerback group has seen a fair amount of turnover heading into 2025, but the team made it clear they wanted to build around Byron Murphy Jr., re-signing the 27-year-old to a three-year, \$54 million deal this offseason. Murphy was the team's top corner in 2024, often drawing the toughest assignments while also contributing as a leader in the secondary. With a new contract in hand, Murphy is locked in as the CB1 moving forward. Also returning is Mekhi Blackmon, who was in line to potentially be a starter in 2024 before missing the entire season due to injury.

Among the new additions is Isaiah Rodgers, who brings elite speed and intriguing upside. Jeff Okudah, the former No. 3 overall pick, was also signed in free agency. He's had a rocky start to his NFL career due to injuries and inconsistency, but Minnesota is banking on a change of scenery — and Flores' coaching — to unlock his potential. Rounding out the additions is Tavierre Thomas, a scrappy slot corner with special teams value. Thomas gives the Vikings flexibility inside and provides experienced depth at a position where injuries tend to stack up quickly.

Veteran corners Shaquill Griffin and Stephon Gilmore, who both played rotational or starting roles last season, remain unsigned free agents. Their potential return hasn't been ruled out, but for now, the Vikings appear to be moving forward with a younger, faster group.

The Vikings' safety room enters 2025 anchored by two familiar names — one a franchise legend, the other a rising leader. Harrison Smith is back for what is likely his final NFL season, and while he's no longer the All-Pro force of his prime, his experience, leadership, and ability to play multiple roles within Brian Flores' aggressive scheme remain invaluable. The 35-year-old has already etched his name into Vikings history, and fans will no doubt savor every snap of what could be a farewell tour for the future Hall of Famer.

Lining up next to him will be Josh Metellus, whose versatility and football IQ have made him a mainstay in the starting lineup. After breaking out in 2023, Metellus has continued to earn the trust of the coaching staff as a do-it-all defender who can drop deep, play in the box, and cover tight ends. With Bynum gone, Metellus will now take on an even larger role — both on the field and as a vocal leader in the secondary.

Speaking of Camryn Bynum, his departure to the Colts leaves a noticeable void. A steady, reliable presence on the back end, Bynum rarely came off the field and was often the last line of defense. Just as memorable as his play, though, were his post-game celebrations — uniquely choreographed dances that brought life and personality to the Vikings' locker room. His absence will be felt in more ways than one.

To fill out the depth chart, Minnesota re-signed Theo Jackson, who provides special teams value and rotational depth. Jay Ward, a 2023 draft pick, remains a developmental piece the team hopes can take a step forward in year three. Rounding out the group is Bubba Bolden, a long, rangy safety added in free agency. Bolden is still a bit of an unknown, but he brings intriguing athleticism and could push for a roster spot with a strong camp.

With the secondary wrapped up, we've now covered every position group on the Vikings' roster heading into the 2025 season. Next up: the NFL Draft. Minnesota does not have many draft picks this year, and with needs still lingering at key spots, all eyes are on how Kwesi Adofo-Mensah will navigate one of the most pivotal drafts in recent team history. We'll break it all down next week. Skol!



CALVARY'S LOVE STORY

*Easter Cantata presented by
Aberdeen Alliance Church and
Groton C&MA Church*

**APRIL
13
2025**

**GROTON C&MA
CHURCH**

**6:30 PM
706 N MAIN ST.
GROTON, SD**

**APRIL
16
2025**

**ABERDEEN
ALLIANCE CHURCH**

**7:00 PM
1106 S. ROOSEVELT ST.
ABERDEEN, SD**

"My Journey to Becoming a Hospitalist"

When I first moved to Brookings, the primary care physicians took care of their own patients in the hospital. We would round on patients in the morning before clinic or try to sneak over during lunch or after clinic. While I loved taking care of patients in the hospital, it was hard to juggle the responsibilities of both giving my attention to the patients in the hospital while seeing people in the clinic. Any time the hospital nurse had a question; my clinic nurse would have to interrupt a clinic visit or wait for me to be between patients. This could lead to some less-than-ideal times where I was being pulled in multiple directions at once.

Then about six years ago, the Brookings Health System decided to start a new program where there would be Hospitalist hired. These would be doctors who would just take care of patients in the hospital. Primary Care Physicians in the clinic would follow up after the hospital stay and resume care. This had already been done for several years in Sioux Falls at the Sanford and Avera McKennan. Despite the fact that I was familiar with what a hospitalist was, it was still hard to give up caring for my patients when they were in the hospital. However, I learned to see these Hospitalists as valued colleagues who were giving my patients the time and attention that they deserved. They could give better care and more attention as hospital medicine continues to evolve and advance.

During COVID, I started taking extras shifts to help out in the hospital on weekends. This was a good way for me to keep up my skills for taking care of patients who were sicker than in the clinic. In the clinic, we mainly focus on taking care of minor illnesses and injuries as well as managing chronic medical conditions and health maintenance visits. I realized that I missed taking care of hospitalized patients and caring for people when they were at their sickest.

When one of the hospitalists left for a new job, I was asked if I wanted to take their place as a hospitalist. After careful consideration of all the pros and cons, I decided to answer the call to this new challenge of being a hospitalist. I am happy to see my former clinic patients, but now it is usually in the grocery store and at the post office. However, it is extra special when I can care for them when they are admitted to the hospital. I embrace this current chapter in my medical career and wonder how it will continue to evolve as medicine changes with time.

Jill Kruse, D.O. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices as a hospitalist in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org and on Facebook, Instagram, and Threads featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show, 2 podcasts, and a Radio program, providing health information based on science, built on trust, on SDPB and streaming live on Facebook most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central and wherever podcast can be found.



Jill Kruse, DO



**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
B&M Tunes**

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



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

South Dakota stands to lose its live-giving waters

New federal definition and ongoing litigation are dire threats to wetlands

by Brad Johnson

Hundreds of thousands of acres of wetlands in northeastern South Dakota are likely to lose federal protection under the Trump administration's proposed narrow interpretation of what water is important to preserve.

The proposed restrictive definition says a wetland deserves protection only if it has a continuous surface connection to a navigable stream or lake.

That leaves almost all of South Dakota's 1.7 million acres of wetlands, which are home to about half of all threatened and endangered species, at the mercy of land developers and agricultural interests.

A new report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) shows the catastrophic loss of federal protections for wetlands across the United States.

Using Geographic Information System (GIS) modeling, the model can zero in on specific counties. It shows that more than 70 million acres of wetlands — approximately 84% of the total area protected before the U.S. Supreme Court's 2023 Sackett v. EPA decision — are left without federal safeguards.

It also shows that nonperennial streams, which make up the vast majority of U.S. waterways and are essential for drinking water and flood mitigation, are also at risk. If only perennial streams remain protected, more than 8 million miles of U.S. streams could lose Clean Water Act protections.

Under the Trump administration's definition, about 460,000 individual wetlands covering about 743,000 acres in northeastern South Dakota's 10 most affected counties would be at risk.

The most impacted counties in order are Brown, Beadle, Hand, Spink, Faulk, Edmunds, Roberts, McPherson, Sanborn and Hyde.

An additional threat is emerging in a lawsuit in Iowa that seeks to overturn the federal Swampbuster and Sodbuster provisions that tie wetland preservation to farm safety-net programs. Arguments were



The sun sets on the LaCreek National Wildlife Refuge near Martin, South Dakota, in April 2021. (John Deuter/USDA NRCS South Dakota, public license)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 17 of 69

heard Monday in Cedar Rapids.

At the federal level, organizations and individuals will have opportunities this month to voice their support for wetlands. The EPA has offered a general 30-day public comment period and a series of listening sessions.

Schedules for states, tribes, industry and agricultural stakeholders and environmental and conservation stakeholders have been set from April 29 to May 1, but a listening session for the general public has not been announced.

The odds of convincing the Trump administration to broaden its protection appear daunting.

In the Sackett decision, the court ruled that wetlands are protected by the Clean Water Act only when they have a "continuous surface connection" to other covered waters. It also held that other waters, like streams, are only protected if they are "relatively permanent."

The Biden administration liberally interpreted what constituted a connection, but Trump's Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers are taking a strict approach, excluding most of what we think of as a wetland or marsh or protected streams.

"Our analysis confirms that the Supreme Court has gutted the Clean Water Act's ability to protect our wetlands, exposing communities to increased flooding, worsening water pollution, and threatening habitats that sustain wildlife and local economies," said Jon Devine, freshwater ecosystems director at NRDC.

In South Dakota, potentially "93 percent of wetland area and 99 percent of individual wetlands are predicted to lack protection," the NRDC analysis said.

The National Wildlife Federation, which is the nation's largest hunting and fishing conservation organization, is also voicing opposition.

"This will be the fourth rule attempting to define the Waters of the United States in a decade. We need to stop playing political ping pong with this vital issue," said Jim Murphy, the federation's director of legal advocacy. "With the likelihood of a skeletal workforce at EPA, this move will put even more pressure and expense on states and localities to ensure our water is safe."

For South Dakota, which does not have a state wetland program plan or a wetland monitoring plan, a resource so important to the state's \$1.4 billion annual fishing and hunting economy and quality of life appears as threatened as the species that depend on their life-giving waters.

Brad Johnson is a certified general real estate appraiser and longtime journalist. He is past president of South Dakota Lakes and Streams Association, president of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, a member of the National Wildlife Federation's board of directors, and served 16 years on the South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources. He lives in Rapid City and Watertown.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 18 of 69

EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Why do some wild animals live in cities more than in rural areas? – L.K. via email

When people think of wildlife, they often picture animals wandering in nature. However, in the past 15 years, scientists have found more animals moving into and thriving in cities—sometimes even more successfully than in their natural habitats.

Before learning about why animals are moving to cities, it's important to understand what urban and rural mean. Urban areas are densely populated regions dominated by human activity. Rural areas are sparsely populated with more natural ecosystems. Wildlife that successfully adapt to city life are often called urban wildlife. Unlike rural areas, where animals rely on seasonal food cycles, the urban environment provides them with more predictable food sources like waste bins, pet foods and restaurant waste, ensuring a steady food supply. Thus, animals endure harsher habits in rural areas, leading to greater migration into the city.

"Anecdotally, we see high densities of coyotes in nature preserves and urban parks," said Emily Zepeda, of the School of Environment and Natural Resources from Ohio State University. "Also, in low-income areas, coyotes are 1 1/2 times more likely to survive to age two than in high-income areas," due to the amount of human food waste. The presence of humans discourages natural predators, unlike rural areas where predation is a major threat to wildlife. Thus, animals prefer cities, as they can thrive with less competition. Moreover, urban settings provide animals with shelter, like parks and suburban green spaces. Also, warmer microclimates in cities make survival easier for animals that struggle in colder rural areas.

Urban wildlife is adapting to cities in many ways. Lauren Stanton, a PhD candidate at the University of Wyoming, says that raccoons in Toronto "are making rapid associations, and they can alter their behavior." To find more food sources, animals have learned to synchronize their behavior with human activity; for example, raccoons have learned to get inside rubbish bins with securely locked lids. And pigeons typically nest on cliffs, and a multi-story building is indeed a type of cliff, albeit manmade. Therefore, adapting to cities isn't hard for the pigeons due to preadaptation.

Living in cities as urban wildlife isn't easy. There is a risk of vehicle collisions, habitat fragmentation and human-wildlife conflict. Thousands of animals die each year on roads. Humans are also at risk. Animals cause serious road hazards. Bears break into homes and garages to search for food. Ultimately, humans need to balance urbanization with wildlife needs, like expanding natural habitats, thoughtful city planning and wildlife corridors to ensure a future where both species can live together safely and peacefully.

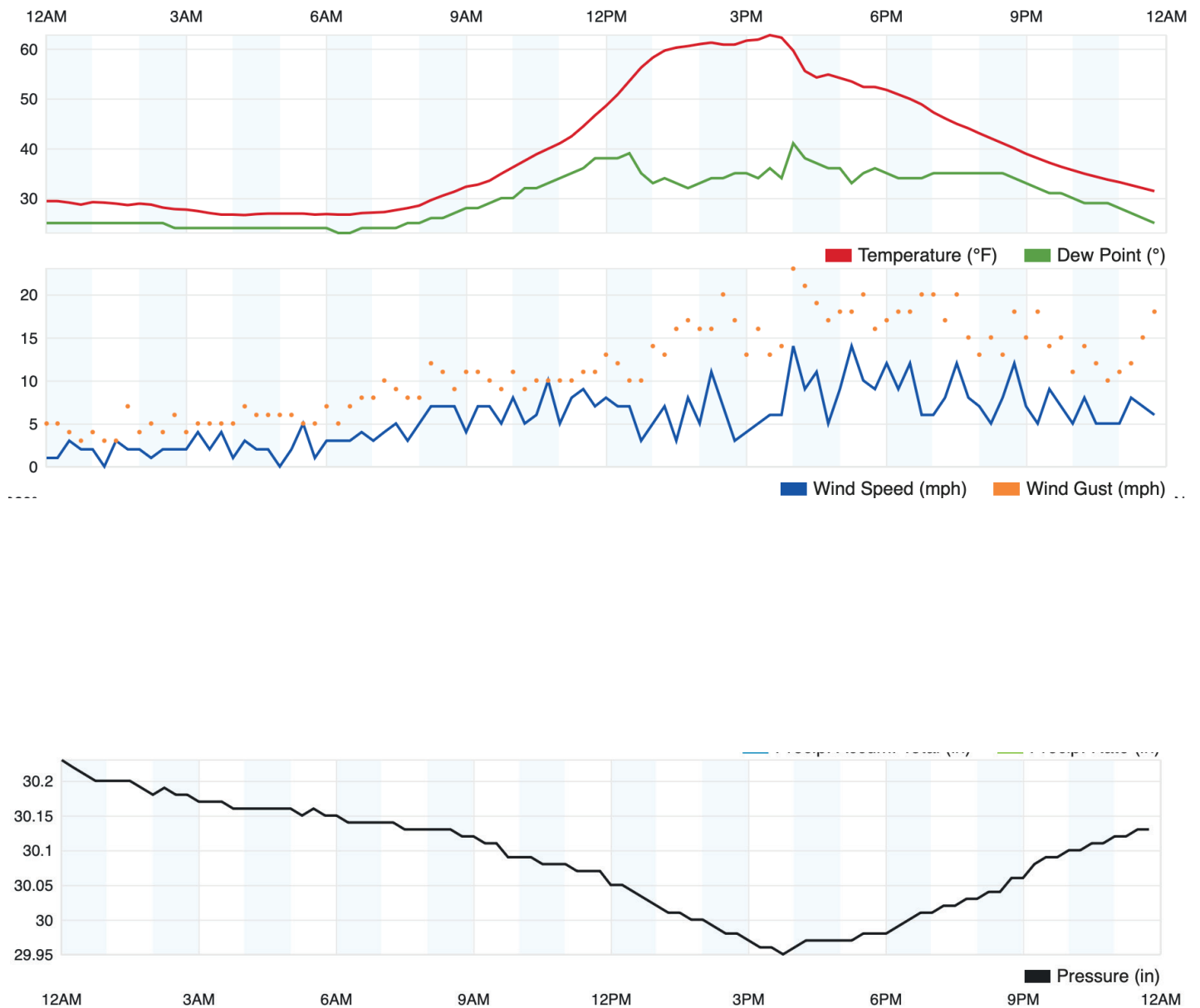


We are all used to seeing wild animals in the city nowadays across the United States. Credit: Pexels.com.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 19 of 69

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 20 of 69

Today



High: 39 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 22 °F

Mostly Clear

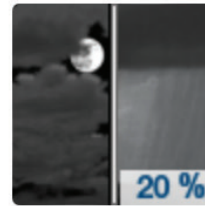
Tuesday



High: 54 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 30 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
Showers

Wednesday



High: 64 °F

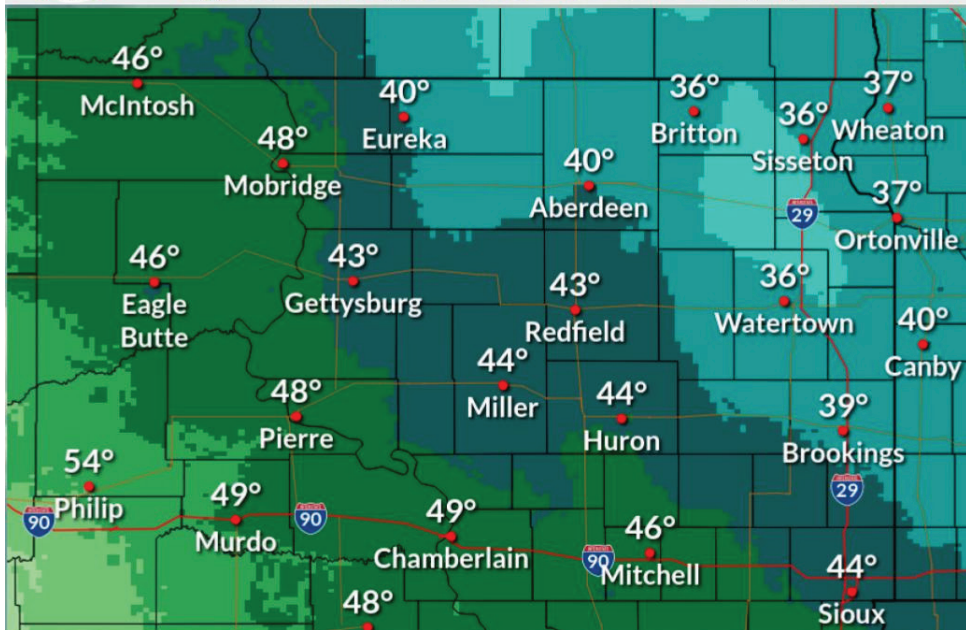
Partly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
Showers



Below Normal Temperatures Today

April 7, 2025
2:36 AM

Highs 5 to 20 degrees below normal for early April



Near-Normal Temperatures
(upper 40s - low 60s) Tuesday

Slow Steady Warm Up

Mild/Above Normal
Wednesday - Sunday

Dry Today and Tuesday

Light Showers Wednesday
& Thursday



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures will be some 5 to 20 degrees below normal for today, but a steady warmup is on the way with readings by next weekend some 10 to 20 degrees above normal. Precipitation chances for mid week are only about 20-30%, and most areas should expect a tenth of an inch or less.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 21 of 69

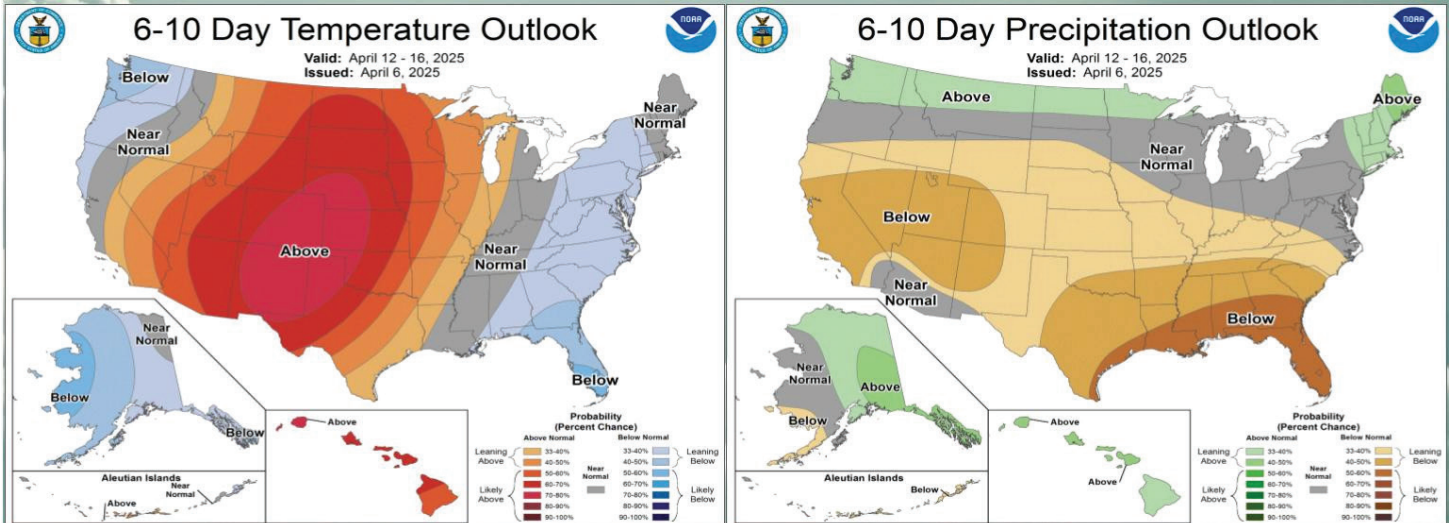


Look Ahead...

