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Sunday, May 4

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m. (Senior Milestones and Faith Forever Scholarship)

High School Baseball in Groton - hosting Elton at 2 p.m. and Clark/Willow Lake/Hamlin/Castlewood at 6 p.m.

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

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

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

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

Monday, May 5

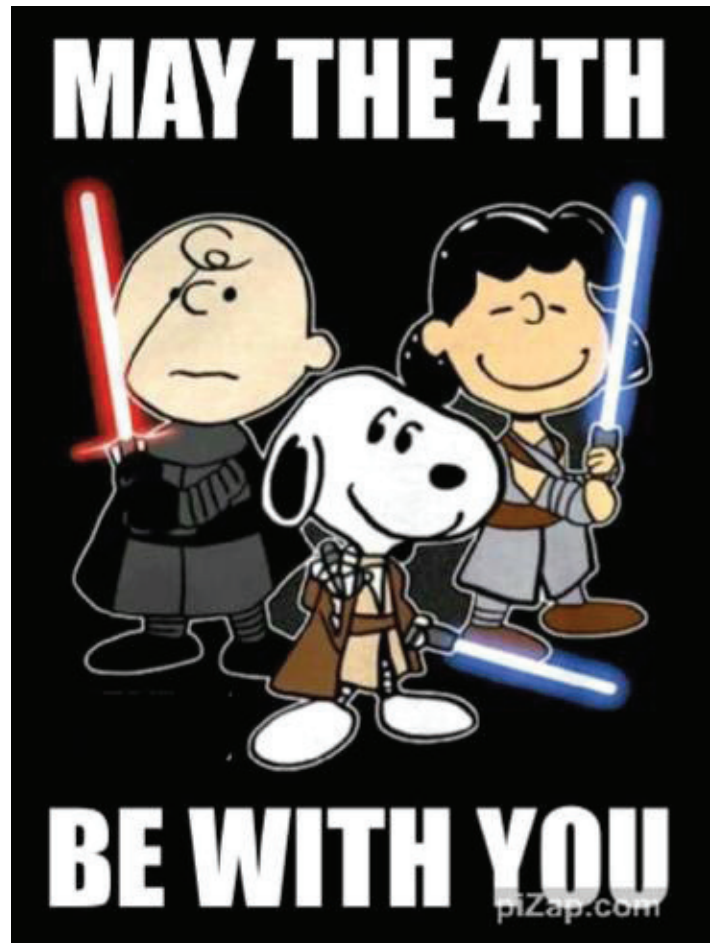
Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, mixed vegetables, 4w5aa, garlic bread.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



School Lunch: Popcorn chicken, tiny whole potatoes.

Junior High Track at Sisseton, 2 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

Tuesday, May 6

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on bun, oven roasted potatoes, California blend, tropical fruit.

School Breakfast: Waffles.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, puzzle tots.

Track at Milbank, 1:30 p.m.

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

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

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We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

The First 100 Days: Trump's Efforts to Transform America Rests on Ahistorical Personalization of Power

One of the more remarkable features of President Donald Trump's ongoing, yet unfulfilled, effort in the first 100 days of his second term in office to transform American democracy into an autocracy is its ahistoric path, one that represents a radical departure from the work and vision of the Framers of the Constitution.

The Framers' institutionalization and constitutional confinement of the presidency represented their response to the royal prerogative of the English Monarchy which, as James I declared, inhered in the king by virtue of his royalty and not his office. The American system of government was designed in part to overcome the personalization of executive power. In their replacement of personal rule with the rule of law, the Framers rejected the historical admiration of the executive and the claims of personal authority that at least since the Middle Ages, in one form or another, had conceived of executive rights as innate; they were derived not from the office but, it could be said, from the "blood and bone of the man." Executive power was personal, not juridical. For its part, the Constitutional Convention sought to transform personal rule into a matter of law and to subordinate the presidency to constitutional commands and prescriptions.

Trump's extraordinary concentration of power in the presidency, grounded in his acts of usurpation and congressional abdication, has left in its wake a long list of casualties, including separation of powers, checks and balances and enumeration of powers. Given his diminution of the constitutional restraints imposed on the president, what Thomas Jefferson lamented as the conversion of the Constitution into "a thing of wax," it seems evident that in historical terms, the United States is marching steadily backward. After 100 days, this is the condition of the Trump Presidency: an overgrown office swollen with powers subject to few limitations. In fine, Trump admires the personalization of power that the Framers rejected. A citizen, therefore, cannot logically choose both the Trump theory of the presidency and that of Framers.

At this juncture, we are allowed to wonder whether Congress will remain a viable institution, or whether Trump's practice of aggrandizing legislative power, as seen in his usurpation of fundamental congressional powers—lawmaking, appropriations and appointment, for example—will continue without interruption, leading to the establishment of autocracy. The retreat and abdication of power and responsibility by the GOP majority in both houses of Congress, has left the judiciary as the lone constitutional restraint on the Trump Presidency. To date, federal courts have checked most of the 100 or so executive orders issued by Trump, but his defiance of court rulings, including the Supreme Court's order that he "facilitate" the return of Kilmar Abrego Garcia from an El Salvador prison, raises the question of whether he will comply with a ruling by the highest court in the land. As the nation learned in Trump's April 29 interview with ABC News, contrary to his previous claims that he was without power to retrieve the Maryland man illegally deported by the administration, he is, indeed, capable of securing the return of Garcia, but he "just doesn't want to" do it. Trump's admission of power to retrieve Garcia demonstrates a chilling willingness to remove from the United States those whom he dislikes, without due process of law.

Without the authority to enforce its rulings seeking to uphold the rule of law and constrain President Trump by the terms of the Constitution, it is not clear whether the courts can hold the line in the face of

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his assertions of unbridled executive power. Congress, of course, has the authority to restrain illegal and unconstitutional presidential actions, but Trump has been able to seize power so brazenly only because the GOP majority in both the House and Senate have lacked the courage and foresight to defend its constitutional position.

Trump has embraced a conception of executive power that is at war with the aims and purposes of those who wrote the Constitution. Stephen Miller, Trump's Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy, has articulated the Trump theory of the presidency. Because the "president is elected by the whole American people," he embodies "the whole will of democracy," and it is for him to impose that will on the government. We examine next week the implications of the Plebiscitary Presidency for American Constitutionalism.

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.

Wed., May 7 from 4-9 pm

**DI DAY
AT DQ**

**Here's your chance to support
the two Groton Area teams attending
Global Finals in Kansas City, MO. A
portion of the evening sales go to DI.**

Imagination will get you everywhere!

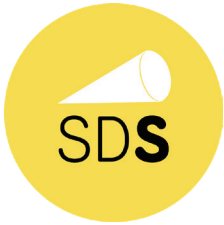
.Thanks for your support!



Flags at Half-Staff in Honor of National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Day

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Larry Rhoden ordered that flags be flown at half-staff from sunrise until sunset statewide on Sunday, May 4, 2025, in honor of National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Day.

This announcement is consistent with President Trump's order in accordance with Public Law 107-51.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Legislators who decry 'ballot fatigue' seem to be afflicted with ballot envy

by Dana Hess

South Dakota citizens have had the right to petition issues on to the ballot since 1898. Some legislators would like to put an end to that.

The prevailing wisdom in the Legislature seems to be that voters here are suffering from "ballot fatigue." They claim voters are just sick and tired of all the initiated measures and constitutional amendments on the ballot.

In reality, "ballot fatigue" is just a legislative code phrase for "let's make it so tough to get an issue on the ballot that citizens will just give up." That was the impetus behind House Joint Resolution 5003, a constitutional amendment that's already on the ballot for 2026.

The measure was sponsored by an irony-impaired Republican representative from Sioux Falls, John Hughes. Hughes didn't think it was at all odd to say that voters were "fatigued" by the seven 2024 ballot issues, all the while sponsoring his own constitutional amendment for the 2026 election.

Hughes' ballot measure calls for constitutional ballot issues to need 60% of the vote to be enacted. Currently those measures have to get just more than 50% to become part of the constitution. (There's more irony to go around. Hughes placed his 60% amendment on the ballot in chambers where all he needed to do was convince just more than half of his colleagues it was a good idea. In 2026, if the 60% threshold is approved by voters, it will need just more than 50% of the votes cast.)

Lawmakers had quite a time with ballot issues during the 2025 legislative session. They may be suffering from their own version of ballot fatigue as they considered 11 ballot issues, ultimately placing four of them on the 2026 ballot. There's another legislative session before the next election. That's another chance for lawmakers to endorse even more ballot measures.

A check of the Secretary of State's website shows there are already six other ballot issues waiting in the wings for the 2026 ballot. Their backers will try to get them on the ballot the old-fashioned way: by collecting the signatures of registered voters. It takes 17,508 signatures to get an initiated measure on the ballot and 35,017 signatures before voters can consider a constitutional amendment.

There's a stark disparity between the relative ease that lawmakers have if they want to get a measure on the ballot and the drudgery of collecting thousands of signatures for citizen-led ballot efforts.

If voters are suffering from ballot fatigue, perhaps lawmakers are suffering from "ballot envy," an anguish rooted in the realization that there are people in the state with far more will and determination than they

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have when it comes to getting an issue before the voters.

When they talk about ballot fatigue, lawmakers would have you believe that they want to protect voters from the chore of making a few extra choices on Election Day. The real definition of ballot fatigue is that lawmakers are tired of seeing issues appear and reappear on the ballot that don't conform to their world-view. Given the current Republican super-majorities in both chambers, there's no other way than through a ballot initiative for citizens to get issues like abortion and marijuana legalization in front of voters.

For Republicans, it's not the voting that's tiring but the effort it takes every two years to fight off ideas that they find disagreeable. They point to the cavalcade of political commercials as a bad thing rather than celebrating the notion that political messages are just our free speech rights in action.

Of course ballot fatigue is a play on words, substituting the word ballot for battle. But South Dakotans are in a real battle to keep their access to the ballot. It's a battle in which we can't afford to get fatigued.

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

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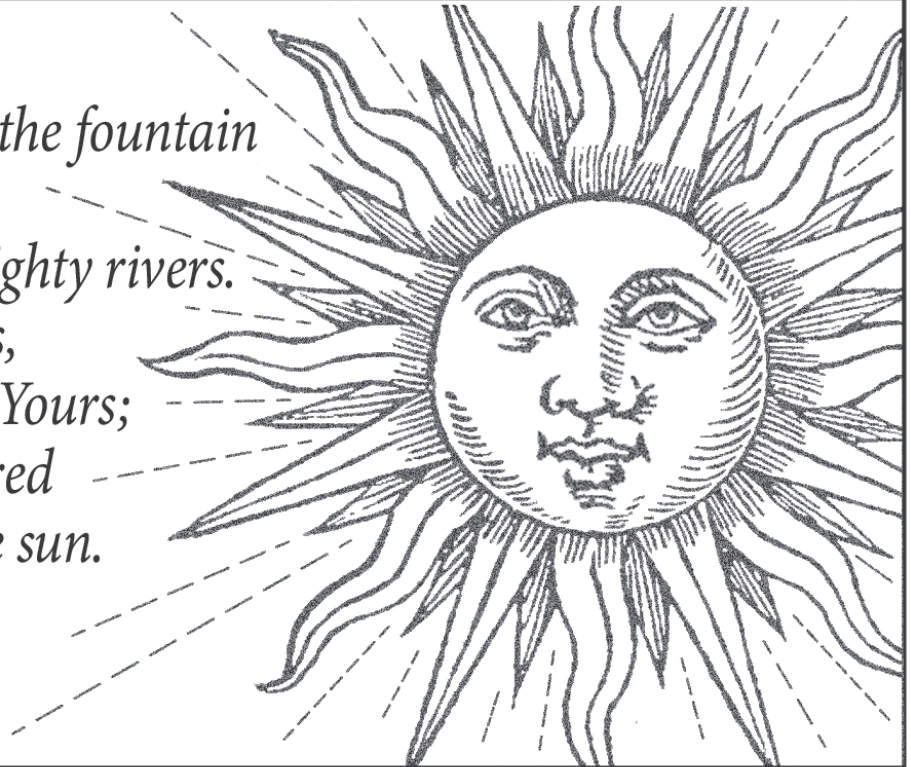
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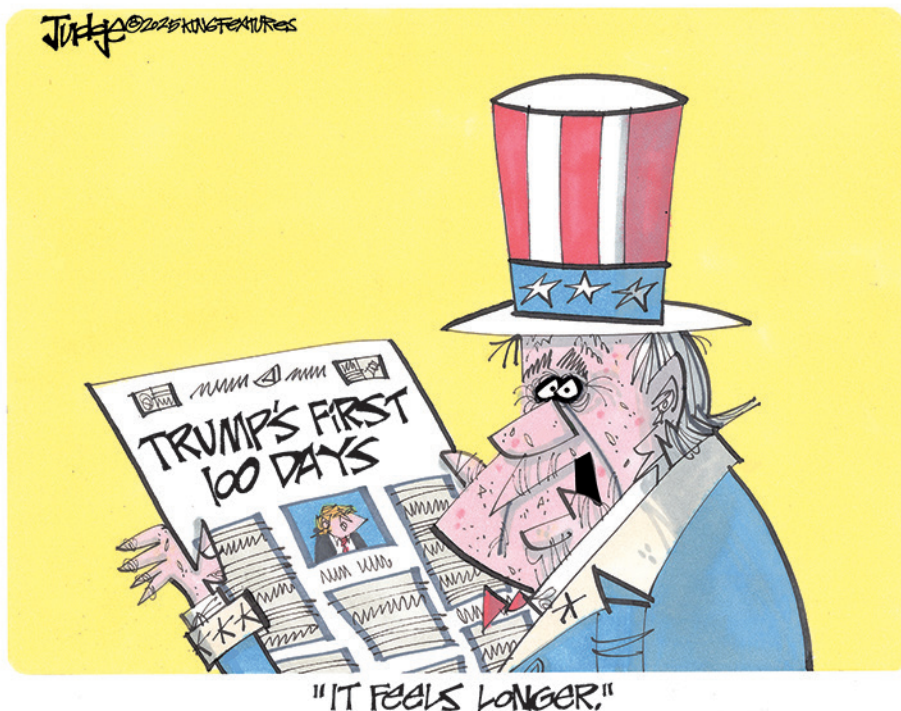
THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

*You broke open the fountain
and the flood;
You dried up mighty rivers.
The day is Yours,
the night also is Yours;
You have prepared
the light and the sun.*

PSALM 74:15,16



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BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Lamentations (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Romans 11, which tribe did Paul describe himself as a member of? *Benjamin, Rome, Barnabus, Tarsus*

3. What's the "Decalogue" another name for? *Ark of Covenant, Holy Grail, Ten Commandments, Last Supper*

4. In which "Garden of" did Adam and Eve live? *Everest, Eden, Heaven, Paradise*

5. From Romans 5:6, Paul noted that Christ died for the *Believers, Unbelievers, Righteous, Ungodly*

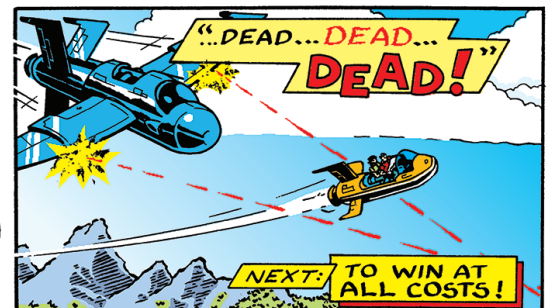
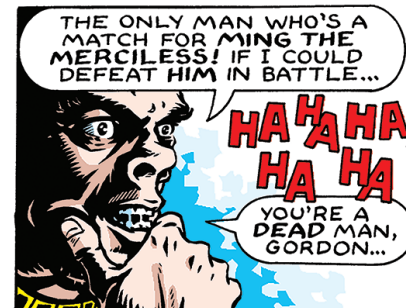
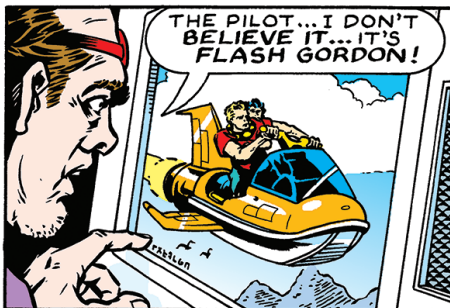
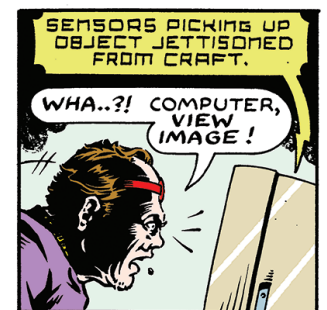
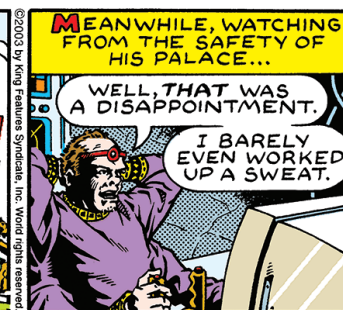
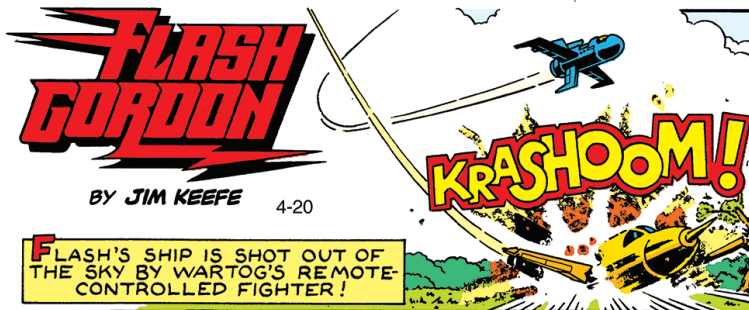
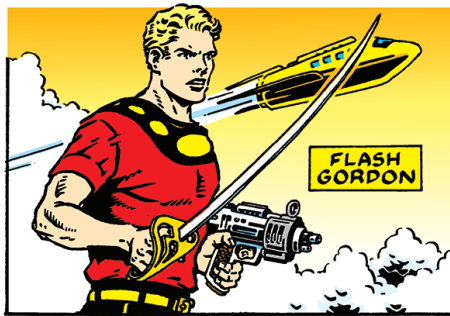
6. What was Adam made of/from? *Eve's rib, Earth's dust, Ray of light, Fig leaf*

ANSWERS: 1) Old, 2) Benjamin, 3) Ten Commandments, 4) Eden, 5) Ungodly, 6) Earth's dust

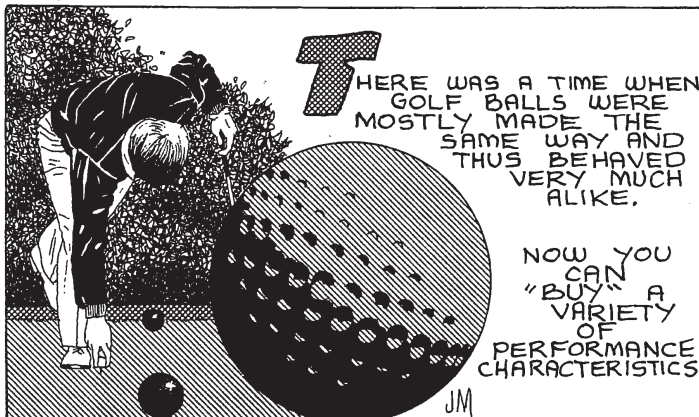
Find expanded trivia online with Wilson Casey at www.patreon.com/triviaguy. FREE TRIAL!

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Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS





Dry Cough Persisting for a Decade Might Indicate Asthma

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a dry cough that's been going on for about 13-14 years. I'm a healthy 62-year-old and read that it is called "cough variant asthma." I would like to know more about this but can't really find anything about it, except that it will eventually get worse if it's not treated. I was checked twice in the past 15 years for asthma, and I wasn't diagnosed. However, I've not been diagnosed with any acid reflux or postnasal drip. -- D.S.

ANSWER: Although most people think that asthma causes wheezing, cough is a very common symptom of asthma. You've named the two other most common causes of chronic cough: acid reflux and postnasal drip. It can be tricky to make these diagnoses.

Very often, primary care doctors will do a "therapeutic trial" that involves a short-term prescription to see if there is improvement. For acid reflux, it might be an H2 blocker like famotidine (Pepcid), which acts faster than a proton-pump inhibitor like omeprazole. This is often faster, easier, and much less expensive than a diagnostic test like a 24-hour pH monitor (the gold-standard diagnostic test).

Similarly, a physician might give a trial of asthma medication (such as a bronchodilator like albuterol) to see if it stops the cough, rather than immediately testing a person's pulmonary function with a trial of bronchodilators -- a standard diagnostic test for asthma. Sometimes a pulmonologist will order a "methacholine challenge test" where an airway irritant is given at very low doses to see if it will trigger an asthma response in the lung. Postnasal drip can sometimes be confirmed by a physical exam, but a fiberoptic laryngoscopy is seldom necessary to make the diagnosis.

When therapeutic trials are not helpful, diagnostic tests become necessary. I personally order lung testing before and after bronchodilators on all patients with suspected asthma, as the tests give important information beyond a diagnosis. Lung testing can be used to follow the course of the disease and identify whether there may be a separate problem in addition to asthma.

DEAR DR. ROACH: I am a 69-year-old male. I exercise five days per week and eat healthy. I take losartan, simvastatin, Xarelto and metoprolol. I have gotten the COVID and flu shots yearly but still end up catching the flu. What gives? -- J.L.P.

ANSWER: I wish the flu shot was perfect, but it isn't. Each year, the flu shot is usually around 30% to 50% effective at protecting people from getting the flu. Still, 50% protection is a lot better than no protection at all. Furthermore, if you do get the flu, people who have received the vaccine tend to have milder cases, which is very similar to the COVID vaccines.

The flu is pretty contagious, so if you are in close contact with a lot of different people, you are likely to get exposed. You can reduce your risk of the flu (and COVID) by keeping away from large groups or wearing a mask, in addition to getting your yearly vaccine.

Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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"Death of a Unicorn" (R) -- Jenna Ortega ("Beetlejuice Beetlejuice") and Paul Rudd ("Only Murders in the Building") team up to play a father-daughter duo in this fantastical horror-comedy film. Rudd portrays Elliot Kintner, who takes his daughter, Ridley (Ortega), on a weekend trip to the



Paul Rudd, left, and Jenna Ortega star in "Death of a Unicorn." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

estate of his boss, Odell LEOpold. Upon arriving to their destination, Elliot accidentally runs over a unicorn foal, much to their surprise and confusion. Keeping the injured unicorn in their car, Elliot and Ridley get to the LEOpolds' estate only for them to discover that the unicorn has healing properties. The LEOpolds want to extract as much as power as they can from the unicorn, but as majestic as these creatures look, unicorns subsequently prove that they're no one to mess with. Out now to rent. (Amazon Prime Video)

"Companion" (R) -- This sci-fi thriller is a mind-bending one led by scream queen Sophie Thatcher ("Heretic") and Jack Quaid ("Novocaine"), and it's out now to stream. Thatcher plays a young woman named Iris who prepares to travel with her boyfriend, Josh (Quaid), to a lake house to meet their friends. Once there, Iris experiences a frightening situation when Sergey, one of their friends, tries to sexually assault her. In self-defense, she kills Sergey; however, when she returns to the lake house in shambles, Josh reveals that she is actually a companion robot. Offered through a robotics company named Empathix, Iris is just one of many models that people can purchase and control through an app on their phone. Who knows what this revelation will lead Iris to do ... (Max)

"The Four Seasons" (TV-MA) -- This eight-episode miniseries out now to binge is comprised of a stacked cast that is sure to make this your new favorite series. Serving as an adaptation of the 1981 film of the same name, this comedy series stars Tina Fey ("Mean Girls"), Steve Carell ("The Morning Show"), Colman Domingo ("Sing Sing"), and Will Forte ("Sausage Party: Foodtopia"). These comedy veterans play a group of longtime friends who always vacation together each season of the year, but dynamics in the group are thrown for a loop when one couple breaks up and the ex-husband brings in a much younger woman. Get your popcorn ready! (Netflix)

"Love Hurts" (R) -- Following the success of a 2023 award season campaign that landed him a Golden Globe and an Oscar for his work in "Everything Everywhere All at Once," Ke Huy Quan was signed to utilize his action skills to lead a classic action-comedy film for Universal Pictures. Quan plays a top-selling realtor named Marvin Gable who's become quite a success, but he hides a dark secret. Having been a former assassin for an organization run by his criminal brother, Marvin uses his realtor guise as an attempt to cover up his dodgy past. But when he receives a warning message from someone in his past, Marvin realizes that his enemies are right on his tail, and it's time for him to tie up some loose ends. Premieres May 9. (Peacock)

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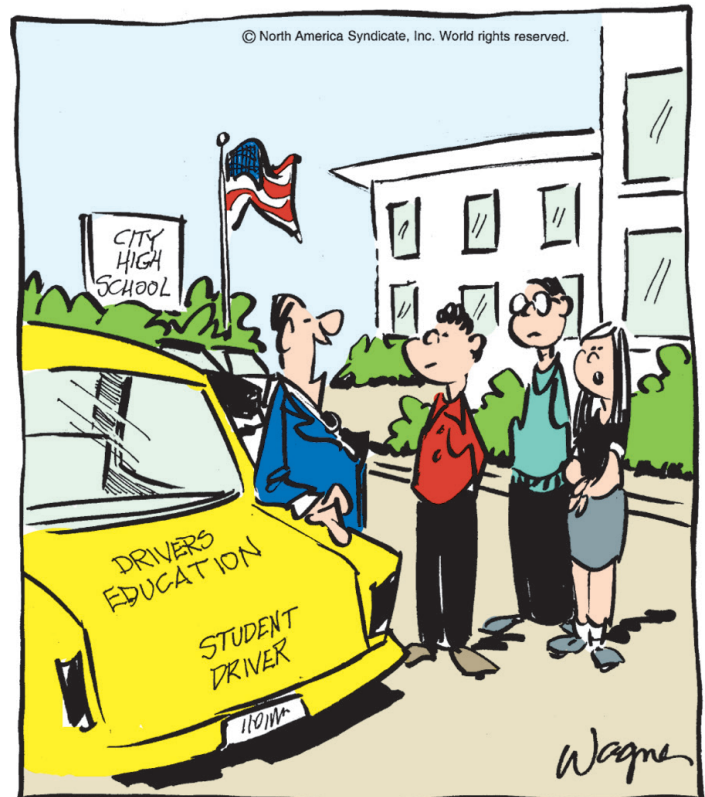
1. Name the song in which the alarmed husband calls out to his wife, "Don't look, Ethel!"
2. Who wrote and released "Spinning Wheel"?
3. Which two artists released "Ebony and Ivory"?
4. Name the theme song for "American Gigolo."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "The road is long with many a winding turn, That leads us to who knows where, who knows when."