April 7, 2025

2:45 AM

Milder Temperatures Coming Late This Week/Weekend



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 22 of 69

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 63 °F at 3:30 PM

Low Temp: 26 °F at 4:01 AM

Wind: 27 mph at 3:48 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 13 hours, 11 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1895

Record Low: 2 in 2018

Average High: 54

Average Low: 28

Average Precip in April.: 0.31

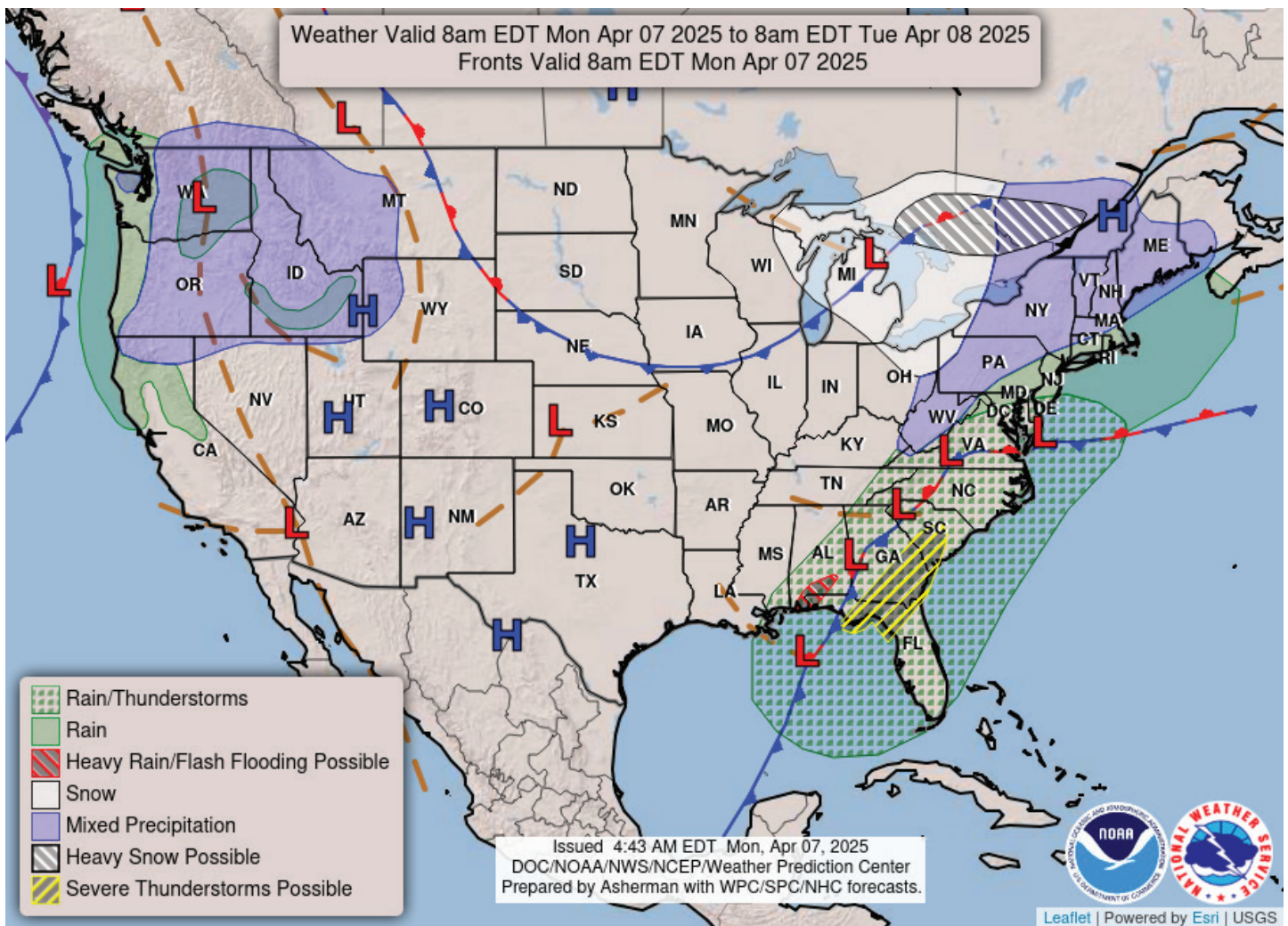
Precip to date in April.: 1.07

Average Precip to date: 2.37

Precip Year to Date: 1.70

Sunset Tonight: 8:09:58 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:56:56 am



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 23 of 69

Today in Weather History

April 7-8th, 2001: Ten inches to two feet of snow fell in central South Dakota in a five-day period, beginning April 8th. Many roads became impassable. Several businesses, government offices, and schools closed on the 11th. Twenty-four inches fell at Ree Heights and Gettysburg, 20.0 inches at Faulkton, 18.0 inches at Kennebec, 16.0 inches at Pierre, and 10.0 inches at Doland.

1857 - A late season freeze brought snow to every state in the Union. Even as far south as Houston TX the mercury plunged to 21 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1929 - Record heat prevailed across New England. Hartford CT reported an afternoon high of 90 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1935 - Amarillo, TX, reported dust obscuring visibility for twenty hours. Blowing dust was reported twenty-seven of thirty days in the month. On several days the visibility was reduced to near zero by the dust. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Severe thunderstorms spawned tornadoes which ripped through central Arkansas. The severe thunderstorms also produce high winds and baseball size hail. Five counties were declared disaster areas by President Carter. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - International Falls, MN, with record warm afternoon high of 71 degrees, was warmer than Miami FL, where the high was a record cool 66 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - High winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region gusted to 172 mph atop Grandfather Mountain NC. Twenty-nine cities in the southwest and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Yankton SD with a reading of 91 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-seven cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 92 degrees in Downtown San Francisco and 104 degrees at Phoenix AZ established records for April. Highs of 78 degrees at Ely NV and 93 degrees at San Jose CA equalled April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Low pressure brought strong winds to the Alaska peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. Winds gusted to 68 mph at Port Heiden two days in a row. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across central Alaska. Yakutat reported a record high of 54 degrees. Unseasonably cold weather prevailed over central sections of the Lower Forty-eight states. A dozen cities from Kansas to Indiana and Alabama reported record low temperatures for the date. Evansville IN equalled their record for April with a morning low of 23 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2010 - A temperature of 80 degrees is measured on Grandfather Mountain, NC, the warmest ever measured in April and three degrees short of the all-time record high for any month.



When Storms Come

How do you respond when facing challenges?

Matthew 14:22-33: Jesus Walks on the Water: ²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. ²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" ³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Storms are inevitable. In nature, powerful tempests leave a changed landscape behind them. Similarly, challenging circumstances can alter the topography of our life.

When difficulties arise, how do you respond? Do you say to the Lord, "I am doing what You asked, so why is this happening?" Such thinking assumes that being in the center of God's will exempts us from problems. In Matthew 14, we learn that Jesus instructed the disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the opposite shore. While they were obeying Him, high winds and waves developed. Storms can arise even when we are exactly where God wants us to be (John 16:33).

Another question we sometimes ask is, "Father, what have I done wrong?" God does use trials to correct us, but not all situations come from our mistakes. He may allow troubles to perfect us—that is, to mature us and grow us into Christ's likeness.

God uses different things to train and equip us, because He wants each of His children to become a strong, vital servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. Realize that nothing can happen to a believer unless God allows it. Instead of keeping our head bent low against the struggles of life, let's look up to the Lord and seek His purposes in our challenges.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 25 of 69

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White \$48.99/year
- ☐ Colored \$79.88/year
- ☐ Colored \$42.60/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- ☐ 1 Month \$15.98
- ☐ 3 Months..... \$26.63
- ☐ 6 Months..... \$31.95
- ☐ 9 Months..... \$42.60
- ☐ 12 Months..... \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 26 of 69



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: 1 Days 17 Hrs 12 Mins
51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.05.25

17 26 37 40 51 9

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$28,770,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 27 Mins 51
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.06.25

3 6 27 37 40 11

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 51
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.05.25

4 10 13 18 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$95,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 42
Mins 50 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.05.25

10 16 20 48 51 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 11 Mins 50
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 04.05.25

4 23 30 46 62 2

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$54,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 11 Mins 50
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 27 of 69

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

The Latest: Markets sink as Trump's tariffs roil global trading system

By The Associated Press undefined

Global markets plunged Monday following last week's two-day meltdown on Wall Street, and U.S. President Donald Trump said he won't back down on his sweeping new tariffs, which have roiled global trade. Countries are scrambling to figure out how to respond to the tariffs, with China and others retaliating quickly.

Trump's tariff blitz fulfilled a key campaign promise as he acted without Congress to redraw the rules of the international trading system. It was a move decades in the making for Trump, who has long denounced foreign trade deals as unfair to the U.S.

The higher rates are set to be collected beginning Wednesday, ushering in a new era of economic uncertainty with no clear end in sight.

Here's the latest:

German economy minister calls US tariffs 'nonsense'

Germany's economy minister says the premise of U.S. President Donald Trump's wide-ranging tariffs is "nonsense," and he is arguing that Europe is in a strong position.

Robert Habeck, who is also vice chancellor in Germany's outgoing government, said as he arrived at a meeting of European Union trade ministers in Luxembourg Monday that he and his colleagues must act "calmly, prudently but also clearly and with determination."

He said that means "being clear that we are in a strong position — America is in a position of weakness." He argued that "we don't have time pressure now," but the U.S. does.

Habeck said it's important for the EU to stick together, arguing that attempts by individual countries to win exemptions haven't worked in the past. He stressed the importance of trade agreements and contacts with other regions of the world, such as South America, Asia and the Pacific.

The German minister said of Trump's tariffs that "even the basis of the calculation is nonsense: The assumption that a trade budget surplus or deficit is a problem in itself is a wrong estimation."

Indonesia says it won't retaliate against Trump's tariffs

Indonesia says it won't retaliate against Trump's 32% tariff but will pursue diplomacy and negotiations to seek mutually beneficial solutions.

Indonesia, which had an \$18 billion trade surplus with the U.S. last year, will gather input from business leaders to create a strategy for addressing the tariffs and find ways to reduce the deficit, Coordinating Economic Affairs Minister Airlangga Hartarto said Monday.

"We will increase the volume of purchases so that the \$18 billion trade deficit can be reduced," Hartarto said.

China accuses US of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying

China on Monday accused the United States of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying with tariffs.

"Putting 'America First' over international rules is a typical act of unilateralism, protectionism and economic bullying," Foreign Affairs spokesperson Lin Jian told reporters.

Last week, Trump put an additional 34% tariff on Chinese goods, on top of two rounds of 10% tariffs already declared in February and March, which Trump said was due to Beijing's role in the fentanyl crisis. China and other governments retaliated quickly. China announced its own 34% tariff rate on U.S. goods.

Lin said the new tariffs harmed the stability of global production and supply chains and seriously impacted the world's economic recovery.

"Pressure and threats are not the way to deal with China. China will firmly safeguard its legitimate rights

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 29 of 69

and interests," Lin added.

European shares plunge in early trading

European shares dropped in early trading, with Germany's DAX falling 6.5% to 19,311.29. In Paris, the CAC 40 shed 5.7% to 6,861.27, while Britain's FTSE 100 lost 4.5% to 7,694.00.

South Korea's top trade negotiator will visit Washington

South Korea's top trade negotiator will visit Washington this week to express Seoul's concerns over the Trump administration's increased tariffs and discuss ways to mitigate their negative impact on South Korean businesses.

South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy said Monday that its minister of trade, Inkyo Cheong, plans to meet with various U.S. officials, including U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer.

The ministry says Cheong aims to gather detailed information on the Trump administration's trade policies and engage in discussions to reduce the 25% tariffs placed on South Korean products.

Chinese officials meet business representatives from Tesla and other US companies

Chinese government officials met business representatives from Tesla, GE Healthcare and other U.S. companies on Sunday. It called on them to issue "reasonable" statements and take "concrete actions" on addressing the issue of tariffs.

"The United States in recent days has used all sorts of excuses to announce indiscriminate tariffs on all trading partners, including China, severely harming the rules-based multilateral trade system," said Ling Ji, a vice minister of commerce, at the meeting with 20 U.S. companies.

"China's countermeasures are not only a way to protect the rights and interests of companies, including American ones, but are also to urge the U.S. to return to the right path of the multilateral trading system," Ling added.

Ling also promised that China would remain open to foreign investment, according to a readout of the meeting from the Ministry of Commerce.

Malaysia wants Southeast Asia to present a united response to tariffs

Malaysia's Trade Minister Zafrul Abdul Aziz said his country wants to forge a united response from Southeast Asia to the sweeping U.S. tariffs.

Malaysia, which is the chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations this year, will lead the regional bloc's special Economic Ministers' Meeting on April 10 in Kuala Lumpur to discuss the broader implication of the tariff measures on regional trade and investment, Zafrul told a news conference on Monday.

"We are looking at the investment flow, macroeconomic stability and ASEAN's coordinated response to this tariff issue," Zafrul said.

ASEAN leaders will also meet to discuss member states' strategies and to mitigate potential disruptions to regional supply chain networks.

Pakistan will send a government delegation to Washington

Pakistan plans to send a government delegation to Washington this month to discuss how to avoid the 29% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imports from Pakistan, officials said Monday.

The development came two days after Pakistan's prime minister asked its finance minister to send him recommendations for resolving the issue. The U.S. imports around \$5 billion worth of textiles and other products from Pakistan, which heavily relies on loans from the International Monetary Fund and others.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange fell rapidly on Monday. The exchange suspended trading for an hour after a 5% drop in its main KSE-30 index.

Mideast markets follow oil prices lower

Middle East stock markets tumbled as they struggled with the dual hit of the new U.S. tariffs and a sharp decline in oil prices, squeezing energy-producing nations that rely on those sales to power their economies and government spending.

Benchmark Brent crude is down by nearly 15% over the last five days of trading, with a barrel of oil costing just over \$63. That's down nearly 30% from a year ago, when a barrel cost over \$90.

That cost per barrel is far lower than the estimated break-even price for producers. That's coupled with the new tariffs, which saw the Gulf Cooperation Council states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 30 of 69

Arabia and the United Arab Emirates hit with 10% tariffs. Other Mideast nations face higher tariffs, like Iraq at 39% and Syria at 41%.

The Dubai Financial Market exchange fell 5% as it opened for the week. The Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange fell 4%.

Markets that opened Sunday saw losses as well. Saudi Arabia's Tadawul stock exchange fell over 6% in trading. The giant of the exchange, Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company Aramco, fell over 5% on its own, wiping away billions in market capitalization for the world's sixth-most-valuable company.

China projects confidence, saying 'the sky won't fall'

Beijing struck a note of confidence on Monday even as markets in Hong Kong and Shanghai tumbled.

"The sky won't fall. Faced with the indiscriminate punches of U.S. taxes, we know what we are doing and we have tools at our disposal," wrote The People's Daily, the Communist Party's official mouthpiece.

China announced a slew of countermeasures on Friday evening aimed at Trump's tariffs, including its own 34% tariffs on all goods from the U.S. set to go in effect on Wednesday.

Australian dollar drops to levels last seen early in pandemic

The Australian dollar fell below 60 U.S. cents on Monday for the first time since the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The drop reflected concerns over the Chinese economy and market expectations for four interest rate cuts in Australia this calendar year, Australian Treasurer Jim Chalmers said.

"What our modeling shows is that we expect there to be big hits to American growth and Chinese growth and a spike in American inflation as well," Chalmers said.

"We expect more manageable impacts on the Australian economy, but we still do expect Australian GDP to take a hit and we expect there to be an impact on prices here as well," he added.

The Trump administration assigned Australia the minimum baseline 10% tariff on imports in the United States. The U.S. has enjoyed a trade surplus with Australia for decades.

Indian stocks tumble as selling pressure intensifies

Indian stocks fell sharply on Monday, seeing their biggest single-day drop in percentage terms since March 2020 amid the pandemic.

The benchmark BSE Sensex and the Nifty 50 index both dropped about 5% after trading opened but then recovered slightly. Both were later trading down about 4%.

Trump says he's not backing down on tariffs, calls them 'medicine' as markets reel

President Donald Trump said Sunday that he won't back down on his sweeping tariffs on imports from most of the world unless countries even out their trade with the U.S., digging in on his plans to implement the taxes that have sent financial markets reeling, raised fears of a recession and upended the global trading system.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump said he didn't want global markets to fall, but also that he wasn't concerned about the massive sell-off either, adding, "sometimes you have to take medicine to fix something."

His comments came as global financial markets appeared on track to continue sharp declines once trading resumes Monday, and after Trump's aides sought to soothe market concerns by saying more than 50 nations had reached out about launching negotiations to lift the tariffs.

"I spoke to a lot of leaders, European, Asian, from all over the world," Trump said. "They're dying to make a deal. And I said, we're not going to have deficits with your country. We're not going to do that, because to me a deficit is a loss. We're going to have surpluses or at worst, going to be breaking even."

Asian markets plunge as tariff fallout intensifies

Asian markets plunged on Monday following last week's two-day meltdown on Wall Street, and U.S. President Donald Trump said he won't back down on his sweeping tariffs on imports from most of the world unless countries even out their trade with the U.S.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost nearly 8% shortly after the market opened on Monday. By midday, it was down 6%. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 9.4%, while the Shanghai Composite index was down 6.2%,

and South Korea's Kospi lost 4.1%.

U.S. futures also signaled further weakness.

Market observers expect investors will face more wild swings in the days and weeks to come, with a short-term resolution to the trade war appearing unlikely.

US blocks sea salt imports from South Korean salt farm over forced labor concerns

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL. South Korea (AP) — The United States has blocked imports of sea salt products from a major South Korean salt farm accused of using slave labor, becoming the first trade partner to take punitive action against a decadeslong problem on salt farms in remote islands off South Korea's southwest coast.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection issued a withhold release order against the Taepyeong salt farm, saying information "reasonably indicates" the use of forced labor at the company in the island county of Sinan, where most of South Korea's sea salt products are made.

Under the order issued last Wednesday, Customs personnel at all U.S. ports of entry are required to hold sea salt products sourced from the farm.

Taepyeong is South Korea's largest salt farm, producing about 16,000 tons of salt annually, which accounts for approximately 6% of the country's total output, according to government data, and is a major supplier to South Korean food companies. The farm, located on Jeungdo island in Sinan and leasing most of its salt fields to tenants, has been repeatedly accused of using forced labor, including in 2014 and 2021.

South Korean officials stated that this was the first time a foreign government had suspended imports from a South Korean company due to concerns over forced labor.

In a statement to The Associated Press on Monday, South Korea's Foreign Ministry said relevant government agencies, including the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries, have been taking steps to address labor practices at Taepyeong since 2021. While not providing direct evidence, it said it assesses that none of the salt produced there now is sourced from forced labor. The ministry said it plans to "actively engage" in discussions with the U.S. officials over the matter.

The fisheries ministry said it plans to promptly review the necessary measures to seek the lifting of the U.S. order.

The widespread slavery at Sinan's salt farms was exposed in 2014 when dozens of slavery victims — most of them with disabilities — were rescued from the islands following an investigation by mainland police. Some of their stories were documented by The Associated Press, which highlighted how slavery persisted despite the exposure.

U.S. Customs said it identified several signs of forced labor during its investigation of Taepyeong, including "abuse of vulnerability, deception, restriction of movement, retention of identity documents, abusive living and working conditions, intimidation and threats, physical violence, debt bondage, withholding of wages, and excessive overtime."

Lawyer Choi Jung Kyu, part of a group of attorneys and activists who petitioned U.S. Customs to take action against Taepyeong and other South Korean salt farms in 2022, expressed hope that the U.S. ban would increase pressure on South Korea to take more effective steps to eliminate the slavery.

"Since the exposure of the problem in 2014, the courts have recognized the legal responsibility of the national government and local governments, but forced labor among salt farm workers has not been eradicated," Choi said. "Our hope is that the export ban would force companies to strengthen due diligence over supply chains and lead to the elimination of human rights violations."

Choi's law firm and other groups representing salt farm slavery victims issued a statement urging the South Korean government to take stronger action to prevent the ongoing abuse, including harsher punishments for trafficking and forced labor crimes. They also criticized the lack of support measures for victims, such as employment and housing assistance, which has led some to return to salt farms.

Most of the salt farm slaves rescued in 2014 had been lured to the islands to work by brokers hired by

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 32 of 69

salt farm owners, who would beat them into long hours of hard labor and confine them at their houses for years while providing little or no pay.

The slavery was revealed in early 2014 when two police officers from the capital, Seoul, disguised themselves as tourists to clandestinely rescue a victim who had been reported by his family as missing. One of the Seoul police officers told AP they went undercover because of concerns about collaboration between the island's police and salt farm owners. Dozens of farm owners and job brokers were indicted, but no police or officials were punished despite allegations some knew about the slavery.

In 2019, South Korea's Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling that ordered the government to compensate three men who had been enslaved on salt farms in Sinan and the neighboring county of Wando, acknowledging that local officials and police failed to properly monitor their living and working conditions.

The salt farm slavery issue resurfaced in 2021 when around a dozen workers at Taepyeong were discovered to have endured various labor abuses, including forced labor and wage theft.

World markets plunge, with Japan's Nikkei diving nearly 8%, after the big meltdown on Wall St

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares nosedived around the world Monday as higher U.S. tariffs and a backlash from Beijing triggered massive sell-offs.

European shares followed Asian markets lower, with Germany's DAX falling 6.5% to 19,311.29. In Paris, the CAC 40 shed 5.9% to 6,844.96, while Britain's FTSE 100 lost 5% to 7,652.73.

U.S. futures signaled further weakness ahead. The future for the S&P 500 lost 3.4% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 3.1%. The future for the Nasdaq lost 5.3%.

On Friday, the worst market crisis since COVID slammed into a higher gear as the S&P 500 plummeted 6% and the Dow plunged 5.5%. The Nasdaq composite dropped 3.8%.

Late Sunday, Trump reiterated his resolve on tariffs. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, he said he didn't want global markets to fall, but also that he wasn't concerned about the massive sell-offs, adding, "sometimes you have to take medicine to fix something."

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost nearly 8% shortly after the market opened and futures trading for the benchmark was briefly suspended. It closed down 7.8% at 31,136.58.

Among the biggest losers was Mizuho Financial Group, whose shares sank 10.6%. Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group's stock lost 10.2% as investors panicked over how the trade war may affect the global economy.

"The idea that there's so much uncertainty going forward about how these tariffs are going to play out, that's what's really driving this plummet in the stock prices," said Rintaro Nishimura, an associate at the Asia Group.

Chinese markets often don't follow global trends, but they also tumbled. Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropped 13.2% to 19,828.30, while the Shanghai Composite index lost 7.3% to 3,096.58. In Taiwan, the Taixex plummeted 9.7%.

Markets were closed Friday in China and Kenny Ng Lai-yin, a strategist at Everbright Securities International, said the big movements might reflect some catching up from Friday's declines.

E-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holdings fell 18% and Tencent Holdings, another tech giant, lost 12.5%.

South Korea's Kospi lost 5.6% to 2,328.20, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 4.2% to 7,343.30, recovering from a loss of more than 6%.

Asia is especially dependent on exports, and a large share go to the United States.

"Beyond the market meltdown, the bigger concern is the impact and potential crises for small and trade-dependent economies, so it's crucial to see whether Trump will reach deals with most countries soon, at least partially," said Gary Ng of Nataxis.

Oil prices also sank further, with U.S. benchmark crude down \$2.03 at \$59.96 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up \$2.03 to \$63.55 a barrel.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 33 of 69

Exchange rates also gyrated. The U.S. dollar fell to 146.24 Japanese yen from 146.94 yen. The yen is often viewed as a safe haven in times of turmoil. The euro rose to \$1.0970 from \$1.0962.

Market observers expect investors will face more wild swings in the days and weeks to come, with a short-term resolution to the trade war appearing unlikely.

Nathan Thooft, chief investment officer and senior portfolio manager at Manulife Investment Management, said more countries are likely to respond to the U.S. with retaliatory tariffs. Given the large number of countries involved, "it will take a considerable amount of time in our view to work through the various negotiations that are likely to happen."

"Ultimately, our take is market uncertainty and volatility are likely to persist for some time," he said.

Heavy selling kicked in after China matched President Donald Trump's big raise in tariffs announced last week, upping the stakes in a trade war that could end with a recession that hurts everyone. Even a better-than-expected report on the U.S. job market, usually the economic highlight of each month, wasn't enough to stop the slide.

The Commerce Ministry in Beijing ordered its own 34% tariff on imports of all U.S. products beginning April 10, among other measures, in response to the 34% tariffs imposed by the U.S. on imports from China.

The United States and China are the world's two largest economies, and a big fear is that the trade war could cause a global recession. If it does, stock prices fall further. As of Friday, the S&P 500 was down 17.4% from its record set in February.

Americans may feel "some pain" because of tariffs, Trump has said, but he contends the long-term goals, including getting more manufacturing jobs back to the United States, are worth it.

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 Fed Chair Jerome Powell said Friday that the higher tariffs could drive up expectations for inflation and lower rates could fuel still more price increases.

Much will depend on how long Trump's tariffs stick and how other countries react. Some investors are holding onto hope he will lower the tariffs after negotiating "wins" from other countries.

Stuart Kaiser, head of U.S. equity strategy at Citi, wrote in a note to clients on Sunday that earnings estimates and stock values still don't reflect the full potential impact of the trade war. "There is ample space to the downside despite the large pullback," he said.

The Trump administration showed no signs of relenting on the tariffs that have caused trillions of dollars in losses.

Appearing on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures," White House trade adviser Peter Navarro echoed the president when he said investors shouldn't panic because the administration's approach to trade would usher in "the biggest boom in the stock market we have ever seen."

"People should just sit tight, let that market find its bottom, don't get shook out by the panic in the media," Navarro said.

Israel controls 50% of Gaza after razing land to expand its buffer zone

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel has dramatically expanded its footprint in the Gaza Strip since relaunching its war against Hamas last month. It now controls more than 50% of the territory and is squeezing Palestinians into shrinking wedges of land.

The largest contiguous area the army controls is around the Gaza border, where the military has razed Palestinian homes, farmland and infrastructure to the point of uninhabitability, according to Israeli soldiers and rights groups. This military buffer zone has doubled in size in recent weeks.

Israel has depicted its tightening grip as a temporary necessity to pressure Hamas into releasing the remaining hostages taken during the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that started the war. But the land Israel holds, which includes a corridor that divides the territory's north from south, could be used for wielding long-term

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 34 of 69

control, human rights groups and Gaza experts say.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last week that even after Hamas is defeated, Israel will keep security control in Gaza and push Palestinians to leave.

The demolition close to the Israeli border and the systematic expansion of the buffer zone has been going on since the war began 18 months ago, five Israeli soldiers told The Associated Press.

"They destroyed everything they could, they shot everything that looks functioning ... (the Palestinians) will have nothing to come back, they will not come back, never," a soldier deployed with a tank squad guarding the demolition teams said. He and four other soldiers spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

A report documenting the accounts of soldiers who were in the buffer zone was released Monday by Breaking The Silence, an anti-occupation veterans group. A handful of soldiers -- including some who also spoke to AP -- described watching the army turn the zone into a vast wasteland.

"Through widespread, deliberate destruction, the military laid the groundwork for future Israeli control of the area," said the group.

Asked about the soldiers' accounts, the Israeli army said it is acting to protect its country and especially to improve security in southern communities devastated by the Oct. 7 attack, in which some 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken hostage. The army said it does not seek to harm civilians in Gaza, and that it abides by international law.

Carving Gaza into sections

In the early days of the war, Israeli troops forced Palestinians from communities near the border and destroyed the land to create a buffer zone more than a kilometer (0.62 miles) deep, according to Breaking The Silence.

Its troops also seized a swath of land across Gaza known as the Netzarim Corridor that isolated the north, including Gaza City, from the rest of the narrow, coastal strip, home to more than 2 million people.

When Israel resumed the war last month, it doubled the size of the buffer zone, pushing it as far as 3 kilometers (1.8 miles) into Gaza in some places, according to a map issued by the military.

The buffer zone and the Netzarim Corridor make up at least 50% of the strip, said Yaakov Garb, a professor of environmental studies at Ben Gurion University, who has been examining Israeli-Palestinian land use patterns for decades.

Last week, Netanyahu said Israel intends to create another corridor that slices across southern Gaza, cutting off the city of Rafah from the rest of the territory. Israel's control of Gaza is even greater taking into account areas where it recently ordered civilians to evacuate ahead of planned attacks.

Neighborhoods turned into rubble

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians used to live in the land that now makes up Israel's buffer zone, an area that was key to Gaza's agricultural output.

Satellite images show once-dense neighborhoods turned to rubble, as well as nearly a dozen new Israeli army outposts since the ceasefire ended.

When the ceasefire was announced in January, Nidal Alzaanin went back to his home in Beit Hanoun in northern Gaza. His property stood on the edge of the buffer zone and lay in ruins.

All that remains is a photo of him and his wife on their wedding day, a drawing of his son's face on a porcelain plate and the carcass of a 150-year-old sycamore tree planted by his great-grandfather. His greenhouse was reduced to twisted scraps of metal.

The 55-year-old farmer pitched a tent in the rubble, hoping to rebuild his life. But when Israel resumed its campaign and seized his land, he was again uprooted.

"It took 20 years to build a house and within five minutes they destroyed all my dreams and my children's dreams," he said from Gaza City, where he now shelters.

Israel's bombardment and ground offensives throughout the war have left vast swaths of Gaza's cities and towns destroyed. But the razing of property inside the buffer zone has been more methodical and extensive, soldiers said.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 35 of 69

The five soldiers who spoke to the AP said Israeli troops were ordered to destroy farmland, irrigation pipes, crops and trees as well as thousands of buildings, including residential and public structures, so that militants had nowhere to hide.

Several soldiers said their units demolished more buildings than they could count, including large industrial complexes. A soda factory was leveled, leaving shards of glass and solar panels strewn on the ground.

Soldier alleges buffer zone was a 'kill' zone

The soldiers said the buffer zone had no marked boundaries, but that Palestinians who entered were shot at.

The soldier with the tank squad said an armored bulldozer flattened land creating a "kill zone" and that anyone who came within 500 meters of the tanks would be shot, including women and children.

Visibly shaken, he said many of the soldiers acted out of vengeance for the Oct. 7 attack.

"I came there because they kill us and now we're going to kill them. And I found out that we're not only killing them. We're killing them, we're killing their wives, their children, their cats, their dogs, and we destroyed their houses," he said.

The army said its attacks are based on intelligence and that it avoids "as much as possible, harm to non-combatants."

Long-term hold?

It is unclear how long Israel intends to hold the buffer zone and other territory inside Gaza.

In announcing the new corridor across southern Gaza, Netanyahu said Israel aims to pressure Hamas to release the remaining 59 hostages, of whom 35 are believed dead. He also said the war can only end when Hamas is destroyed and its leaders leave Gaza, at which point Israel would take control of security in the territory.

Then, Netanyahu said, Israel would implement U.S. President Donald Trump's call to move Palestinians from Gaza, what Israel calls "voluntary emigration."

Some Israel analysts say the purpose of the buffer zone isn't to occupy Gaza, but to secure it until Hamas is dismantled. "This is something that any sane country will do with regard to its borders when the state borders a hostile entity," said Kobi Michael, a senior researcher at two Israeli think tanks, the Institute for National Security Studies and the Misgav Institute.

But rights groups say forcibly displacing people is a potential war crime and a crime against humanity. Within Gaza's buffer zones, specifically, it amounts to "ethnic cleansing," because it was clear people would never be allowed to return, said Nadia Hardman, a researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Israel called the accusations baseless and said it evacuates civilians from combat areas to protect them.

Israel strikes tents near hospitals in Gaza, killing and wounding reporters

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel struck tents outside two major hospitals in the Gaza Strip overnight, killing at least two people, including a local reporter, and wounding another nine, including six reporters, medics said Monday.

Fifteen others were killed in separate strikes across the territory, according to hospitals.

A strike on a media tent outside Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis at around 2 a.m. set the tent ablaze, killing Yousef al-Faqawi, a reporter for the Palestine Today news website, and another man, according to the hospital. The six reporters were wounded in that strike.

The Israeli military said it struck a Hamas militant, without providing further information. The military says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames Hamas for their deaths because it is deeply embedded in residential areas.

Israel also struck tents on the edge of Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central city of Deir al-Balah, wounding three people, according to the hospital.

Nasser Hospital said it received another 13 bodies, including six women and four children, from separate

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 36 of 69

strikes overnight. Al-Aqsa Hospital said two people were killed and three wounded in a strike on a home in Deir al-Balah.

Israel has carried out waves of strikes across Gaza and ground forces have carved out new military zones since it ended its ceasefire with Hamas last month. Israel has barred the import of food, fuel, medicine and humanitarian aid since the beginning of March.

Thousands of people have sheltered in tents set up inside hospital compounds throughout the 18-month war, assuming Israel would be less likely to target them.

Israel has raided hospitals on several occasions, accusing Hamas of using them for military purposes, allegations denied by hospital staff.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, rampaging through army bases and farming communities and killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians. They abducted 251 people, and are still holding 59 captives — 24 of whom are believed to be alive — after most of the rest were released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel has vowed to keep escalating military pressure until Hamas releases the remaining hostages, lays down its arms and leaves the territory. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he will then implement U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to resettle much of Gaza's population to other countries through what the Israeli leader refers to as "voluntary emigration."

Palestinians say they do not want to leave their homeland, and human rights experts have warned that implementing the Trump proposal would likely amount to mass expulsion in violation of international law.

Netanyahu will meet with Trump in Washington on Monday to discuss Gaza and other issues.

Israel's military offensive has killed over 50,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were militants or civilians. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The offensive has destroyed vast areas of Gaza and at its height displaced around 90% of its population.

Swollen rivers flood towns in US South after dayslong deluge of rain

By JON CHERRY, KIMBERLEE KRUESI and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Kentucky (AP) — Days of unrelenting heavy rain and storms that killed at least 18 people worsened flooding as some rivers rose to near-record levels and inundated towns across an already saturated U.S. South and parts of the Midwest.

Cities ordered evacuations and rescue crews in inflatable boats checked on residents in Kentucky and Tennessee, while utilities shut off power and gas in a region stretching from Texas to Ohio.

"As long as I've been alive — and I'm 52 — this is the worst I've ever seen it," said Wendy Quire, the general manager at the Brown Barrel restaurant in downtown Frankfort, Kentucky, the state capital built around the swollen Kentucky River.

"The rain just won't stop," Quire said Sunday. "It's been nonstop for days and days."

Officials diverted traffic and turned off utilities to businesses in the city as the river was expected to crest above 49 feet Monday to a record-setting level, said Frankfort Mayor Layne Wilkerson. The city's flood wall system is designed to withstand 51 feet of water.

For many, there was a sense of dread that the worst was still to come.

"This flooding is an act of God," said Kevin Gordon, a front desk clerk at the Ashbrook Hotel in downtown Frankfort. The hotel was offering discounted stays to affected locals.

Storms leaving devastating impact

The 18 reported deaths since the storms began on Wednesday included 10 in Tennessee. A 9-year-old boy in Kentucky was caught up in floodwaters while walking to catch his school bus. A 5-year-old boy in Arkansas died after a tree fell on his family's home, police said. A 16-year-old volunteer Missouri firefighter died in a crash while seeking to rescue people caught in the storm.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 37 of 69

The National Weather Service warned Sunday that dozens of locations in multiple states were expected to reach a "major flood stage," with extensive flooding of structures, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure possible.

In north-central Kentucky, emergency officials ordered a mandatory evacuation for Falmouth and Butler, towns near the bend of the rising Licking River. Thirty years ago, the river reached a record 50 feet (15 meters), resulting in five deaths and 1,000 homes destroyed.

The storms come after the Trump administration cut jobs at NWS forecast offices, leaving half of them with vacancy rates of about 20%, or double the level of a decade ago.

Why so much nasty weather?

Forecasters attributed the violent weather to warm temperatures, an unstable atmosphere, strong winds and abundant moisture streaming from the Gulf.

The NWS said 5.06 inches (nearly 13 centimeters) of rain fell Saturday in Jonesboro, Arkansas — making it the wettest day ever recorded in April in the city. Memphis, Tennessee, received 14 inches (35 centimeters) of rain from Wednesday to Sunday, the NWS said.

Rives, a northwestern Tennessee town of about 200 people, was almost entirely underwater after the Obion River overflowed.

Domanic Scott went to check on his father in Rives after not hearing from him in a house where water reached the doorstep.

"It's the first house we've ever paid off. The insurance companies around here won't give flood insurance to anyone who lives in Rives because we're too close to the river and the levees. So if we lose it, we're kind of screwed without a house," Scott said.

In Dyersburg, Tennessee, dozens of people arrived over the weekend at a storm shelter near a public school clutching blankets, pillows and other necessities. Just days earlier the city was hit by a tornado that caused millions of dollars in damage.

Among them was George Manns, 77, who said he was in his apartment when he heard a tornado warning and decided to head to the shelter. Just days earlier the city was hit by a tornado that caused millions of dollars in damage.

"I grabbed all my stuff and came here," said Mann, who brought a folding chair, two bags of toiletries, laptops, iPads and medications: "I don't leave them in my apartment in case my apartment is destroyed."

For others, grabbing the essentials also meant taking a closer look at the liquor cabinet.

In Frankfort, with water rising up to his window sills, resident Bill Jones fled his home in a boat, which he loaded with several boxes of bottles of bourbon.

Can one of Africa's largest refugee camps evolve into a city?

By ADRIAN BLOMFIELD Associated Press

KAKUMA, Kenya (AP) — Windswept and remote, set in the cattle-rustling lands of Kenya's northwest, Kakuma was never meant to be permanently settled.

It became one of Africa's most famous refugee camps by accident as people escaping calamity in countries like South Sudan, Ethiopia and Congo poured in.

More than three decades after its first tents appeared in 1992, Kakuma houses 300,000 refugees. Many rely on aid to survive. Some recently clashed with police over shrinking food rations and support.

Now the Kenyan government and humanitarian agencies have come up with an ambitious plan for Kakuma to evolve into a city.

Although it remains under the United Nations' management, Kakuma has been redesignated a municipality, one that local government officials later will run.

It is part of broader goal in Kenya and elsewhere of incorporating refugees more closely into local populations and shifting from prolonged reliance on aid.