Answers

1. "The Streak," by Ray Stevens, in 1974. Astonishingly, this song about a streaker climbed international charts, including the U.S., the U.K., Australia, Ireland and Canada. "The Streak" was one of dozens of songs on the same topic that year.
2. David Clayton-Thomas of Blood, Sweat & Tears in 1969. The song won a Grammy for Best Instrumental Arrangement.
3. Stevie Wonder and Paul McCartney, in 1982. Penned by McCartney, it was his first time singing a duet with another artist.
4. "Call Me," by Blondie in 1980. The song topped the Hot 100 chart for six weeks.
5. "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother," originally by Kelly Gordon, in 1969. But it was the Hollies that made the song a hit. The song has been covered by numerous others, including Bill Medley and Neil Diamond.

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GRIN and BEAR IT *Wagner*



"Sure it has a sound system! ...
It goes 'va-room, va-room.'"

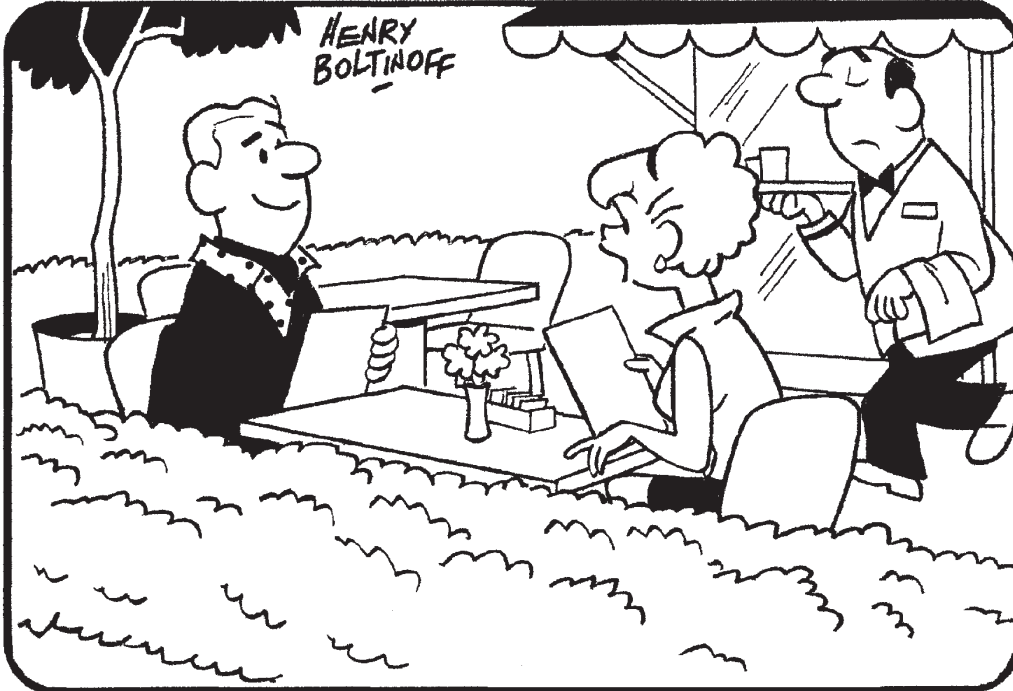
Just Like Cats & Dogs

by Dave T. Phipps

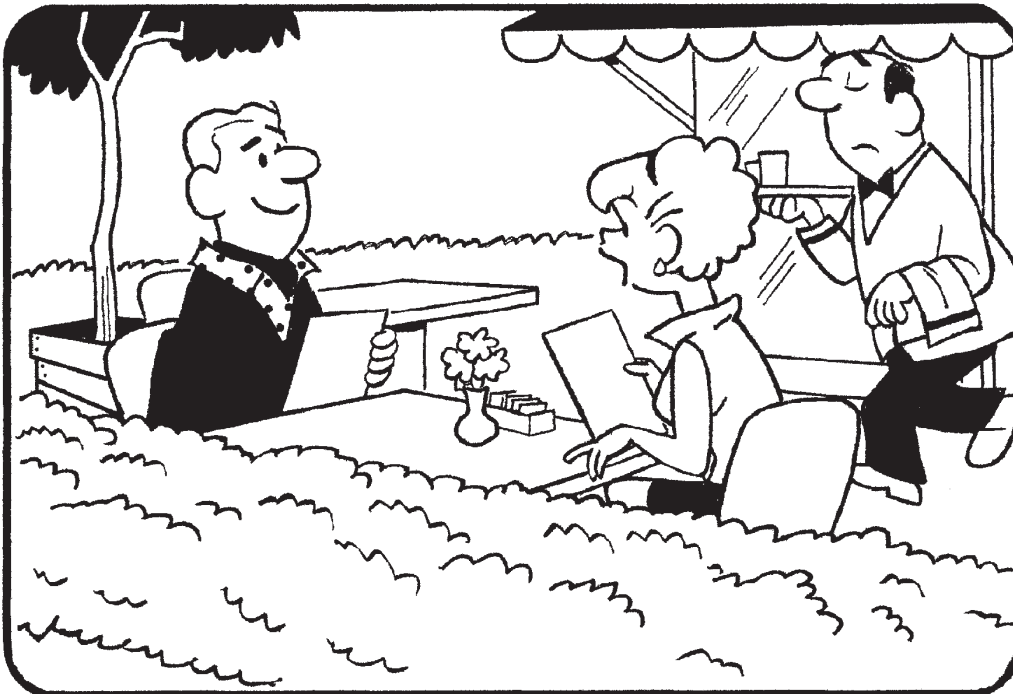


HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Nametag is missing. 2. Chair is missing. 3. Vase is different. 4. Table is wider. 5. Planter is different. 6. Stripe is added to towel.

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* J.C. in Florida writes: "The one thing I might add [to your tips about preparing deviled eggs] is making sure the eggs are point down during storage so that the yolks are centered if stuffing." Great point! A little vinegar in the boiling water will help to keep egg in the shell if it cracks.

* "I love to put photos of family on the fridge. But I found that the photos were getting ruined from grease and moisture in the air. To get around that -- and to really preserve them -- I cleaned and laminated them. Afterward, I hot-glued little magnets to the backs, and now I can move them around to accommodate new photos. There are so many, and it gives me pleasure to look at them." -- C.R. in Oklahoma

* This is classic money-saving advice as well as safety advice:

Lower your water heater temperature from 140 F to 120 F. You will save money on heating water, and you will reduce your risk of scalding from hot temperatures.

* "Add a cinnamon stick or softener sheet to your vacuum bag when you change it. While you clean, you will distribute the good smell throughout your home." -- F.H. in Colorado

* Got a squeak in your hardwood floors? Dust a sprinkling of baby powder at the source of the squeak, and use a brush to get it in the cracks. The powder can help to lubricate the boards and remove the squeak.

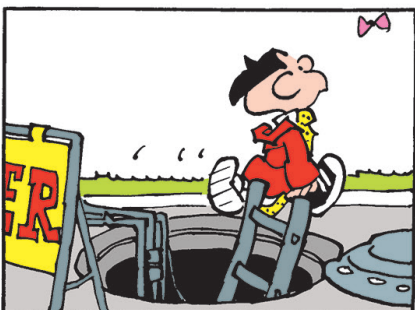
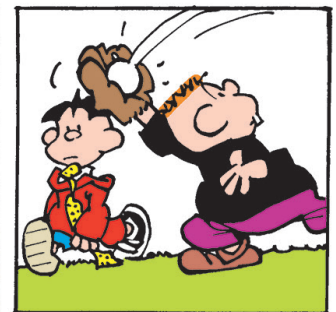
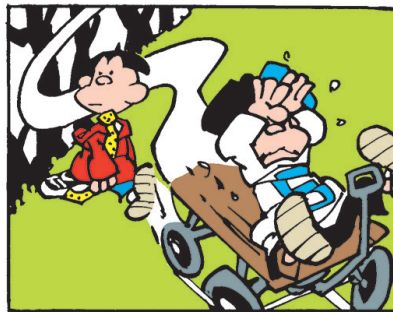
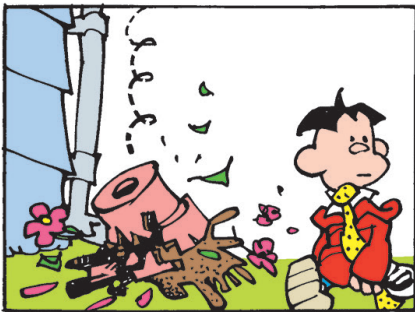
* If you need to clean stained plastic storage containers or takeout containers that you'll use again, do it with baking soda. Get the item wet, and use a liberal amount of baking soda as a scrub. It's abrasive but gentle, and super safe for food containers.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 628 Virginia Drive, Orlando, FL 32803.

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TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Completely
4 Playwright
Levin
7 Done with
11 Secular
13 Collection
14 Water carrier
15 Airline to Tel
Aviv
16 ET's craft
17 Dutch cheese
18 Ersatz choco-
late
20 One-named
supermodel
22 Tree fluid
24 Trombone
parts
28 Grassy tract
32 January, to
Juan

- 33 Grassy area
34 Shade pro-
vider
36 FBI guy
37 Alpha's
opposite
39 "The Hunger
Games" hero-
ine
41 Dance clubs
43 Prefix with
athlete
44 Tom Joad, for
one
46 Urged (on)
50 Hive popula-
tion
53 Schlep
55 Luau dance

1	2	3			4	5	6		7	8	9	10
11			12		13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19		20		21				
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28	29	30				31		32				
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50	51	52			53		54		55			
56					57				58			
59					60					61		

- 56 Vegetarian's
no-no
57 Mine material
58 Russian ruler
59 Saturates
60 Scale member
61 Blasting stick
7 Exciting
Broadway
event
8 YouTube clip,
for short
9 Clean air org.
10 "The One I
Love" band
12 Loan applica-
tion fees
19 "Cheers" set-
ting
21 Pub order
23 Bakery pur-
chase
25 Singer Lovato
26 Historic peri-
ods
27 Male children
28 Trudge
29 Actor Malek
30 Dazzles
31 Caribou kin
35 Yoga pad
38 Fine, to NASA
40 Italian "three"
42 Farm towers
45 Franc replace-
ment
47 Sudden wind
48 Flair
49 Scurry
50 German auto
51 Shoe width
52 Have break-
fast
54 Solidify

DOWN

- 1 Sir Guinness
2 In — land
3 Deceitful per-
son
4 Terre Haute
sch.
5 Mortgage
again, for short
6 Molecule
parts

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— King Crossword — Answers

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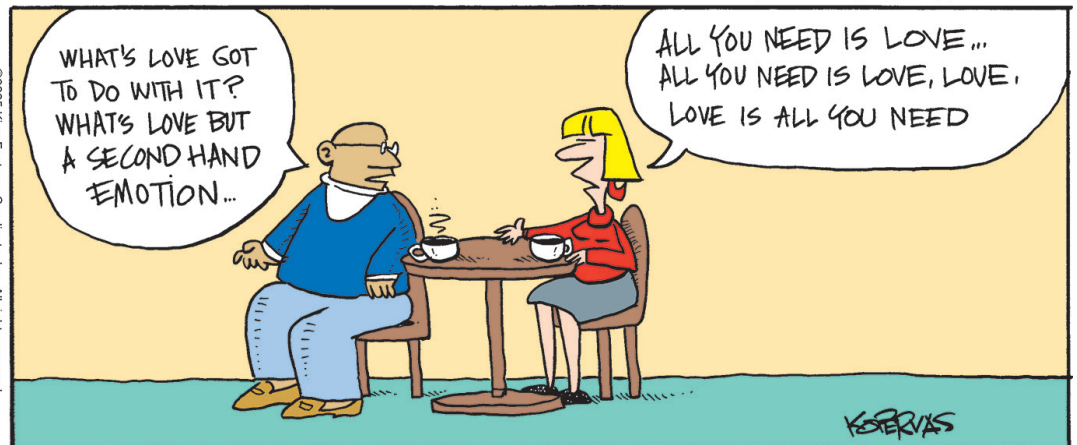
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Olive



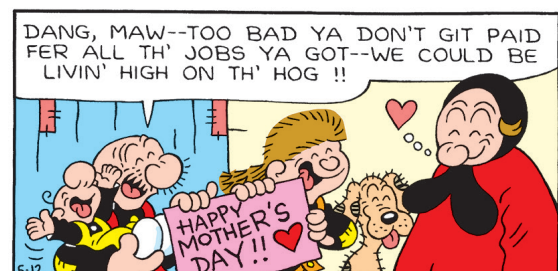
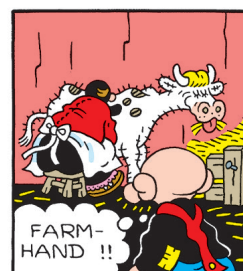
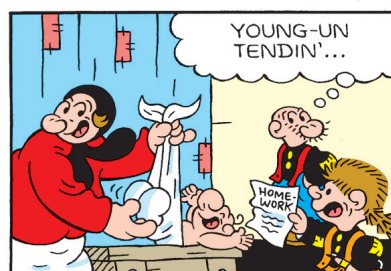
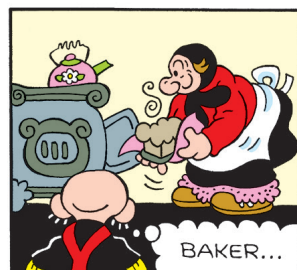
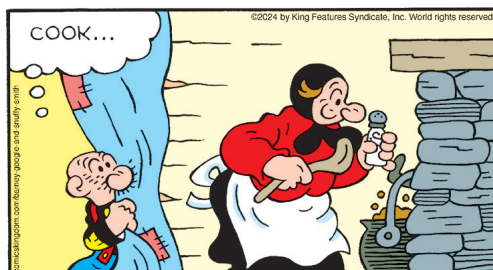
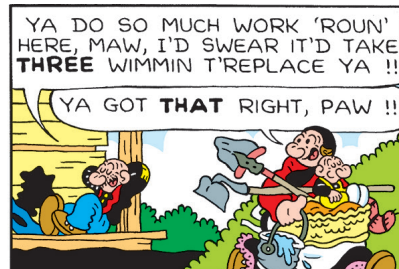
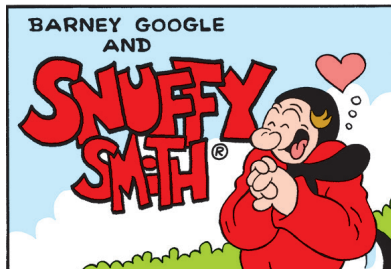
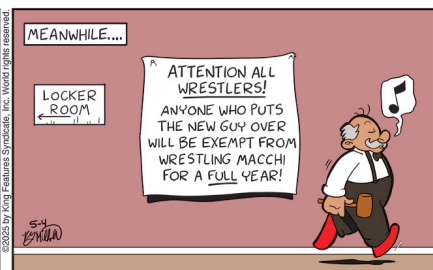
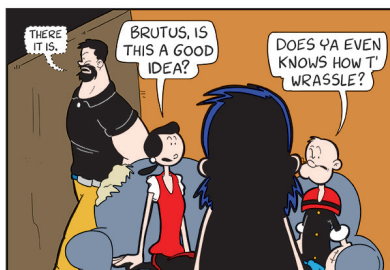
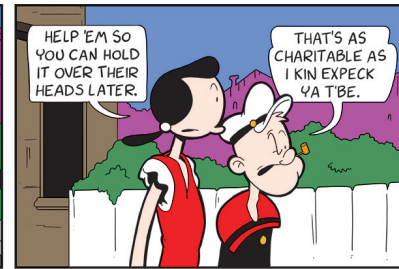
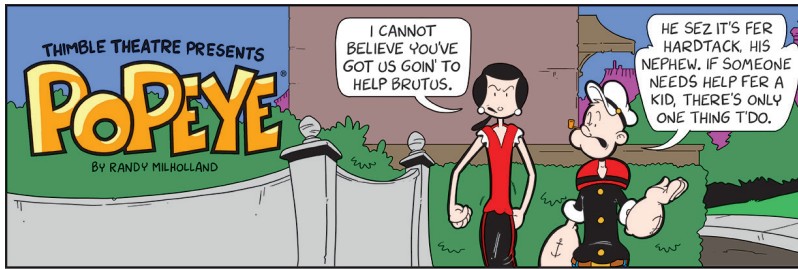
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



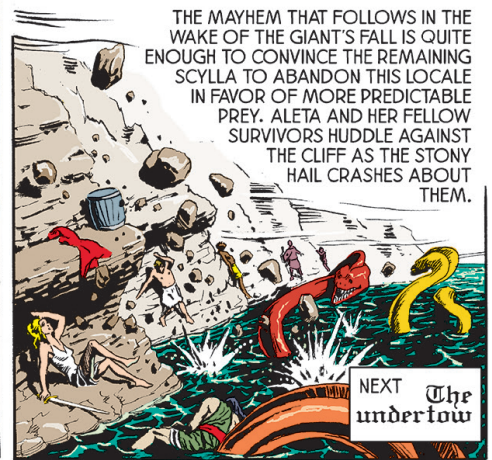
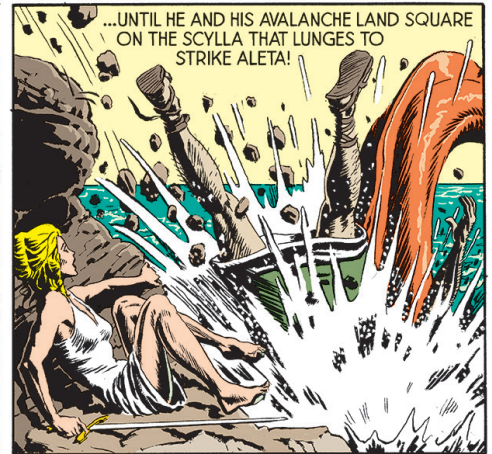
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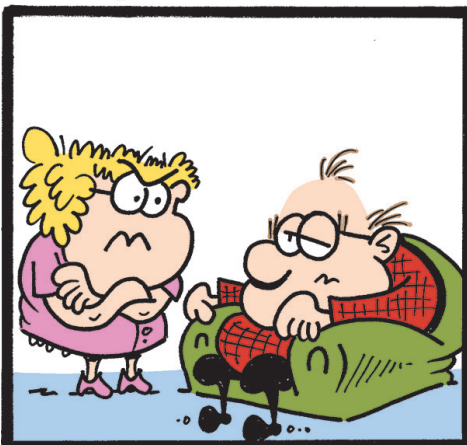
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The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Smart devices

Convenience versus safety -- sometimes it's impossible to have both when it comes to tech devices.

There are more smart devices than we could have imagined 10 years ago, and every day brings something new. We have smart door locks, thermostats, refrigerators, indoor and outdoor security cameras, televisions, cellphones, light bulbs, speakers and wall plugs.

Whether it's data breaches, surveillance, intrusions, hijack of your device or outright cyber attacks and theft of your information, smart devices can make you vulnerable if they are hacked.

Take smart thermostats, for example. Those smart gadgets track all kinds of things about you. Scariest of all is that they keep track of when you leave home and when you come back, information that a thief would like to have.

If you want a smart device, be sure you understand the downside and the risks. Keep the software updated, use strong passwords and understand the settings, especially on any device with a camera or microphone. Your smart television speakers could work in the reverse and capture the sounds in the room, for example.

Before you buy a smart device, or to learn more about devices you might already have, go online to search for "dangers of smart devices."

If you want news about all things tech, you can do no better than Kim Komando. Sign up, and several times a week you'll get an email newsletter packed with tech news. A lot of what she has to say concerns safety, how to avoid scams and what tech items to buy or avoid. I've subscribed for many years and know that she honors privacy preference settings and doesn't sell names or email addresses. If you want to give it a try, go online to www.komando.com to sign up. You can also catch her on the radio or her podcast.

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1. What NASCAR series, created for short-track drivers to get experience on superspeedways, had three driver fatalities during its existence from 1989-96?

2. What team accomplished a Major League Baseball first by hitting home runs on the first three pitches thrown against them in a 20-9 rout of the Milwaukee Brewers in March 2025?

3. Offensive lineman Dwayne White earned what nickname for being the New York Jets' lead blocker on short-yardage run plays in the early 1990s?

4. What short-lived 1951 TV series originating from Philadelphia consisted of children ages 3-12 fighting in three-round boxing matches?

5. First opened in 1977, Ice World was a venue for skating, hockey, boxing and professional wrestling located in what U.S. state?

6. How many 3-pointers did the Alabama Crimson Tide make to set a new NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament single-game record in their 113-88 Sweet 16 victory over BYU in 2025?

7. What American track athlete, a gold-medal winner in the 4x100 meter relay at the 1984 Los Angeles Summer Olympics, also had three touchdown receptions in an NFL career spanning 1987-92?



Answers

1. The NASCAR Sportsman Division.

2. The New York Yankees.

3. The Road Grader.

4. "Kid Gloves."

5. New Jersey.

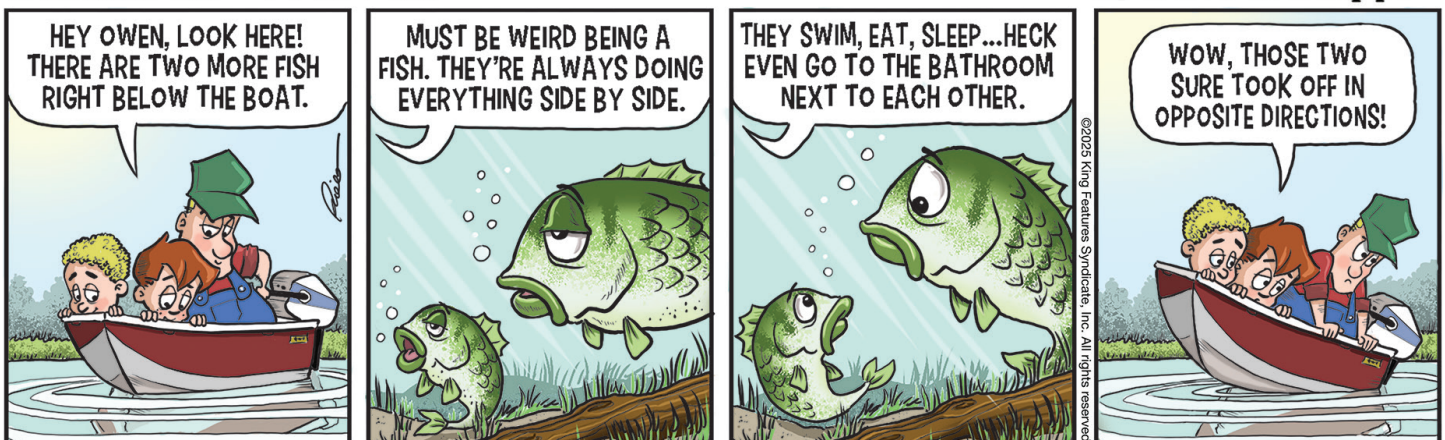
6. 25.

7. Sam Graddy.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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DEAR PAW'S CORNER: Spring is here, and summer is just around the corner. Can you please remind people that leaving pets in a hot car is a deadly mistake? -- Carol in Syracuse, New York

DEAR CAROL: Absolutely. Folks, even if the weather outside is just warm -- not hot -- the inside of your car can become extremely hot when it's parked in the sun. Even with the windows cracked a bit, the temperature can still rise by 20, 30 and 40 degrees higher than the outside air temperature. So, if it's a balmy 65 degrees outside, the interior of your car can reach 105 degrees or higher -- enough to cause heat injury or death for a pet.

That's why 31 U.S. states now have laws banning pets in parked cars. It's why police and even private citizens, in some areas, can smash a car window to save a pet.

And it's why pet owners who leave their animal in a parked car may face fines and, in some states, prison. Those laws do not make exceptions for cars that are left running to keep the air conditioning on. If the car stalls or has an automatic switch-off, the interior will heat up dramatically even on a cloudy day.

So, as we roll into the warm spring months, it's important to have a plan for your pet if you need to take them along for the day. If they can't come with you into the store or the salon, leave them safe at home.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

- * Worldwide, blue is the most common favorite color.
- * Medieval knights were given letters of protection that essentially provided them with a license to kill, as they granted the possessor full immunity from legal proceedings resulting from battles or necessary fatalities.
- * The "Mona Lisa" has her own mailbox in the Louvre for all the flowers, poems and love letters she receives.
- * Deipnophobia is the fear of dining with other people
- * People have used dishwashers to clean hats, tooth-

brushes, sneakers and more. There are even tutorials on how to cook certain foods with a dishwasher.

* New Order's classic song "Blue Monday" is the best-selling 12-inch single in history. Unfortunately, the band lost money on it since the cost of producing its unique cover was higher than its sale price.

* In 95% of cases, the first word someone writes with a new pen is their own name.

* Human fetuses have gills, fur and even a tail during development. The tail becomes the coccyx and the "gills," which are temporary slits in the neck, develop into jaw and ear bones, while the fur disappears before birth or within a few weeks afterward.

* Despite more than 150 years worth of study and experimentation, no one really knows why ice is slippery.


* Sixty-eight percent of American adults buy shoes with foot pain in mind.