The refugees in Kakuma eventually will have to fend for themselves, living off their incomes rather than aid. The nearest city is eight hours' drive away.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 38 of 69

Such self-reliance is not easy. Few refugees can become Kenyan citizens. A 2021 law recognizes their right to work in formal employment, but only a tiny minority are allowed to do so.

Forbidden from keeping livestock because of the arid surroundings and the inability to roam widely, and unable to farm due to the lack of adequate water, many refugees see running a business as their only option.

‘World-class entrepreneurs’

Startup businesses require capital, and interest rates on loans from banks in Kakuma are typically around 20%. Few refugees have the collateral and documentation needed to take out a loan.

Denying them access to credit is a tremendous waste of human capital, said Julianne Oyler, who runs Inkomoko, a charity providing financial training and low-cost loans to African businesses, primarily in displacement-affected communities.

“We find that refugee business owners actually have the characteristics that make world-class entrepreneurs,” she said.

“They are resilient. They are resourceful. They have access to networks. They have adaptability. In some ways, what refugees unfortunately have had to go through actually makes a really good business owner.”

Other options available include microloans from other aid groups or collective financing by refugee-run groups. However, the sums involved are usually insufficient for all but the smallest startups.

One of Inkomoko’s clients in Kakuma, Adele Mubalama, led seven young children — six of her own and an abandoned 12-year-old she found en route — on a hazardous journey to the camp through four countries after the family was forced to leave Congo in 2018.

At the camp it took six months to find her husband, who had fled two months earlier, and six more to figure out how to make a living.

“It was difficult to know how to survive,” Mubalama said. “We didn’t know how to get jobs and there were no business opportunities.”

After signing up for a tailoring course with a Danish charity, she found herself making fabric masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Able to borrow from Inkomoko at half the rate charged by banks, she expanded, taking on 26 employees and buying new sewing machines. Last year she made a profit of \$8,300 — a huge amount when many refugees live on allowances or vouchers of about \$10 or less a month.

Another beneficiary is Mesfin Getahun, a former soldier who fled Ethiopia for Kakuma in 2001 after helping students who had protested against the government. He has grown his “Jesus is Lord” shops, which sell everything from groceries to motorcycles, into Kakuma’s biggest retail chain. That’s thanks in part to \$115,000 in loans from Inkomoko.

Trading with other towns is also essential. Inkomoko has linked refugee businesses with suppliers in Eldoret, a city 300 miles (482 kilometers) to the south, to cut out expensive middlemen and help embed Kakuma into Kenya’s economy.

Other challenges

Some question the vision of Kakuma becoming a thriving, self-reliant city.

Rahul Oka, an associate research professor with the University of Notre Dame said it lacks the resources — particularly water — and infrastructure to sustain a viable economy that can rely on local production.

“You cannot reconstruct an organic economy by socially engineering one,” said Oka, who has studied economic life at Kakuma for many years.

Two-way trade remains almost nonexistent. Suppliers send food and secondhand clothes to Kakuma, but trucks on the return journey are usually empty.

And the vast majority of refugees lack the freedom to move elsewhere in Kenya, where jobs are easier to find, said Freddie Carver of ODI Global, a London-based think tank.

Unless this is addressed, solutions offering greater opportunities to refugees cannot deliver meaningful transformation for most of them, he said.

“If you go back 20 years, a lot of refugee rights discourse was about legal protections, the right to work,

the right to stay in a country permanently," Carver said. "Now it's all about livelihoods and self-sufficiency. The emphasis is so much on opportunities that it overshadows the question of rights. There needs to be a greater balance."

Meet the Mexican soldier trying to revamp a musical genre accused of glorifying cartels

By MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — At a Mexican military base, Captain Eduardo Barrón picks up not a rifle but a microphone. Swaying boot-to-boot, he belts out a song as the sounds of trumpets and accordions roar from a band of a dozen camouflage-clad soldiers.

The rhythmic style — known as a corrido — is recognizable to just about every soul in the Latin American nation of 130 million. But Barrón's lyrics diverge sharply from those blaring on speakers across Mexico.

"I still remember the day I joined the military," he crooned. "This is a dream my soul longed for, and if I were to live another life, I'd become a soldier again."

Barrón, who performs under the name "Eddy Barrón," began releasing music videos and songs on Spotify last year in coordination with the Mexican military. His lyrics extol the army's virtues, celebrate proud parents and honor the fallen.

They stand in stark contrast to the controversial narco corridos, a subgenre that has sparked controversy as famed artists pay homage to cartel bosses, portraying them as rebels going against the system.

Faced with the challenge of addressing a musical style that depicts cartel violence, local governments across Mexico have increasingly banned performances and pursued criminal investigations of bands and musicians. Mexico's president even vowed to reduce the popularity of narco corridos while promoting other, less violent musical styles.

But Barrón, 33, is taking a different approach. Instead of censorship, he wants to build upon the momentum with his own military corridos, an effort to both infuse the genre with more socially acceptable lyrics and recruit young people to the military.

"Narco life is in style and they make it sound really pretty ... but the reality is different," he said. "We're playing our part to invite young people to join this movement of positive music."

A vow to change Mexican music

Barrón's military ballads are part of a wider government push spearheaded by Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who has proposed that the government promote corridos about "love, falling out of love and peace."

She even announced a government-sponsored Mexican music competition in the northern state of Durango showcasing music that avoids "glorifying violence, drugs and discrimination against women."

"It will completely change Mexican music," she said.

But in a subculture long defined by resistance and putting words to the harsh realities facing the poor, the government's initiatives around the genre have been met with skepticism about official attempts to promote family-friendly narratives.

"I don't think using corridos as a way to incorporate other kinds of narratives, is a bad idea," said José Manuel Valenzuela, a Tijuana sociologist who studies the genre. "There are a lot of songs that sing of peace and love. It's just that those aren't the ones that are turning out to be hits ... because we're living in a moment of aggrieved youth."

Singing through social issues

Corridos were born in the 19th century, their classical band instruments and the accordion rooted in German and Polish migration to Mexico. At a time of widespread illiteracy, they were used widely to pass on oral histories.

The ballads took off during the Mexican revolution, when they were used to share stories of war heroes and glory from the conflict.

That is why Barrón says he didn't invent military corridos, but that he's simply bringing them back.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 40 of 69

"Corridos come from the revolution, and we're doing the same thing as those soldiers and revolutionaries, albeit in a different age, but the result is the same," he said.

The genre evolved over generations, from singing about smuggling tequila during the 1920's Prohibition era in corridos tequileros to grappling with the rising wave of cartel violence in Mexico with narco corridos.

"All the big social issues are told through corridos," Valenzuela said. "It's a metaphor to speak about what we've been living through."

Weapons and barbed wire as inspiration

Barrón said he would play guitar with his father's Mexican regional music band as a teenager, and write his own music. He would bring his guitar to play on deployments after he joined the army at 20.

In 2021, he said he began writing his own songs about his time in the military and singing with a military FX Band, named after the type of gun the military uses. But the music never went public.

Around 2023, the genre exploded when artists like Peso Pluma, Fuerza Regida and Natanael Cano began to mix the classic style with trap music in what are known as corridos tumbados. That same year, Peso Pluma bested Taylor Swift as the most streamed artist on YouTube.

A year later, the Mexican army decided to post Barrón's music under his artistic name.

The music videos, which have clocked tens of thousands of views on YouTube alone, are layered with images of heavy duty weapons, the Mexican flag, barbed wire and Barrón belting out in camouflage and infrared goggles pulled above his military helmet.

Originally intended to entertain troops and boost military recruitment among young Mexicans, Barrón's songs took on a different meaning amidst the renewed controversy that has come with the corridos boom.

The musical style has long been criticized for romanticizing cartel violence, but has hit an inflection point in recent years.

Mexican states have implemented performance bans, and prominent artists have received death threats, often claiming to be from rival cartels whose leaders are glorified in their music. And musicians have been forced to cancel shows due to concerns about potential violence.

The controversy intensified last week, after the face of top cartel boss Nemesio Rubén "El Mencho" Oseguera was projected onto a large screen behind the band Los Alegres del Barranco at a music festival in the northern state of Jalisco. The incident, occurring shortly after Oseguera's cartel was linked to a ranch under investigation as a training camp and body disposal site in Jalisco, sent shockwaves across Mexico.

The performance was met with a cascade of criticisms. Two Mexican states announced criminal investigations, concerts were cancelled and the Trump administration revoked the U.S. visas of band members.

It also marked a hardening in tone by Sheinbaum, who called for an investigation into the concert, adding: "You can't justify violence or criminal groups."

Barrón, who opposes a ban on corridos, believes the solution is to continue to sing cloaked in camouflage with the hopes of reclaiming the Mexican music from his childhood from the negative stereotypes that have grown to define it.

He said the army is already planning to release new songs in the coming months.

"Sadly, we've been stuck with this label of corridos as negative music," he said. "A better approach is to reclaim the genre and take a different path to shift the conversation."

Miami's 'Little Venezuela' fears Trump's moves against migration

By GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

DORAL, Fla. (AP) — Wilmer Escaray left Venezuela in 2007 and enrolled at Miami Dade College, opening his first restaurant six years later.

Today he has a dozen businesses that hire Venezuelan migrants like he once was, workers who are now terrified by what could be the end of their legal shield from deportation.

Since the start of February the Trump administration has ended two federal programs that together allowed more 700,000 Venezuelans to live and work legally in the U.S. along with hundreds of thousands of Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 41 of 69

In the largest Venezuelan community in the United States, people dread what could face them if lawsuits that aim to stop the government fail. It's all anyone discusses in "Little Venezuela" or "Doralzuela," a city of 80,000 people surrounded by Miami sprawl, freeways and the Florida Everglades.

Deportation fears in Doralzuela

People who lose their protections would have to remain illegally at the risk of being deported or return home, an unlikely route given the political and economic turmoil in Venezuela.

"It's really quite unfortunate to lose that human capital because there are people who do work here that other people won't do," Escaray, 37, said at one of his "Sabor Venezolano" restaurants.

Spanish is more common than English in shopping centers along Doral's wide avenues, and Venezuelans feel like they're back home but with more security and comfort.

A sweet scent wafts from round, flat cornmeal arepas sold at many establishments. Stores at gas stations sell flour and white cheese used to make arepas and T-shirts and hats with the yellow, blue and red stripes of the Venezuelan flag.

New lives at risk

John came from Venezuela nine years ago and bought a growing construction company with a partner. He and his wife are on Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, which Congress created in 1990 for people in the United States whose homelands are considered unsafe to return due to natural disaster or civil strife. Beneficiaries can live and work while it lasts but TPS carries no path to citizenship.

Born in the U.S., their 5-year-old daughter is a citizen. John, 37, asked to be identified by first name only for fear of being deported.

His wife helps with administration at their construction business while working as a real-estate broker. The couple told their daughter that they may have to leave the United States. Venezuela is not an option.

"It hurts us that the government is turning its back on us," John said. "We aren't people who came to commit crimes; we came to work, to build."

A federal judge ordered on March 31 that temporary protected status would stand until a legal challenge's next stage in court and at least 350,000 Venezuelans were temporarily spared becoming illegal. Escaray, the owner of the restaurants, said nearly all of his 150 employees are Venezuelan and more than 100 are on TPS.

The federal immigration program that allowed more than 500,000 Cubans, Venezuelans, Haitians and Nicaraguans to work and live legally in the U.S. — humanitarian parole — expires April 24 absent court intervention.

Politics of migration

Venezuelans were one of the main beneficiaries when former President Joe Biden sharply expanded TPS and other temporary protections. Trump tried to end them in his first term and now his second.

The end of the temporary protections has generated little political reaction among Republicans except for three Cuban-American representatives from Florida who called for avoiding the deportations of affected Venezuelans. Mario Díaz Ballart, Carlos Gimenez and Maria Elvira Salazar have urged the government to spare Venezuelans without criminal records from deportation and review TPS beneficiaries on a case-by-case basis.

The mayor of Doral, home to a Trump golf club since 2012, wrote a letter to the president asking him to find a legal pathway for Venezuelans who haven't committed crimes.

"These families do not want handouts," said Christi Fraga, a daughter of Cuban exiles. "They want an opportunity to continue working, building, and investing in the United States."

A country's elite, followed by the working class

About 8 million people have fled Venezuela since 2014, settling first in neighboring countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. After the COVID-19 pandemic, they increasingly set their sights on the United States, walking through the notorious jungle in Colombia and Panama or flying to the United States on humanitarian parole with a financial sponsor.

In Doral, upper-middle-class professionals and entrepreneurs came to invest in property and businesses

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 42 of 69

when socialist Hugo Chávez won the presidency in the late 1990s. They were followed by political opponents and entrepreneurs who set up small businesses. In recent years, more lower-income Venezuelans have come for work in service industries.

They are doctors, lawyers, beauticians, construction workers and house cleaners. Some are naturalized U.S. citizens or live in the country illegally with U.S.-born children. Others overstay tourist visas, seek asylum or have some form of temporary status.

Thousands went to Doral as Miami International Airport facilitated decades of growth.

Frank Carreño, president of the Venezuelan American Chamber of Commerce and a Doral resident for 18 years, said there is an air of uncertainty.

"What is going to happen? People don't want to return or can't return to Venezuela," he said.

More homes for sale and easing rates favor homebuyers this spring, but affordability hurdles remain

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — This spring homebuying season is shaping up to be more favorable for home shoppers than it's been in recent years — as long as they can afford to buy.

Home prices are rising more slowly. Mortgage rates remain elevated, but have been mostly easing and could be headed lower if the U.S. economic outlook continues to darken over the Trump administration's widespread tariffs, which have rattled financial markets and stoked fears of a recession.

Most importantly, the number of homes on the market is up sharply from a year ago.

While the inventory of homes for sale nationally is still low by historical standards, active listings — a tally that encompasses all homes on the market except those pending a finalized sale — surged 28.5% last month from a year earlier, according to data from Realtor.com. Listings jumped between 44% and 68% in many large metro areas, including San Diego, Las Vegas, Atlanta and Washington D.C.

As homes take longer to sell, prices have started dropping in many markets. The median listing price was down last month from a year earlier in most of the nation's biggest 50 metro areas, including a more than 6% drop in Austin, Miami and Kansas City.

These trends should give prospective homebuyers more leverage as they negotiate with sellers this spring, though they are unlikely to be a game-changer for many aspiring homeowners priced out of the market after years of soaring prices.

"It's a little hard to say that it's a buyer's market, but I'd call it a much more balanced market than it's been in the last couple of years, where it's really been a predominantly seller's market," said Joel Berner, senior economist at Realtor.com.

Ryan Vasko and his wife, Whitney, recently navigated both sides of the housing market equation in their move from Oregon to Colorado.

In December, the couple sold their three-bedroom, one-bath house in Portland for \$505,000. That was \$10,000 below their list price, but still above the \$500,000 minimum they hoped to get.

At the same time, the couple searched for a home in the Denver metro area, which is among the markets that's had the biggest increase in homes for sale this year. Active listings soared 67.3% in March from a year earlier. As listings jumped, the median listing price fell 5.6% to \$585,000.

Last month, the Vaskos closed the deal on a four-bedroom, three-bathroom house in Littleton, Colorado, about 10 miles south of Denver, that had been on the market at least three weeks.

"We got under contract week one, we found out we were pregnant week two and we put an offer on this house week three," said Vasko, 41, a creative director at an advertising agency.

The price: \$680,000, or \$5,000 above the list price. Still, the seller agreed to cover the cost of lowering the couple's 6.9% mortgage rate for the first two years of the loan to 4.9% and 5.9%, respectively.

"It gives us a little wiggle room, if we need it," said Vasko, noting that he's hoping to eventually refinance to a lower fixed rate.

A mixed market

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 43 of 69

The U.S. housing market has been in a sales slump since 2022, when mortgage rates began to climb from pandemic-era lows. Sales of previously occupied U.S. homes fell last year to their lowest level in nearly 30 years. Easing mortgage rates and more homes on the market nationally helped drive sales higher in February from the previous month, though they were down year-over-year.

Last year, higher mortgage rates dampened the start of the spring homebuying season. This year, the average rate on a 30-year mortgage is down to 6.6% from just over 7% in mid-January, according to mortgage buyer Freddie Mac, although that's still elevated relative to the 2-year low of about 6% it fell to in September.

Another plus for buyers: Lower prices. The median listing price fell in March from a year earlier in 32 of the 50 largest metro areas, including Kansas City, San Francisco, Miami and San Diego. Nationally, it was \$424,900 last month, unchanged from a year earlier, according to Realtor.com.

The market shift may give home shoppers more leverage when sellers ask that buyers waive home inspections. Sellers may also be more willing to pay for closing costs, contribute cash to make repairs or make other concessions, real estate agents say.

"Pretty much every buyer is asking for concessions, unless they know that they are in a multiple offer situation," said Afton Hartmann, a Redfin agent in Denver.

Such situations, although less common than a few years ago, still exist.

Gilad Hoffman, executive director at a synagogue, knew his home search was over when he spotted a four-bedroom, 2.5-bath house for sale in Escondido, 30 miles northeast of San Diego. He felt the home, listed by the estate of its late owner for \$1.079 million, was "severely underpriced."

Hoffman, 41, paid \$13,000 above the asking price for the home in February as he fended off bids from three other prospective buyers -- including one offering to pay all cash.

Elevated mortgage rates didn't dissuade Hoffman. He accepted a 7% rate in exchange for a credit from his lender to put toward closing costs.

"My philosophy going into the whole thing was: get into something now that you can afford with these high interest rates," Hoffman said. "Hopefully in two years, they'll come down and then you can refinance. And that's still my intention."

Affordability and uncertainty are still hurdles

Despite some buyer-friendly trends, the housing market remains largely out of reach for many Americans, especially first-time buyers who don't have home equity gains to put toward a new home. While home price growth has been slowing, the decline is negligible against the 47% gain in prices over the last five years.

And while home listings are up, many more are needed to return the market to more of a balance between buyers and sellers. Consider, there were 1.24 million unsold homes on the market at the end of February. While up 17% from a year earlier, that's still about 44% below the 2.21 million monthly average going back to 1999, according to data from the National Association of Realtors.

As of January, a household earning the median U.S. annual income of \$79,223 would have to spend 47% of that to cover payments on a home at the median price of \$390,333. That share of income matches the highest it has ever been on records going back to 2005, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. When the annual cost of homeownership exceeds 30% of the median U.S. household income, it's considered unaffordable by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

If the decline in mortgage rates accelerates in coming months, that would boost homebuyers' purchasing power.

Economic forecasts generally have the average rate on a 30-year mortgage staying around 6.5% this year, but those forecasts may be outdated now.

A sharp downward move last week in the 10-year Treasury yield as bond investors reacted to rapidly escalating trade war between the U.S. and nations around the globe points to lower mortgage rates.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which banks use as a guide to pricing home loans, dropped to 4.01% Friday, its lowest level since October, as global trade tensions escalated.

Still, tariffs are typically inflationary, and the 10-year Treasury yield tends to rise on expectations of higher inflation. That could keep mortgage rates where they are, or nudge them higher.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 44 of 69

If the trade war worries do pave the way for further mortgage rate drops, "those lower rates may be cold comfort to prospective buyers who are increasingly worried about job security and inflation," said Lisa Sturtevant, chief economist at Bright MLS.

Trump says he's not backing down on tariffs, calls them 'medicine' as markets reel

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump said Sunday that he won't back down on his sweeping tariffs on imports from most of the world unless countries even out their trade with the U.S., digging in on his plans to implement the taxes that have sent financial markets reeling, raised fears of a recession and upended the global trading system.

Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One, Trump said he didn't want global markets to fall, but also that he wasn't concerned about the massive sell-off either, adding, "sometimes you have to take medicine to fix something."

His comments came as global financial markets appeared on track to continue sharp declines once trading resumes Monday, and after Trump's aides sought to soothe market concerns by saying more than 50 nations had reached out about launching negotiations to lift the tariffs.

"I spoke to a lot of leaders, European, Asian, from all over the world," Trump said. "They're dying to make a deal. And I said, we're not going to have deficits with your country. We're not going to do that, because to me a deficit is a loss. We're going to have surpluses or at worst, going to be breaking even."

The higher rates are set to be collected beginning Wednesday, ushering in a new era of economic uncertainty with no clear end in sight. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said unfair trade practices are not "the kind of thing you can negotiate away in days or weeks." The United States, he said, must see "what the countries offer and whether it's believable."

Trump, who spent the weekend in Florida playing golf, posted online that "WE WILL WIN. HANG TOUGH, it won't be easy." His Cabinet members and economic advisers were out in force Sunday defending the tariffs and downplaying the consequences for the global economy.

"There doesn't have to be a recession. Who knows how the market is going to react in a day, in a week?" Bessent said. "What we are looking at is building the long-term economic fundamentals for prosperity."

U.S. stock futures dropped on Sunday night as the tariffs continued to roil the markets. S&P 500 futures were down 2.5% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 2.1%. Nasdaq futures were down 3.1%. Even the price of bitcoin, which held relatively stable last week, fell nearly 6% Sunday.

Asian shares, meanwhile, nosedived. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index lost nearly 8% shortly after the market opened. By midday, it was down 6%. A circuit breaker briefly suspended trading of Topix futures after an earlier sharp fall in U.S. futures. Chinese markets also tumbled, with Hong Kong's Hang Seng dropping 9.4%, while the Shanghai Composite index lost 6.2%.

Trump's tariff blitz, announced April 2, fulfilled a key campaign promise as he acted without Congress to redraw the rules of global trade. It was a move decades in the making for Trump, who has long denounced foreign trade deals as unfair to the U.S. He is gambling that voters will be willing to endure higher prices for everyday items to enact his economic vision.

Countries are scrambling to figure out how to respond to the tariffs, with China and others retaliating quickly.

Top White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett acknowledged that other countries are "angry and retaliating," and, he said, "by the way, coming to the table." He cited the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative as reporting that more than 50 nations had reached out to the White House to begin talks.

Adding to the turmoil, the new tariffs are hitting American allies and adversaries alike, including Israel, which is facing a 17% tariff. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is set to visit the White House and speak at a press conference with Trump on Monday, with his office saying the tariffs would be a point of discussion with Trump along with the war in Gaza and other issues.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 45 of 69

Another American ally, Vietnam, a major manufacturing center for clothing, has also been in touch with the administration about the tariffs. Trump said Vietnam's leader said in a telephone call that his country "wants to cut their Tariffs down to ZERO if they are able to make an agreement with the U.S." And a key European partner, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, said she disagreed with Trump's move but was "ready to deploy all the tools — negotiating and economic — necessary to support our businesses and our sectors that may be penalized."

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick made clear there was no postponing tariffs that are days away. "The tariffs are coming. Of course they are," he said, adding that Trump needed to reset global trade. But he committed only to having them "definitely" remain "for days and weeks."

In Congress, where Trump's Republican Party has long championed free trade, the tariff regiment has been met with applause but also significant unease.

Several Republican senators have already signed onto a new bipartisan bill that would require presidents to justify new tariffs to Congress. Lawmakers would then have to approve the tariffs within 60 days, or they would expire. Nebraska GOP Rep. Don Bacon said Sunday that he would introduce a House version of the bill, saying that Congress needs to restore its powers over tariffs.

"We gave some of that power to the executive branch. I think, in hindsight, that was a mistake," said Bacon, adding that getting a measure passed would be challenging unless the financial markets continue to react negatively and other indicators such as inflation and unemployment shift.

Wyoming's John Barrasso, the No. 2 member of the Senate's GOP leadership, said Trump is "doing what he has every right to do." But, he acknowledged, "there is concern, and there's concern across the country. People are watching the markets."

"There'll be a discussion in the Senate," Barrasso said of the tariffs. "We'll see which way the discussion goes."

Trump's government cost-cutting guru, billionaire businessman Elon Musk, had been relatively silent on Trump's tariffs, but said at a weekend event in Italy that he would like to see the U.S. and Europe move to "a zero-tariff situation." The comment from the Tesla owner who leads Trump's Department of Government Efficiency drew a rebuke from White House trade adviser Peter Navarro.

"Elon, when he is on his DOGE lane, is great. But we understand what's going on here. We just have to understand. Elon sells cars," Navarro said. He added: "He's simply protecting his own interest as any business person would do."

Trump indicated he disagreed with Musk, saying Sunday of the European Union, "They want to talk, but there's no talk unless they pay us a lot of money on a yearly basis."

Lawrence Summers, an economist who was treasury secretary under Democratic President Bill Clinton, said Trump and his economic team are sending contradictory messages if they say they are interested in reviving manufacturing while still being open to negotiating with trade partners.

If other countries eliminate their tariffs, and the U.S. does, too, he said, "it's just making a deal, then we don't raise any revenue nor do we get any businesses to relocate to the United States. If it's a permanent revenue source and trying to get businesses to relocate to the United States, then we're going to have these tariffs permanently. So the president can't have it both ways."

Bessent was on NBC's "Meet the Press," Hasset and Summers appeared on ABC's "This Week," Lutnick and Barrasso were on CBS' "Face the Nation" and Navarro was interviewed on Fox News Channel's "Sunday Morning Futures."

Jay North, TV's mischievous Dennis the Menace, dies at 73

LAKE BUTLER, Fla. (AP) — Jay North, who starred as the towheaded mischief maker on TV's "Dennis the Menace" for four seasons starting in 1959, has died. He was 73.

North died Sunday at his home in Lake Butler, Florida, after battling colon cancer, said Laurie Jacobson, a longtime friend, and Bonnie Vent, who was his booking agent.

"He had a heart as big as a mountain, loved his friends deeply. He called us frequently and ended every conversation with 'I love you with all my heart,'" Jacobson wrote in a tribute on Facebook.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 46 of 69

North was 6 when he was cast as the smiling troublemaker in the CBS sitcom adaptation of Hank Ketcham's popular comic strip that took place in an idyllic American suburb.

Often wearing a striped shirt and overalls, Dennis' mischievous antics frequently frustrated his retired next-door neighbor George Wilson, played by Joseph Kearns. Dennis' patient parents were played by Herbert Anderson and Gloria Henry.

The show ran on Sunday nights until it was canceled in 1963. After that it was a fixture for decades in syndication.

Later, North appeared on TV in shows including "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.," "The Lucy Show," "My Three Sons," "Lassie" and "The Simpsons," and in movies like "Maya" (1966), "The Teacher" (1974) and "Dickie Robert: Former Child Star" (2003).

North is survived by his third wife, Cindy, and three stepdaughters.

Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 32, mostly women and children

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes in the Gaza Strip killed at least 32 people, including over a dozen women and children, local health officials said Sunday, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu headed to the United States to meet with President Donald Trump about the war.

Israel last month ended its ceasefire with Hamas and has seized territory to pressure the militant group to accept a new deal for a truce and release of remaining hostages. It has blocked the import of food, fuel and other supplies for over a month to the coastal territory heavily reliant on outside assistance.

Israel's military late Sunday ordered Palestinians to evacuate several neighborhoods in central Gaza's Deir al-Balah shortly after about 10 projectiles were fired from Gaza — the largest barrage from the territory since Israel resumed the war.

The military said about five were intercepted. Hamas' military arm claimed responsibility. Police said a rocket fell in Ashkelon city and fragments fell in several other areas. The Magen David Adom emergency service said one man was lightly injured. The military later said it struck a rocket launcher in Gaza.

Israeli strikes overnight into Sunday hit a tent and a house in the southern city of Khan Younis, killing five men, five women and five children, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies.

The body of a toddler took up one end of an emergency stretcher.

A female journalist was among the dead. "My daughter is innocent. She had no involvement, she loved journalism and adored it," said her mother, Amal Kaskeen.

"Trump wants to end the Gaza issue. He is in a hurry, and that is clear from this morning," said Mohammad Abdel-Hadi, cousin of a woman killed.

Israeli shelling killed at least four people in the Jabaliya refugee camp in northern Gaza, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The bodies of seven people, including a child and three women, arrived at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah, according to an Associated Press journalist there.

And a strike in Gaza City hit people waiting outside a bakery and killed at least six, including three children, according to the civil defense, which operates under the Hamas-run government.

Netanyahu visits Trump amid anti-war protests

Dozens of Palestinians took to the streets in Jabaliya for new anti-war protests. Footage on social media showed people marching and chanting against Hamas. Such protests, while rare, have occurred in recent weeks.

There is also anger inside Israel over the war's resumption and its effects on remaining hostages in Gaza. Families of hostages along with some of those recently freed from Gaza and their supporters have urged Trump to help ensure the fighting ends.

Netanyahu on Monday will meet with Trump for the second time since Trump began his latest term in January. The prime minister said they would discuss the war and the new 17% tariff imposed on Israel, part of a sweeping global decision by the U.S.

"There is a very large queue of leaders who want to do this with respect to their economies. I think it reflects the special personal connection and the special connection between the United States and Israel, which is so vital at this time," Netanyahu said while wrapping up a visit to Hungary.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 47 of 69

The U.S., a mediator in ceasefire efforts along with Egypt and Qatar, had expressed support for Israel's resumption of the war last month.

The toll of war

Hundreds of Palestinians since then have been killed, among them 15 medics whose bodies were recovered only a week later. Israel's military this weekend backtracked on its account of what happened in the incident, captured in part on video, that angered Red Cross and Red Crescent and U.N. officials.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage. Fifty-nine hostages are still held in Gaza — 24 believed to be alive.

Israel's offensive has killed at least 50,695 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants but says more than half were women and children. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence.

Early Monday, strikes hit inside the compound of Al Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, where an Associated Press camera caught the sound of the explosions. Smoke and fire were seen from distance, and there were no immediate reports of casualties.

Violence in the West Bank

The Palestinian Health Ministry in the occupied West Bank said one Palestinian-American teen was killed and two others were injured — one in critical condition — and asserted that Israeli settlers had shot them.

Israel's military said it was looking into the incident in Turmus Ayya town, which is near Jerusalem and has a large population of Palestinian-Americans.

The war in Gaza has sparked a surge of violence in the West Bank, with Israel's military carrying out military operations that have killed hundreds of Palestinians and displaced tens of thousands. There has been a rise in settler violence as well as Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

Rising rivers threaten US South and Midwest after dayslong torrent of rain

By JON CHERRY, KIMBERLEE KRUESI and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Kentucky (AP) — Rivers rose and flooding worsened Sunday across the sodden U.S. South and Midwest, threatening communities already badly damaged by days of heavy rain and wind that killed at least 18 people.

Even as the rain moved out of some of the hardest hit areas in Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky, water levels crept up in some communities, swirling into homes and businesses and submerging roads.

In Frankfort, Kentucky, rescue crews checking up on residents in the state capital traversed inundated streets in inflatable boats. Workers erected sandbag ramparts to protect homes and businesses and turned off utilities as the swollen Kentucky River kept rising.

"As long as I've been alive — and I'm 52 — this is the worst I've ever seen it," said Wendy Quire, the general manager at the Brown Barrel restaurant in downtown Frankfort.

The river's depth had risen above 47 feet Sunday and was expected to crest above 49 feet Monday morning to a potentially record-setting level, according to Frankfort Mayor Layne Wilkerson. The city's flood wall system is designed to withstand 51 feet of water.

Forecasters said that flooding could persist as torrential rains lingered over several states. Tornado watches were in effect through much of the day Sunday in parts of Alabama, Georgia and Florida.

For many, there was a sense of dread.

"This flooding is an act of God," said Kevin Gordon, a front desk clerk at the Ashbrook Hotel in downtown Frankfort. The hotel was open Sunday and offering discounted stays to affected locals, but Gordon said it could eventually be forced to close.

Storms cut a deadly path

The 18 reported deaths since the storms began on Wednesday included 10 in Tennessee. A 9-year-old boy in Kentucky was caught up in floodwaters while walking to catch his school bus. A 5-year-old boy in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 48 of 69

Arkansas died after a tree fell on his family's home and trapped him, police said. A 16-year-old volunteer Missouri firefighter died in a crash while seeking to rescue people caught in the storm.

The National Weather Service said on Sunday dozens of locations in multiple states were expected to reach a "major flood stage," with extensive flooding of structures, roads, bridges and other critical infrastructure possible.

In north-central Kentucky, emergency officials ordered a mandatory evacuation for Falmouth and Butler, towns near the bend of the rising Licking River. Thirty years ago, the river reached a record 50 feet (15 meters), resulting in five deaths and 1,000 homes destroyed.

The storms come after the Trump administration cut jobs at NWS forecast offices, leaving half of them with vacancy rates of about 20%, or double the level of a decade ago.

Floods force evacuations

A northwestern Tennessee town of about 200 people that flooded after a levee failure in February was almost entirely underwater on Sunday after the Obion River overflowed. Domanic Scott went to check on his father in Rives, Tennessee, after not hearing from him in a house where floodwater had reached the doorsteps.

"It's the first house we've ever paid off. The insurance companies around here won't give flood insurance to anyone who lives in Rives because we're too close to the river and the levees. So if we lose it, we're kind of screwed without a house," Scott said.

For others that fled to higher ground, grabbing the essentials also meant taking a closer look at the liquor cabinet.

In Kentucky, with water rising up to his windowsills, Frankfort resident Bill Jones fled his home in a boat, which he loaded with several boxes filled with bottles of bourbon.

As of early Sunday, Memphis had received 14 inches (35 centimeters) of rain since Wednesday, the National Weather Service said. West Memphis, Arkansas, received 10 inches (25 centimeters).

The rain and fierce winds moved further east on Sunday, felling trees in Alabama and Georgia.

Forecasters attributed the violent weather to warm temperatures, an unstable atmosphere, strong winds and abundant moisture streaming from the Gulf.

Alex Ovechkin breaks Wayne Gretzky's NHL career goals record by scoring his 895th

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Alex Ovechkin fired just about the perfect shot from the place on the ice that has defined his remarkable career. When the puck hit the net, it made him the top goal scorer in NHL history.

Ovechkin broke Wayne Gretzky's record by scoring his 895th career goal in the Washington Capitals' game Sunday against the New York Islanders, beating fellow Russian Ilya Sorokin on a power play with 12:34 left in the second period. He took a cross-ice pass from longtime teammate Tom Wilson and fired a laser past Sorokin with defenseman Jakob Chychrun screening.

Capitals coach Spencer Carbery called it "the ultimate goal-scorer's goal for the greatest of all time."

With the excitement of a child, the 39-year-old belly flopped onto the ice as tens of thousands of fans around him cheered and chanted, "Ovi! Ovi!" while teammates streamed off the bench, mobbing him in celebration.

"I'm probably gonna need a couple more days or maybe a couple weeks to realize what does it mean to be No. 1," Ovechkin said after a 4-1 loss that was still a party for the Capitals. "I'm really proud for myself. I'm really proud for my family, for all my teammates that help me to reach that milestone and for all my coaches. It's huge. It's unbelievable. It's unbelievable moment, and I'm happy."

Ovechkin had never scored on Sorokin before, making his countryman the 183rd different goaltender he has beaten. "Thank you to Sorokin to let me score 895," Ovechkin said. "I love you, brother." Ovechkin asked him for the stick, and Sorokin obliged after writing "895!" and signing it.

That any player got to 895 goals, breaking a record that stood for 31 years, seemed unreal to those in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 49 of 69

the middle of it.

"It's truly incredible," said center Dylan Strome, who got the secondary assist for passing the puck to Wilson. "Sometimes those moments happen where you've kind of got to pinch yourself to believe that you're really in this moment and really on the ice celebrating or a part of it, and it was awesome."

Ovechkin broke a record that appeared to be one of the most untouchable in sports. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman made sure to point that out when he opened the 10-minute ceremony to celebrate the milestone.

"Wayne, you'll always be the 'Great One' and you had a record that nobody ever thought would be broken," Bettman said. "But Alex, you did it."

The first to get hugs from Ovechkin were longtime equipment managers Craig "Woody" Leydig and Brock Myles, along with the rest of the training and locker room staff who have been around him so long. Ovechkin waved to acknowledge the crowd and went through a handshake line with the Islanders as crew members set up for the 895 ceremony that has been months in the making.

Ovechkin got a portrait of himself and Gretzky. Janet Gretzky presented a gift to Ovechkin's wife, Nastya, just as Colleen Howe did to her when her husband broke Gordie's record back in 1994. Ovechkin got No. 895 in his 1,487th game — the same number Gretzky finished with.

Gretzky shook Ovechkin's hand, embraced him and congratulated the "Great 8" and his family for the accomplishment.

"They say records are made to be broken, but I'm not sure who's going to get more goals than that," Gretzky said.

Ovechkin took the microphone from Gretzky like a torch being passed from one legend of the game to another. He thanked injured teammates Nicklas Backstrom and T.J. Oshie, with whom he won the Stanley Cup in 2018, and expressed his affection for his wife, mother and two sons standing nearby.

"We did it, boys. We did it," Ovechkin said. "And the most important thing, to my mom, my family, my beautiful wife, my father-in-law, my beautiful kids, thank you. I love you so much, and without you, without your support I would never stand here."

More "Ovi!" chants followed. Plenty more will be coming as he attempts to reach 900.

Gretzky's total of 894 goals had long seemed unapproachable. Ovechkin passed it even after missing 16 games in November and December because of a broken left leg, a testament to his durability and a knack for putting the puck in the net consistently for two decades. He surpassed 40 goals this season for a 14th time — two more than Gretzky and also the most in league history — and now has 42.

"To do what he's doing at this age is incredible," said longtime teammate John Carlson, who assisted on tying goal No. 894. "I think people are sleeping on that, too. Just, like, he missed two months and he might score 50 goals. Like that's nuts. It's crazy."

The chase by the Great 8, a nickname honoring his jersey number, captured attention from North America to Ovechkin's native Russia, where billboards and goal counters cheered on and tracked his effort. It helped Ovechkin that his team is one of the best in the NHL this season, defying expectations.

Gretzky broke Howe's record a little more than 31 years ago, since he scored 802 on March 23, 1994. He added 92 more before retiring in 1999 after a total of 1,487 games over 20 seasons.

Even with this one falling to Ovechkin, Gretzky holds 54 NHL records, and two seem truly untouchable: 2,857 total points and 1,963 assists, the latter of which is more than anyone else has in goals and assists combined.

For NHL playoff goals, which do not count toward the record, Gretzky has the most (122). Ovechkin has 72. Gretzky also had another 56 in the World Hockey Association regular season and playoffs, while Ovechkin has 57 from his time in the KHL, Russia's top league.

Returning to Russia to play in front of family and friends is an option at some point for Ovechkin, who has one season left after this one on the five-year, \$47.5 million contract he signed in 2021, which took him through age 40 to give him enough time to chase Gretzky's record. Instead, he got it done earlier than just about anyone could have realistically expected.

RFK Jr. visits epicenter of Texas measles outbreak after death of second child who was infected

By DEVI SHASTRI and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. visited the epicenter of Texas' still-growing measles outbreak on Sunday, the same day a funeral was held for a second young child who was not vaccinated and died from a measles-related illness.

Kennedy said in a social media post that he was working to "control the outbreak" and went to Gaines County to comfort the families who have buried two young children. He was seen late Sunday afternoon outside of a Mennonite church where the funeral services were held, but he did not attend a nearby news conference held by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention about the outbreak.

Seminole is the epicenter of the outbreak, which started in late January and continues to swell — with nearly 500 cases in Texas alone, plus cases from the outbreak believed to have spread to New Mexico, Oklahoma, Kansas and Mexico.

The second young child died Thursday from "what the child's doctor described as measles pulmonary failure," and did not have underlying health conditions, the Texas State Department of State Health Services said Sunday in a news release. Aaron Davis, a spokesperson for UMC Health System in Lubbock, said that the child was "receiving treatment for complications of measles while hospitalized."