* The oldest known toilet, in the ancient city of Knossos on the island of Crete, has remained functional for approximately 4,000 years since its construction and was built with a seat and sophisticated drainage system.

* Eyelashes are considered the thickest and toughest of all hairs on the human body, with a lifespan of about three months.

Thought for the Day: "Life consists not in holding good cards but in playing those you hold well." -- Josh Billings

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Abutilon plants are commonly known as "flowering maples," as their leaves are thought to resemble maple leaves. These perennial shrubs like well-drained soil and sunny or partly shady locations. Their colorful, paper-lantern-like flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies.

— Brenda Weaver

"Fools' Gold" flowering maple Sources: www.plantdelights.com, www.ehow.com



by Freddy Groves

The benefits of Stand Downs

Will you be taking advantage of the services offered at the annual Stand Downs this summer? Or will you step up and volunteer to assist?

Either way, you're sure to benefit from what you'll find at a Stand Down.

The Stand Downs, started in 1988, provide services to homeless veterans or those at risk of homelessness. Whether you attend a one-, two- or three-day event, you'll be welcomed. Services are varied, and depend on the location and the length of the event. You might find hot showers, clean clothes and food. Direct care can range from haircuts, dental care, treatment for substance abuse and legal advice, to help with your VA claim, housing or mental health counseling, as well as health screenings.

You'll likely find employment search help and benefits counseling from the wide range of veteran service organizations, agencies or individual groups that work at each Stand Down.

Sometimes the events are right on the grounds of the local VA facility, or sometimes they'll be at a local fairground or park. To find a location and the dates in your area, check www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp. Also keep an eye on the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (nchv.org/current-stand-downs) for their list. Check both lists as time goes on and new events are added. They generally run through the summer into fall.

If you're going to need a ride, don't wait until the last minute. Call the contact person listed for each event and be sure they can help you.

As for volunteering, again, don't wait. Groups are putting their events together right now and need to know how many will be helping. To get started you can also call the closest VA medical center and ask for the Homeless Coordinator. No matter how you pitch in, your efforts will be appreciated.

Whether you attend a Stand Down as a veteran in need of services or as a volunteer, it might be the most rewarding thing you do this year.

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Wishing Well®

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E	A	F	V	A	S	U	G	N	E	O	E	O
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7	5	2	6	2	3	5	3	6	3	5	8	4
R	E	E	F	S	I	R	N	E	D	S	E	G

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. U.S. STATES: Which state is last, alphabetically?
2. MOVIES: What does the acronym S.H.I.E.L.D. stand for in movies about Marvel characters?
3. LITERATURE: Who wrote the short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"?
4. GAMES: How many cards are in a standard deck?
5. TELEVISION: On which sitcom did the character Harry the Hat appear?
6. BUSINESS: When did the first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise open?
7. GENERAL KNOWLEDGE: How many Nobel prizes are awarded every year?
8. U.S. PRESIDENTS: Which president was the shortest at 5 foot 4 inches tall?
9. ASTRONOMY: Who was the first woman to travel into space?
10. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a baby platypus called?

Answers

1. Wyoming.
2. Strategic Homeland Intervention, Enforcement and Logistics Division.
3. James Thurber.
4. 52.
5. "Cheers."
6. 1952 in Salt Lake City, Utah.
7. Six.
8. James Madison.
9. Valentina Tereshkova.
10. A platypup or puggle.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

The Great Faces of Travel

South Dakota is such a wonderful state that millions of visitors come every year to see it for themselves. And who can blame them? There's something here for everyone in all seasons of the year.

I made my living in our state's largest industry: agriculture. But because agriculture can be so up and down, it's important that we have other thriving economic sectors. Variety helps keep South Dakota stable and growing – and our tourism industry is very helpful in that regard.

Every year in early May, we celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week. It's a great opportunity to highlight the importance of tourism and thank the men and women who work so hard to facilitate travel for others. The data behind our travel industry is powerful, but it wouldn't be possible without the smiling "Great Faces" behind checkout counters, giving tours, and sweating the small details so that our visitors don't have to.

With that said, I'd like to share some of the powerful data that underscores just how crucial tourism is to our economy. Last year, 14.9 million visitors traveled to and within South Dakota. These visitors spent a whopping \$5.1 billion dollars – that's a new record!

There may be headaches associated with having so many tourists running around, but the benefits are huge. Tourism generated 17% of all state sales tax collections last year – that's tax revenue that we get to charge to out-of-staters, rather than to South Dakotans. Tourists provided almost \$400 million in funding to state and local governments. Without those visitors, each South Dakota family would have to pay an additional \$1,100 in taxes – thank God that isn't the case.

All that tourist spending supports the folks working in our travel industry. Nearly 60,000 jobs were directly supported by tourism last year. That means 60,000 South Dakota families were able to put food on the table and pay for the roof over their heads all because folks thought that our state was worth visiting. That's pretty special!

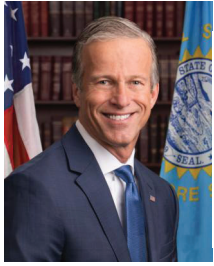
As we get into the summer months, tourism is getting ready to kick into high gear for the year. Our natural beauty (the "Great Places") draws them here in the first place, and our smiling people (the "Great Faces") keep visitors coming back again and again.

So when you see those out-of-state license plates, try to smile about it. They're choosing to spend time relaxing with their family in our backyard because it's such a special place. They make lives just a bit better for us when they do!

And my advice to all our South Dakotans: get out and see something new this year. For instance, I recently talked to a lifelong South Dakotan who had just visited Aberdeen for the first time after nearly 40 years of life – and he enjoyed it! There's so much to discover across our state, so please do. You'll be glad you did!

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JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

Small Business Is A Big Deal

The first week of May is National Small Business Week, an opportunity to celebrate the entrepreneurs, small business owners, farmers, and ranchers who make up South Dakota's small businesses. They are the backbone of our economy, they're job creators and innovators, and I'm proud to represent South Dakota's small businesses in the U.S. Senate.

Meeting with South Dakota small business owners is often on my agenda whether I'm at home in South Dakota or they're visiting Washington, D.C. I know small business owners are facing multiple challenges right now, and I'm focused on doing everything I can to help small businesses be successful. Getting input directly from business owners, farmers, and ranchers is the best way to help me do that.

We have important work to do this year on behalf of small businesses. One of our top priorities is making the 2017 Republican-led tax cuts permanent to prevent a \$600 billion tax hike on small businesses. Without action, the entire economy would face a massive \$4 trillion tax hike next year. One thing I often hear from small business owners is how important the 199A small business deduction is to them. For the last several years, small businesses have used this deduction to lower their tax burden, allowing them to invest in their operations and employees, and remain competitive with large corporations. It's estimated that making this permanent would result in 1.2 million additional jobs per year, and it's just one of the pro-small business, pro-jobs policies we're working to make permanent.

The 2017 tax law also doubled the exemption for the death tax, and I'm continuing my years-long effort to fully eliminate this fundamentally flawed tax. Earlier this year, I introduced the Death Tax Repeal Act, which would put an end to the death tax once and for all. Eliminating this onerous tax would ensure small businesses and family farms and ranches would be relieved from burdensome planning and aren't stuck with a huge tax bill when one generation dies and passes the operation on to the next generation.

I'm also working on other legislation that will help strengthen small businesses. I recently introduced the Strengthening Local Processing Act, which would provide support to smaller meat and poultry processors. This bill would not only help small processors, it would provide more options for livestock producers and create job opportunities in local markets. Another bill I introduced would simplify and standardize state income tax collection for employees who travel outside of their home state for temporary work, alleviating burdensome tax requirements for both employees and employers.

Sometimes the best thing we can do for small businesses is just keep government out of the way, and the Trump administration and Congress are making progress on regulatory relief. We've eliminated a number of burdensome regulations through the Congressional Review Act process. Farmers, ranchers, and other landowners will be glad to know the Trump administration has initiated a collaborative process to craft an alternative to the out-of-touch Biden-era WOTUS rule. And Republicans are working to deliver on our promise to unleash American energy to support more affordable and reliable energy for all Americans.

South Dakota's small businesses are an essential part of the fabric of our communities and our way of life. I'm proud to represent so many hard-working entrepreneurs, and it's always heart-warming to see family-owned businesses still going strong – businesses like the Star Family Restaurant in Murdo where I got my start as a busboy. They're a key part of what makes South Dakota great, and I'm proud to celebrate them this Small Business Week.

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Championing Freedom for Ranchers, Consumers, and American Fuel

BIG News

Heather and Charles Maude, fifth generation West River ranchers, faced up to ten years in prison over a fence line dispute with the Biden Administration's U.S. Forest Service. Thankfully, under the leadership of President Trump, cooler heads prevailed. This week, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced the criminal charges against the Maude family were dropped.

Thanks to the advocacy of people like you, the Trump Administration, members of Congress, and more, we brought an end to this political prosecution. I was honored to join Secretary Rollins, Secretary Noem, and the Maudes to celebrate this outcome.

BIG Idea

Transportation issues were the talk of the town this week. The House of Representatives debated and passed legislation blocking California's zero-emissions requirements for vehicles. These mandates would force all vehicles sold in California to be zero-emissions (electric vehicles) by 2035. Because it's inefficient for manufacturers to make different cars for different states, California's mandates would effectively apply to the whole country. All Americans should have the choice to purchase the car the best fits their needs. The government should not make that decision for them.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, that I am a member of, considered its portion of the budget reconciliation bill. Our package reduces spending by more than \$10 billion while making historic investments in the Coast Guard and air traffic control. Updates to our outdated air traffic control technology nationwide will be great for our towers at the Rapid City and Sioux Falls airports..

BIG Update

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved the sale of year-round E-15 sales, just days after my colleagues and I sent a letter to EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin asking for this waiver to be approved. This decision supports South Dakota producers, gives consumers a cheaper option at the pump, and bolsters our energy security.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

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A Tribute To Ms. Gossips-A-Lot

I was sitting in the shopping mall, drinking coffee and taking a break. I don't like going to the mall, but sometimes I have to go and pick up something for The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage. Sometimes, I think she does it on purpose, knowing how much I dislike it. I try to make the most of it.

While drinking coffee, I watched people pass by. I can't understand why so many people like coming to the mall.

Suddenly, I saw someone I recognized—or at least, I thought I recognized. It was my great-aunt. That would be my grandmother's sister, who passed away about 25 years ago. How could she be in the mall here today? Or, is it her ghost?

Staring at her as she walked by, I couldn't help but believe she was either my great-aunt or an identical substitute. Everything about her reminded me of my great-aunt.

I haven't thought about my great-aunt for many years. She's been deceased now for 25 years. Sitting there thinking about her, many things came to mind.

The first thing was that she was the biggest gossip in the whole town. It was a small town, but she knew everything that was happening there.

Her job was delivering mail, and she would stop at my grandmother's mailbox daily. They would catch up on a lot of things. Together, they both knew everything that ever happened or would happen in that little town.

I couldn't help but chuckle as I thought of the stories associated with her. I never told her or my grandmother that I referred to her as Ms. Gossips-A-Lot. I'm unsure where the name came from; I just made it up. But if anybody knew how to gossip, it was her.

It was always a wonderful time to sit down with my great-aunt and listen to the stories she told. I never knew if those stories were true, but she presented them to me, and at the time, I believed them to be true.

All I had to do was mention a name, and she would go on and on about that person. She knew more about that person than that person probably did. And the critical aspect is that she knew where all the dead bodies were buried, so to speak. She had dirt on just about everybody in town. She could have been a politician.

Several times she told me, "Son, the more you know about somebody the more you can control them." And believe me, she was a control freak on every level.

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Everybody in town feared talking in front of her. They knew whatever they said would be conveyed to other people. They were kind to her and smiled a lot at her, but they did not like sharing any information with her.

The more I got to know my great-aunt, the more I learned how to control her. I'm not a control freak, but sometimes I like to pull pranks on people. Ms. Gossips-A-Lot was a prime subject for some of my pranks.

Sometimes, as we sat and talked, I would calmly say, "Auntie, did you hear what Mr. Smith down the road did the other night?"

That kind of question always gets her undivided attention. She is nervous that somebody will know something about someone she doesn't know. That's not the way she plays her harp.

Looking at me seriously, she would lean toward me and whisper, "No, what did Mr. Smith do the other night? I haven't heard anything."

I didn't live in the town, but about 100 miles away. There's just no way I would know anything about anybody Auntie didn't know. She couldn't take a chance that I knew something she didn't.

Sitting there, I told a story about Mr. Smith, which I had made up. The more I talked about Mr. Smith, the more Auntie's eyes widened. She had a hard time dealing with me knowing something about someone she didn't.

I would say, "Auntie, what I'm about to tell you please do not let anybody else know."

That was the clue I needed to stir her up and spread this gossip for weeks.

Looking back on some of the pranks I pulled on her, I am a little regretful. She was an easy target, and I played her more than I should have.

The problem was that nobody believed what my dear old Auntie said. The only one who really believed her was her sister, my grandmother.

After she passed away, the town gossip quieted as never before. People couldn't get the daily gossip they once did and didn't realize how much they depended upon Auntie's gossip.

Sitting in the mall thinking about Ms. Gossips-A-Lot, I was reminded of what Solomon said in Proverbs 20:19. "He that goeth about as a talebearer revealeth secrets: therefore meddle not with him that flat-tereth with his lips."

I did not know my great-aunt very well. I only saw her occasionally. I did know some of the people around her, and they did not have anything too good to say about her. If my great-aunt had known what the people thought about her, she might have toned down her gossiping a little.

It is so easy to gossip. However, gossip only causes harm and is never good when considering the subject. I want to build people up, not tear them down.

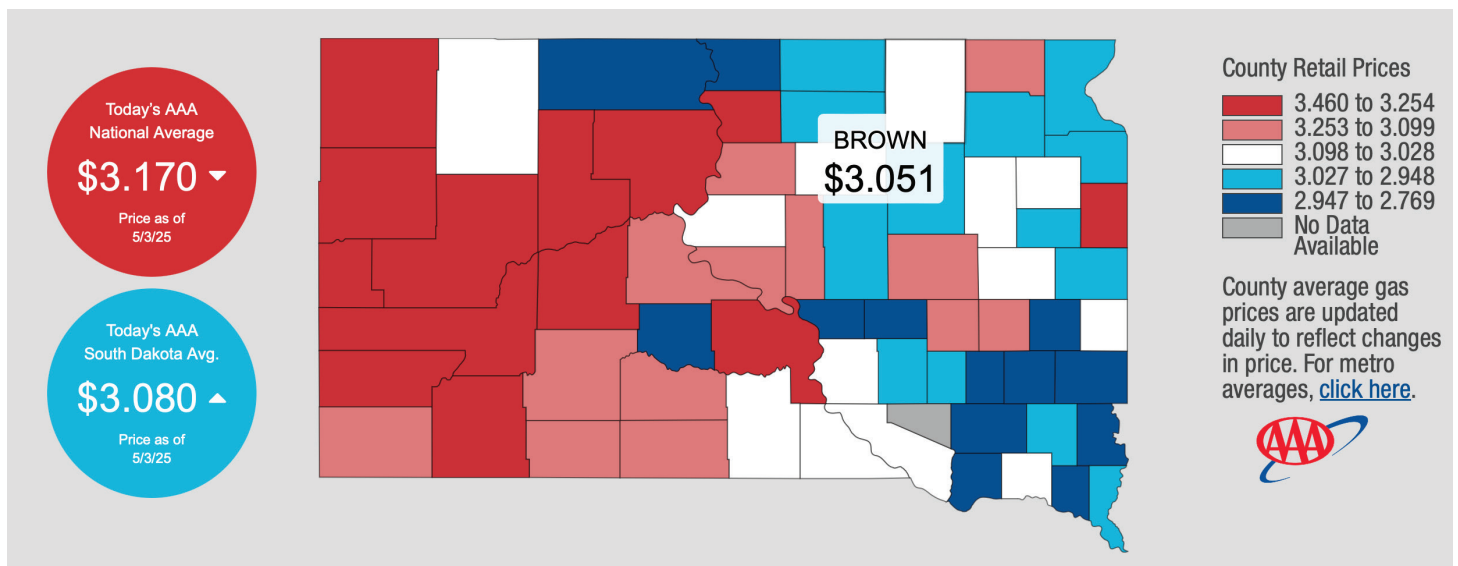
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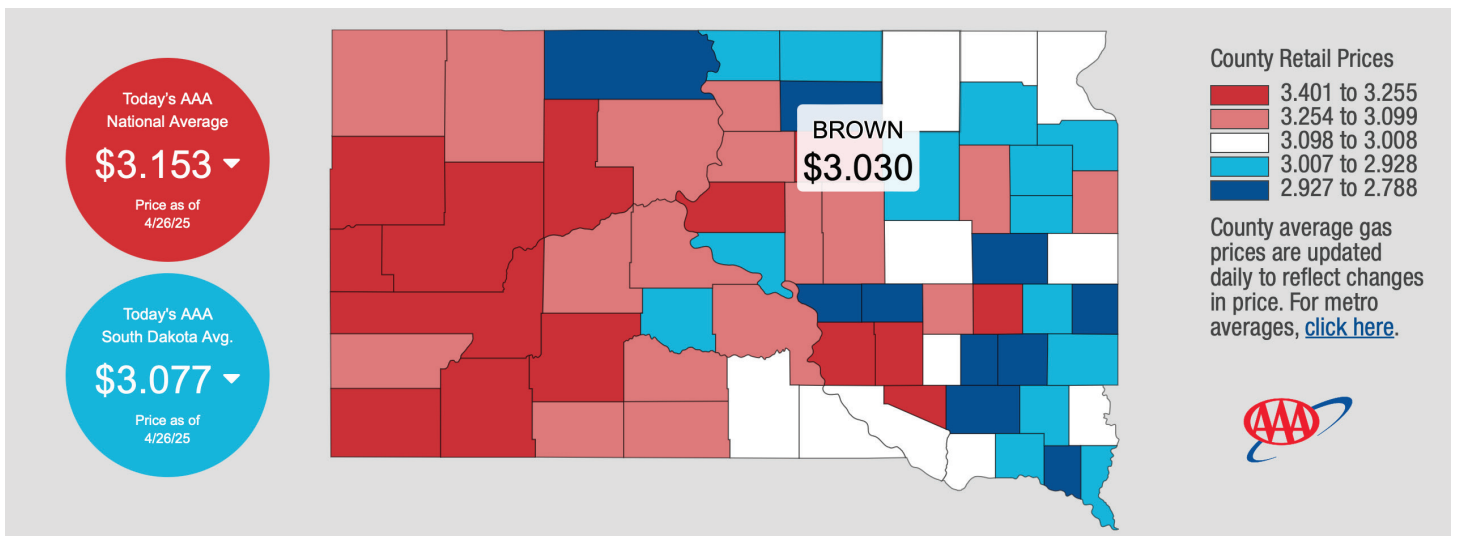
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.080	\$3.254	\$3.686	\$3.246
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.064	\$3.245	\$3.678	\$3.251
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.077	\$3.244	\$3.689	\$3.283
Month Ago Avg.	\$3.135	\$3.325	\$3.763	\$3.346
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.366	\$3.521	\$3.955	\$3.646

This Week



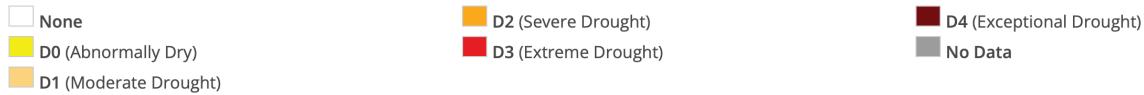
Last Week



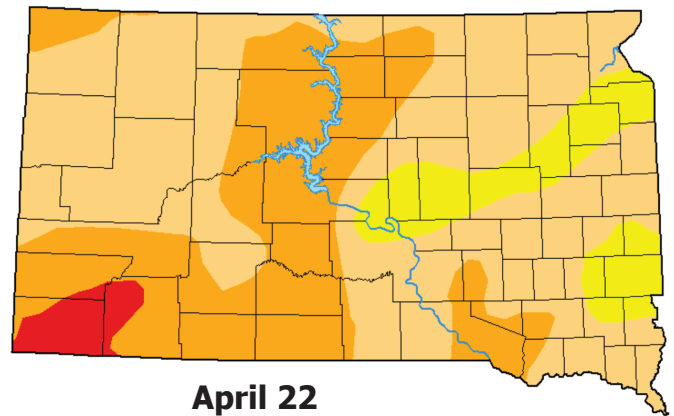
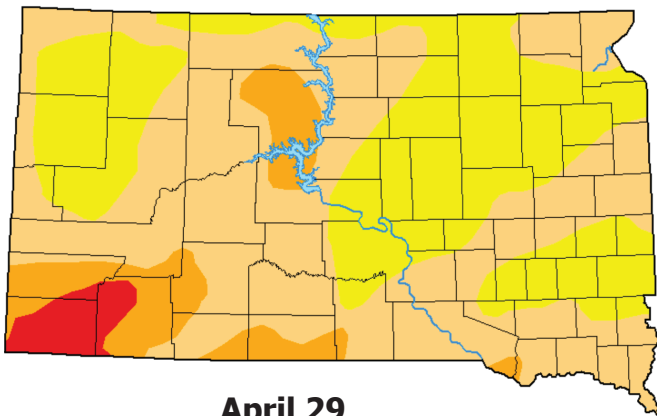
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Drought Classification



Drought Monitor



Precipitation totals varied significantly across this region this week, but more areas were hit by heavy rains and improving conditions than dryness and deterioration. The dry week led to deterioration across southwestern Kansas, southeastern Colorado, and much of the central tier of Colorado. Farther north and east, however, widespread heavy rains were noted in several swaths of the Plains and Wyoming, leading to reductions in the intensity and extent of dryness and drought. Improvements were most widespread across central and northwestern Kansas, and most of the state of South Dakota, where heavy rains were most widespread. Still, despite the improvement in many areas, 60-day precipitation totals were under 25 percent of normal in southwestern Kansas and southeastern Colorado, with less than half of normal reported in adjacent areas plus parts of central Kansas, central and northeastern Nebraska, and a few other scattered areas.

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: How have Trump's budget cuts affected U.S. national parks and can we expect widespread closures during the busy summer season?

-- Mary Paterson, Greenwich, CT

America's national parks welcome millions of visitors per year, some 331.9 million in 2024. And parks offer more than just scenery. The 63 American national parks are vital to conservation and local economies. The National Park Service (NPS) is responsible for the sites, from larger parks like Yosemite to smaller sites. However, the NPS heavily relies on funding from the federal government. Trump's federal budget cuts included significant cuts to the Department of Interior, which oversees the NPS.



U.S. national parks, like the Grand Tetons pictured here, are facing severe budget cuts thanks to Trump administration mania over cost cutting. Credit: Roddy Scheer.

Trump heavily reduced NPS funding despite Congress having not approved all of it. For example, NPS has struggled heavily with maintenance costs, such as road and trail repairs and upkeep at visitor centers. Furthermore, the deferred maintenance backlog for NPS was over \$23 billion as of 2023. Reductions in the budget also led to staff cuts and hiring freezes, leading to a smaller number of people who could support the parks and tourists. Many national parks sponsor environmental initiatives, but these have had to be scaled back due to the budget cuts. Theresa Pierno, the CEO and president of the National Parks Conservation Association, said, "This budget doesn't value our parks, and instead presents cuts that would be deeply damaging to them," in response to the Trump Administration's FY2018 budget.

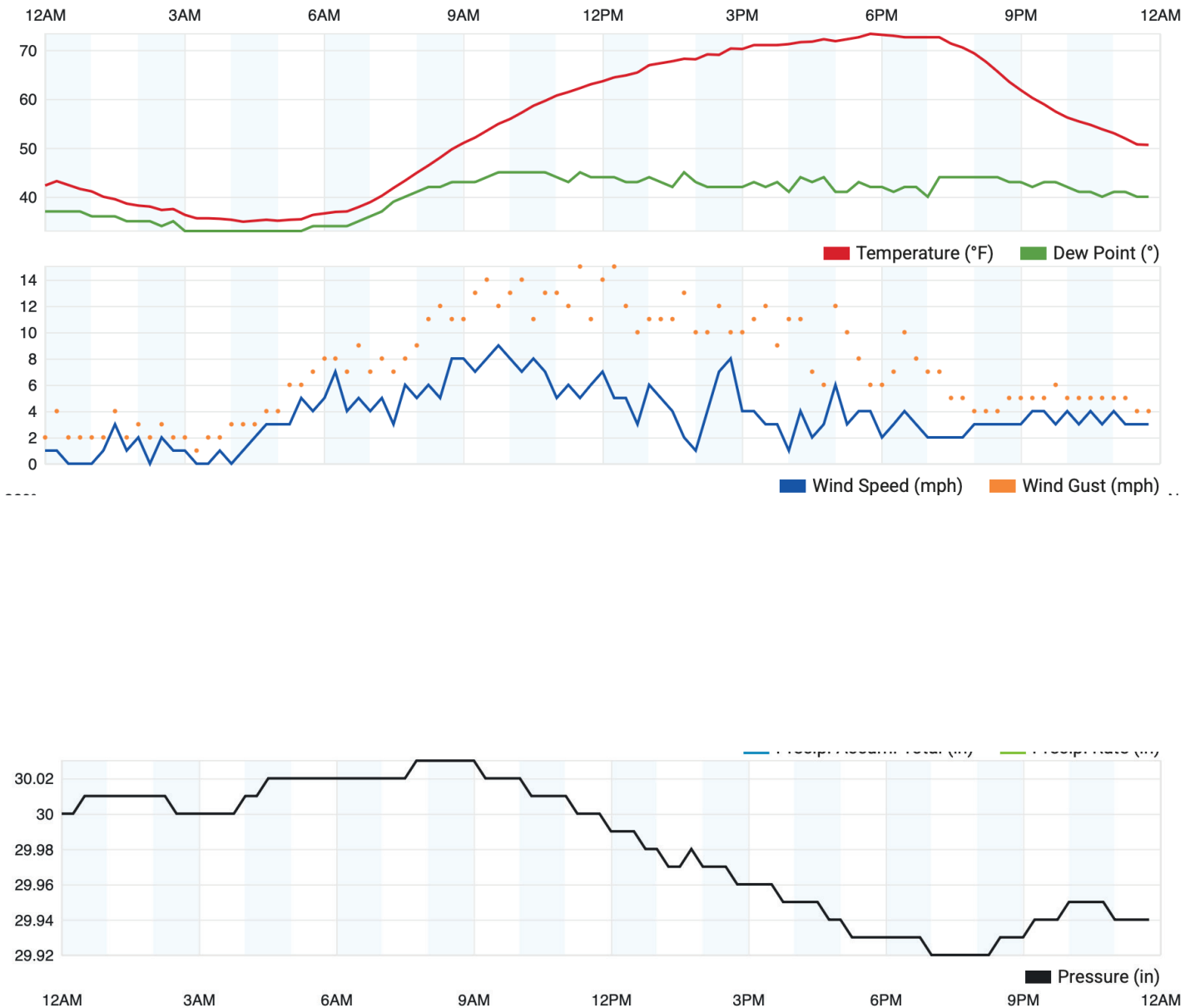
Staff shortage from budget cuts means fewer rangers, programs and activities available for tourists. Many basic services, like trash collection, restroom cleaning and trail maintenance, have been delayed in many parks due to this issue. Trails, campgrounds and visitor centers in a few parks were even closed temporarily due to a lack of park staff. Parks with a high visitor volume became overcrowded, leading to environmental damage, safety issues and a less satisfying and peaceful experience for visitors.

While no major national parks shut their doors completely, many smaller parks were especially vulnerable to the cuts. The reduced funding meant these parks had shorter operational hours and a reduced visiting season, impacting the communities in the area that rely on money generated by tourism. Phil Francis, chair of the Coalition to Protect America's National Parks, believes that "this financial challenge, combined with increasing use of the parks and recent policy changes, greatly challenges the ability of the NPS to meet its fundamental mission of resource protection and visitor enjoyment." Many see these cuts as having long-lasting consequences for the future of America's national parks. Future administrations face the issue of creating a sustainable budget for national parks. Most important, public advocacy through organizations such as the National Park Foundation and the National Parks Conservation Association will continue to play a large role in protecting our national parks for decades to come.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 77 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 47 °F

Clear

Monday



High: 78 °F

Sunny then
Sunny and
Breezy

Monday Night



Low: 47 °F

Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 75 °F

Sunny



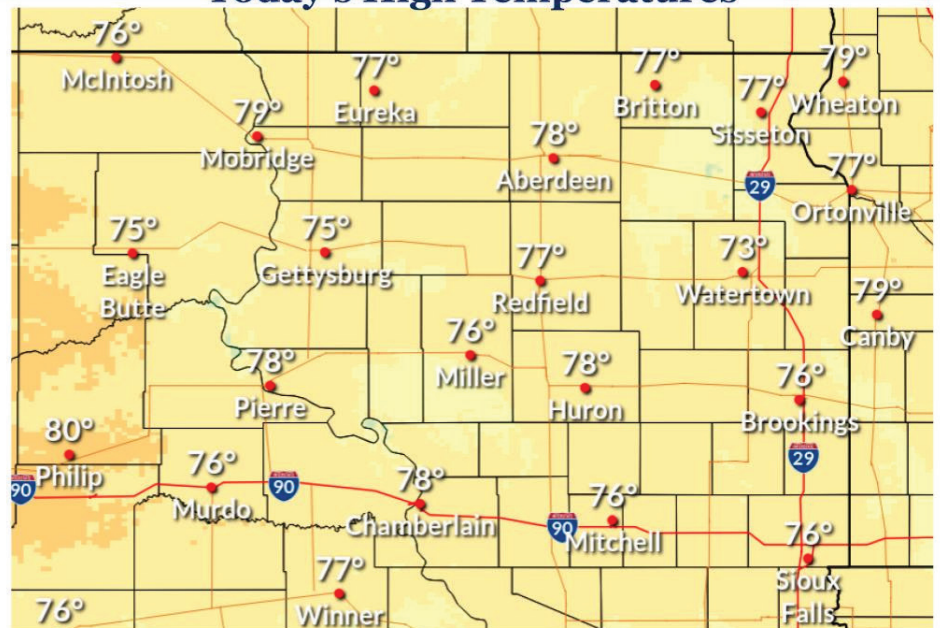
Mild & Dry Weather Continues

May 4, 2025
4:03 AM

Today's High Temperatures

Key Points

- Slightly Above Normal Temperatures Through The Upcoming Work Week
 - Near To As Much As 15 Degrees Above Normal
- Mostly Dry
 - Limited Chances For Moisture Monday PM - Wednesday AM
 - Mostly West-River
 - In The Form Of Showers & Weak Storms - Severe Weather Unlikely



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures through the next several days will remain near to slightly above normal. Our chances for moisture are limited due to a blocking pattern, and are mainly limited to late Monday into early Wednesday, primarily west-river, consisting of generally weak convection.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 73 °F at 5:44 PM

Low Temp: 35 °F at 4:17 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 11:21 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 31 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 98 in 1926

Record Low: 20 in 2005

Average High: 66

Average Low: 39

Average Precip in May.: .44

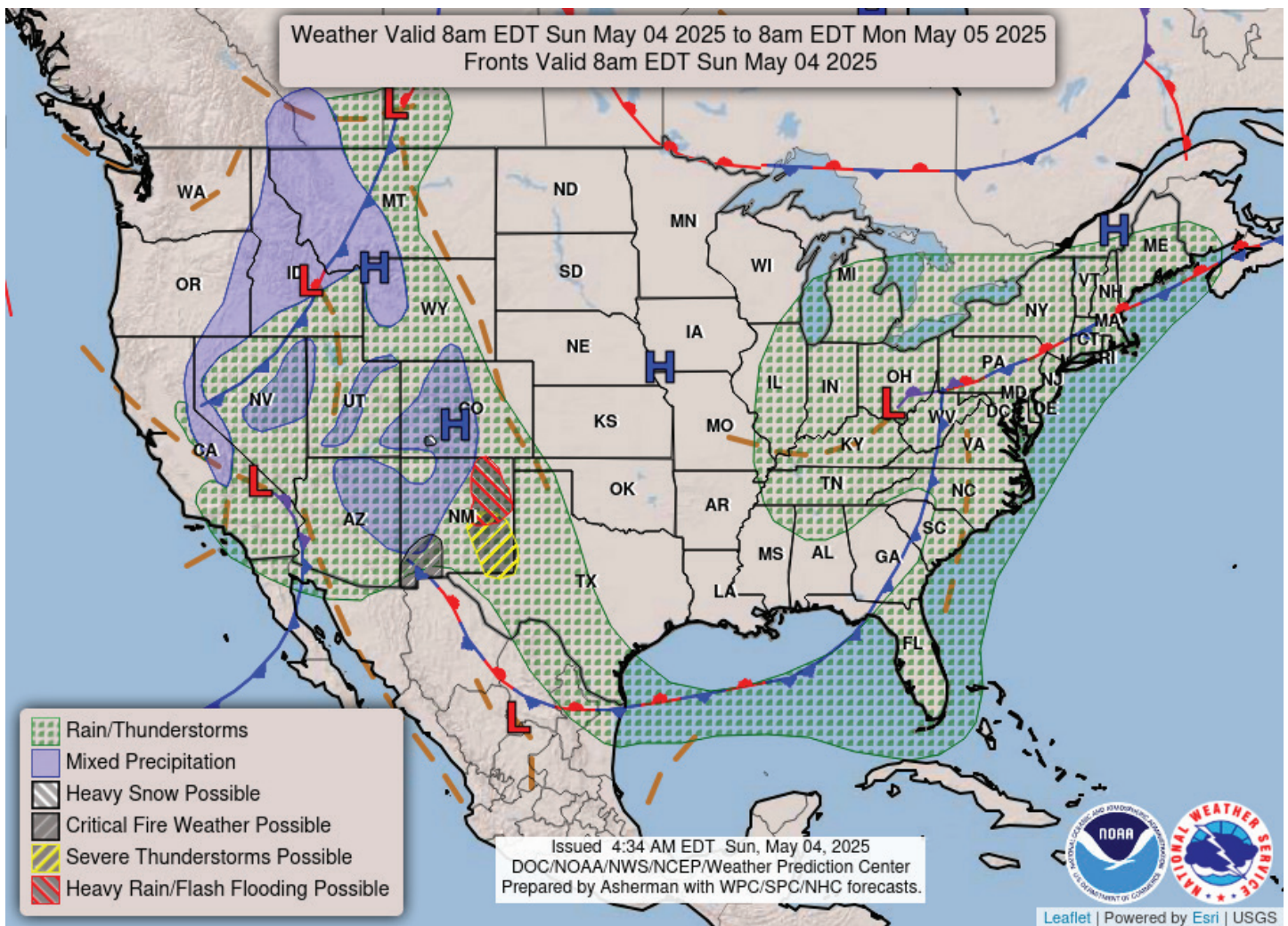
Precip to date in May.: 0.30

Average Precip to date: 4.41

Precip Year to Date: 2.93

Sunset Tonight: 8:44:39 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:12:12 am



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Today in Weather History

May 4, 1964: A tornado touched down southwest of Kadoka, causing damage of \$25,000.

1812 - A storm produced snow from Philadelphia to Maine. A foot of snow fell near Keene NH, and in Massachusetts, nine inches fell at Waltham, located near Boston. (David Ludlum)

1917 - A late season snowstorm in northwest Texas produced up to eight inches of snow in Potter County and Armstrong County. (David Ludlum)

1922 - Austin, TX, was hit twice by tornadoes which struck within thirty minutes of each other. Twelve persons were killed in the tornadoes. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - A tornado 500 yards in width struck Pleasant Hill, MO, severely damaging the high school and grade school. Only minor injuries were reported among the more than 1000 teaches and students due to excellent warnings and prior tornado drills. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the southeastern U.S., with South Carolina hardest hit. Thunderstorm winds toppled trees seventy feet high in Spartanburg County SC, and knocked homes off their foundations near Bishopville SC. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail in North Carolina, but brought welcome rains to much of the rest of the eastern U.S. Residents of New England finally saw sunshine after about a week of clouds and rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region and the Lower Mississippi Valley. Thunderstorms spawned fifteen tornadoes, and there were 340 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Hail three inches in diameter, and 9.39 inches of rain, resulted in more than 130 million dollars damage at Monroe LA. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 100 mph at Epps LA and Fort Worth TX. A thunderstorm north of Mineral Wells TX produced high winds which unroofed a nightclub, turning it into a "topless club." (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower Ohio Valley to Virginia and the Carolinas. A tornado at Augusta Springs VA killed two people and injured ten others, and another tornado caused 1.7 million dollars damage at Colonial Heights VA. Temperatures soared into the 90s in northern California. The high of 98 degrees in downtown Sacramento was their hottest reading of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotion

A Caring Church

When believers choose to meet the needs of others, God is glorified and we are blessed.

Luke 10:25-37

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

27 He answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'[a]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'[b]"

28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii[c] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

36 "Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

37 The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Do you realize that for believers, many needs can and should be met within the church? To make this possible, however, Christians must give of themselves on behalf of others (2 Corinthians 9:10-12).

For example, a man determines to offer support and pray alongside a hurting brother. Or a woman makes herself available to answer a new Christian's questions about the weekly sermon—the two ladies search the Bible and fill their minds with Scripture. And there are countless other ways to serve, such as driving an elderly member to the service, teaching a Sunday school class, or delivering a meal and spending time with someone.

Before you become overwhelmed by what a variety of needs there are, remember that loving one another is a body-wide effort; one person cannot offer help for all situations. But suppose you commit to serving a few folks whom God brings into your sphere of influence. As you surrender to the Lord, He will bless you with joy and profound contentment.

To put others before yourself is to practice authentic Christianity. And if believers commit to meeting as many needs as the Lord brings to their attention, a church can be transformed, becoming a true body of believers who function together for the glory of God.

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.02.25

14 37 40 41 68 2

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$90,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

21 23 39 45 50 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$32,520,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

2 13 18 21 31 9

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 11 Mins 50 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

4 9 13 20 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$143,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

14 23 33 38 60 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

10 21 23 35 65 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$54,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
03/29/2025 Men's Singles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle 10am, 1pm & 4pm
04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
04/12/2025 Groton Firemens Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
05/12/2025 High School Girls Golf Meet at Olive Grove
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
06/07/2025 Day of Play
06/13/2025 SDSU 4 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
06/21/2025 Groton Triathlon
06/23/2025 Ladies 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
07/11-13/25 2025 VFW 12U Class B State Baseball Tournament
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
07/16/2025 Men's Pro Am Golf at Olive Grove
07/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove
08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove
08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Romanians vote in a presidential redo after voided election sparked deep political crisis

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romanians are casting ballots Sunday in a critical presidential election redo after last year's annulled vote plunged the European Union and NATO member country into its worst political crisis in decades.

Eleven candidates are vying for the presidency and a May 18 runoff is expected. Polls opened at 7 a.m. (0400 GMT) and will close at 9 p.m. (1800 GMT). By noon, 3.5 million people — about 19.5% of eligible voters — had cast ballots, according to the Central Election Bureau, with a massive 500,000 coming from voters abroad.

Romania's political landscape was shaken last year when a top court voided the previous election in which the far-right outsider Calin Georgescu topped the first round, following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied.

Like many countries in the EU, anti-establishment sentiment is running high in Romania, fueled by high inflation and cost of living, a large budget deficit and a sluggish economy. Observers say the malaise has bolstered support for nationalist and far-right figures like Georgescu, who is under investigation and barred from the rerun.

While data from local surveys should be taken with caution, a median of polls suggests that hard-right nationalist George Simion will enter the runoff, likely pitting him against Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan, or the governing coalition's candidate, Crin Antonescu.

At a polling station in the capital, Bucharest, Simion appeared Sunday morning alongside Georgescu and told reporters: "We are here with one mission only: the return to constitutional order, the return to democracy. I have no other goal than first place for the Romanian people."

For his part, Georgescu called the vote rerun "a fraud orchestrated by those who have made deceit the only state policy," but said he was there to "acknowledge the power of democracy, the power of the vote that frightens the system, that terrifies the system."

Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician and former anti-corruption activist who founded the Save Romania Union party (USR) in 2016, is running on a pro-EU "Honest Romania" ticket. After casting his ballot, Dan said he voted "for hope and a new beginning" for Romania. "I voted with realism, because Romania is going through a difficult time," he said.

Veteran centrist Antonescu, 65, who campaigned on retaining Romania's pro-Western orientation, said Sunday morning that he voted for "a united Romania, for a strong Romania, for a dignified Romania."

Victor Ponta, a former prime minister between 2012 and 2015, has also pushed a MAGA-style "Romania First" campaign and boasts of having close ties to the Trump administration.

Another hopeful, Elena Lasconi, came second in last year's first round ballot and is participating in the rerun. She has positioned herself as a staunchly pro-Western, anti-system candidate, railing against what she describes as a corrupt political class.

Distrust in the authorities remains widespread, especially for those who voted for Georgescu, a sizeable electorate that Simion has sought to tap into.

"The anti-establishment sentiment is not like an anarchic movement, but is against the people who destroyed this country," Simion, who came fourth in last year's race and later backed Georgescu, told The Associated Press days before the rerun. "We are not a democratic state anymore."

Simion said that his hard-right nationalist Alliance for the Unity of Romanians party is "perfectly aligned with the MAGA movement," capitalizing on a growing wave of populism in Europe after U.S. President Donald Trump's political comeback. AUR rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election, proclaims to stand for "family, nation, faith, and freedom," and has since doubled its support.

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The election redo is a crossroads moment for Romania as it seeks to restore its democracy and retain its geopolitical alliances, which have become strained since the canceled election fiasco.

The decision to annul the election and the ban on Georgescu's candidacy drew criticism from U.S. Vice President JD Vance, Elon Musk and Russia, which publicly supported his candidacy in the rerun.

The presidential role carries a five-year term and significant decision-making powers in national security and foreign policy.

UK police arrest several Iranian men over alleged attack plot

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British counterterrorism officers arrested several Iranian men over an alleged plot to attack an unspecified target in London, the Metropolitan Police force said Sunday.

Police said five men aged between 29 and 46 were detained on Saturday in various parts of England on suspicion of preparing "a terrorist act."

Four are Iranian citizens and the nationality of the fifth is still being established.

All the suspects are being questioned at police stations and have not been charged. Police said they are searching several properties in London, Manchester in northwest England and Swindon in western England.

Police said the attack plot targeted a single location that was not being named "for operational reasons."

Commander Dominic Murphy, head of the force's Counter Terrorism Command, said police are still working to establish a motive "as well as to identify whether there may be any further risk to the public."

Separately, three other Iranian men, aged 39, 44 and 55, were arrested in London on suspicion of a national security offense as part of an unrelated investigation, police said.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said the arrests were "serious events that demonstrate the ongoing requirement to adapt our response to national security threats.

"The government continues to work with police and intelligence agencies to support all the action and security assessments that are needed to keep the country safe," she said.

Police have not determined whether the alleged plot is connected to Iran, but Britain's domestic intelligence service has warned of a growing threat from attackers linked to Tehran.

In October, the head of the MI5 domestic security service, Ken McCallum, said his agents and police have tackled 20 "potentially lethal" plots backed by Iran since 2022, most aimed at Iranians in the U.K. who oppose the country's authorities.

He said at the time there was there is the risk "of an increase in, or broadening of, Iranian state aggression in the U.K." if conflicts in the Middle East deepened.

In March 2024, Pouria Zeraati, a presenter at a Farsi-language television station critical of the Iranian government, was stabbed in the leg outside his home in London. Two men were later arrested in Romania and charged over the attack.

The U.K.'s official terror threat level stands at "substantial," the middle of a five-point scale, meaning an attack is likely.

Israeli Cabinet ministers to vote on whether to expand Gaza fighting

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Top Israeli Cabinet ministers were set to meet on Sunday to vote on whether to intensify the country's military operations in the Gaza Strip, as the army began to call up thousands of reserve soldiers in preparation for an expanded assault, Israeli officials said.

Also Sunday, a missile launched by Iranian-backed rebels in Yemen prompted air traffic at Israel's main Ben-Gurion Airport to halt, police said. The Israeli military said a projectile landed in the area of the airport, although it was not immediately clear if it was the missile or an interceptor of the country's missile defense system.

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The plans to escalate fighting in Gaza more than 18 months after the war there erupted come as a humanitarian crisis in the territory deepens.

As part of its efforts to pressure the militant group Hamas to negotiate on Israel's terms for a new ceasefire, Israel in early March halted the entry of goods into Gaza. That has plunged the territory of 2.3 million people into what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis since the war began.

An eight-week-long ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that brought a lull in fighting and freed Israeli hostages collapsed in March. Israel resumed its strikes on Gaza on March 18 and has captured swaths of the coastal enclave. Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed since the fighting resumed, according to local health officials. At least six Israeli soldiers have been killed in the renewed fighting.

An Israeli official said the country's influential security Cabinet would meet on Sunday evening to vote on plans to expand the fighting. A military official said the country was calling up thousands of reserve soldiers. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Far-right Israeli National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, in an interview with Israeli Army Radio, said he wanted to see a "powerful" expansion of the war, but did not disclose details as to what that would entail.

"We need to increase the intensity and continue until we achieve total victory. We must win a total victory," he said.

The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking 250 hostages.

Israel's offensive has killed more than 52,000 people in Gaza, many of them women and children according to Palestinians health officials, who do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count.

The fighting has displaced more than 90% of Gaza's population, often multiple times. Hunger has been widespread and the shortage of food has set off looting.

As the war in Gaza has dragged on, Israel has faced continued attacks from the Iranian-backed Houthis rebels, who on Sunday launched a missile that set off air raid sirens in many parts of the country.

A large plume of smoke could be seen rising near the airport, according to footage shared by Israeli media. Passengers were heard yelling and scrambling to take cover. It was not clear whether the fragment had landed inside the area of the airport, but police said they were closing the entrances to it while they dealt with the scene. Police later said road and rail traffic would resume.

Israel's paramedic service Magen David Adom said four people were lightly wounded following the attack.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz vowed retribution for the strike: "Whoever harms us we will harm them sevenfold."

Lady Gaga rocks Copacabana Beach with a free concert for more than 2 million fans

By ELÉONORE HUGHES Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Lady Gaga gave a free concert Saturday night in front of 2 million fans who poured onto Copacabana Beach for the biggest show of her career.

"Tonight, we're making history. (...) Thank you for making history with me," Lady Gaga told a screaming crowd.

The Mother Monster, as she is known, kicked off the show at around 22:10 p.m. local time with her 2011 song "Bloody Mary." Cries of joy rose from the tightly-packed fans who sang and danced shoulder-to-shoulder on the vast stretch of sand.

Concert organizers said 2.1 million people attended the show.

Lady Gaga performed her classic hits, including "Poker Face" and "Alejandro," switching between an array of dresses including one with the colors of the Brazilian flag.

Some fans - many of them young - arrived on the beach at the crack of dawn to secure a good spot, armed with snacks and drinks. They spent the day under a blazing sun, while others perched in trees, determined to get a panoramic view.

"Today is the best day of my life," said Manoela Dobes, a 27-year-old designer who was wearing a dress

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plastered with a photograph from when she met Lady Gaga in the United States in 2019. "It's surreal to be here."

Madonna also turned Copacabana Beach into a massive dance floor last year.

The large-scale performances are part of an effort led by City Hall to boost economic activity after Carnival and New Years' Eve festivities and the upcoming month-long Saint John's Day celebrations in June.

"It brings activity to the city during what was previously considered the low season – filling hotels and increasing spending in bars, restaurants, and retail, generating jobs and income for the population," said Osmar Lima, the city's secretary of economic development, in a statement released by Rio City Hall's tourism department last month.

Rio's City Hall said in a recent report that the show should inject at least 600 million reais (some \$106 million) into Rio's economy.

Similar concerts are scheduled to take place every year in May at least until 2028.

Lady Gaga arrived in Rio in the early hours of Tuesday. The city has been alive with Gaga-mania since, as it geared up to welcome the pop star for her first show in the country since 2012. Rio's metro employees danced to Lady Gaga's 2008 hit song "LoveGame" and gave instructions for Saturday in a video. A free exhibition celebrating her career sold out.

While the vast majority of attendees were from Rio, the event also attracted Brazilians from across the country and international visitors.

More than 500,000 tourists poured into the city in the days leading up to the show, more than double the initial forecast, according to data from the local bus station and Tom Jobim airport, Rio's City Hall said in a statement on Friday.

Ingrid Serrano, a 30-year-old engineer, made a cross-continent trip from Colombia to Brazil to attend the show.

"I've been a 100% fan of Lady Gaga my whole life," said Serrano, who was wearing a T-shirt featuring Lady Gaga's outlandish costumes over the years.

For her, the mega-star represents "total freedom of expression - being who one wants without shame."

Rio officials have a history of organizing huge concerts on Copacabana Beach. Madonna's show drew an estimated 1.6 million fans last year, while 4 million people flooded onto the beach for a 1994 New Year's Eve show by Rod Stewart in 1994. According to Guinness World Records, that was the biggest free rock concert in history.

To ensure fans could hear the songs, sixteen sound towers were spread along the beach.

Rio state's security plan included the presence of 3,300 military and 1,500 police officers, and 400 military firefighters.

Among those present were Lady Gaga admirers who remember their disappointment in 2017, when the artist canceled a performance scheduled in Rio at the last minute due to health issues.

Ricardo Filho, who has been a fan since childhood, said it was worth the wait.

"She's the best artist in the world," the 25-year-old said, as chants of "Gaga, I love you" in Portuguese rose from the crowd behind him.

Australia's re-elected prime minister says voters chose unity over division

By ROD MCGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australia's re-elected Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Sunday was greeted by well-wishers at a Sydney café and said the country had voted for unity over division.

Albanese's center-left Labor Party won an emphatic victory in elections on Saturday. As vote counting continued, the government was on track to win at least 85 seats in the 150-seat House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties need a majority to form an administration.

Labor held 78 seats in the previous Parliament, and gaining seats in a second term is rare in Australian politics.

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"The Australian people voted for unity rather than division," Albanese told reporters in the crowded café in inner-suburban Leichhardt where he and his fiancée, Jodie Haydon, gathered with colleagues and supporters for coffee.

"We'll be a disciplined, orderly government in our second term, just like we have been in our first," he added.

Treasurer Jim Chalmers, the government's top economic minister, explained the election result as voters seeking stability after U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff disruptions to the global economy.

"This was beyond even our most optimistic expectations," Chalmers told Australian Broadcasting Corp. of the election result.

"We know that this second term has been given to us by the Australian people because they want stability in uncertain times," he added.

Australian election result reminiscent of Canada

In an election result reminiscent of Canada's recent contest, conservative opposition leader Peter Dutton lost his parliamentary seat. His alliance of parties was reduced to 37 seats.

Canada's opposition leader, Pierre Poilievre, lost his seat after Trump declared economic war on the U.S. neighbor. Poilievre had previously been regarded as a shoo-in to become Canada's next prime minister and shepherd his Conservative Party back into power for the first time in a decade.

Senior Australian lawmakers say they feared late last year they would become the first government to be tossed out after a single three-year term since the turmoil of the Great Depression in 1931.

Like the center-left Canadian government, the Australian government had linked their political opponents to Trump's administration and its Elon Musk-led Department of Government Efficiency.

Australia was hit during the five-week election campaign with 10% tariffs on exports to the United States despite trading with its bilateral free trade partner at a deficit for decades.

Opposition leader branded 'DOGE-y Dutton'

The opposition leader was branded "DOGE-y Dutton," and Labor warned that a Dutton government would slash public sector services to pay for seven government-funded nuclear power plants.