This is the third known measles-related death tied to this outbreak. One was another elementary school-aged child in Texas and the other was an adult in New Mexico; neither were vaccinated.

It's Kennedy's first visit to the area as health secretary, where he said he met with families of both the 6- and 8-year-old children who died. He said he "developed bonds" with the Mennonite community in West Texas in which the virus is mostly spreading.

Kennedy, an anti-vaccine advocate before ascending to the role of nation's top health secretary earlier this year, has resisted urging widespread vaccinations as the measles outbreak has worsened under his watch. On Sunday, however, he said in a lengthy statement posted on X that it was "the most effective way to prevent the spread of measles."

The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine has been used safely for more than 60 years and is 97% effective against measles after two doses.

Dr. Manisha Patel, CDC incident manager, said in a Sunday news conference that the MMR vaccine is the best way to protect against measles. She also told parents in Gaines County that it was important not to "delay care" for a child who is sick with measles.

"Call your doctor and make sure you're talking to a health care professional who can guide you on those next steps," Patel said.

Kennedy's social media post said CDC employees had been "redeployed." CDC spokesman Jason McDonald clarified late Sunday that the first CDC team arrived in early March and left Gaines County on April 1, while a team led by Patel "was redeployed and arrived today to assess needs" as ordered by Kennedy and requested by Texas' governor.

Asked about the outbreak Sunday by reporters on Air Force One, Trump said, "they're doing reports on it," adding that if the outbreak "progresses, we'll will have to take action very strongly."

Neither the CDC nor the state health department included the death in their measles reports issued Friday, but the CDC acknowledged it when asked Sunday.

The number of cases in Texas shot up by 81 between March 28 and April 4, and 16 more people were hospitalized. Nationwide, the U.S. has more than double the number of measles cases it saw in all of 2024.

Republican U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy from Louisiana, a liver doctor whose vote helped cinch Kennedy's confirmation, called Sunday for stronger messaging from health officials in a post on X.

"Everyone should be vaccinated! There is no treatment for measles. No benefit to getting measles," he wrote. "Top health officials should say so unequivocally b/4 another child dies."

Cassidy has requested Kennedy to appear before his health committee Thursday, although Kennedy has

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 51 of 69

not publicly confirmed whether he will attend.

A CDC spokesperson noted the efficacy of the measles vaccine Sunday but stopped short of calling on people to get it. Departing from long-standing public health messaging around vaccination, the spokesperson called the decision a “personal one” and encouraged people to talk with their doctor. People “should be informed about the potential risks and benefits associated with vaccines,” the spokesperson added.

Misinformation about how to prevent and treat measles is hindering a robust public health response, including claims about vitamin A supplements that have been pushed by Kennedy and holistic medicine supporters despite doctors’ warnings that it should be given under a physician’s orders and that too much can be dangerous.

Doctors at Covenant Children’s Hospital in Lubbock, where the first measles death occurred, say they’ve treated fewer than 10 children for liver issues from vitamin A toxicity, which they found when running routine lab tests on children who are not fully vaccinated and have measles. Dr. Lara Johnson, chief medical officer, said the patients reported using vitamin A to treat and prevent the virus.

Dr. Peter Marks, the Food and Drug Administration’s former vaccine chief, said responsibility for the death rests with Kennedy and his staff. Marks was forced out of the FDA after disagreements with Kennedy over vaccine safety.

“This is the epitome of an absolute needless death,” Marks told The Associated Press in an interview Sunday. “These kids should get vaccinated — that’s how you prevent people from dying of measles.”

Marks also said he recently warned U.S. senators that more deaths would occur if the administration didn’t mount a more aggressive response to the outbreak.

Experts and local health officials expect the outbreak to go on for several more months if not a year. In West Texas, the vast majority of cases are in unvaccinated people and children younger than 17.

With several states facing outbreaks of the vaccine-preventable disease — and declining childhood vaccination rates nationwide — some worry that measles may cost the U.S. its status as having eliminated the disease.

Measles is a respiratory virus that can survive in the air for up to two hours. Up to 9 out of 10 people who are susceptible will get the virus if exposed, according to the CDC. The first shot is recommended for children ages 12 to 15 months, and the second for ages 4 to 6 years.

UConn returns to top of women’s basketball, dominates South Carolina 82-59 to capture its 12th title

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — During the final sweet moments of UConn’s 12th national title, Geno Auriemma and Paige Bueckers embraced after the star guard departed her final game with the Huskies.

It was the moment they wanted all along.

“They’ve all been gratifying, don’t get me wrong,” Auriemma said. “But this one here, because of the way it came about and what’s been involved, it’s been a long time since I’ve been that emotional when a player has walked off the court.”

Bueckers, Azzi Fudd and Sarah Strong led the way as UConn returned to the top of women’s college basketball by rolling to an 82-59 victory over defending champion South Carolina on Sunday.

Fudd, who was named the Most Outstanding Player of the Final Four, scored 24 points. Strong had 24 points and 15 rebounds, and Bueckers scored 17 points for UConn (37-3).

“Well, it’s amazing to have three players, three people like that on the same team,” said the 71-year-old Auriemma, who became the oldest coach in major college basketball to win a championship. “And Sarah, you would think Sarah was graduating the way she plays, right? All three of them complement each other so well. They all have such unique skill sets.”

Bueckers capped her stellar career with the Huskies’ first championship since 2016, ending a nine-year drought for the team. That was the longest period for Auriemma and his program without a title since Rebecca Lobo and Jen Rizzotti led the Huskies to their first championship in 1995.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 52 of 69

Since then the Huskies have had dominant championship runs, including in the early 2000s led by Sue Bird and Diana Taurasi, 2009-10 with Maya Moore and finally the four straight from 2013-16 with Breanna Stewart. All were in attendance in Florida on Sunday to see the Huskies' latest title.

"You just never know if you'll ever be back in this situation again," Auriemma said. "And there were so many times when I think we all questioned, 'Have we been here too long? Has it been time?' And we kept hanging in there and hanging in there and that's because these players make me want to hang in there every day."

Bueckers, the expected No. 1 pick in the WNBA draft on April 14, delivered for the Huskies throughout their championship season.

Winning a title was the only thing missing from an incredible UConn career that was slowed by injuries. She was the first freshman to win AP Player of the Year before missing a lot of her sophomore season with a tibial plateau fracture and meniscus tear. She then tore an ACL before the next season.

"It's been a story of resilience, gratitude of overcoming adversity and responding to life's challenges," Bueckers said. "I wouldn't trade it for the world."

UConn closed the first half up 10 points and then put the game away in the third quarter, with Fudd, Strong and Bueckers combining for 23 of the team's 26 points in the period. UConn was up 50-39 with 3:21 left before closing with a 12-3 run.

Fudd and Strong got it started with back-to-back 3s, and the rout was on. Auriemma subbed Bueckers, Fudd and Strong out with 1:32 left in the game.

UConn's leading trio finished the tourney with 368 points, including an NCAA freshman record 114 for Strong. It was the highest point total for three teammates in a single NCAA Tournament, according to Stats Perform. Chamique Holdsclaw, Tamika Catchings and Semeka Randell scored 363 points for Tennessee in the 1998 women's tournament, and Glen Rice led the way for a trio of Michigan men that had 366 points in 1989.

The UConn trio proved to be way too much for South Carolina.

Dawn Staley's team was trying for a third title in four years and fourth overall. It would have tied her with Kim Mulkey for third most behind Auriemma and former Tennessee Hall of Fame coach Pat Summitt, who had eight.

"Our kids gave it all they had. When you can understand why you lost and when you've been on the other side of that three times, you understand it," Staley said. "You can swallow it. We lost to a very good basketball team."

UConn had reached the title game only once during its drought since 2016. The Huskies had been eliminated by heartbreaking last-second losses in the Final Four on buzzer-beaters. The Huskies' last title game appearance came in 2022 when Staley's team beat UConn to start the Gamecocks' current run of success, a game that ended Auriemma's perfect record in title games.

There seemed to be no nerves early for either team as the game got off to a fast start. The teams traded baskets for the first few minutes before the defenses started to clamp down. The Huskies led 19-14 after one quarter and then extended the advantage to 36-26 at the half. Fudd had 13 points and Strong added eight points and 11 rebounds.

Le Pen supporters rally in Paris, turning a protest into a populist show of force

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Convicted of embezzling public funds and banned from running for office, far-right politician Marine Le Pen stood unshaken before a sea of French flags in Paris on Sunday. "For 30 years I have fought against injustice," she told the crowd. "And I will continue to fight."

Thousands of supporters gathered at Place Vauban, near the golden dome of Les Invalides and the tomb of Napoleon, for what was billed as a protest — but observers said it had all the markings of a campaign rally.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 53 of 69

The National Rally, Le Pen's party, organized the event in response to what it calls a politically motivated verdict. But with chants of "Marine Président!" and "They won't steal 2027 from us," the message was clear: this was more than a protest. It was a show of populist defiance aimed squarely at France's institutions.

Bardella sharpens the attack

At the heart of that charge stood Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 29-year-old protégé and president of the National Rally. His speech was fiery, accusing France's judges of trying to silence the opposition.

"March 29 was a dark day for France," he said, referencing the date of Le Pen's conviction. "The people must be free to choose their leaders — without interference from political judges."

Though he claimed the party would respect democracy, Bardella denounced magistrates' unions and warned of "a system determined to crush dissent." Supporters carried signs reading "Justice taking orders" and "Stop the judicial dictatorship." Others wore "Je suis Marine" ("I am Marine") shirts or compared Le Pen to U.S. President Donald Trump, who was convicted of civil fraud: "Trump can run — why not Marine?"

"The system's not broken — it's rigged," said Alice Triquet, a 26-year-old bartender. "If they can do this to her, what stops them from coming after anyone who doesn't think like them?"

One woman raised a handmade scale of justice, its arms bent and broken — a symbol of what Le Pen's supporters see as a justice system turned against the people.

A nation divided over justice and power

Le Pen was found guilty of using European Parliament funds to pay party staff in France — a scheme the court described as "a democratic bypass." She was sentenced to four years in prison, including two under house arrest and two suspended, and banned from public office for five years, effective immediately. Her appeal is expected next year.

The reaction has been sharply divided. While National Rally supporters denounce the ruling as politically motivated, many outside the party see it as legitimate accountability. "I challenge the notion that there is a tsunami of support for Le Pen on this issue," said John Goodman, Ph.D., director of Syracuse University's flagship program in France.

He also criticized the unusually rapid pace of Le Pen's appeal. "Her appeal has been fast-tracked so it can be heard in the summer of 2026, well before the 2027 presidential election, and significantly faster than a typical criminal case," Goodman said.

Warnings of a 'Trumpist turn'

On the other side of the Seine, hundreds gathered for a counter-rally led by left-wing parties, warning that France's far right is embracing U.S.-style authoritarianism.

"This is bigger than Marine Le Pen," said Green Party leader Marine Tondelier. "It's about defending the rule of law from people who think justice is optional."

Placards read "No Trumpism in France" and "Anti-fascist response." Meanwhile, former Prime Minister Gabriel Attal addressed supporters at a meeting of the center-right Renaissance party in the Paris suburb of Saint-Denis, calling the moment "a test of the Republic." Former PM Edouard Philippe stood by his side.

Though police were out in force, only minor clashes were reported.

The real message: trust the people, not the courts

Beyond the legal battle, Sunday's gathering of the National Rally revealed a deeper strategy. Party leaders have spent the week accusing judges of plotting a "judicial coup." They've called the sentence a political "execution." The goal is not just to overturn the ruling — it's to convince voters the legal system itself can't be trusted.

It's a page from the Trump playbook: paint the courts as biased, the system as broken, and frame any legal setback as an attack on democracy. The ballot box becomes the only authority that matters.

"The judges wear robes, but they're just politicians in disguise," said Claude Morel, 68, a pensioner from the southern city of Marseille. "Let the people decide."

What comes next

Le Pen may be barred from running — for now — but her political machine is far from finished. Bardella, long seen as her polished understudy, is stepping into the spotlight with growing confidence and sharpened rhetoric.

"We will be here tomorrow," he told the crowd. "And we will be stronger."

Sunday's rally was more than a show of strength. It was a test: can the far right convince enough French voters that justice is no longer neutral, and that only they can return power to the people?

How that question is answered may shape not only the 2027 presidential race — but the future of French democracy.

Judge says deportation of Maryland man to an El Salvador prison was 'wholly lawless'

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — The U.S. government's decision to arrest a Maryland man and send him to a notorious prison in El Salvador appears to be "wholly lawless," a federal judge wrote Sunday in a legal opinion explaining why she had ordered the Trump administration to bring him back to the United States.

There is little to no evidence to support a "vague, uncorroborated" allegation that Kilmar Abrego Garcia was once in the MS-13 street gang, U.S. District Judge Paula Xinis wrote. And in any case, she said, an immigration judge had expressly barred the U.S. in 2019 from deporting Abrego Garcia to El Salvador, where he faced likely persecution by local gangs.

"As defendants acknowledge, they had no legal authority to arrest him, no justification to detain him, and no grounds to send him to El Salvador — let alone deliver him into one of the most dangerous prisons in the Western Hemisphere," Xinis wrote.

She said it was "eye-popping" that the government had argued that it could not be forced to bring Abrego Garcia back because he is no longer in U.S. custody.

"They do indeed cling to the stunning proposition that they can forcibly remove any person — migrant and U.S. citizen alike — to prisons outside the United States, and then baldly assert they have no way to effectuate return because they are no longer the 'custodian,' and the Court thus lacks jurisdiction," Xinis wrote. "As a practical matter, the facts say otherwise."

The Justice Department has asked the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to pause Xinis' ruling.

Abrego Garcia, a 29-year-old Salvadoran national who has never been charged or convicted of any crime, was detained by immigration agents and deported last month.

Abrego Garcia had a permit from DHS to legally work in the U.S. and was a sheet metal apprentice pursuing a journeyman license, his attorney said. His wife is a U.S. citizen.

The White House has described Abrego Garcia's deportation as an "administrative error" but has also cast him as an MS-13 gang member. Attorneys for Abrego Garcia said there is no evidence he was in MS-13.

In her order Sunday, Xinis referenced earlier comments from now-suspended Justice Department attorney Erez Reuveni in which Reuveni said: "We concede he should not have been removed to El Salvador" and that he responded "I don't know" when asked why Abrego Garcia was being held.

The Justice Department placed Reuveni on leave after he made the comments.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, in an interview on "Fox News Sunday," likened Reuveni's comments to "a defense attorney walking in, conceding something in a criminal matter."

"That would never happen in this country," she said. "So he's on administrative leave now and we'll see what happens."

Stacey Young, a former Justice Department lawyer and founder of Justice Connection, a network of department alumni that works to support employees, released a statement that defended Reuveni and said he has "zealously represented the United States in some of the most high-stakes and controversial immigration cases under the Obama, Trump, and Biden administrations."

"Justice Department attorneys are being put in an impossible position: Obey the president, or uphold their ethical duty to the court and the Constitution," Young said. "We should all be grateful to DOJ lawyers who choose principle over politics and the rule of law over partisan loyalty."

Alex Ovechkin surpassed Wayne Gretzky's NHL goal count. Here

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 55 of 69

are other 'unbreakable' sports records

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP National Writer

Long before Alex Ovechkin surpassed Wayne Gretzky for the NHL goal-scoring record with No. 895 on Sunday, Gretzky moved into the top spot ahead of Gordie Howe by putting the puck in the net for the Los Angeles Kings on March 23, 1994.

During the Kings' regional sports network broadcast that day, an announcer breathlessly declared: "A historic moments in sports, compared with Henry Aaron passing Babe Ruth in home runs, with Pete Rose passing Ty Cobb in hits. Great moments when people thought records would never be broken. Mike Powell passing Bob Beamon's long jump record of 29 feet, 2 1/2 inches. And Wayne Gretzky, indeed, has records that may never be broken. Perhaps this one."

Gretzky got his 802nd in that game and ended up with 894 when he retired in 1999.

Turns out, Ovechkin did get there, scoring from his "office" in the left faceoff circle on a power play for the Washington Capitals — the only team the 39-year-old Russian winger has played for since making his NHL debut in 2005 — during the second period of a game against the New York Islanders.

"They say records are made to be broken," Gretzky said during an on-ice ceremony after Ovechkin moved ahead of him Sunday, "but I'm not sure who's going to get more goals than that."

Perhaps Ovechkin's final total will prove unsurpassable, even if Gretzky's didn't. Here is a by-the-numbers look at some supposedly unbreakable records that do still stand:

10.49

Florence Griffith-Joyner has held the fastest time in the women's 100-meter dash since a breezy day at the 1988 U.S. Olympic Trials, and only one other athlete has even gone faster than 10.6. Griffith-Joyner also holds the 200 record, established at the Seoul Olympics that year, and debates over the legitimacy of those two standards continue decades later.

18

There was plenty of talk that Tiger Woods was going to overtake Jack Nicklaus for the most major championships in men's golf, but that was before a series of injuries interrupted Woods' career. He recently had surgery for a ruptured Achilles tendon and will miss the upcoming Masters. Woods won his most recent major in 2019, ending an 11-year drought and raising his count to 15; Nicklaus retired with 18. No other active player has more than six.

23

Michael Phelps' dominance of the pool left the American swimmer with the most Olympic gold medals from any sport — and no one else has more than nine as of now. Phelps, who retired after the 2016 Rio Olympics, also owns more total medals than any other athlete, 28.

56

Joe DiMaggio's streak of consecutive Major League Baseball games with at least one hit has stood since 1941, and the closest anyone has come since then was Rose's 44-game run in 1978. Another number that might not be surpassed: Rose's 4,256 career hits. Baseball is a sport filled with numbers and, therefore, records, and another one widely deemed unapproachable is Cal Ripken's 2,632 games in a row, more than 500 above Lou Gehrig's previous high. The longest current active streak is below 500.

100

Wilt Chamberlain's single-game NBA scoring record was set on March 2, 1962, and while he said a quarter-century later, "I think it can be broken," the closest anyone has come was Kobe Bryant's 81 in 2006.

511

Cy Young's career pitching wins are nearly 100 more than anyone else in MLB history and came long before the current era of limiting innings and protecting arms (his last season was 1911). There are some who think there might never be another player to get to 300 wins. The sport's active leader is Justin Verlander, who entered this year with 262 at age 42.

762

Barry Bonds hit more career home runs than anyone else in MLB, bettering Aaron's total of 755 before

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 56 of 69

retiring in 2007. Bonds admitted taking performance-enhancing drugs, although he said he didn't do so knowingly. Also still around: Bonds' season record of 73 homers in 2001.

70-68

Consider this record one that simply can't be broken because the rules changed: John Isner's victory over Nicolas Mahut at Wimbledon in 2010 is the longest match in tennis history, lasting 11 hours, 5 minutes until finishing at 70-68 in the fifth set. In 2022, all four Grand Slam tournaments adopted tiebreakers at 6-6 in the fifth set of men's matches and third set of women's to prevent never-ending marathons.

Wayne Gretzky and Alex Ovechkin at a glance

By The Associated Press undefined

Alex Ovechkin with his 895th career goal has broken Wayne Gretzky's NHL record that most thought was untouchable. A look at Gretzky and Ovechkin and how their careers compare:

Wayne Gretzky

Born: Jan. 26, 1961

Hometown: Brantford, Ontario

NHL debut: Oct. 10, 1979

First goal: Oct. 14, 1979

Stanley Cup titles: 4, all with Edmonton (1984, '85, '87, '88)

Teams: Edmonton Oilers, Los Angeles Kings, St. Louis Blues, New York Rangers

Games played: 1,487

NHL records: 55, including most assists (1,963) and points (2,857)

Alex Ovechkin

Born: Sept. 17, 1985

Hometown: Moscow

NHL debut: Oct. 5, 2005

First goal: Oct. 5, 2005 (2)

Stanley Cup titles: 1 with Washington (2018)

Teams: Washington Capitals

Games played: 1,487

NHL records: Goals (895), power-play goals (325), shots (6,851)

Deadly car accident in coastal Georgia kills family of 5

By The Associated Press undefined

A deadly car accident killed five people in coastal Georgia on Sunday morning, according to state police. A vehicle burst into flames after it collided with another vehicle headed southbound on I-95 in McIntosh County around 6 a.m.