Labor said Dutton never campaigned at any of the proposed power plant sites and argued the conservatives realized that nuclear reactors were not popular. There is no nuclear power generation in Australia.

Labor also accused Dutton of igniting culture wars. While Albanese stands before the Australian flag and two Indigenous flags at media announcements, Dutton had said that as prime minister, he would only stand in front of the national flag.

Indigenous Australians account for 4% of the population and are the nation's most disadvantaged ethnic minority.

Chalmers said the direct impacts of U.S. tariffs on Australia were "manageable and relatively modest."

"But there is a huge downside risk in the global economy. I think what's happening, particularly between the U.S. and China, does cast a dark shadow over the global economy. And we're not uniquely impacted by that. But we're really well-placed. We are quite well-prepared," Chalmers said.

Albanese has become the first Australian prime minister to lead a party to consecutive election victories since conservative John Howard in 2004.

Revolving door for Australian political leaders

Howard's 11-year reign ended at the next election in 2007. Like Dutton, Howard also lost his seat in Parliament as well as his government. Howard's departure coincided with the start of an extraordinary period of political instability that created a revolving door for political leaders. There have been six prime ministers since Howard, including one who served in the role twice in separate stints three years apart.

Albanese said the first world leader to congratulate him on his election victory was Papua New Guinea Prime Minister James Marape, who phoned at 7:45 a.m.

"He's a very good friend," Albanese said. "I told him it's a bit early to call."

Albanese had also spoken to New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon and received text messages of congratulation from British Prime Minister Kier Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron.

Albanese said he would speak to Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later Sunday.

A roofless palace in Italy's Viterbo hosted the first and longest conclave

By GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

VITERBO, Italy (AP) — It was the mounting rage of citizens in Viterbo, a small town north of Rome, that put an end to the longest papal election in the history of the Catholic Church, forging for the first time the word “conclave.”

The Viterbo conclave in the 13th century was a pivotal event in papal elections, lasting almost three years — exactly 1,006 days — due to deep divisions among the cardinals over the name of the new pope.

Viterbo is also considered the birthplace of modern conclaves, where cardinals are confined to a single place until they elect a new pontiff, and often need to negotiate before reaching a compromise on the final name.

In November 1268, the cardinals — summoned in Viterbo to elect the successor of the late Pope Clement IV — were split mainly between two factions and couldn't reach a consensus before September 1271.

Drastic measures

As the cardinals continued to deliberate in Viterbo, frustration rose among locals due to the lack of progress, as political and internal struggles had cast a shadow over the election.

Those divisions stemmed from the cardinals' allegiance to competing parties, mainly supporters of the papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. That was further complicated by personal and family ties, making any agreement on the pope's election extremely difficult.

The electing marathon led citizens, who at the time had to pay for the cardinals' room and board expenses, to resort to drastic measures.

The cardinals were first locked in Viterbo's papal palace with a key, giving birth to the term conclave, which comes from the Latin words “cum” (with) and “clavem” (key).

“The cardinals left us a very important testimony, a parchment, dated June 8, 1270, where they said to be locked inside a palazzo scoperto, a palace with no roof,” said Elena Cangiano, an archaeologist at Viterbo's medieval Palazzo dei Papi (Palace of the Popes).

Cangiano noted that, according to Viterbo oral tradition, the cardinals ended up camping inside the unroofed palace.

“That's reportedly testified by some holes found on the hall's floor, which could be those left by the tents' poles,” she explained.

Then Viterbese also restricted the cardinals' meals to bread and water to make them hurry up. As that didn't work either, they started tearing off part of the roof of the large room that hosted the college of cardinals, exposing them to the elements.

Those extreme conditions only lasted three weeks, following which the cardinals were allowed access to the other rooms of the palace, but not to leave the building. It would take another 15 months before Gregory X was chosen as the new pope.

That was the longest papal election ever: To avoid the same situation ever occurring again, Gregory X promulgated a new apostolic constitution — called “Ubi Periculum” — that imposed strict regulations on the election and allowed to isolate the cardinals.

Gregory's election was also seen as a “compromise,” with his name chosen to unite the divided college of cardinals and bring an end to the exhausting process.

Modern conclave

That's why the Viterbo conclave is seen by historians as setting the stage for future papal elections. The rules and practices established at the time laid the foundation for many of the procedures used currently in papal conclaves.

Among the new rules, Gregorio X decreed that cardinals were restricted to “one meal per day,” and later,

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to bread, water and wine, to further encourage a quick decision. The newly elected Adrian V, however, suspended those rules a few years later.

Fabrizio Cardoni, 61, born and raised in Viterbo, considers the city's primacy a matter of pride.

"This is the history of our city," he said. "So, we care a lot about our medieval neighborhood, we care about the pope palace that is truly wonderful and, let's say, almost unique."

Cristina Giusio, a tourist visiting from northern Italy, was struck by the history of the Viterbo conclave after a tour of the papal palace. "It was something quite amazing. ... I did not know that first conclave started here, so it was a real surprise," she said.

Vatican history experts stress that modern conclaves still owe to Viterbo some of their key characteristics, including shorter durations.

Viterbo's legacy could again play a role again in the conclave that starts on Wednesday in Rome's Sistine Chapel to choose Pope Francis' successor.

"Let's say that the timing is now almost certainly respected, also thanks to all that happened in Viterbo," said Cangiano. "In recent times, usually, it doesn't take that long to elect the pope."

Protesters want Morocco to sever ties with Israel, so they're targeting strategic ports

By SAM METZ and AKRAM OUBACHIR Associated Press

TANGIER, Morocco (AP) — More than a year of protests over Morocco's decision to normalize ties with Israel has emboldened activists and widened a gap between the decisions of the government and the sentiments of the governed. The fury has spilled into the country's strategic ports.

Amid shipping cranes and stacked containers, 34-year-old agricultural engineer Ismail Lghazaoui marched recently through a sea of Palestinian flags and joined protesters carrying signs that read "Reject the ship," in reference to a vessel transporting fighter jet components from Houston, Texas.

Activists are urging Moroccan port officials to try to block ships carrying military cargo to Israel, much like Spain did last year. Protests often target Danish shipping company Maersk, which helps transport components used to make Lockheed Martin's F-35 as part of the U.S. Defense Department's Security Cooperative Participant Program that facilitates weapons sales to allies including Israel.

A similar boycott campaign landed Lghazaoui in prison last year, but that didn't deter him from turning out again for resurgent protests last month, after his release. Lghazaoui is one of more than a dozen activists pursued by Moroccan authorities for criticizing the government's ties with Israel.

During a rally in November in Casablanca where Lghazaoui spoke, plainclothes officers beat him and others to prevent them from advancing toward the U.S. Consulate, he said. He later posted about Maersk on social media and was arrested and charged with incitement. He spent four months in prison, from November to February.

"They try to silence people," Lghazaoui told The Associated Press. "They were using me to dissuade people or to push people away from what they were doing."

A push to topple 'normalization'

Morocco is one of four Arab states that normalized ties with Israel as part of the Abraham Accords brokered in 2020 during President Donald Trump's first term.

The deal delivered something Moroccan diplomats had chased for years: U.S. support for Morocco's claims over the disputed Western Sahara. But its cost — growing public resentment toward normalization — has ballooned throughout the Israel-Hamas war.

"I've rarely seen such a chasm between public opinion and the monarchy. What the power elites are doing goes completely against what the Moroccan people want," said Aboubakr Jamai, dean of the Madrid Center at the American College of the Mediterranean.

Tens of thousands have taken to the streets of Morocco since the war began. While largely made up of families, students, Islamists, leftists and union members, the protests have also drawn more radical voices. Some have burned Israeli flags or chanted against royal adviser André Azoulay, a Jewish Moroccan.

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Clad in riot gear, security forces have stood by and watched as protesters denounce “normalization” and Morocco’s expanding trade and military ties with Israel.

But authorities have shown that their tolerance for dissent only goes so far.

Morocco’s constitution generally allows for freedom of expression, although it is illegal to criticize the monarchy or King Mohammed VI and those who do can face prosecution. Throughout the war, activists who have implicated the monarchy on social media or protested businesses targeted by boycotts due to their operations in Israel have received prison sentences.

The constraints mirror Egypt and Jordan, which like Morocco have publicly sympathized with the Palestinians, maintained ties with Israel and imprisoned activists who direct their ire toward the government.

However, unlike in those countries, the arrests in Morocco have done little to quell public anger or activists’ demands.

A harbor draws heat

In recent weeks, protesters have set their sights on a new target: the country’s strategic ports and the companies using them to move military cargo. Activists and port workers recently demanded that two vessels crossing the Atlantic carrying fighter jet parts that they suspected would end up in Israel be blocked from docking in Morocco.

Port protests gained momentum last month when Morocco’s largest labor union backed the call to block the two ships, and dozens of religious scholars and preachers, many affiliated with the anti-monarchy Islamist movement Al Adl wal Ihsan, issued an edict with a similar message.

While not officially allowed to participate in politics, Al Adl wal Ihsan has mobilized large crowds and helped lead pro-Palestinian activism throughout the Israel-Hamas war, drawing in young people who feel official parties don’t speak to them. On a recent Friday, the group said Moroccans took part in 110 demonstrations across 66 cities in support of Palestinians in Gaza.

Both Al Adl wal Ihsan and union members marched portside in Tangier and Casablanca, where the vessels eventually docked April 20.

In a statement, Maersk acknowledged that ships that passed through the two Moroccan ports carried parts used in the fighter jet. But it denied activists’ claims of directly shipping weapons to conflict zones, stating that they require end-use certificates to verify the final destination of military cargo.

A port official in Tangier who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren’t authorized to speak on the matter said that while cargo docked and unloaded in Morocco undergoes examination, ships docking en route to other destinations do not.

The Israeli military did not respond to questions about the shipments. F-35s are typically assembled in the United States, using components sourced throughout the world, including outer wings and display systems manufactured in Israel.

Morocco’s Foreign Ministry did not respond to questions about normalization or its port policies, though diplomats have previously argued that relations with Israel allow them to press for a two-state solution and facilitate aid delivery to Gaza.

Domestic fault lines exposed

Some observers in Morocco have questioned whether the focus on Gaza has diverted attention from pressing domestic struggles. Voices from Moroccan nationalist circles on social media have instead highlighted the marginalization of the Indigenous Amazigh population and the dispute over Western Sahara, which they argue are more central to national identity and sovereignty.

For others, the prolonged war has prompted clear shifts. The Islamist Justice and Development Party, which once backed normalization with Israel while in power, recently invited senior Hamas officials to its congress in Rabat. However, the officials were unable to obtain visas to enter Morocco.

“Palestine will remain our primary cause,” said Abdelilah Benkirane, a former prime minister and general secretary of the Justice and Development Party.

Pope Francis left unfinished business after a 12-year papacy. What challenges await the next pope?

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — While Pope Francis accomplished a lot in his 12-year papacy, he left much unfinished business and many challenges for his successor — from the Vatican's disastrous finances to the wars raging on multiple continents and discontent among traditionalists about his crackdown on the old Latin Mass.

When the conclave's cardinals finish casting their ballots under Michelangelo's frescoed ceilings of the Sistine Chapel, the 267th pope will have to decide whether to continue Francis' policies, tweak them, or abandon them altogether. Will he prioritize migrants, the environment and the social justice policies that Francis championed, or give precedence to other issues?

Among the challenges facing the new pope:

The role of women

Francis did more to promote women to leadership positions in the Vatican than any pope before him, and his successor will have to decide whether to continue that legacy, accelerate it or back down and change course.

The issue isn't minor. Catholic women do much of the church's work in schools and hospitals and are usually responsible for passing the faith to the next generation. But they have long complained of second-class status in an institution that reserves the priesthood for men.

Some are voting with their feet.

Nuns are leaving in droves, either through attrition or simply quitting, leading to questions about the future of female religious orders.

The Vatican says the number of nuns globally has been hemorrhaging about 10,000 per year for over a decade, with their numbers at 599,229 at the end of 2022, the last year for which there are statistics. In 2012, there were 702,529 nuns globally.

The new pope will have to address women's expectations for not only a greater say in church governance, but greater recognition.

"We are the great majority of the people of God," said Maria Lia Zerbino, an Argentine named by Francis to advise the Vatican on bishop nominations, a first for a woman. "It's a matter of justice. It's not an achievement of feminism, it's in the church's interest."

Women's Ordination Conference, which advocates for female priests, goes further. "The exclusion of women from the conclave, and from ordained ministry, is a sin and a scandal," it said.

Gervase Ndyababo, a prominent lay leader in Uganda, said there should be more participation of the laity and women in the administration of parishes and decision-making at all levels. Progress, he said, has come "at a snail's speed."

Polarization of progressives and traditionalists

An anonymous letter circulated among Vatican officials in 2022, highlighting what it called Francis' "disastrous" pontificate and what a new pope must do correct the "catastrophe" he had wrought. Its author was Australian Cardinal George Pell, but that fact emerged only after his death in 2023. Once a close adviser to Francis but always conservative, Pell grew increasingly disillusioned with his papacy, signing the letter with the pen name, "Demos" — the common people.

Last year, a screed by another anonymous cardinal circulated, signed by "Demos II." It resumed where Pell left off, denouncing what it called Francis' "autocratic, at times seemingly vindictive style of governance; a carelessness in matters of law; an intolerance for even respectful disagreement; and — most seriously — a pattern of ambiguity in matters of faith and morals causing confusion among the faithful."

It blamed polarization in the church on the confusion Francis had sown and urged the next pope to focus on "recovery and reestablishment of truths that have been slowly obscured or lost among many Christians."

Those letters underscored the age-old divisions between traditionalists and progressives in the Catholic

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Church that were exacerbated during Francis' pontificate. He emphasized inclusion and "synodality," or listening to the faithful, and cracked down on traditionalists by restricting their celebration of the old Latin Mass. While the conservatives may not have enough votes to elect one of their own, a new pope will have to try to restore unity.

The polarization is keenly felt in the United States, where anyone using social media can challenge the Vatican or even the local church's perspective, said professor Steven Millies of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Such forms of communications "can have a narrative of what Catholicism is that doesn't come from any ordained minister, from any bishop, and can, night after night, the world over, suggest that the pope is wrong," he said.

Clergy sexual abuse

While many church leaders would like to think clergy sexual abuse scandals are in the past, survivors and their advocates want the new pope to address it as a top priority.

Francis and Pope Benedict XVI took steps to end decades of abuse and cover-ups, changing church laws to punish abusers and their clerical superiors who hid their wrongdoing.

But a culture of impunity still reigns, and church authorities have barely begun to deal with other forms of spiritual and psychological abuse that have traumatized generations of faithful. Twenty years after the sex abuse scandal first erupted in the U.S., there is still no transparency from the Vatican about the depth of the problem or how cases have been handled.

The new pope must deal with not only the existing caseload but continued outrage from rank-and-file Catholics and ongoing revelations in parts of the world where the scandal hasn't yet emerged.

Ahead of the conclave, groups of survivors and their advocates held news conferences in Rome to publicize the problem. They created online databases to call out cardinals who botched cases and demanded the Vatican finally adopt a zero-tolerance policy to bar any abuser from priestly ministry.

Peter Isely of the U.S. group SNAP said it was "crazy and bizarre" that the church doesn't apply the same rigor to abusers that it does to establishing criteria for ordination.

"You can't be a married man and a priest," he said. "You can't be a woman and a priest. ... But you can be a child molester and a priest."

LGBTQ+ outreach

Francis famously said, "Who am I to judge?" when asked in 2013 about a purportedly gay monsignor at the Vatican. Francis sought to assure gay people that God loves them as they are, that "being homosexual is not a crime," and that everyone is welcome in the church.

His successor must decide whether to follow in that outreach or pull back. There's plenty of support for rolling it back. In 2024, African bishops issued a continent-wide dissent from Francis' decision allowing priests to bless same-sex couples, and bishops from around the world attending his synod on the church's future backed off language explicitly accepting LGBTQ+ people.

"We want a united Catholic Church, but we must stay with the fundamentals," said Ndyababo, the Ugandan lay leader. "The gospel should not change at all because of our own human weakness."

The Rev. James Martin, who seeks to build bridges with LGBTQ+ Catholics, knows the degree of opposition but remains hopeful.

"The challenge for the new pope is to continue Francis' legacy of reaching out to a group who has felt excluded from their own church," Martin said. "Based on the synod, I would say that many cardinals feel that there needs to be welcome of LGBTQ+ people because they know their dioceses. But how far that goes is up in the air."

Visa crackdown leads international students in the US to reconsider summer travel

By MAKIYA SEMINERA Associated Press

On summer break from a Ph.D. program, an international student at University of California, San Diego, was planning a trip with a few friends to Hawaii. But after seeing international students across the United States stripped of their legal status, the student decided against it.

Any travel, even inside the U.S., just didn't seem worth the risk.

"I probably am going to skip that to ... have as few interactions with governments as possible," said the student, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of fear of being targeted.

International students weighing travel to see family, take a vacation or conduct research are thinking twice because of the Trump administration's crackdown, which has added to a sense of vulnerability.

Even before students suddenly began losing permission to study in the U.S., some colleges were encouraging international students and faculty to postpone travel, citing government efforts to deport students involved in pro-Palestinian activism. As the scale of the status terminations emerged in recent weeks, more schools have cautioned against non-essential travel abroad for international students.

University of California, Berkeley, for one, issued an advisory last week saying upcoming international travel was risky due to "strict vetting and enforcement."

At least 1,220 students at 187 colleges, universities and university systems have had their visas revoked or legal status terminated since late March, according to an Associated Press review of university statements, correspondence with school officials and court records.

The number of affected students appears far higher, though. At least 4,736 international students' visa records were terminated in a government database that maintains their legal status, according to an April 10 Immigration and Customs Enforcement response to inquiries from Congress.

Suddenly at risk for deportation, some students went into hiding while others left the country on their own. Many of the students said they had only minor infractions on their records or didn't know why their records were removed.

After federal judges raised due process concerns in several students' cases, the U.S. government reversed the terminations but then issued new guidance expanding the reasons international students can lose their legal status in the future.

Under the new policy, valid reasons for status termination include the revocation of the visas students used to enter the U.S. In the past, if a student's visa was revoked, they generally could stay in the U.S. to finish school. They simply would not be able to reenter if they left the country.

The fast-evolving situation has left colleges struggling to advise students.

A Michigan college employee who helps international students navigate the visa process said they are inquiring more than ever about summer travel. The employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said he often has been unable to give sufficient answers.

Last year, the U.S. hosted around 1.1 million international students, a source of essential tuition revenue at many schools. Advocates say that number is likely to shrink as the crackdown hurts America's appeal.

Over the past few weeks, Rishi Oza's immigration law firm in North Carolina has received calls about travel risks almost daily from people of varied immigration status, including international students.

"You kind of shake your head and say, 'Is this the character of the country we want?'" Oza said. "It just seems that it's a bit out of whack that people are fearful of leaving and whether they'll be able to come back."

Students in the U.S. with a visa need to decide if their travels are critical, Oza said.

When attempting reentry after leaving the country, they should bring immigration documents, school transcripts and even court documents if they were charged with a crime and the court dismissed the case. Ultimately, lawyers can't foretell what will happen at the airport, he said.

The unpredictability has put one international student at the University of Illinois in distress. The student,

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who requested anonymity to avoid being targeted, has laid low since one of his classmates left the country after their legal status was terminated.

The student's plan to travel to his home country in Asia this summer causes feelings of panic, but he has nowhere else to stay. He bought his plane ticket and is committed to the trip. His anxiety over what could happen when he returns, however, is still there.

"Right now," he said, "I'm afraid I might not be able to come back." ____

Associated Press reporter Christopher L. Keller contributed from Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Musk gets his Texas wish. SpaceX launch site is approved as the new city of Starbase

By VALERIE GONZALEZ and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — The South Texas home of Elon Musk's SpaceX rocket company is now an official city with a galactic name: Starbase.

A vote Saturday to formally organize Starbase as a city was approved by a lopsided margin among the small group of voters who live there and are mostly Musk's employees at SpaceX. With all the votes in, the tally was 212 in favor to 6 against, according to results published online by the Cameron County Elections Department.

Musk celebrated in a post on his social platform, X, saying it is "now a real city!"

Starbase is the facility and launch site for the SpaceX rocket program that is under contract with the Department of Defense and NASA that hopes to send astronauts back to the moon and someday to Mars.

Musk first floated the idea of Starbase in 2021 and approval of the new city was all but certain. Of the 283 eligible voters in the area, most are believed to be Starbase workers.

The election victory was personal for Musk. The billionaire's popularity has diminished since he became the chain-saw-wielding public face of President Donald Trump's federal job and spending cuts, and profits at his Tesla car company have plummeted.

SpaceX has generally drawn widespread support from local officials for its jobs and investment in the area.

But the creation of an official company town has also drawn critics who worry it will expand Musk's personal control over the area, with potential authority to close a popular beach and state park for launches.

Companion efforts to the city vote include bills in the state Legislature to shift that authority from the county to the new town's mayor and city council.

All these measures come as SpaceX is asking federal authorities for permission to increase the number of South Texas launches from five to 25 a year.

The city at the southern tip of Texas near the Mexico border is only about 1.5 square miles (3.9 square kilometers), crisscrossed by a few roads and dappled with airstream trailers and modest midcentury homes.

SpaceX officials have said little about exactly why they want a company town and did not respond to emailed requests for comment.

"We need the ability to grow Starbase as a community," Starbase General Manager Kathryn Lueders wrote to local officials in 2024 with the request to get the city issue on the ballot.

The letter said the company already manages roads and utilities, as well as "the provisions of schooling and medical care" for those living on the property.

SpaceX officials have told lawmakers that granting the city authority to close the beach would streamline launch operations. SpaceX rocket launches and engine tests, and even just moving certain equipment around the launch base requires the closure of a local highway and access to Boca Chica State Park and Boca Chica Beach.

Critics say beach closure authority should stay with the county government, which represents a broader population that uses the beach and park. Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino, Jr. has said the county has worked well with SpaceX and there is no need for change.

Another proposed bill would make it a Class B misdemeanor with up to 180 days in jail if someone doesn't comply with an order to evacuate the beach.

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The South Texas Environmental Justice Network, which has organized protests against the city vote and the beach access issue, held another demonstration Saturday that attracted dozens of people.

Josette Hinojosa, whose young daughter was building sandcastle nearby, said she was taking part to try to ensure continued access to a beach her family has enjoyed for generations.

With SpaceX, Hinojosa said, "Some days it's closed, and some days you get turned away,"

Organizer Christopher Basaldú, a member of the Carrizo/Comecrudo Nation of Texas tribe, said his ancestors have long been in the area, where the Rio Grande meets the Gulf.

"It's not just important," he said, "it's sacred."

Mexico's president says she rejected Trump's plan to send US troops across the border

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said on Saturday that U.S. President Donald Trump proposed sending American troops into Mexico to help her administration fight drug trafficking but that she rejected it.

Her remarks to supporters in eastern Mexico came in response to a Wall Street Journal article published the day before, describing a tense phone call last month in which Trump reportedly pressured her to accept a bigger role for the U.S. military in combating drug cartels in Mexico.

"He said, 'How can we help you fight drug trafficking? I propose that the United States military come in and help you.' And you know what I said to him? 'No, President Trump.'"

She added: "Sovereignty is not for sale. Sovereignty is loved and defended."

White House National Security Council spokesman James Hewitt said in a statement later Saturday that Trump has worked closely with Mexico's president "to achieve the most secure southwest border in history."

"Dangerous Foreign Terrorist Organizations, however, continue to threaten our shared security and the drugs and crime they spread threaten American communities across the country," the statement said. "The President has been crystal clear that Mexico must do more to combat these gangs and cartels and the United States stands ready to assist and expand the already close cooperation between our two countries."

The U.S. military presence has increased steadily along its southern border with Mexico in recent months, following Trump's order in January to increase the army's role in stemming the flow of migrants.

The U.S. Northern Command has surged troops and equipment to the border, increased manned surveillance flights to monitor fentanyl trafficking along the border and sought expanded authority for U.S. Special Forces to work closely with Mexican forces conducting operations against cartels.

Trump designated many of the gangs and cartels smuggling drugs into the U.S. as foreign terrorist organizations on Feb. 19, restricting their movements and lending law enforcement more resources to act against them.

But Sheinbaum's hardline stance Saturday signaled that U.S. pressure for unilateral military intervention would put her and Trump on a collision course after months of cooperation on immigration and trade.

"We can work together, but you in your territory and us in ours," Sheinbaum said.

Sovereignty reigns in 151st Kentucky Derby, outdueling favorite Journalism in the slop

By BETH HARRIS AP Racing Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Sovereignty gave trainer Bill Mott a second Kentucky Derby victory. This time there was no doubt about it and no asterisk.

The 3-year-old colt outdueled 3-1 favorite Journalism down the stretch to win the 151st Derby in the slop on Saturday, snapping an 0 for 13 skid by owner Godolphin.

Mott won his first Derby in 2019, also run on a sloppy track, when Country House was elevated to first after Maximum Security crossed the finish line first and was disqualified during a 22-minute delay.

It took a few minutes for Saturday's results to be made official while the stewards sorted out a photo

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for second and reviewed a traffic-choked start.

Mott knew all the while who earned the garland of red roses.

"This one got there the right way," the Hall of Fame trainer said. "I mean, he's done well, he's a great horse, he comes from a great organization and I can't say enough about the horse and the organization that started him out and made this happen."

Godolphin is the racing stable of Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

It was quite a weekend for the sheikh. His filly, Good Cheer, won the Kentucky Oaks on Friday and earlier Saturday, Ruling Court — a son of 2018 Triple Crown winner Justify — won the 2,000 Guineas in Britain.

"I've had quite a long relationship with the Godolphin team and the man behind the Godolphin operation, Sheikh Mohammed," Mott said. "I'm just honored."

Sovereignty, also bred by the sheikh, splashed through 1 1/4 miles in 2:02.31 and paid \$17.96 to win at 7-1 odds. He's the record 20th horse with a name starting with "S" to win. The victory was worth \$3.1 million from the \$5 million purse.

"It's great," Mott said. "I think it will take a little while to sink in."

Journalism didn't have the cleanest of trips in the 19-horse field, but rallied to stay in the fight. He found trouble early before jockey Umberto Rispoli swung him outside to get him in the clear. They made a move at the leaders with Sovereignty and jockey Junior Alvarado right behind them.

"He was saying to me, 'Listen, I'm ready,' so from there I started picking up," Alvarado said.

The two colts hooked up for a sixteenth of a mile for a thrilling battle against the backdrop of 147,406 roaring and rain-soaked fans before Sovereignty surged ahead inside the eighth pole and drew clear.

"I saw the blue silks (of Godolphin) coming at us and I knew that was the one we were going to have to be concerned about," said Michael McCarthy, Journalism's trainer. "The winner ran a better race."

Alvarado won his first Derby in six tries. He and Sovereignty were reunited after Alvarado had missed the colt's last start in the Florida Derby because he was injured.

"It's more than a dream come true," the 38-year-old Venezuelan said. "I thought I had a great chance. I was confident the whole week."

Fast-closing Baeza — who got into the race on Thursday after another horse was scratched — was a neck back in third. Final Gambit was fourth and Owen Almighty finished fifth.

Citizen Bull, the lone entry for six-time Derby-winning trainer Bob Baffert, set the pace. Baffert was back on the first Saturday in May having serving a three-year suspension by Churchill Downs after his Medina Spirit crossed the finish line first in 2021 and failed a postrace drug test.

D. Wayne Lukas, the 89-year-old four-time Derby winner, saw his colt American Promise finish right behind Baffert in 15th.

Rain made for a soggy day, with the Churchill Downs dirt strip listed as sloppy and fans protecting their fancy hats and clothing with clear plastic ponchos.

Burnham Square was sixth, followed by Sandman, East Avenue, Chunk of Gold, Tiztastic, Coal Battle, Neoequos, Publisher, Citizen Bull, American Promise, Render Judgment, Flying Mohawk and Admire Daytona.

Warren Buffett's best and worst investments in his 60 years leading Berkshire Hathaway

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Billionaire investor Warren Buffett said Saturday that he wants to step down as chief executive of Berkshire Hathaway at the end of the year. The revelation came as a surprise because the 94-year-old had previously said he did not plan to retire.

Buffett, one of the world's richest people and most accomplished investors, took control of Berkshire Hathaway in 1965 when it was a textiles manufacturer. He turned the company into a conglomerate by finding other businesses and stocks to buy that were selling for less than they were worth.

His success made him a Wall Street icon. It also earned him the nickname "Oracle of Omaha," a refer-

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ence to the Nebraska city where Buffett was born and chose to live and work.

Here are some of his best and worst investments over the years:

Buffett's Best

— National Indemnity and National Fire & Marine: Purchased in 1967, the company was one of Buffett's first insurance investments. Insurance float — the premium money insurers can invest between the time when policies are bought and when claims are made — provided the capital for many of Berkshire's investments over the years and helped fuel the company's growth. Berkshire's insurance division has grown to include Geico, General Reinsurance and several other insurers. The float totaled \$173 billion at the end of the first quarter.

— Buying blocks of stock in American Express, Coca-Cola Co. and Bank of America at times when the companies were out of favor because of scandals or market conditions. Collectively, the shares are worth over \$100 billion more than what Buffett paid for them, and that doesn't count all the dividends he has collected over the years.

— Apple: Buffett long said that he didn't understand tech companies well enough to value them and pick the long-term winners, but he started buying Apple shares in 2016. He later explained that he bought more than \$31 billion worth because he understood the iPhone maker as a consumer products company with extremely loyal customers. The value of his investment grew to more than \$174 billion before Buffett started selling Berkshire Hathaway's shares.

— BYD: On the advice of his late investing partner Charlie Munger, Buffett bet big on the genius of BYD founder Wang Chanfu in 2008 with a \$232 million investment in the Chinese electric vehicle maker. The value of that stake soared to more than \$9 billion before Buffett began selling it off. Berkshire's remaining stake is still worth about \$1.8 billion.

— See's Candy: Buffett repeatedly pointed to his 1972 purchase as a turning point in his career. Buffett said Munger persuaded him that it made sense to buy great businesses at good prices as long as they had enduring competitive advantages. Previously, Buffett had primarily invested in companies of any quality as long as they were selling for less than he thought they were worth. Berkshire paid \$25 million for See's and recorded pretax earnings of \$1.65 billion from the candy company through 2011. The amount continued to grow but Buffett didn't routinely highlight it.

— Berkshire Hathaway Energy: Utilities provide a large and steady stream of profits for Berkshire. The conglomerate paid \$2.1 billion, or about \$35.05 per share, for Des Moines-based MidAmerican Energy in 2000. The utility unit subsequently was renamed and made several acquisitions, including PacifiCorp and NV Energy. The utilities added more than \$3.7 billion to Berkshire's profit in 2024, although Buffett has said they are now worth less than they used to be because of the liability they face related to wildfires.

Buffett's Worst

— Berkshire Hathaway: Buffett had said his investment in the Berkshire Hathaway textile mills was probably his worst investment ever. The textile company he took over in 1965 bled money for many years before Buffett finally shut it down in 1985, though Berkshire did provide cash for some of Buffett's early acquisitions. Of course, the Berkshire shares Buffett began buying for \$7 and \$8 a share in 1962 are now worth \$809,350 per share, so even Buffett's worst investment turned out OK.

— Dexter Shoe Co.: Buffett said he made an awful blunder by buying Dexter in 1993 for \$433 million, a mistake made even worse because he used Berkshire stock for the deal. Buffett says he essentially gave away 1.6% of Berkshire for a worthless business.

— Missed opportunities. Buffett said that some of his worst mistakes over the years were the investments and deals that he didn't make. Berkshire easily could have made billions if Buffett had been comfortable investing in Amazon, Google or Microsoft early on. But it wasn't just tech companies he missed out on. Buffett told shareholders he was caught "sucking his thumb" when he failed to follow through on a plan to buy 100 million Walmart shares that would be worth nearly \$10 billion today.

— Selling banks too soon. Not long before the COVID pandemic, Buffett seemed to sour on most of his bank stocks. Repeated scandals involving Wells Fargo gave him a reason to start unloading his 500 million shares, many of them for around \$30 per share. But he also sold off his JP Morgan stake at prices less

than \$100. Both stocks have more than doubled since then.

— Blue Chip Stamps: Buffett and Munger, Berkshire's former vice chairman, took control of Blue Chip in 1970 when the customer rewards program was generating \$126 million in sales. But as trading stamps fell out of favor with retailers and consumers, sales steadily declined; in 2006, they totaled a mere \$25,920. However, Buffett and Munger used the float that Blue Chip generated to acquire See's Candy, Wesco Financial and Precision Castparts, which are all steady contributors to Berkshire.

Warren Buffett shocks shareholders by announcing his intention to retire at the end of the year

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Billionaire Warren Buffett shocked an arena full of shareholders Saturday by announcing that he will retire at the end of the year, bringing the curtain down on a six-decade run leading Berkshire Hathaway that made him the most influential investor in the world.

Buffett said he will recommend to Berkshire Hathaway's board on Sunday that Vice Chairman Greg Abel should replace him.

"I think the time has arrived where Greg should become the chief executive officer of the company at year end," Buffett said.

Abel has been Buffett's designated successor for years, and he already manages all of Berkshire's non-insurance businesses. But it was always assumed that he would not take over until after Buffett's death. Previously the 94-year-old Buffett always said he had no plans to retire.

Buffett announced the news at the end of a five-hour question and answer period without taking any questions about it. He said the only board members who knew this was coming were his two children, Howard and Susie Buffett. Abel, who was sitting next to Buffett on stage, had no warning.

Abel returned an hour later without Buffett to conduct the company's formal business meeting, and he responded to the news.

"I just want to say I couldn't be more humbled and honored to be part of Berkshire as we go forward," Abel said.

Many investors have said they believe Abel will do a good job running Berkshire, but it remains to be seen how good he will be at investing Berkshire's cash. Buffett endorsed him Saturday by pledging to keep his fortune invested in the company.

"I have no intention — zero — of selling one share of Berkshire Hathaway. I will give it away eventually," Buffett said. "The decision to keep every share is an economic decision because I think the prospects of Berkshire will be better under Greg's management than mine."

Thousands of investors in the Omaha arena gave Buffett a prolonged standing ovation after his announcement in recognition of his 60 years leading the company.

During that period Berkshire nearly doubled the returns of the S&P 500, with a 19.9% compounded annual growth rate compared with the index's 10.4% gain.

Buffett had such a devoted following among investors that markets would move when his investments were disclosed because so many people copied him.

CFRA research analyst Cathy Seifert said it had to be hard for Buffett to decide to step down.

"This was probably a very tough decision for him, but better to leave on your own terms," Seifert said. "I think there will be an effort at maintaining a 'business as usual' environment at Berkshire. That is still to be determined."

Abel expected to do well

In many respects, Abel has already been running much of the company for years. But he hasn't been managing Berkshire's insurance operations or deciding where to invest all of its cash. He will now take those tasks on, but Vice Chairman Ajit Jain will remain to help oversee the insurance companies.

Investment manager Omar Malik of Hosking Partners in London said before Buffett's announcement that he wasn't worried about Berkshire's future under Abel.

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"Not really (worried). He's had such a long time alongside Warren and a chance to know the businesses," Malik said about Abel. "The question is will he allocate capital as dynamically as Warren? And the answer is no. But I think he'll do a fine job with the support of the others."

Cole Smead of Smead Capital Management said he wasn't surprised Buffett is stepping down after watching him Saturday because the 94-year-old wasn't as sharp as in past years. At one point, he made a basic math mistake in one of his answers. At other points, he got off track while telling stories about Berkshire and his investing without answering the question he was asked.

Abel is well regarded by Berkshire's managers and Buffett has praised his business acumen for years. But he will have a hard time matching Buffett's legendary performance, and since he doesn't control 30% of Berkshire's stock like Buffett does, he won't have as much leeway.

"I think the challenge he's going to have is if anyone is going to give him Buffett or (former Vice Chairman Charlie) Munger's pass card? Not a chance in God's name," Smead said. Buffett always enjoyed a devoted following among shareholders.

Buffett has said that Abel might even be a more hands-on manager than he is and get more out of Berkshire's companies. Managers within the company say they have to be well prepared before talking to Abel because they know he will ask tough questions.

Steven Check, president of Check Capital Management, said he never thought he would see Buffett retire. "I didn't think he would retire while his mind is still working so well, nor did I think it'd happen at the annual meeting," Check said. "But overall I'm very happy for him."

Buffett earlier warned that Trump's tariffs were harmful

Earlier Saturday, Buffett warned of dire global consequences from President Donald Trump's tariffs while telling the thousands of investors gathered at his annual meeting that "trade should not be a weapon" but "there's no question that trade can be an act of war."

Buffett said Trump's trade policies have raised the risk of global instability by angering the rest of the world.

"It's a big mistake in my view when you have 7.5 billion people who don't like you very well, and you have 300 million who are crowing about how they have done," Buffett said as he addressed the topic on everyone's mind at the start of the Berkshire Hathaway shareholders meeting.

While Buffett said it is best for trade to be balanced between countries, he doesn't think Trump is going about it the right way with his widespread tariffs. He said the world will be safer if more countries are prosperous.

Market turmoil doesn't create big opportunities

Buffett said he just doesn't see many attractively priced investments that he understands these days, so Berkshire is sitting on \$347.7 billion in cash, but he predicted that one day Berkshire will be "bombarded with opportunities that we will be glad we have the cash for."

Buffett said the recent turmoil in the markets that generated headlines after Trump's tariff announcement last month "is really nothing." He dismissed the recent drop as relatively small. He cited when the Dow Jones industrial average went from 240 on the day he was born in 1930 down to 41 during the Great Depression as a truly significant drop in the markets. Currently the Dow Jones Industrial Average sits at 41,317.43.

"This has not been a dramatic bear market or anything of the sort," he said.

Buffett said he hasn't bought back any of Berkshire's shares this year either because they don't seem to be a bargain either.

Investor Chris Bloomstran, who is president of Semper Augustus Investments Group, told the Gabelli investment conference Friday that a financial crisis might be the best thing for Berkshire because it would create opportunities to invest at attractive prices.

"Berkshire needs a crisis. I mean Berkshire thrives in crisis," Bloomstran said.

Berkshire meeting attracts thousands

The meeting attracts some 40,000 people every year who want to hear from Buffett, including some

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celebrities and well-known investors. This year, Hillary Rodham Clinton also attended. Clinton was the last candidate Buffett backed publicly because he has shied away from politics and any controversial topic in recent years for fear of hurting Berkshire's businesses.

One investor even camped outside the arena overnight to be first in line.

Devan Bisher, 72, said he has faith in Berkshire's future and does not plan to sell the stock he started buying in the 1980s.

"It's been a good train to ride," Bisher said, "and I'm going to stay with it."

The 20-year-old man who fell to the warning track at a Pirates game is awake

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The man who fell from the top of a 21-foot-high wall onto the warning track at PNC Park during a game between the Pittsburgh Pirates and the Chicago Cubs on Wednesday night is awake and alert.

The organizer of a GoFundMe page for Kavan Markwood, the 20-year-old who slipped off a railing and onto the field during the seventh inning of Pittsburgh's 4-3 win over the Cubs, shared an update Saturday that Markwood is improving.

According to Jennifer Phillips, who is organizing the fundraiser, Markwood has made significant progress since being admitted to the trauma center at Allegheny General Hospital on Wednesday in critical condition.

"After everything he's been through since the accident on Wednesday night, this progress feels nothing short of miraculous," wrote Phillips, who once taught Markwood. "He still has a long road ahead of him, but today brought a moment of hope that we've all been holding onto."

Phillips added that Markwood can speak and encouraged others to support him during his "next phase of recovery."

As of early Saturday evening, the GoFundMe had raised more than \$27,000.

The Pirates have conducted an internal investigation into the incident, which included interviewing fans and analyzing credit card receipts by others in Markwood's group.

Brian Warecki, the club's senior vice president of communications, said the investigation concluded that Markwood did not buy any alcohol but did consume two beers over the course of the game.

Markwood attended the game with three other people, the club said. Credit card receipts indicated that one party in the group legally bought seven alcoholic beverages during the contest.

The team said it received conflicting accounts from fans who sat near Markwood in the section that sits above the Clemente Wall, which is named for Hall of Famer and franchise icon Roberto Clemente.

One fan told the team that Markwood appeared intoxicated. Others said he did not do anything of note until the moment he stood up to celebrate a hit by Pirates star Andrew McCutchen, at which point Markwood leapt out of his seat toward the 36-inch railing in front of him before flipping over the top.

Pittsburgh Public Safety, which includes Pittsburgh Police and EMS, has labeled the incident an accident.

Expert testifies that repeated strikes to Tyre Nichols' head were unnecessary and excessive

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — A police training expert testifying Saturday as a defense witness in the trial of three former Memphis officers charged in the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols acknowledged that kicks and punches to Nichols' head were unnecessary and excessive.

Don Cameron took the stand in the trial of Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith, who have pleaded not guilty to state charges including second-degree murder. They already face the prospect of years in prison after they were convicted of federal charges last year.

Cameron and a series of other witnesses testified before defense lawyers rested their case late Saturday.

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The three officers did not testify in their own defense. The trial resumes Monday with jury instructions and closing arguments.

Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man, fled a January 2023 traffic stop after he was yanked out of his car, pepper-sprayed and hit with a Taser. Five officers who are also Black caught up with him and punched, kicked and hit Nichols with a police baton, struggling to handcuff him as he called out for his mother near his home.

Footage of the beating captured by a police pole camera also showed the officers milling about, talking and laughing as Nichols struggled. His death led to nationwide protests, calls for police reforms in the U.S., and intense scrutiny of police in Memphis, a majority-Black city.

The officers are charged with second-degree murder, aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression. Prosecutors have argued that the officers used excessive force in trying to handcuff Nichols. The officers also had a duty to intervene and stop the beating and tell medical personnel that Nichols had been struck in the head, but they failed to do so, prosecutors say.

Former Memphis officers Desmond Mills Jr. and Emmitt Martin also were charged in the case. They have agreed to plead guilty to the state charges and are not standing trial. They also pleaded guilty in federal court, where sentencing for all five officers is pending.

Defense attorneys have sought to chip away at accusations that the officers used unnecessary force to subdue Nichols. They have argued that Nichols was actively resisting arrest by running away and failing to give his hands to officers so that he could be handcuffed. They also have argued that their use of force complied with police department policies.

Cameron was called to the stand by the defense lawyer for Haley, who was at the traffic stop and arrived at the location of the beating after Martin kicked and punched Nichols in the head as Nichols was being held by Smith and Bean.

Cameron said Nichols had not yet been handcuffed and Haley used proper force in kicking Nichols once in the arm. The veteran police trainer said Haley kicked Nichols in order to facilitate the handcuffing of Nichols by the other officers.

However, under cross-examination by prosecutor Paul Hagerman, Cameron acknowledged that the punches and kicks by Martin to Nichols' head were unnecessary, excessive and an example of deadly force. Officers who saw those head blows had a duty to intervene and stop the beating at that point, Cameron said.

The prosecutor also asked Cameron about Haley's comment to "beat that man" as he got out of his car and approached Nichols. Cameron said he believed Haley made the comment in order to get Nichols to comply with being handcuffed after Nichols repeatedly ignored expletive-laced orders to do so.

The defense has said that the officers' vision was impaired because of the repeated deployment of pepper spray. Martin Zummach, Smith's lawyer, asked Cameron if officers have a duty to intervene if they don't actually see unnecessary force being applied.

"If they can't see it, they can't intervene," Cameron said.

Mills, who hit Nichols three times with a police baton, testified Tuesday that he regrets his failure to stop the beating, which led to Nichols' death three days later from blunt-force trauma. Dr. Marco Ross, the medical examiner who performed the autopsy, testified Wednesday that Nichols suffered tears and bleeding in the brain.

The five officers were part of a crime suppression team called the Scorpion Unit that since has been disbanded. The team targeted drugs, illegal guns and violent offenders with the goal of amassing arrests, while sometimes using force against unarmed people.

The trial comes months after the U.S. Justice Department said in December that a 17-month investigation found that the Memphis Police Department uses excessive force and discriminates against Black people.

Singapore's long-ruling party wins another landslide in election boost for new prime minister

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Singapore's long-ruling People's Action Party won another landslide in Saturday's general elections, extending its 66-year unbroken rule in a huge boost for Prime Minister Lawrence Wong who took power a year ago.

The Election Department announced the PAP won 82 Parliamentary seats after vote counting ended. The party had earlier won five seats uncontested, giving it 87 out of a total 97 seats. The opposition Workers Party maintained its 10 seats.

The PAP's popular vote rose to 65.6%, up from a near-record low of 61% in 2020 polls. Jubilant supporters of the PAP, which had ruled Singapore since 1959, gathered in stadiums waved flags and cheered in celebration.

A U.S.-trained economist who is also finance minister, Wong's appeal for a resounding mandate to steer trade-reliant Singapore through economic troubles following U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff hikes has hit home. The government has lowered its growth forecast and warned of a possible recession.

Wong, 52, said he was humbled and grateful for the solid mandate for the PAP. He acknowledged voters' desire to have more alternative voices in government, but said a strong PAP team was needed to tackle challenges ahead.

"The results will put Singapore in a better position to face this turbulent world," he said.

Eugene Tan, a law professor at the Singapore Management University, said the opposition's failure to make further inroads after 2020 was a surprise. "Singapore voters played their cards close to their chest. Today, they indicated that their trust is with a party that has delivered over the years," he said.

Wong succeeded Lee Hsien Loong to become the city-state's fourth leader. Lee stepped down in May 2024 after two decades at the helm but remained in the Cabinet as a senior minister. His retirement as premier ended a family dynasty started by his father, Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's first leader, who built the former colonial backwater into one of the world's richest nations during 31 years in office.

The PAP is seen as a beacon of stability and prosperity, but tight government control and the rising cost of living in one of the world's most expensive cities also has led to growing unhappiness, especially among younger voters. Widening income disparity, increasingly unaffordable housing, overcrowding and restrictions on free speech have loosened the PAP's grip on power.

The opposition says giving it a stronger presence in Parliament will allow a more balanced political system and greater accountability. But they face an uphill task, often hamstrung by a lack of resources, fragmented support and a lack of unity. Critics said gerrymandering also gives the PAP an advantage.

Pritam Singh, leader of the Workers Party, acknowledged it was a tough contest and vowed to continue the fight for a more balanced Parliament. "The slate is wiped clean, we start work again tomorrow, and we go again," he said.

'Bilateral defense and security ties'

The United States government offered its congratulations to Singapore and Wong.

In a statement, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the U.S. and Singapore had shared a "strong and enduring strategic partnership and a commitment to a secure, free, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region" for almost 60 years.

"We look forward to continuing to work closely with the newly elected government and Prime Minister Wong to strengthen economic growth and our bilateral defense and security ties, which benefit Americans, Singaporeans, and others across the region," Rubio said.

While the Workers Party failed to expand its presence, it had consolidated its support with increased share vote in some areas, said Southeast Asia political analyst Bridget Welsh. Other smaller opposition parties however, failed to make a breakthrough.

Welsh said voters opted for stability amid concerns over global volatility due to sweeping U.S. tariffs. Wong's more approachable leadership in engaging younger voters and efforts to renew PAP by bringing

in about a-third of new faces also helped swung votes, she said.

"I call this the Wong and Trump effect," she said. "The issue of economic insecurity really did reinforce his mandate."

Who is Greg Abel, the executive picked to be successor to Warren Buffett?

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — When Warren Buffett announced at his annual shareholder meeting Saturday that he is stepping down as CEO of Berkshire Hathaway at the end of the year, he elevated a low-key 62-year-old Canadian executive named Greg Abel who has long been one of his top lieutenants.

For the past seven years, Abel has been overseeing Berkshire's BNSF railroad and its treat makers See's Candies and Dairy Queen along with dozens of other manufacturing and retail businesses that Buffett acquired over the years.

He grew up in Canada as a hockey player and learned the value of hard work as he redeemed discarded bottles and worked for a small company filling fire extinguishers. Now he finds himself at the top of the food chain in the investment world.

Berkshire confirmed Abel as Buffett's successor in 2021 after former Vice Chairman Charlie Munger let it slip at the annual meeting. Since then, Abel has largely remained in Buffett's shadow although shareholders have had a chance to get to know him a bit when he appeared alongside Buffett at the annual meetings and in interviews.

Berkshire's board will now vote on whether to formally approve Abel as the new CEO to take over at the end of 2025. At the annual meeting in Omaha, Buffett said he expects that to occur by a unanimous vote.

Abel will step forward to take responsibility for all of Berkshire's eclectic assortment of businesses with their nearly 400,000 employees and the conglomerate's massive stock portfolio. Buffett and members of Berkshire's board who for years have devoted much of their time to finding Buffett's successor have praised Abel's brilliance and knack for understanding all kinds of businesses.

Buffett once said Berkshire is "so damn lucky" to have Abel ready to take over, but he will have trouble coming close to Buffett's remarkable track record of outpacing the market. Whereas Buffett grew Berkshire over the decades by making well-timed deals and stock investments at attractive prices, Berkshire's massive size has made it that much harder lately to find anything big enough to change the conglomerate's bottom line.

Abel has big shoes to fill, but no one expects him to match the accomplishments of Buffett that made him a billionaire many times over and one of the wealthiest investors of the past century. Longtime Berkshire board member Ron Olson said two days before the announcement that he believed Abel was ready to take over.

"Is he another Warren Buffett? No, there is no other Warren Buffett that I know. But he has so many of the fundamentals of Warren," Olson said. "He is for sure high integrity. He is a hard worker. He is a strategic thinker."

Buffett has said for years that Abel's main job when he becomes CEO will be to preserve Berkshire's unique decentralized culture built on independence, integrity and trust. In fact, Munger's comment that gave away Abel's future role was that "Greg will keep the culture."

Executives at a diverse mix of Berkshire subsidiaries, including sneaker maker Brooks Running, flooring giant Shaw and Borsheims jewelry have said they all turn to Abel whenever they face tough questions in their businesses related to strategy or operating details, and he's always available when they need him though he will challenge them.

"When I think about Greg, he not only has high business acumen, but he has really high business instincts," Dairy Queen CEO Troy Bader said Friday. "The intuition is really important. And, you know, Warren has that intuition, but Greg has a lot of it as well."

Abel has never done many interviews, though he put his detailed business knowledge on display at the

Berkshire meetings when discussing utilities and the railroad. But he did offer a glimpse into his background to the Horatio Alger Association when that group honored him in 2018.

Abel's family-oriented upbringing in Edmonton, Alberta, and lessons in hard work and perseverance were similar to what Buffett learned while working in his grandfather's Omaha grocery store as a kid.

"I think hard work leads to good outcomes. In my schooling, in sports, and in my business positions, I learned that if I put in a lot of work and was well-prepared, then success would be more likely," Abel said in 2018.

Abel lives about two hours from Buffett's hometown in Des Moines, Iowa, where he has led Berkshire Hathaway Energy since 2011 and helped coach his kids' hockey and soccer teams. He is expected to continue living there because Berkshire is so decentralized that there is little reason to move to its Omaha headquarters. Buffett only had a couple dozen people working in his office as he spent his days reading business reports and making the occasional phone call.

NPR stations targeted for cuts by Trump have provided lifelines to listeners during disasters

By JOHN RABY and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — After Hurricane Helene devastated Asheville, North Carolina, the sound coming from open car windows as residents gathered on a street at the top of a ridge trying to get cell service last fall was Blue Ridge Public Radio. And as they stood in line for water or food, the latest news they had heard on the station was a frequent topic of conversation.

"The public radio station was alerting people what was going on," said Lisa Savage, who volunteered at an area church after the hurricane.

Now public radio stations are being targeted for cuts by President Donald Trump. This week, he signed an executive order aimed at slashing public subsidies to NPR and PBS, alleging "bias" in the broadcasters' reporting.