The victims in that vehicle were identified as 27-year-old Reagan Dougan and her four children, ages 9, 4, 2 and 3 months, according to Georgia State Trooper Christopher Ashdown.

Dougan had been driving a rental car from Raleigh, North Carolina, to meet her husband in Florida, who has been notified of the accident. The passenger in the other vehicle was taken to the hospital.

Forecast of a week of rain adds to woes faced by victims of Myanmar quake, as death toll tops 3,500

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — People in Myanmar's earthquake-stricken areas braced for thunderstorms late Sunday, after heavy rains and winds the previous night disrupted rescue and relief operations and added to the misery of the many who lost their homes in the disaster and were forced to sleep in the open.

Myanmar's state-run MRTV reported on Sunday evening that scattered showers and thunderstorms

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 57 of 69

possible across the country for the next week.

"The public is advised to be aware of the possibility of untimely rain accompanied by strong winds, lightning, hail, and landslides," MRTV said. Daytime temperatures are forecast to reach 38 degrees Celsius C (100 degrees Fahrenheit) by mid-week.

The epicenter of the 7.7 magnitude quake on March 28 was near Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city. It hit a wide swath of the country, causing significant damage to six regions and states including the capital Naypyitaw.

Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun, a spokesperson for the military government, said Sunday in an audio message to journalists that 3,564 people have been confirmed dead so far, with 5,012 others injured and 210 missing.

The quake left many areas without power, telephone or cell connections and damaged roads and bridges, hindering damage assessments.

An official from Myanmar Rescue Federation (Mandalay) told The Associated Press on Sunday that rescuers had to temporarily shut down electrical equipment and machines used in search operations due to the rain on Saturday and Sunday, making work more difficult but not halting it.

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was afraid of being arrested by the military for speaking without authorization, said rescuers will continue search operations despite the possibility of more rain.

Another rescuer working in Mandalay, similarly speaking on condition of anonymity, said the rain and strong winds caused some buildings to collapse, causing further hardship for those seeking shelter.

The Irrawaddy, an online Myanmar news site operating in exile, reported that at least 80 dead bodies were found in the wreckage of the Great Wall Hotel in Mandalay after the removal of walls and rubble on Sunday afternoon. Its report could not immediately be confirmed.

Myanmar Fire Services Department said in a statement on Sunday that rescuers recovered five bodies from collapsed buildings in Mandalay.

Myanmar has had a military government since February 2021, when the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. It tolerates no criticism, and is engaged in a civil war against pro-democracy resistance forces and ethnic minority guerrilla armies.

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.

Myanmar's military government has said 5,223 buildings, 1,824 schools, 2,752 Buddhist monasterial living quarters, 4,817 pagodas and temples, 167 hospitals and clinics, 169 bridges, 198 dams and 184 sections of the country's main highway were damaged by the earthquake.

1 killed in Russian attack on Kyiv as death toll from earlier missile strike rises to 20

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — One person was killed Sunday as Russian air strikes hit the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, while the death toll from Friday's deadly attack on the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih continued to rise.

The Kyiv victim was found close to the strike's epicenter of the attack in the city's Darnytskyi district, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. A further three people were injured in the strike, which sparked fires in several nonresidential areas, damaging cars and buildings.

In a statement on social media, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the intensifying Russian attacks showed that there is still insufficient international pressure on Moscow.

He said Russia has launched more than 1,460 guided aerial bombs, nearly 670 attack drones and more than 30 missiles at Ukraine in the past week alone.

"These attacks are (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's response to all international diplomatic efforts. Each of our partners — the United States, all of Europe, the entire world — has seen that Russia intends to continue the war and the killing," Zelenskyy said.

"That is why there can be no easing of pressure. All efforts must be aimed at guaranteeing security and bringing peace closer."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 58 of 69

Zelenskyy also said that the missiles fired into Ukraine had been launched by Russian ships stationed in the Black Sea. While U.S. negotiators announced on March 25 that both Moscow and Kyiv had agreed to a Black Sea ceasefire, the Kremlin has pushed for some Western sanctions against Russia to be lifted before such an agreement comes into force.

"This is one reason why Russia distorts diplomacy and will not agree to an unconditional (Black Sea) ceasefire: They want to retain the opportunity to strike at our cities and our ports from the sea," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. "A ceasefire at sea is not only about free navigation and maritime food supplies, it is, above all, about security."

Meanwhile, officials said that the death toll from Friday's attack on Kryvyi Rih had continued to grow, with 20 dead — including many children — and a further 75 wounded.

Oleksandr Vilkul, head of Kryvyi Rih's military administration, declared three days of mourning, starting on April 7. He said that there was "pain in the hearts of millions of people".

"Together we will stand. And no matter how difficult it is, we will win," he said. "The enemy will be punished for every Ukrainian and for every mother's tear."

A team from the U.N. Human Rights Office in Ukraine visited the impact site Saturday to document the damage and establish the identities of the nine children killed in the attack. They described it as the deadliest single verified strike harming children since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Local authorities said the Kryvyi Rih strike damaged 44 apartment buildings and 23 private houses.

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.

Elsewhere, Russian troops fired 23 missiles and 109 strike and decoy drones across Ukraine overnight, the Ukrainian air force said Sunday. Thirteen missiles and 40 drones were shot down, while 53 decoy drones were jammed and did not reach their destinations, it said.

A 59-year-old man was killed Sunday morning by a Russian drone strike in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, local Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that its air defenses had destroyed 11 Ukrainian drones, including eight over the Rostov region and two over the Kursk region.

The US has revoked visas for South Sudanese while civil war threatens at home

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

The United States once cheered the creation of South Sudan as an independent nation. Now the Trump administration has abruptly revoked the visas of all South Sudanese, saying the country's government has failed to accept the return of its citizens "in a timely manner."

The decision means South Sudanese could be returned to a nation again on the brink of civil war or unable to seek the U.S. as a haven.

There was no immediate response from South Sudan's government, which has struggled since independence from Sudan in 2011 to deliver some of the basic services of a state. Years of conflict have left the country of over 11 million people heavily reliant on aid that has been hit hard by another Trump administration decision — sweeping cuts in foreign assistance.

Here's a look at South Sudan, whose people had been granted temporary protected status by the U.S. because of insecurity at home. That status expires on May 3.

A deadly divide

The euphoria of independence turned to civil war two years later, when rival factions backing President Salva Kiir and deputy Riek Machar opened fire on each other in South Sudan's capital, Juba, in 2013.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 59 of 69

The two men's tensions have been so much at the heart of the country's insecurity that Pope Francis once took the extraordinary step of kneeling to kiss their feet in one of his pleas for lasting peace.

Five years of civil war killed hundreds of thousands of people. A peace deal reached in 2018 has been fragile and not fully implemented, to the frustration of the U.S. and other international backers. Notably, South Sudan still hasn't held a long-delayed presidential election, and Kiir remains in power.

His rivalry with Machar, compounded by ethnic divisions, has simmered through multiple attempts to return Machar as a vice president. Machar has long regarded himself as destined for the presidency, citing a prophecy years ago by a seer from his ethnic group.

Late last month, the threat of war returned. Machar was arrested and his allies in the government and the military were detained following a major escalation: A militia from Machar's ethnic group had seized an army garrison upcountry. The government responded with airstrikes. Dozens of people were killed. A United Nations helicopter was attacked.

Following the arrest, Machar's opposition political party announced South Sudan's peace deal is effectively over.

"Let's not mince words: What we are seeing is darkly reminiscent of the 2013 and 2016 civil wars, which killed 400,000 people," U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned days ago.

Some Western countries have closed their embassies there while others, including the U.S., have reduced embassy staff.

A country in disarray

South Sudan's government has long relied on the country's oil production. But little of that money has reached the people, in part because of official corruption. Civil servants at times go months without being paid.

Conflict in neighboring Sudan has affected landlocked South Sudan's exports of oil. Refugees spilling over from Sudan have added to instability at home.

Climate shocks including flooding have caused mass displacement and closed schools. South Sudan's health and education systems were already among the weakest in the world. Aid organizations have run or supported many. Now that support network has been hit by sweeping cuts in U.S. aid.

The Trump administration's announcement Saturday evening revoking visas for all South Sudanese with immediate effect is in sharp contrast to Washington's past warm embrace as its rebel leaders — including Kiir and Machar — fought for independence.

Educational and other opportunities for South Sudanese have been available in the U.S. for years. On Saturday, hours after the State Department announcement, a freshman from South Sudan was in Duke's starting lineup at the men's NCAA basketball tournament Final Four. Duke spokesman Frank Tramble told The Associated Press the university was aware of the announcement and was "working expeditiously to understand any implications for Duke students."

It was not immediately clear how many South Sudanese hold U.S. visas or how American authorities will follow up. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau said on social media the dispute centers on one person, certified by South Sudan's embassy in Washington, that Juba has refused to accept. That person was not named.

No new visas will be issued, the U.S. said, and "we will be prepared to review these actions when South Sudan is in full cooperation."

The skyrocketing cost of weight-loss drugs has state Medicaid programs looking for a solution

By SUSAN HAIGH and MARC LEVY Associated Press

States increasingly struggling to cover the rising cost of popular GLP-1 drugs like Wegovy, Ozempic and Zepbound are searching for ways to get out from under the budgetary squeeze that took them by surprise.

One solution some policymakers may try is restricting the number of people on Medicaid who can use

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 60 of 69

the pricey diabetes drugs for weight-loss purposes.

Pennsylvania's Medicaid coverage of the drugs is expected to cost \$1.3 billion in 2025 — up from a fraction of that several years ago — and is contributing to projections of a multibillion-dollar budget deficit. The state is thinking about requiring Medicaid patients who want to use GLP-1s for weight loss to meet a certain number on the body-mass index or try diet and exercise programs or less expensive medications first.

"It is a medication that's gotten a lot of hype and a lot of press, and has become very popular in its use and it is wildly expensive," Dr. Val Arkoosh, Pennsylvania's human services secretary, told a state House hearing in March.

At least 14 states already cover the cost of GLP-1 medications for obesity treatment for patients on Medicaid, the federal health care program for people with low incomes. Democrats and Republicans in at least a half-dozen other states floated bills this year to require the same coverage, according to an Associated Press analysis using the bill-tracking software Plural.

Some bills have stalled while others remain alive, including a proposal in Arkansas requiring GLP-1s to be covered under Medicaid when prescribed specifically for weight loss. Iowa lawmakers are thinking about ordering a cost-benefit analysis before making the commitment. Already, West Virginia and North Carolina ended programs in 2024 that provided coverage for state employees, citing cost concerns.

"It is very expensive," said Jeffrey Beckham, the state budget director in Connecticut, where Medicaid coverage of the drugs for weight loss may be scrapped entirely. "Other states are coming to that conclusion, as well as some private carriers."

Overall Medicaid spending on GLP-1 drugs — before partial rebates from drug manufacturers — jumped from \$577.3 million in 2019 to \$3.9 billion in 2023, according to a November report from KFF, a nonprofit that researches health care issues. The number of prescriptions for the drugs increased by more than 400% during that same time period. The average annual cost per patient for a GLP-1 drug is \$12,000, according to a Peterson-KFF tracker.

About half of Americans "strongly" or "somewhat" favor having Medicare and Medicaid cover weight-loss drugs for people who have obesity, a recent AP-NORC poll showed, with about 2 in 10 opposed the idea and about one-quarter with a neutral view.

But Medicare does not cover GLP-1s, and the Trump administration said Friday that wouldn't put into place a proposed rule by presidential predecessor Joe Biden to cover the medications under Medicare's Part D prescription drug coverage. Biden's proposal was expensive: It would have included coverage for all state- and federally funded Medicaid programs, costing taxpayers as much as \$35 billion over next decade.

States that do provide coverage have tried to manage costs by putting prescribing limits on the GLP-1s. There's also some evidence that if Medicaid patients lose weight with the drugs, they'll be healthier and less expensive to cover, said Tracy Zvenyach of Obesity Action, an advocacy group that urges states to provide coverage.

Zvenyach also stressed how it's unclear whether patients will need to regularly take these drugs for the rest of their lives — a key cost concern raised by public officials. "Someone may have to be on treatment for over the course of their lifetime," she said. "But we don't know exactly what that regimen would look like."

About 40% of adults in the U.S. have obesity, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Obesity can cause hypertension, Type 2 diabetes and high cholesterol, which lead to greater risks of things like stroke and heart attacks.

Dr. Adam Raphael Rom, a physician at Greater Philadelphia Health Action, a network of health centers in the city, said most of his patients who take GLP-1s are covered by Medicaid and some are non-diabetics who use it for weight loss.

"I had one patient tell me that it's like, changed her relationship to food," Rom said. "I've had patients lose like 20, 40, 60 pounds."

But obesity experts have told The Associated Press that as many as 1 in 5 people may not lose the amount of weight that others have seen come off. And in a recent survey of state Medicaid directors con-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 61 of 69

ducted by KFF, a health policy research organization, they said cost and potential side effects are among their concerns.

The debate over coverage coincides with rising Medicaid budgets and the prospect of losing federal funding — with congressional Republicans considering siphoning as much as \$880 billion from Medicaid over the next decade.

Connecticut is facing a \$290 million Medicaid account deficit, and Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont proposed doing away with a 2023 requirement that Medicaid cover GLP-1s for severe obesity, though the state has never fully abided by the law due to the cost.

Starting June 14, though, state Medicaid patients will be required to have a Type 2 diabetes diagnosis to get the drugs covered. Lamont also is pushing for the state to cover two less expensive oral medications approved by the FDA for weight loss, as well as nutrition counseling.

Sarah Makowicki, 42, tried the other medications and said she suffered serious side effects. The graduate student and statehouse intern is working on a bill that would restore the full GLP-1 coverage for her and others.

Sara Lamontagne, a transgender woman with a disability who is on Medicaid, said she regained weight when her coverage for GLP-1 medication was cut off in the past. She said she went from 260 pounds to over 300, heavier than she had ever been.

"So, it's a horrible game to be played, to be going back and and forth," said Lamontagne, whose attempts to appeal the state's recent denial of her Ozempic prescription refill have been unsuccessful.

Makowicki said GLP-1 drugs combined with weight-loss surgery helped her change her life: She's had knee-replacement surgery and lost over 200 pounds.

"I am a different person from what I was five years ago," Makowicki said. "Not only in my physical space, but also mentally."

Trump's tariffs hit a sour note in landmark NYC emporium of sweets

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Economy Candy's shelves brim with sweets from around the world — gummies from Germany, lollipops from Spain, chocolates from Japan and a panoply of candies from across the U.S.

Standing amid it all, columns of bright jellybeans to his left and exotic Kit Kats to his right, owner Mitchell Cohen is quick with his assessment of how many of this shop's 2,000-plus items are affected by the historic round of tariffs announced by President Donald Trump.

"I think all of them," Cohen says at his store on New York's Lower East Side.

Few corners of the American economy are untouched, directly or indirectly, by the sweeping tariffs being imposed by Trump. Even a little store like Economy Candy.

Cohen had just begun to feel a barrage of inflation-driven price increases from suppliers ease when the tariff threats arrived. For a business with a name like Economy Candy, he wants to remain affordable but fears how high some prices may have to climb in the coming months.

"I think it's gonna be another round of this hyperinflation on some items," says 39-year-old Cohen. "If we're putting tariffs everywhere, it is going to go up."

Stepping into Economy Candy feels like a time warp. Its name is emblazoned on a sign in a vintage, blaring red script, and crossing below its green-and-white striped awning, past the bins of Smarties, butterscotches and Lemonheads in the front window, an indecipherable sweetness fills the air, oldies music sounds overhead and customers mill around stacks of candy bars they forgot still existed.

It represents just a blip in the country's \$54 billion candy industry. But it was already feeling the weight of surges in prices of cocoa and other ingredients before tariffs were layered on.

Candy and gum prices are up about 34% from five years ago and 89% from 2005, according to Consumer Price Index data. Price, according to the National Confectioners Association, has become the top factor in consumers' candy purchase decisions, outweighing a buyer's mood.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 62 of 69

About a third of Economy Candy's products are imported, crowded on shelves and tables near the store's rear. There aren't just "more German Haribo varieties than the Haribo store in Germany," as Cohen claims, but gummies the brand makes in France, Austria and Britain.

They have every Milka bar they can find in Switzerland, every type of Leone hard candies that Italy churns out and as many exotic Kit Kats from Japan as they can fit.

On products like these, the tariffs' toll is obvious.

Pistachio Snickers bars are from India, now subject to 26% tariffs, while passion fruit mousse Snickers are from Portugal, now under the 20% European Union levies.

But even an American-made Snickers isn't immune.

While the bars may roll off conveyors in Texas, they rely on ingredients from around the globe. Source-map, which tracks supply chains, says Snickers bars include chocolate from Guyana and sugar from Brazil and are wrapped in packaging from Canada. All are now subjected to varying levels of tariffs.

"There's a lot of ingredients in there that have to come from other countries," says Andreas Waldkirch, an economics professor at Colby College who teaches a class on international trade. "Unless you're talking about something very simple from your local farmers market, almost every product relies on ingredients from elsewhere. Those indirect costs are really what's going to drive up prices."

The story repeats with American candies across the store – the boxes of Nerds and bags of Sugar Babies and rolls of Smarties are all inextricably tied to the global supply chain.

A table teeming with those domestic delicacies takes center stage near Economy Candy's entrance. Cohen took over the store from his parents, who took it over from their parents before. He got his first haircut in the store. He was behind the register as a child. He took his wife by on their first date.

As a kid, everything on the store's centerpiece table of American treats cost 59 cents. By 2020, the price was \$1.29, but customers who bought a whole box paid a discounted rate of \$1 per piece.

Now, Cohen can't even get them wholesale at that price.

Today, he sells the items on the table for \$1.59. Cohen calls the selection a "loss leader" but thinks it's important to showcase his store's affordability. Once the tariffs are fully implemented, he's not sure he'll be able to put off price increases.

"When your margins are coming down and your dollar doesn't go as far at the end of the day, you really start to feel it," he says. "But I don't want anyone to come into Economy Candy and not think that it's economical."

The biggest-ticket implications of the tariff blitz understandably gain the most attention – the thousands of dollars a car's price tag may grow, the tens of thousands that disappear from a retirement account in a single day. But here among the root beer barrels and licorice strands, you're reminded that small-dollar items are affected too, and so are the families selling them.

At its birth, the business Cohen's grandfather started focused on shoe and hat repairs. But in the wake of the Great Depression, when few in a neighborhood of crowded tenements had money for such fixes, the business pivoted.

Candy, once relegated to a cart out front, took over the store.

In the 88 years since, business hasn't always been Chuckles and Zagnuts. The Sept. 11 attacks kept tourists away and had sales sagging and the pandemic closed the store and forced it to pivot to online sales.

If tariffs upend things, Cohen isn't sure how he might adapt again. He sells products that aren't made in America and he sells American products made with ingredients from across the globe. He had just been making headway on beginning international sales, but the web of tariff rules may make it impossible.

The average U.S. tariff could rise to nearly 25% if the import taxes Trump put on goods from dozens of countries are fully implemented Wednesday. That would be the highest rate in more than a century, including tariffs widely blamed for worsening the Great Depression.

Trump said imposing the tariffs amounted to a "liberation day" for a country that has been "looted, pillaged, raped and plundered" by friend and foe alike, insisting it was "very, very good news" for the U.S.