Public radio stations have been a lifeline for residents during natural disasters that take out power, the internet and cell towers. And in many remote and rural areas across the U.S., they can be a lone source of local news.

About a week after she had volunteered in the Asheville area, Savage recalled driving through another hard-hit community and hearing updates on Blue Ridge Public Radio on where residents could pick up water.

"So that was crucial," Savage said.

In the West Texas desert, Marfa Public Radio provides listeners with a mix of local and national news and music. It is based in Marfa, a city of about 2,000 that draws tourists to its art scene.

"Marfa Public Radio is the only radio service in a lot of the geographic area that we cover," said Tom Livingston, the station's interim executive director. "So it's really essential in terms of if there's news events, if there's safety things that happen in the community."

Funding has widespread impact

Trump's order instructs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and other federal agencies "to cease Federal funding for NPR and PBS" and further requires that they work to root out indirect sources of public financing for the news organizations. The broadcasters get roughly half a billion dollars in public money through the private CPB, which has said that it is not a federal executive agency subject to Trump's orders.

The heads of PBS, NPR and CPB all suggested Friday that the order was illegal, and a court fight seems inevitable.

The White House has also said it will be asking Congress to rescind funding for the CPB as part of a \$9.1 billion package of cuts. Local stations operate on a combination of government funding, donations and philanthropic grants, and stations in smaller markets are particularly dependent on the public money.

WMMT, based in the eastern Kentucky community of Whitesburg, can be heard in parts of five Appalachian states. The station's general manager, Teddy Wimer, said listeners "want to hear people that sound like folks that they know from Appalachia," and the station, which currently operates from a renovated

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Winnebago called the Possum Den, relies on CPB funding.

"We're in an economically disadvantaged area of the country," Wimer said. "Most of our listeners who really rely upon our programming don't have the funds to ramp up their support."

Livingston said about 30% of their funding comes from the CPB. Right now, he says, it's too early to know if the cuts will actually happen or what they would impact if they do come through.

Local flavor is a factor in listenership and credibility

Along the West Virginia-Virginia border, more than three hours from Washington, D.C., residents can pick up signals from radio stations far away. But those "aren't going to have the local flavor and impact that we do," said Scott Smith, general manager of Allegheny Mountain Radio. "This is the only game in town for that sort of thing."

In his home base of Monterey, Virginia, Smith said there's about a 4 -square-mile (10.3-square-kilometer) area of cell coverage with one cell tower. The station has proven to be a vital source of information during natural disasters. In 2012, residents relied on it after a derecho knocked out power to 680,000 customers across West Virginia and it took nearly two weeks for some areas to get their service restored.

"Yeah, we play music. Yeah, we get on the air and joke around," he said. "But we're here providing basic level services of information, emergency information, that sort of thing, to our communities. And as part of that, we're a pretty critical link in this area for the emergency alert system."

Smith has a staff of 10 people at Allegheny Mountain Radio, which receives 68% of its annual budget from CPB.

"What CPB does fund the most is small rural radio," Smith said. "When you take 60% of our income away, that's not readily or easily replaceable."

Smith calls it a "wait-and-see game" on whether Congress will act on the CPB funding.

"The answer to how we move forward is vague," Smith said. "We will still continue to be here as long as we can be."

Hunger and malnutrition are rising across Gaza as Israel's blockade leaves mothers with few options

By MOHAMMED JAHJOUH and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — The little boy is in tears and, understandably, irritable. Diarrhea has plagued him for half of his brief life. He is dehydrated and so weak. Attached to his tiny left hand is a yellow tube that carries liquid food to his frail little system.

At 9 months old, Khaled is barely 11 pounds (5 kilos) — half of what a healthy baby his age should be. And in Gaza's main pediatric hospital ward, as doctors try to save her son, Wedad Abdelaal can only watch.

After back-to-back emergency visits, the doctors decided to admit Khaled last weekend. For nearly a week, he was tube-fed and then given supplements and bottled milk, which is distributed every three hours or more. His mother, nervous and helpless, says that's not enough.

"I wish they would give it to us every hour. He waits for it impatiently ... but they too are short on supplies," Abdelaal says. "This border closure is destroying us."

The longer they stay in the hospital, the better Khaled will get. But Abdelaal is agonizing over her other children, back in their tent, with empty pots and nothing to eat as Israel's blockade of Gaza enters its third month, the longest since the war started.

Locked, sealed and devastated by Israeli bombings, Gaza is facing starvation. Thousands of children have already been treated for malnutrition. Exhausted, displaced and surviving on basics for over a year and half of war, parents like Abdelaal watch their children waste away and find there is little they can do.

They are out of options.

Acute malnutrition among children is spiking

Hospitals are hanging by a thread, dealing with mass casualty attacks that prioritize deadly emergencies. Food stocks at U.N. warehouses have run out. Markets are emptying. What is still available is sold at exorbitant prices, unaffordable for most in Gaza where more than 80% are reliant on aid, according to

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the United Nations.

Community kitchens distributing meals for thousands are shuttering. Farmland is mostly inaccessible. Bakeries have closed. Water distribution is grinding to a halt, largely because of lack of fuel. In desperate scenes, thousands, many of them kids, crowd outside community kitchens, fighting over food. Warehouses with few supplies have been looted.

The longest blockade on Gaza has sparked a growing international outcry, but it has failed to persuade Israel to break open the borders. More groups accuse Israel of using starvation as a weapon of war. Residents and humanitarians warn that acute malnutrition among children is spiraling.

"We are breaking the bodies and minds of the children of Gaza," Michael Ryan, executive director of emergencies at the World Health Organization, told reporters in Geneva. "Because if we don't do something about it, we are complicit in what is happening before our very eyes. ... The children should not have to pay the price."

Israel imposed the blockade March 2, then ended a two-month ceasefire by resuming military operations on March 18, saying both steps were necessary to pressure Hamas into releasing the hostages. Before the ceasefire collapsed, Israel believed 59 hostages were still inside Gaza, 24 of them alive and still in captivity.

It hasn't responded to accusations that it uses starvation as a war tactic. But Israeli officials have previously said Gaza had enough aid after a surge in distribution during the ceasefire, and accused Hamas of diverting aid for its purposes. Humanitarian workers deny there is significant diversion, saying the U.N. monitors distribution strictly.

A mother wants to help her son — but can't

Khaled has suffered from malnutrition since he was 2 months old. His mother managed it through outpatient visits and supplements distributed at feeding centers. But for the past seven months, Abdelaal, 31, has been watching him slowly shrivel. She, too, is malnourished and has had hardly any protein in recent months.

After an exhausting pregnancy and two days of labor, Khaled was born — a low-weight baby at 4 1/2 pounds (2 kilos) but otherwise healthy. Abdelaal began nursing him. But because of lack of calcium, she is losing her teeth — and producing too little milk.

"Breastfeeding needs food, and I am not able to give him enough," she says.

Khaled has four other siblings, aged between 9 and 4. The family has been displaced from Rafah and now lives in a tent further north in Mawasi Khan Younis.

As food ran out under the blockade, the family grew dependent on community kitchens that serve rice, pasta and cooked beans. Cooking in the tent is a struggle: There is no gas, and finding wood or plastic to burn is exhausting and risky.

Ahmed, 7 and Maria, 4, are already showing signs of malnutrition. Ahmed, 7, weighs 17 pounds (8 kilos); his bones are piercing his skin. He gets no supplements at feeding centers, which serve only kids under 6. Maria, 4, has also lost weight, but there is no scale to weigh her.

"My kids have become so frail," Abdelaal laments. "They are like chicks."

Nutrition centers around Gaza are shutting down

Since March 2, U.N. agencies have documented a rise in acute malnutrition among children. They are finding low immunity, frequent illness, weight and muscle mass loss, protruding bones or bellies, and brittle hair. Since the start of the year, more than 9,000 children have been admitted or treated for acute malnutrition, UNICEF said.

The increase was dramatic in March, with 3,600 cases or an 80% increase compared to the 2,000 children treated in February.

Since then, conditions have only worsened. Supplies used to prevent malnutrition, such as supplements and biscuits, have been depleted, according to UNICEF. Therapeutic food used to treat acute malnutrition is running out.

Parents and caregivers are sharing malnutrition treatments to make up for shortages, which undermines treatment. Nearly half of the 200 nutrition centers around Gaza shut down because of displacement and

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bombardment.

Meanwhile, supplies are languishing at the borders, prevented by Israel from entering Gaza.

"It is absolutely clear that we are going to have more cases of wasting, which is the most dangerous form of malnutrition. It is also clear we are going to have more children dying from these preventable causes," UNICEF spokesperson Jonathan Crickx says.

Suad Obaid, a nutritionist in Gaza, says parents are frequenting feeding centers more because they have nothing to feed their children. "No one can rely on canned food and emergency feeding for nearly two years."

At Nasser Hospital, four critical cases were receiving treatment last week for acute malnutrition, including Khaled. Only critical cases are admitted — and only for short periods so more children can be treated.

"If we admit all those who have acute malnutrition, we will need hundreds of beds," says Dr. Yasser Abu Ghaly, acknowledging: "We can't help many, anyway ... There is nothing in our hands."

The system for managing diseases has buckled

Before the war, hundreds of families in Gaza were registered and treated for congenital defects, genetic or autoimmune disorders, a system that has broken down mostly because food, formulas or tablets that helped manage the diseases quickly ran out.

Dr Ahmed al-Farrah, head of the pediatrics and obstetrics ward at Nasser Hospital, says hundreds of children with genetic disorders could suffer cognitive disorders as well, if not worse.

"They are sentenced to death," he says.

Osama al-Raqab's cystic fibrosis has worsened since the start of the war. Lack of meat, fish and enzyme tablets to help him digest food meant repeated hospital visits and long bouts of chest infections and acute diarrhea, says his mother, Mona. His bones poke through his skin. Osama, 5, weighs 20 pounds (9 kilos) and can hardly move or speak. Canned food offers him no nutrition.

"With starvation in Gaza, we only eat canned lentils," his mother says. "If the borders remain closed, we will lose that too."

Rahma al-Qadi's baby was born with Down syndrome seven months ago. Since then, Sama gained little more than half a pound (300 grams) and was hospitalized multiple times with fever. Her mother, also malnourished and still suffering from infection to her wound after birth, continues to breastfeed her. Again, it is not enough.

Sama is restless, doesn't sleep and is always demanding more food. Doctors ask her mother to eat better to produce more milk.

Lifting Sama's scrawny legs up, her mother says: "I can't believe this is the leg of a 7-month-old."

A father's lament: 'Waiting for death'

Abdelaal's kids fetch water and wait in line at soup kitchens because she cannot. To get there, they must climb a small hill. When she can, she waits for them at the bottom, fearing they may fall or drop the food.

When they do bring back food, the family divides it over several meals and days. When they get nothing, they share beans out of a can. Abdelaal often surrenders her share. "My kids," she says, "are more deserving."

Her husband, Ammar, has a heart condition that limits his movement, so he cannot help either. "Because of lack of healthy food, even as adults, we have no energy to move or exert any effort," Ammar says. "We are sitting in our tents, waiting for death."

The kids plead for fried tomatoes or cooked potatoes. But produce is unavailable or too expensive. A kilo of each would cost her \$21. A bar of biscuits costs \$2. Canned sardines cost nearly \$10 — a fortune.

"In two years, my child won't be able to walk because of lack of food," Abdelaal says.

Smiling through her helplessness, Abdelaal brought Khaled out of the hospital for a few hours to visit his family on Friday. They gathered around a can of cold beans. She wishes Khaled's doctors could give her the treatment to take back to the tent, so she could be with her family.

"I am exhausted before birth and after birth from lack of food," she says. "We are not able to live."

Trump draws criticism with AI image of himself as the pope ahead of the papal conclave

By NICOLE WINFIELD and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump posted an artificial intelligence-generated image of himself dressed as pope as the mourning of Pope Francis continues and just days before the conclave to elect his successor is set to begin. Trump's action drew rebukes from a group representing Catholic bishops in New York and among Italians.

The image, shared Friday night on Trump's Truth Social site and later reposted by the White House on its official X account, raised eyebrows on social media and at the Vatican, which is still in the period of nine days of official mourning following Francis' death on April 21. Catholic cardinals have been celebrating daily Masses in his memory and are due to open the conclave to elect his successor on Wednesday.

The death of a pope and election of another is a matter of utmost solemnity for Catholics, for whom the pope is Christ's vicar on Earth. That is all the more true in Italy, where the papacy is held in high esteem even by nonreligious Italians.

The image featuring Trump in a white cassock and pointed miter, or bishop's hat, was the topic of several questions during the Vatican's daily conclave briefing Saturday. Italian and Spanish news reports lamented its poor taste and said it was offensive, given that the period of official mourning is still underway.

Left-leaning former Premier Matteo Renzi said the image was shameful. "This is an image that offends believers, insults institutions and shows that the leader of the right-wing world enjoys clowning around," Renzi wrote on X. "Meanwhile, the U.S. economy risks recession and the dollar loses value. The sovereignists are doing damage, everywhere."

The Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, declined to comment.

In the United States, the New York State Catholic Conference, which represents the bishops of the state in working with government, accused Trump of mockery.

"There is nothing clever or funny about this image, Mr. President," they wrote. "We just buried our beloved Pope Francis and the cardinals are about to enter a solemn conclave to elect a new successor of St. Peter. Do not mock us."

Italy's left-leaning La Repubblica also featured the image on its homepage Saturday with a commentary accusing Trump of "pathological megalomania."

Asked to respond to the criticism, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said that, "President Trump flew to Italy to pay his respects for Pope Francis and attend his funeral, and he has been a staunch champion for Catholics and religious liberty."

Jack Posobiec, a prominent far-right influencer and Trump ally who recently participated in a Catholic prayer event in March at Trump's Florida resort, also defended the president.

"I'm Catholic. We've all been making jokes about the upcoming Pope selection all week. It's called a sense of humor," he wrote on X.

The episode comes after Trump joked last week about his interest in the vacancy. "I'd like to be pope. That would be my number one choice," the thrice married president, who is not Catholic, told reporters.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a close Trump ally, piled on.

"I was excited to hear that President Trump is open to the idea of being the next Pope. This would truly be a dark horse candidate, but I would ask the papal conclave and Catholic faithful to keep an open mind about this possibility!" Graham, R-S.C., wrote on X. "The first Pope-U.S. President combination has many upsides. Watching for white smoke.... Trump MMXXVIII!"

Vice President JD Vance, who is Catholic and was one of the last foreign officials to meet with Francis before the pope died, also joked about Secretary of State Marco Rubio becoming pope, suggesting Rubio could add it to the long list of titles he holds, including national security adviser and acting archivist.

Beyond floating himself for the job, Trump also has put in a plug for Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York.

"I have no preference. I must say, we have a cardinal that happens to be out a place called New York

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who's very good. So we'll see what happens," he said.

Dolan, 75, is one of 10 U.S. cardinals who will be voting in the conclave, but Trump's pitch might have cost Dolan support.

The reason conclaves are held in secrecy, with cardinals sequestered for the duration, is to prevent outside secular powers from influencing their choice, as occurred in centuries past.

There is an old saying about campaigning for the job of pope or of being promoted excessively, especially by outsiders: If you "enter a conclave as pope, you leave as a cardinal."

While Trump attended Francis' funeral, he and Vance have clashed with U.S. bishops in general and Francis in particular over the administration's hard line stance on immigration and its efforts to deport migrants en masse. Right before he was hospitalized in February for pneumonia, Francis issued a strong rebuke of the administration's mass deportation plans and Vance's theological justification of it.

Over 12 years as pope, Francis tried to remake the U.S. Catholic hierarchy more in his image, elevating pastors who prioritized social justice and migration issues over culture warriors who were more favored by his more doctrinaire predecessors St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI. A new pope who is more conservative could reverse that effort.

Trump has nominated as his ambassador to the Holy See Brian Burch, whose Catholicvote.org has been aggressively covering the pre-conclave days at the Vatican. It was one of the main disseminators in English-speaking media of a report, flatly and officially denied by the Vatican, that Cardinal Pietro Parolin had had a health scare this past week that required medical attention.

Parolin was the secretary of state under Francis and is seen as a leading contender to be pope. He is also the main architect of the Vatican's China policy and its controversial 2018 deal with Beijing over bishop nominations -- a deal that the was sharply criticized by the first Trump administration.

Warren Buffett's profits fall on wildfire losses as thousands line up to listen to him Saturday

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Warren Buffett's company reported just over one-third of last year's profit Saturday a few hours before Buffett announced plans to retire as Berkshire Hathaway's CEO at the end of the year.

Berkshire Vice Chairman Greg Abel will take over as CEO as Buffett has long planned. Abel has already been overseeing all of Berkshire's noninsurance businesses for years, but he will now take on responsibility for also overseeing the many insurance companies and deciding how to invest all of the conglomerate's cash.

The profit numbers were weighed down by a major drop in the value of its investments and \$860 million in insurance losses related to policies that its insurance companies wrote before the devastating Southern California wildfires.

Berkshire said it earned \$4.6 billion, or \$3,200 per Class A share, in the first quarter. That's down from \$12.7 billion, or \$8,825 per Class A share, last year.

But Buffett has long recommended that investors pay more attention to Berkshire's operating earnings because those exclude the value of its investments, which can vary widely from quarter to quarter. Berkshire must include the value of its investments in its bottom line numbers even though it hasn't sold most of them.

By that measure, Berkshire's earnings were still down 14% at \$9.6 billion, or \$6,703.41 per A share. Last year, the conglomerate reported operating earnings of \$11.2 billion, or \$7,796.47 per Class A share.

The analysts surveyed by FactSet Research predicted Berkshire would report operating earnings of \$7,076.90 per Class A share.

Buffett's comments were the main attraction Saturday and his surprise retirement announcement overshadowed everything else.

But investors have been wondering why Berkshire is now sitting on \$347.7 billion cash as of the end of the first quarter, up from \$334.2 billion at the end of the year. Buffett told shareholders that he just isn't finding any attractive deals for companies he understands. And he said the market didn't really drop

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enough in April to catch his attention.

Buffett told shareholders that he nearly spent \$10 billion on a deal recently but that fell through and he didn't disclose the details.

Many of Berkshire's myriad businesses like BNSF railroad and its assortment of manufacturing and retail businesses tend to follow the economy. Berkshire said Saturday that its future results may be affected by geopolitical events and trade policy, but it's impossible to predict what will happen.

"The pace of changes in these events, including international trade policies and tariffs, has accelerated in 2025. Considerable uncertainty remains as to the ultimate outcome of these events," Berkshire said in the report.

But during the quarter, earnings improved at BNSF and Berkshire's utility division while the manufacturing and retail businesses held steady. The main area where operating profits fell was in insurance underwriting, weighed down by the wildfire losses.

Geico's underwriting profits were actually up at \$2.2 billion from last year's \$1.9 billion. The results at reinsurance and primary insurance groups dragged down the insurance results.

But Berkshire managers — just like every CEO — are worrying about the potential impact of tariffs on their business. Dairy Queen CEO Troy Bader said their restaurants should be able to weather the trade war OK even though they have thousands of locations in China because most of its ingredients are sourced locally.

But the tariffs are a greater concern to other Berkshire businesses like Brooks Running, which makes all of its shoes in Vietnam and Indonesia. Brooks CEO Dan Sheridan said his company will likely have to raise its prices because of the tariffs, but he is still waiting to see exactly which tariffs go into effect.

Edward Jones analyst Kyle Sanders said the results appear solid outside of the wildfire losses, but Berkshire continued to be a net seller of stocks by unloading \$1.5 billion more than it bought during the quarter. That contributed to the growing cash pile that's more than double where it was a year ago as Buffett has largely stayed on the sidelines while selling off much of Berkshire's Apple stake.

But Buffett still praised Apple CEO Tim Cook, who is attending the Berkshire shareholders meeting, for all the money he has made Berkshire.

Berkshire Hathaway owns dozens of companies, including Geico, BNSF railroad, a collection of massive utilities and an assortment of retail and manufacturing businesses including well-known brands like See's Candy. It also holds a massive stock portfolio.

A community rallied to share flu shot experiences. Then the government stopped the study

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some Denver parents got texts during this winter's brutal flu season with videos sharing why people in their neighborhoods chose flu shots for their kids, an unusual study about trust and vaccines in a historically Black community.

But no one will know how it worked out: The Trump administration canceled the project before the data could be analyzed -- and researchers aren't the only ones upset.

"For someone like me, from the Black community who income-wise is on the lower end, we don't often have a voice," said Denver mom Chantyl Busby, one of the study's community advisers. "Having this funding taken away from this project sends a horrible, horrible message. It's almost like telling us all over again that our opinions don't matter."

How to talk about vaccines with parents — or anyone — is taking on new urgency: At least 216 U.S. children died of flu this season, the worst pediatric toll in 15 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Unvaccinated children are fueling one of the country's largest measles outbreaks in decades, and another vaccine-preventable disease — whooping cough — is soaring, too.

At the same time Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. questions vaccines long proven to be safe and effective. Moves by the Trump administration are making it increasingly uncertain that COVID-19 vaccines

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will be available this fall. And the administration has slashed funding for public health and medical research, including abruptly stopping studies of vaccine hesitancy.

"We need to understand what it is that is creating this challenge to vaccines and why," said Michael Osterholm, who directs the University of Minnesota's Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy and worries the country is entering "scientific dark ages."

At Denver Health, Dr. Joshua Williams is a pediatrician who every day has vaccine conversations with confused or worried parents. Some even ask if they'll get kicked out of his practice for refusing immunizations.

Nope, Williams says: Building trust takes time.

"The most satisfying vaccine-related encounters I have are the ones in families who had significant concerns for a long time, came to trust me over the years as I cared for broken arms and ear infections – and ultimately vaccinated their child," he said.

But in the TikTok age, Williams wondered if digital storytelling – seeing and hearing what led other families to choose vaccination – might help those decisions. He chose flu shots as the test case — just under half of U.S. children got one this season. And Black children are among those most at risk of getting seriously ill from influenza.

With a grant from the National Institutes of Health, Williams partnered with Denver's nonprofit Center for African American Health to host workshops bringing volunteers together to discuss how influenza and the flu vaccine had impacted their lives. Professionals helped those who wanted to go the extra step turn them into 2- to 3-minute polished videos.

After two years of community engagement, five of those videos were part of the pilot study sending text messages to 200 families who get care at two Denver Health clinics.

In one video, a mother described getting her first flu vaccination along with her young daughter, making her own health decisions after leaving a controlling relationship.

In another, a grandmother explained how she'll never again miss a vaccine appointment after her grandson spent his 4th birthday hospitalized with the flu.

Seeing "people that they look like, that they sound like, who have experiences they've been through that can go, 'Hey, I felt like you felt but this changed my life,'" is powerful, said Busby, who OK'd her kids' flu vaccinations after questioning Williams during multiple family checkups.

The study's sudden cancellation means Williams can't assess if the texted videos influenced families' vaccine decisions – lost data from more than two years of work and already-spent NIH dollars. It also jeopardizes the researchers' careers. While considering next steps, Williams has asked permission of community members to use some of the videos in his own practice as he discusses vaccination.

Williams gets personal, too, telling families that his kids are vaccinated and how his 95-year-old grandmother reminisces about the terror of polio during her own childhood before those vaccinations were developed.

"We've lost the collective memory about what it's like to have these diseases in our community," Williams said, ruefully noting the ongoing measles outbreak. "I think it's going to take a collective voice from the community saying this is important, to remind those in power that we need to be allocating resources to infection prevention and vaccine hesitancy research."

Witnesses and aid groups report a surge in looting in desperate Gaza

By SAM MEDNICK and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Armed groups and others have looted warehouses of supplies in northern Gaza as desperation spikes after more than two months of Israel's blockade of the territory, locals and aid workers said Saturday as Israel's latest airstrikes killed more than a dozen people.

Unidentified people, both armed and unarmed, have been looting U.N. and aid groups' warehouses, as well as bakeries and shops since Wednesday, according to witnesses, organizations in Gaza and messages that were circulated among security officials for aid groups and were seen by The Associated Press.

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Israel has blocked humanitarian aid from entering Gaza since Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu ended the latest ceasefire with Hamas in March, throwing the territory of over 2 million people into what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis in nearly 19 months of war.

Israel has said the blockade and its renewed military campaign are intended to pressure Hamas to release the remaining 59 hostages it still holds, most of them thought to be dead, and to disarm the Palestinian militant group.

The U.N. high commissioner for human rights previously warned that starving civilians as a military tactic is a war crime.

Aid groups have said Gaza's civilian population is facing starvation, and there is concern that the desperation could lead to a breakdown of law and order. Although there have been incidents of looting by armed gangs throughout the war, aid workers say this week's looting marks an escalation, as it was less organized and reached urban areas.

Looting ramps up

The ransacking in Gaza City began Wednesday evening after reports that aid trucks had entered the north from the south, said one aid worker who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to address the media. A security report circulated among aid agencies that night saying a group of armed people had broken into a bakery, driven by rumors that it held food supplies.

The storage was empty and the group then looted a soup kitchen affiliated with an international aid group in the al-Shati camp, the report said.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency said its staff were safely evacuated on Wednesday after thousands of Palestinians breached its Gaza City field office and took medications. Louise Wateridge, a senior emergency officer at UNRWA, called the looting "the direct result of unbearable and prolonged deprivation."

The ransacking continued through Friday night. Three witnesses told the AP that dozens of armed men stormed into at least two U.N. warehouses, pushing past police and local security guards who were protecting the facilities. The warehouses were nearly empty before the men arrived.

"There were organized gangs," said Ahmed Abu Awad, a resident of western Gaza City, where some of the looting took place.

Yahya Youssef, another witness, said that for two straight nights on western Gaza City's streets, he saw dozens of men engaged in gunfights with police and security guards who protect U.N. and aid groups' facilities.

Curfew is enforced

Both men said Israeli drones and aircraft were flying over the area while looting was underway.