Cohen isn't sure how that can be true for a business like his.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 63 of 69

"I can understand bringing manufacturing and bringing things back to America, but you know, we rely on raw materials that just aren't native to our country," he says. "And it's not like I can get a green tea Japanese Kit Kat from an American company."

As Cohen stood before mounds of strawberry candies in shiny wrappers and little cubes of caramel in cellophane, the first word of the tariff's concrete impact on him arrived. A French supplier emailed saying it was immediately imposing a 5% surcharge due to the tariffs, expressing regret for the move and hope that "the situation will be resolved swiftly."

Cohen wore a smile anyway. He wants this to be a happy place for visitors.

"You travel back to a time when nothing mattered," Cohen says, "when you didn't worry about anything."

Pope makes surprise appearance at St. Peter's Square, 2 weeks after leaving hospital

By SILVIA STELLACCI and COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis made a surprise entrance to St. Peter's Square during a special Jubilee Mass for the sick and health workers on Sunday, marking his first public appearance at the Vatican since leaving the hospital two weeks ago after a life-threatening bout with pneumonia.

The pontiff waved at the crowd of faithful that stood and applauded as he was pushed in a wheelchair unannounced to the front of the altar in the square. Some exclaimed, "I see the pope!" as his image first emerged on a big screen showing him passing through the Holy Door before being brought down a ramp to the altar.

"Good Sunday to everyone," Francis said, speaking into a microphone, which he tapped to make sure it was working on a second attempt. "Thank you very much."

The pontiff's voice sounded stronger than when he addressed well-wishers outside of Gemelli hospital on the day of his release March 23, after a five-week hospital stay.

He wore nasal tubes to receive supplemental oxygen, which the Vatican says is being gradually reduced. As he waved and blessed the crowd, his arm movements remained limited — which his doctor said was not related to his illness but to an unspecified trauma suffered before his Feb. 14 hospitalization.

After the Mass, the pontiff greeted some of those who assisted in the service, many who bowed to kiss his hands. He exited the square through the Holy Door.

Pope shares his experience of being sick

Francis has just completed two weeks of at least two months of doctor-ordered rest as he continues physical, respiratory and speech therapy, as well as treatment for a lingering lung infection.

The pope referred to his experience with illness in both the traditional Sunday blessing and the homily read by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, organizer of the Holy Year that is expected to bring some 30 million pilgrims to Rome.

Addressing the sick among the crowd, the pope said in the homily read by Fisichella that "In this moment of my life I share a lot: the experience of infirmity, feeling weak, depending on the others for many things, needing support.

"It is not easy, but it is a school in which we learn every day to love and to let ourselves be loved, without demanding and without rejecting, without regretting, without despairing, grateful to God and to our brothers for the good that we receive, trusting for what is still to come."

He also urged the faithful not to push the fragile from their lives "as unfortunately a certain mentality does today. Let's not ostracize pain from our surroundings. Let's instead make it an opportunity to grow together, to cultivate hope."

In the traditional Sunday blessing, he offered prayers for doctors, nurses and health care workers "who are not always helped to work in inadequate conditions, at times the victims of aggression. Their mission is not easy and must be supported and respected."

The faithful were moved by the pope's unexpected appearance.

"It was beautiful, something completely unexpected because I didn't think I would see the pope," said

Pasquale Citrolo from Trapani, Sicily. "Instead he gave us this gift."

Linda Elezi, from the Adriatic coastal province of Ancona, said she was touched by the pope's "surprise."
"We pray for him every day, and he prays for us, and for peace and for all the world, because that is the message of our pilgrimage today: Bring peace to all the world," she said.

Moroccans protest Israel's offensive in Gaza and take aim at Trump

By SAM METZ and AKRAM OUBACHIR Associated Press

RABAT, Morocco (AP) — Tens of thousands of Moroccans on Sunday protested Israel's latest offensive in Gaza, putting fury toward U.S. President Donald Trump near the center of their grievances.

In the largest protest Morocco has seen in months, demonstrators denounced Israel, the United States and their own government. Some stepped on Israeli flags, held banners showing slain Hamas leaders and waved posters juxtaposing Trump alongside displaced Palestinians fleeing their homes.

Organizers condemned Israel's ongoing military operation in Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed since Israel renewed air and ground strikes last month, aimed at pressuring Hamas to release remaining hostages.

Such protests have erupted across the Middle East and North Africa, where leaders typically worry about demonstrations undermining domestic stability. Pro-Palestinian rallies were also staged this weekend in the capitals of Tunisia and Yemen as well as in Morocco's most populous city Casablanca.

In countries that have historically aligned with the U.S., anti-Trump backlash has emerged as a theme. Demonstrators in Rabat on Sunday condemned his proposal to displace millions of Palestinians to make way for the redevelopment of Gaza, as well as the U.S. efforts to pursue pro-Palestinian activists.

Still, many Moroccans said they saw Trump's policies as mostly consistent with his predecessor, Joe Biden's. "(Trump) has made the war worse," said Mohammed Toussi, who travelled from Casablanca with his family to protest.

"Biden hid some things but Trump has shown it all," he added, likening their positions but not their messaging.

Protestors, Toussi said, remain angry about Morocco's 2020 decision to normalize ties with Israel.

Abdelhak El Arabi, an adviser to Morocco's former Islamist prime minister, said the reasons Moroccans were protesting had grown throughout the war. He predicted popular anger would continue until the war ends.

"It's not a war, Gaza is getting erased from the earth," the 62-year-old Tamesna resident said.

Demonstrations have included a range of groups, including the Islamist association al Adl Wal Ihsan. Moroccan authorities tolerate most protests, but have arrested some activists who have rallied in front of businesses or foreign embassies or implicated the monarchy in their complaints.

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 have since been released in ceasefire agreements and other deals. More than 50,000 Palestinians have been killed as part of Israel's offensive, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which doesn't say whether those killed are civilians or combatants. The war has left most of Gaza in ruins, and at its height displaced around 90% of the population.

Ukraine will send a team to the US next week for talks on a new draft mineral deal

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine will send a team to Washington next week to begin negotiations on a new draft of a deal that would give the U.S. access to Ukraine's valuable mineral resources, Economy Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko told The Associated Press.

"The new draft agreement from the U.S. shows that the intention to create a fund or jointly invest re-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 65 of 69

mains," Svyrydenko said Saturday, during a trip to northern Ukraine.

The delegation from Kyiv will include representatives from the Ministries of Economy, Foreign Affairs, Justice and Finance.

The long-running negotiations over a mineral deal have already strained relations between Kyiv and Washington. The two sides had been preparing in February to sign a framework agreement but the plan was derailed following a contentious meeting in the Oval Office between U.S. President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

After some Ukrainian lawmakers leaked the new draft, critics slammed it as little more than an attempt to strip Kyiv of control over its own natural resources and infrastructure. According to the leaked document, the new draft includes not only rare-earth minerals but gas and oil.

Ukraine holds significant deposits of more than 20 minerals deemed strategically critical by the U.S., including titanium, which is used to make aircraft wings, lithium, key to several battery technologies, and uranium, used in nuclear power.

New draft only gives the U.S. side of the deal

Despite the disruption following the Oval Office meeting, Ukrainian officials showed interest in signing the framework deal at any time, seeing it as an important step to win the favor of President Donald Trump and shore up U.S. backing in the war against Russia's full-scale invasion.

After weeks of silence on the status of the deal, the U.S. sent a new draft to Kyiv, which goes further than the original framework.

It's unclear why the U.S. chose to bypass the signing of the framework deal and instead moved forward with a more comprehensive draft agreement, which would likely require ratification by Ukraine's parliament.

However, Ukrainian officials have been cautious about commenting on the contents of the draft, stressing that it currently reflects only one side's position.

"What we have now is a document that reflects the position of the U.S. Treasury legal team," said Svyrydenko. "This is not a final version, it's not a joint position."

She said that Ukraine's task now is to assemble a technical team for negotiations, define its red lines and core principles, and send a delegation to Washington for technical talks as early as next week.

"It's clear that the full parameters of this agreement can't be discussed online," Svyrydenko said. "We need to sit down with the teams and continue the conversation in person."

Legal, investment, and financial advisers are being selected, she said.

"This marks a new stage in relations with the United States — one that requires expertise across multiple areas," she said. "Ultimately, everything will be decided through the course of negotiations."

Ukraine seeks terms acceptable to both sides

Svyrydenko declined to elaborate publicly on Ukraine's official evaluation of the new draft, but noted that there is now a more detailed document outlining the fund's creation. And while the initial draft focused primarily on the intention to establish the fund, Svyrydenko said the latest version lays out how American advisers envision its structure and operation.

It remains unclear what role Ukraine would play in managing the fund under the newly proposed U.S. draft. However, analysts who reviewed the leaked document said Kyiv's involvement would likely be minimal — a point Ukraine hopes to challenge in upcoming negotiations, using the previously agreed framework as its reference.

A previous version of the framework agreement, obtained by The Associated Press, outlined plans for a jointly owned and managed investment fund between the United States and Ukraine, intended to support the reconstruction of Ukraine's war-torn economy.

Under the terms, Ukraine would allocate 50% of future revenues generated from key national assets — including minerals, hydrocarbons, oil, natural gas, and other extractable resources — to the fund.

The framework agreement, which was never signed, stated that revenues from its natural resources would go into the fund and be used for the reconstruction of the country, not that ownership or control of those resources would be transferred to the United States.

"We're very focused on ensuring that the final draft of the agreement, after negotiations, fully aligns

with our strategic interests," Svrydenko said. "I believe the work on the previous memorandum showed that both teams are capable of reaching these goals and agreeing on terms acceptable to both sides."

What to know about the severe storms and flash flooding hitting parts of the US

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — Parts of the South and Midwest, still reeling from violent storms, tornadoes and flooding that have killed more than a dozen people, face new flooding and tornado warnings that forecasters said could last for days.

Severe thunderstorms have swept through a swath of the country with a population of 2.3 million people from northeast Texas through Arkansas and into southeast Missouri.

What has happened?

In Kentucky, more than 500 roads were closed by Sunday because of the floods and mudslides. Two people were killed, including a 9-year-old boy who was swept away as he walked to a school bus stop.

The downtown area of Hopkinsville, Kentucky — a city of 31,000 residents 72 miles (116 kilometers) northwest of Nashville, Tennessee — was submerged.

The first wave of storms killed at least five people in Tennessee and one each in Missouri and Indiana on Wednesday and Thursday.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee called the devastation in his state "enormous" and said it was too early to know whether there were more deaths as searches continued.

There was massive destruction in Lake City in eastern Arkansas, where homes were flattened and cars were flipped and tossed into trees.

More than 300 tornado warnings were issued by the National Weather Service since the tornado outbreak began early Wednesday, and new warnings followed overnight in Alabama and Mississippi, along with flash flood warnings in Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee. The number of tornado warnings eclipsed those issued during last month's deadly outbreak in Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri and other states.

Not all tornado warnings involve an actual tornado, and it was too early to know how many were actually produced by the current outbreak.

The severe weather also caused travel headaches.

Hundreds of flights have been canceled and more than 6,400 flights delayed, according to FlightAware.com, which reported 74 cancellations and 478 delays of U.S. flights early Sunday. The flooding also led to road closures in Kentucky and southern Illinois, among other places.

The severe weather hit at a time when nearly half the National Weather Service's forecast offices have 20% vacancy rates — twice that of a decade ago — according to data obtained by The Associated Press.

What's causing this wave of storms?

Forecasters attributed the violent weather to warm temperatures, an unstable atmosphere, strong wind shear and abundant moisture streaming from the Gulf.

The prolonged deluge, which could dump more than a foot (30 centimeters) of rain over a four-day period, "is an event that happens once in a generation to once in a lifetime," the National Weather Service said.

What's next?

Private forecasting company AccuWeather said northeastern Arkansas, southeastern Missouri, southern Illinois, western Kentucky and northwestern Tennessee needed to prepare for a catastrophic risk from flash flooding.

"This is a rare and dangerous atmospheric setup," said Jonathan Porter, AccuWeather chief meteorologist.

Forecasters have also warned of major disruptions to shipping and supply chains. Shipping giant FedEx, for example, has a massive facility in the danger area, in Memphis Tennessee. Barge transportation on the lower Mississippi River could also be affected.

Water rescue teams and sandbags were being set up across the region in anticipation of flooding, and authorities warned people to take the threat of rising water seriously and to not drive through water.

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear said flooding had reached record levels in many communities. "Kentuckians and communities have been affected across the state, and teams are working around the clock to support them," he said Sunday on social media platform X.

State Supreme Courts have become an electoral battleground. But some states choose a different path

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO and JOHN HANNA Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — The race for control of the Wisconsin Supreme Court drew \$100 million in campaign spending, attack ads and the attention of President Donald Trump and close ally Elon Musk.

While its spending set a record for a U.S. judicial contest, the race that ended Tuesday was the apex of a trend building for years as state Supreme Court races across the country have gotten increasingly costly and vitriolic. The partisan tone of the Wisconsin race and the amount of money it drew from outside interest groups raise questions about whether elections are the best way to fill seats for bodies that are supposed to be nonpartisan and ultimately decide the fate of state laws and citizen ballot initiatives.

The politicized nature of the contests was illustrated starkly on Friday when a Republican-majority appellate panel in North Carolina sided with a Republican state Supreme Court challenger who is seeking to throw out thousands of ballots from last November's election.

These races have become priorities for both major parties because state high courts have been playing pivotal roles in deciding rules around redistricting, abortion and voting rights while also settling disputes over election outcomes.

Some states shifted toward electing justices "to bring the process out into the sunlight, to disempower powerful political actors from getting themselves or allies on the bench, or to provide some level of public accountability," said Douglas Keith, senior counsel for the Brennan Center's judiciary program. "But with these modern judicial elections, these highly politicized races are not really serving any of those goals."

Not every state puts its Supreme Court seats up for a statewide vote. Some use appointment processes that allow candidates to avoid public campaigning and the influence of political donors. Keith said a merit-based selection process can result in Supreme Courts "that are not as predictable along political lines."

Seven states use partisan elections to select their Supreme Court justices while 14, including Wisconsin, use nonpartisan elections. Meanwhile, nine task governors with appointing justices, two use legislative appointments, four have hybrid models and 14 use a merit selection process that often involves nonpartisan nominating commissions.

Kansas is one of the states with an appointment process, a system that has been in place for six decades and has been largely nonpartisan. Bristling at some of the court's rulings in recent years, Republicans in the state now want to change that and move toward a system in which justices have to stand for election.

Opponents say Republicans' goal is clear in a GOP-leaning state: remaking the court in a more conservative image.

When a vacancy on the seven-member court now occurs, applicants for the seat are screened by a nine-member commission. Five are lawyers elected by other lawyers and four are nonlawyers appointed by the governor. The commission names three finalists and the governor — currently a Democrat — chooses one.

The Republican-supermajority Legislature placed a proposed amendment to the Kansas Constitution on the ballot for the state's August 2026 primary election, rejecting arguments that the current system of filling vacancies on the state Supreme Court is notable for its lack of partisan politics and promotes judicial independence.

Backers of the proposal have criticized the state's top court for years over rulings protecting abortion rights and forcing higher spending on public schools. They argue that the court is too liberal and is out of step with voters, even though Kansas voters opted to protect abortion rights in 2022, just months after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v Wade*.

Republicans also say that in making Supreme Court candidates run for election, any politics in the process would be visible instead of "a black box."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 68 of 69

"It is an elitist system, and that elitist system was designed by lawyers," Kansas' attorney general, Republican Kris Kobach, said of the current system. "It is obviously controlled by lawyers."

Critics of the Kansas proposal pointed to Wisconsin and the tens of millions of dollars spent on state Supreme Court races in recent years. They say that's just what Kansas should expect to see if voters approve the change next year.

With the current system, they say a candidate's experience and likely judicial temperament are the most important factors, rather than a candidate's skills at campaigning, raising money or creating television ads.

"There is a reason that goes beyond giving the people a voice. There's a political reason to change the court," Bob Beatty, a political science professor at Washburn University in Topeka, said of Republicans' proposal.

Kansas Senate President Ty Masterson, a Wichita-area Republican, said he wasn't concerned about Wisconsin-style campaigning for high court seats if the amendment passes. He said opponents were "trying to take a one-off and make it something it's not."

In Oklahoma, the Republican-led Legislature for several years has considered legislation seeking to change its current appointment system for appellate court justices to having them run for election. Some Republicans have brought up the issue in Alaska in recent years, though the efforts have not advanced.

In North Carolina and Ohio, Republican-dominated legislatures in recent years have added party labels to the ballot in what many legal experts say is an attempt to benefit conservative judicial candidates and construct a court that aligned more with the legislature's policy goals.

North Carolina has been caught up in an ongoing legal saga over a close, highly politicized state Supreme Court race. The Republican candidate, Jefferson Griffin, has challenged more than 65,000 ballots cast in last fall's election. On Friday, the Republican majority on a North Carolina appellate panel sided with Griffin, who was 734 votes behind Associate Justice Allison Riggs, a Democrat who is likely to appeal.

Pennsylvania is bracing for a Wisconsin-style election in the fall. It's another presidential battleground where the state Supreme Court could be called upon to decide election disputes during next year's midterms or the 2028 presidential election. Three Democratic justices are running to retain their seats and face a yes-or-no vote for additional 10-year terms.

The recently concluded Wisconsin election offers warning signs of what may come in November in Pennsylvania when Democrats' 5-2 majority on the court will be on the line, said Christopher Borick, director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Allentown.

Spending exceeded \$22 million in Pennsylvania's 2023 Supreme Court contest.

"It would be silly not to anticipate that in this current environment in a key state like Pennsylvania," Borick said. "It is going to be intensified."

Making term limits longer and eliminating judicial reelections could be a useful reform because "a lot of the influence of money comes from the pressure to get reelected," said Michael Kang, a Northwestern School of Law professor and author of "Free to Judge: The Power of Campaign Money in Judicial Elections."

"There is no perfect system," Kang said. "But there are things that can be done to improve."

Today in History: April 7, Rwandan genocide begins

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, April 7, the 97th day of 2025. There are 268 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 7, 1994, a day after the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi died in a missile attack on their aircraft, the moderate Hutu prime minister of Rwanda, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, and her husband were killed by Rwandan soldiers; in the 100 days that followed, Hutu extremists slaughtered hundreds of thousands of minority Tutsi and Hutu moderates.

Also on this date:

In 1862, Union forces led by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell defeated Confederate forces at the Battle of Shiloh in Tennessee.

In 1922, Interior Secretary Albert B. Fall signed a secret deal to lease U.S. Navy petroleum reserves in

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, April 7, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 286 ~ 69 of 69

Wyoming and California to his friends, oilmen Harry F. Sinclair and Edward L. Doheny, in exchange for cash gifts; Fall would eventually be sentenced to prison on bribery and conspiracy charges in what became known as the Teapot Dome Scandal.

In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower held a news conference in which he outlined the concept of the "domino theory" as he spoke of the importance of containing the spread of communism in Indochina, saying, "You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly."

In 1966, the U.S. Navy recovered a hydrogen bomb that the U.S. Air Force had lost in the Mediterranean Sea off Spain following a B-52 crash.

In 1984, the Census Bureau reported that Los Angeles had overtaken Chicago as the nation's "second city" in terms of population.

In 2022, the Senate confirmed Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court, securing her place as the court's first Black female justice.

Today's Birthdays: Country musician Bobby Bare is 90. Former California Gov. Jerry Brown is 87. Film director Francis Ford Coppola is 86. Musician John Oates is 77. Singer-songwriter Janis Ian is 74. Actor Jackie Chan is 71. Football Hall of Famer Tony Dorsett is 71. Former boxer James "Buster" Douglas is 65. Actor Russell Crowe is 61. Actor-comedian Bill Bellamy is 60. Football Hall of Famer Ronde Barber is 50. Baseball Hall of Famer Adrián Beltré is 46.