An Israeli strike Friday night killed three people — two tasked with guarding the area in western Gaza City and a child — the Hamas-run interior ministry said in a statement. Staff at Shifa hospital, which received the bodies, confirmed the deaths.

The Israeli military said it couldn't comment on the strike without being provided with its exact coordinates.

Gaza's interior ministry said Saturday that over the past two days, it killed six suspects and wounded 13 others over looting activities. The ministry also enforced a curfew starting Friday along some of Gaza City's main streets.

The al-Najjar family, one of Gaza City's most prominent, condemned the pillaging and called for respect and the protection of public and private property. "We categorically reject the chaos that harms the interests of the nation and its citizens," it said in a statement.

In Beit Lahiya, in northern Gaza, desperate families pushed and shoved at food distribution sites to reach steaming vats of soup.

"We are eight people. I need to provide them with a bite of food," said Faten Al-Sabbagh. "I wish I can find even bread, but there is nothing and we are unable to. The prices are high and there are no salaries."

The top U.N. court on Friday wrapped a week of hearings on what Israel must do to ensure that desperately needed humanitarian aid reaches Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

Israeli strikes on Gaza continued overnight Friday, leaving at least 17 people dead, including children, in

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the southern city of Khan Younis, according to hospital records.

Among the dead were 11 people from the same family, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies. Another strike killed two newly married couples, one of their families said.

Takeaways from AP's reporting on child malnutrition in Gaza

By MOHAMMED JAHJOUH and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's total blockade of Gaza is entering its third month, and food and medical supplies in the aid-dependent Palestinian territory are running dangerously low.

Acute malnutrition among children is increasingly prevalent as hospitals hang by a thread, forced to prioritize deadly emergencies from mass casualty attacks. The price of what little food is still available in the market is exorbitant, unaffordable for most in Gaza, where the United Nations says more than 80% of the population relies on aid.

Israel's longest blockade on Gaza, which began March 2, has sparked a growing international outcry. But that has failed to convince Israel to open the borders. More groups accuse Israel of using starvation as a weapon of war. Israel, for its part, insists the blockade is necessary to pressure Hamas to release the hostages it still holds. Of the 59 hostages still in Gaza, 24 are believed to be still alive.

Israeli authorities did not immediately respond when asked to comment on accusations that Israel was using starvation as a weapon of war, but have previously said Gaza had enough aid after a surge in distribution during a two-month ceasefire, and accuse Hamas of diverting aid for its purposes. Humanitarian workers deny there is significant diversion, saying the U.N. monitors distribution strictly.

Here are some takeaways from AP's reporting:

No food coming in, no way to produce it locally

A lack of supplies means the distribution of food parcels has stopped. Community kitchens, a lifeline for hundreds of thousands for their daily meal, are shutting down one after the other. At those still open, chaotic scenes of desperate men, women and children fighting to get meager rations are common. Bakeries have closed, while water distribution is grinding to a halt due to lack of fuel.

The war has rendered farmland mostly inaccessible, while fishermen have reported being shot at when trying to catch fish along Gaza's coastline. Looting has been reported at warehouses with few remaining supplies.

Meanwhile, supplies languish at the borders, prevented by Israel from entering Gaza.

Malnutrition stalks the most vulnerable

U.N. agencies have documented a rise in acute malnutrition among children since March. They are finding low immunity, frequent illness, weight and muscle mass loss, protruding bones or bellies, and brittle hair.

Since the start of the year, more than 9,000 children have been admitted or treated for acute malnutrition, UNICEF said. The increase was particularly dramatic in March, with 3,600 cases – an 80% increase compared to the 2,000 children in February.

And conditions have only worsened. UNICEF says supplies to prevent malnutrition, such as supplements and biscuits, have been depleted. High-nutrition food used to treat acute malnutrition is running out.

Nearly half the 200 nutrition centers around Gaza have shut down because of displacement and bombardment.

"It is absolutely clear that we are going to have more cases of wasting, which is the most dangerous form of malnutrition," said UNICEF spokesperson Jonathan Crickx. "It is also clear we are going to have more children dying from these preventable causes."

In the pediatric ward

At 9 months old, Khaled, weak and dehydrated, is barely 11 pounds (5 kilos) — half of what he should be. Diarrhea has plagued him for half his brief life.

In Gaza's main pediatric hospital ward, as doctors try to save her son, Wedad Abdelaal, 31, can only watch and agonize over her four other children back in their tent who have nothing to eat.

"This border closure is destroying us," she said.

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A low-weight baby at 4 1/2 pounds (2 kilos) but otherwise healthy at birth, Khaled began suffering from malnutrition at 2 months old. His mother, herself malnourished, can't produce enough milk.

"Breastfeeding needs food, and I am not able to give him enough," she says.

Two of Abdelaal's other children, Ahmed, 7 and Maria, 4, are also showing signs of malnutrition. At 17 pounds (8 kilos), Ahmed's bones pierce his skin. He gets no supplements at feeding centers, which serve only children under 6. Maria has also lost weight, but there is no scale to weigh her.

"My kids have become so frail," Abdelaal laments. "They are like chicks."

Struggling hospitals

Only critical malnutrition cases are admitted to hospitals, and just for short periods so more children can be treated.

"If we admit all those who have acute malnutrition, we will need hundreds of beds," says Dr. Yasser Abu Ghaly. "We can't help many, anyway ... There is nothing in our hands."

While the lack of food can decimate even previously healthy children, for those with pre-existing conditions and genetic disorders, the outlook is dire.

"They are sentenced to death," said Dr. Ahmed al-Farrah, head of the pediatrics and obstetrics ward at Nasser Hospital.

The youngest pay the price

"We are breaking the bodies and minds of the children of Gaza," said Michael Ryan, executive director of emergencies at the World Health Organization. "Because if we don't do something about it, we are complicit in what is happening before our very eyes. ... The children should not have to pay the price."

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese wins a second 3-year term

By ROD McGUIRK and TRISTAN LAVELETTE Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Anthony Albanese claimed victory as the first Australian prime minister to clinch a second consecutive term in 21 years on Saturday and suggested his government had increased its majority by not modeling itself on U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

"Australians have chosen to face global challenges the Australian way, looking after each other while building for the future," Albanese told supporters in a victory speech in Sydney.

"We do not need to beg or borrow or copy from anywhere else. We do not seek our inspiration overseas. We find it right here in our values and in our people," he added.

His center-left Labor Party had branded Albanese's rival Peter Dutton, the opposition leader, "DOGE-y Dutton" and accused his conservative Liberal Party of mimicking Trump and his Department of Government Efficiency.

Dutton had earlier conceded his alliance of conservative parties had been defeated at the election and that he had lost his own parliamentary seat that he had held for 24 years.

Dutton's plight parallels that of Canada's opposition leader, Pierre Poilievre, who lost his seat after Trump declared economic war on the U.S. neighbor to the north. Poilievre had previously been regarded as a shoo-in to become Canada's next prime minister and shepherd his Conservative Party back into power for the first time in a decade.

Analysts argue that mirroring Trump switched from a political positive for Australian conservatives to a negative after Trump imposed global tariffs.

Trumpet of Patriots, a minor party inspired by Trump policies with an advertising budget funded by mining magnate Clive Palmer that eclipsed the major parties, attracted only 2% of the vote.

Zareh Ghazarian, a lecturer in politics at Monash University, in Melbourne, questioned the significance of the "DOGE-y Dutton" label in the election result.

"We won't know. But I'm not sure it had a massive impact," Ghazarian said. "It is a huge win for Labor and it's a massive rebuke for the Liberal Party."

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US congratulates Albanese on re-election

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio congratulated Albanese on his election to a second three-year term.

"Australia is a valued ally, partner, and friend of the United States. Our shared values and democratic traditions provide the bedrock for an enduring alliance and for the deep ties between our peoples," Rubio said in a statement.

"The United States looks forward to deepening its relationship with Australia to advance our common interests and promote freedom and stability in the Indo-Pacific and globally," he added.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, a fellow center-left leader, congratulated Albanese on his victory.

"The U.K. and Australia are as close as ever – which goes to show that long-distance friendships can be the strongest," Starmer said. "I know that we will continue to work together on our shared ambitions, including on trade, investment and energy, working towards a better life for working people in the U.K. and Australia."

Labor had held a narrow majority of 78 seats in the 151-seat house House of Representatives, the lower chamber where parties form governments.

Australian governments are usually elected for at least a second term, but are expected to lose seats at the second election. But Labor is on track to increase its majority in its second term.

High prices are a major election issue

Energy policy and inflation have been major issues in the campaign, with both sides agreeing the country faces a cost of living crisis.

The Liberal Party blamed government waste for fueling inflation and increasing interest rates, and has pledged to ax more than one in five public service jobs to reduce government spending.

While both said the country should reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, Dutton argues that relying on nuclear power instead of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind turbines would deliver less expensive electricity.

Labor argued Dutton's administration would slash services to pay for its ambitions to build seven government-funded nuclear generators. Australia currently has no nuclear power.

Opposition senator Jacinta Nampijinpa Price would have been responsible for cutting 41,000 public service jobs in Dutton's administration. She attracted media attention last month when she told supporters her government would "make Australia great again."

Echoes of Trump

Price told reporters at the time she didn't recall using the words reminiscent of the Republicans' "Make America Great Again" slogan.

Price, who said she was photographed wearing a MAGA cap "in jest at Christmas time," on Saturday blamed the news media for focusing on Trump in the election campaign.

"You made it all about Donald Trump," Price told Australian Broadcasting Corp. "We really couldn't care less about the way Donald Trump is governing for America. We were concerned with the way Australia is being governed under an Albanese government."

The election took place against a backdrop of what both sides of politics describe as a cost of living crisis.

Foodbank Australia, the nation's largest food relief charity, reported 3.4 million households in the country of 27 million people experienced food insecurity last year. That meant Australians were skipping meals, eating less or worrying about running out of food before they could afford to buy more.

The central bank reduced its benchmark cash interest rate by a quarter percentage point in February to 4.1% in an indication that the worst of the financial hardship had passed. The rate is widely expected to be cut again at the bank's next board meeting on May 20, this time to encourage investment amid the international economic uncertainty generated by Trump's tariff policies.

Russia and Ukraine clash over ceasefire proposals as fighting rages

By HANNA ARHIROVA and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine and Russia are at odds over competing ceasefire proposals, as Moscow accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of threatening the safety of dignitaries attending Victory Day celebrations after he dismissed Russia's unilateral 72-hour ceasefire.

Zelenskyy instead renewed calls for a more substantial 30-day pause in hostilities, as the U.S. had initially proposed. He said the proposed ceasefire could start anytime as a meaningful step toward ending the three-year war. "Let's be honest — you can't agree on anything serious in three, five, or seven days," he said.

Zelenskyy said that Moscow's announcement of a 72-hour ceasefire next week in Ukraine to mark Victory Day in World War II is merely an attempt to create a "soft atmosphere" ahead of Russia's annual celebrations. "It looks unserious," he said, "so that (Russian President Vladimir) Putin's guests on Red Square feel comfortable and safe."

Ukraine won't guarantee safety for visitors to Russia

He said that Ukraine cannot provide security assurances to foreign officials planning to visit Russia around May 9, warning that Moscow could stage provocations and later attempt to blame Ukraine.

Zelenskyy said that some governments had approached Kyiv seeking safety reassurance while their delegations are in Russia.

"Our position is very simple: we cannot take responsibility for what happens on the territory of the Russian Federation," he said. "They are the ones providing your security, and we will not be offering any guarantees."

Zelenskyy said he had instructed Ukraine's Foreign Ministry to advise against visiting Russia during this period. "We must tell those who approach us: we do not recommend visiting the Russian Federation from a security standpoint. And if you choose to do so, don't ask us — it's your personal decision."

The Ukrainian leader reiterated that Kyiv's military actions will remain "mirror-like," responding to Russia's moves. He acknowledged that implementing a complete front-line ceasefire without robust international monitoring remains nearly impossible, but emphasized that the 30-day window offers a credible start.

He confirmed ongoing efforts to convene the next round of negotiations with the U.S. He also expressed hope that it could happen in Ukraine, saying it was a "positive sign" that such a gathering is under discussion despite recent personnel changes in Washington.

Russia wants Ukraine to 'de-escalate'

In response to Zelenskyy's comments, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that he had "unequivocally threatened the world leaders who are planning to arrive in Moscow on May 9."

Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, said Saturday that nobody could guarantee Kyiv's safety if Ukraine attacked Moscow celebrations on May 9.

"In the event of a real provocation on Victory Day, no one will guarantee that May 10 will come in Kyiv," he wrote on Telegram.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that Russia expects Kyiv to take steps to de-escalate before Victory Day.

"We will, of course, expect (from) Kyiv not ambiguous, but final statements, and most importantly, actions aimed at de-escalating the conflict during the holidays," Peskov told journalists.

Russia's ceasefire proposals, he said, were meant to "test Kyiv's readiness to find ways for long-term sustainable peace between Russia and Ukraine."

Russia and Ukraine exchange drone strikes

A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, wounded 47 people, officials said, and prompted another appeal from Zelenskyy for more decisive support from the country's allies.

Kharkiv Mayor Ihor Terekhov said drones hit 12 locations across the city late Friday, hitting residential buildings, civilian infrastructure and vehicles.

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The Kharkiv Prosecutor's Office said that Russian forces used drones with thermobaric warheads. In a statement on Telegram, it said thermobaric weapons create a powerful blast wave and a hot cloud of smoke, causing large-scale destruction. The prosecutor said its use may indicate a deliberate violation of international humanitarian law.

"While the world hesitates with decisions, nearly every night in Ukraine turns into a nightmare, costing lives. Ukraine needs strengthened air defense. Strong and real decisions are needed from our partners — the United States, Europe, all our partners who seek peace," Zelenskyy wrote on X.

Russia fired a total of 183 exploding drones and decoys overnight, Ukraine's air force said. Of those, 77 were intercepted and a further 73 lost, likely having been electronically jammed. Russia also launched two ballistic missiles.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 170 Ukrainian drones overnight. The ministry said eight cruise missiles and three guided missiles were also intercepted.

In southern Russia, five people, including two children, were injured in a drone strike on the Black Sea port city of Novorossiysk overnight, according to Mayor Andrey Kravchenko.

The latest wave of attacks comes after the U.S. and Ukraine on Wednesday signed an agreement granting American access to Ukraine's vast mineral resources. It finalizes a deal months in the making that could enable continued military aid to Kyiv amid concerns that President Donald Trump might scale back support in ongoing peace negotiations with Russia.

Grievances and forgiveness were both on display in Prince Harry's raw TV interview

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The rift between Prince Harry and his family has burst into the open again with the prince's raw television interview after losing a court case over his security.

In a long and at times emotional conversation, the 40-year-old prince said he wants reconciliation, while re-airing grievances against the royal family, the U.K. government and the media.

Here are key takeaways from Friday's BBC interview:

A security feud has deepened the royal rift

Harry said his father, King Charles III, won't speak to him because of "this security stuff" — a legal wrangle over protection for the prince when he is in Britain.

"This, at the heart of it, is a family dispute," he said.

Harry has been estranged from his family since he and his wife Meghan quit royal duties in 2020 and moved to the United States, alleging hostility and racist attitudes by the press and royal establishment. Harry's tell-all 2023 memoir "Spare," stuffed with private details and embarrassing revelations, made things worse.

But Harry said what's souring the relationship now is a decision to remove his police protection detail after he stopped being a working royal. On Friday the Court of Appeal in London rejected Harry's bid to restore the protection, saying a government committee was justified in deciding that security should be assessed on a case-by-case basis whenever Harry visits the U.K.

Harry blamed the palace, alleging that the decision to withdraw his security had been made at the direction of royal officials, who sit on the committee alongside police and government representatives. He said they were "knowingly putting me and my family in harm's way," hoping that the sense of threat "would force us to come back."

He suggested his father was part of the problem, saying he'd asked the king "to step out of the way and let the experts do their job."

Harry highlighted health concerns about the king

King Charles, 76, has been treated for an undisclosed cancer for more than a year. Buckingham Palace has given infrequent updates, and has not disclosed what form of cancer the king has.

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Harry, who has met his father only once, briefly, since his diagnosis early last year, said "I don't know how much longer my father has."

He held out little hope of another meeting soon.

"The only time I come back to the U.K., is, sadly, for funerals or court cases," he said.

After taking several months off last year, Charles has returned to a full slate of public duties. This week he told a reception for cancer charities that being diagnosed was "a daunting and at times frightening experience." He added: "I can vouch for the fact that it can also be an experience that brings into sharp focus the very best of humanity."

Harry fears for his life and safety

Harry has well-founded concerns for the safety of himself and his family.

He is fifth in line to the throne, behind his brother William and William's three children. He spent 10 years in the British army, serving two tours of duty in Afghanistan. Harry's lawyer said in court papers that al-Qaida had published a document that said Harry's assassination would please Muslims.

Harry said that before 2020 he was placed in the highest tier of at-risk royals, alongside his late grandmother Queen Elizabeth II.

Since then, he has been stripped of taxpayer-funded police protection, and also denied permission to pay for it himself, leaving private security his only option.

He said that is not as good as police protection, which is provided for life to "people who leave public office," such as former prime ministers.

"I can never leave the royal family," he said. "I was born into those risks, and they've only increased over time."

He claimed that "some people want history to repeat itself," an apparent reference to the death of his mother Princess Diana. She was killed in a car crash in Paris in 1997 while being pursued by paparazzi.

He worries his children will lose part of their heritage

Harry, Meghan and their children Archie, 5, and 3-year-old Lilibet, currently live in California, and Harry said he "can't see a world in which I would be bringing my wife and children back to the U.K."

The prince said he loves Britain and "it's really quite sad that I won't be able to show my children my homeland."

Harry claimed that he and his family are endangered when visiting Britain because of hostility aimed at him and Meghan on social media and through relentless hounding by news media.

Harry wants reconciliation with his family – but it may not be imminent

Harry's explosive memoir "Spare" scattered bitterness and blame at Charles, Queen Camilla – Harry's stepmother – and his elder brother William.

In the interview, he said he could forgive his family, and even the British press that he reviles and has repeatedly sued.

"I would love reconciliation with my family. There's no point in continuing to fight anymore," Harry said.

Historian Anthony Seldon said Harry had chosen his words deliberately to signal he "wants to make a new start."

"There will be no more spiteful books," Seldon told Sky News. "He has signaled he wants to be back in a way that needs to be worked out."

But Joe Little, managing editor of Majesty Magazine, said it's hard to see how reconciliation can happen.

"He clearly feels aggrieved at the outcome of this legal action, but there is a great deal to be gained by maintaining a dignified silence," Little said. "Sadly, as we know from past events, this isn't Harry's way of doing things."

International tourists killed in vehicle crash were among millions drawn to the Yellowstone area

By MEAD GRUVER and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — The deaths of at least six Italian and Chinese tourists in a fiery van crash in Idaho near Yellowstone National Park are a reminder that the roads leading into the popular international destination can be as dangerous as the region's grizzly bears and boiling hot pools.

The van collided with a pickup truck Thursday on a highway just west of Yellowstone. Both vehicles caught fire, and the survivors were taken to hospitals with injuries, according to police. The tourists who were killed were from Italy and China, officials said.

The Chinese Consulate General in San Francisco said eight Chinese citizens were injured in the crash. The accident comes after a crash in 2019 of a bus from Las Vegas carrying Chinese tourists that rolled over near southern Utah's Bryce National Park, killing four people and injuring dozens more.

Where the van in Thursday's accident was coming from and going was unknown. Some Yellowstone roads, including the one south of Old Faithful — the park's most famous geyser — were still closed after the snowy winter.

The highway where the accident happened south of West Yellowstone, Montana, offers a way to get between Yellowstone and Grand Teton at this time of year, before a north-south route is plowed and the park fully opens for summer.

National parks including the world's first, Yellowstone, draw visitors from worldwide

According to the most recent data from the International Trade Administration, 36% of international visitors who arrived to the U.S. by air listed visits to national parks and national monuments as their top leisure activity while in the U.S.

Seventeen percent of Yellowstone's visitors came from other countries in 2016, according to a park visitor use study with the most recent comprehensive data available.

Visitors from Europe and Asia accounted for the majority of travelers from outside the U.S., with 34% from China, 11% from Italy and 10% from Canada.

The COVID-19 pandemic changed those numbers significantly, said Brian Riley whose Wyoming-based business, Old Hand Holdings, markets the Yellowstone region in China and runs tours.

"Every Chinese is taught how great Yellowstone is in their elementary school," Riley said Friday.

The pandemic put a sharp brake on tourism of all kinds but especially from China, which has yet to recover, Riley observed. Now, visits by people already living in the U.S. account for most visits by Chinese, he said.

"Foreigners in general they don't feel safe over here like they did before," Riley said Friday. "The Chinese are kind of preaching that behind the scenes."

The U.S. tourism industry expected 2025 to be another good year for foreign visitors. But several months in, international arrivals have been plummeting. Angered by President Donald Trump's tariffs and rhetoric, and alarmed by reports of tourists being arrested at the border, some citizens of other countries are staying away from the U.S. and choosing to travel elsewhere.

Riley, who grew up in Jackson, Wyoming, just south of Grand Teton and lived in China for a time to learn Mandarin and why Chinese wanted to visit the U.S., is more focused of late on getting them to visit Hawaii, a state perceived as less dangerous.

International visitors are all ages

Yellowstone's crowds peak in the summer, but international tourism peaks in spring and fall, according to Riley and West Yellowstone Mayor Jeff McBirnie.

Many foreign visitors are parents of international students at U.S. colleges and universities.

"They're like, 'Hey let's drop our kid off and go on vacation for a week.' Or kid's graduating, let's get them through college and go on vacation,'" said McBirnie, who owns a pizza place in town. "They really bring a huge economic impact to this town."

Yellowstone suffered a one-two punch between the pandemic and devastating floods in 2022 that cut off access to parts of the park for months.

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Tourism rebounded with 4.7 million visitors last year, Yellowstone's second-busiest on record.

A 'legion' of road deaths over the past century

Winding roads and natural distractions help fuel numerous accidents in and around the park.

The first death involving a passenger vehicle in Yellowstone came just a few years after the park was completely motorized and a fleet of buses replaced the stage coaches and horses used for transport in the park's early years.

In 1921, a 10-passenger bus went off the road in the Fishing Bridge area of the park and down an embankment, killing a 38-year-old Texas woman when her neck was broken, according to park historian Lee Whittlesey.

Whittlesey in his book "Deaths in Yellowstone." chronicles deaths by all means — from drownings in hot springs, to bear maulings, airplane crashes and murders. Auto deaths, Whittlesey wrote, are "legion" in the park, to the point that he felt them too ordinary to include in his tally of fatalities.

Another accounting of deaths in Yellowstone says at least 17 people died inside the park in motor vehicle crashes since 2007, ranking it the second most common cause of deaths behind medical issues.

Whittlesey presaged the chapter of his book covering road deaths with a quote attributed to the 15th century soothsayer Mother Shipton: "Carriages without horses shall go, And Accidents fill the world with woe."

Vatican workers install Sistine Chapel stove where ballots are burned during conclave to elect pope

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Vatican workers installed the simple stove in the Sistine Chapel where ballots will be burned during the conclave to elect a new pope and began taking measures to block any electronic interference with their deliberations, as jockeying continued Saturday outside over who among the cardinals was in the running.

The Holy See released a video Saturday of the preparations for the May 7 conclave, which included installing the stove and a false floor in the frescoed Sistine Chapel to make it even. The footage also showed workers lining up simple wooden tables where the cardinals will sit and cast their votes starting Wednesday, and a ramp leading to the main seating area for any cardinal in a wheelchair.

The engineer overseeing the works, Silvio Screpanti, said workers were also deactivating all the electronic sensors that have been installed in the Sistine Chapel in recent years to help protect its precious frescoes. Such work is part of the technological blackout that accompanies a conclave to prevent bugging of the secret deliberations and ensure the cardinals have no contact with the outside world.

In the coming days, all the windows of the Apostolic Palace facing the Sistine Chapel will be darkened. On the eve of the first vote itself, some 80 seals will be erected around the perimeter of the space where the cardinals will live — between their residence and the Sistine Chapel — to keep outsiders away, he said in comments posted on the site of the Vatican city state.

On Friday, fire crews were seen on the chapel roof attaching the chimney from which smoke signals will indicate whether a pope has been elected.

The preparations are all leading up to the solemn pageantry of the start of the conclave to elect a successor to Pope Francis, history's first Latin American pope, who died April 21 at age 88.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni issued a net denial of reports that one of the leading candidates, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, had suffered health problems earlier in the week that required medical attention. The reports, which spoke of a blood pressure issue, were carried by some Italian media and picked up by some conservative U.S. sites, including Catholicvote.org, the U.S. site headed by Brian Burch, the Trump administration's choice to be ambassador to the Holy See.

Speculation about a papal candidate's health is a mainstay of conclave politics and maneuvering, as various factions try to torpedo or boost certain cardinals. Francis experienced the dynamic firsthand: When the votes were going his way in the 2013 conclave, one breathless cardinal asked him if it was true that

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he had only one lung, as rumors had it. (Francis later recounted that he told the cardinal he had had the upper lobe of one lung removed as a young man.) He was elected a short time later.

Bruni also confirmed the names of two cardinal electors who will not be participating for health reasons, bringing the number down to 133: Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera, the retired archbishop of Valencia, Spain, and the retired archbishop of Nairobi, Kenya, Cardinal John Njue. Two more cardinals have yet to arrive in Rome.

What happens in the conclave?

The Vatican said Saturday that all cardinals will be asked to arrive at the main Vatican residence, Domus Santa Marta hotel, or an adjacent residence between Tuesday evening and Wednesday morning to begin their sequester. They must be in place before Mass on Wednesday morning in St. Peter's Basilica celebrated by the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re. In the afternoon after lunch, they will process into the Sistine Chapel, hear a meditation and take their oaths before casting their first ballots.

If no candidate reaches the necessary two-thirds majority, or 89 votes, on the first ballot, the papers will be burned and black smoke will indicate to the world that no pope was elected.

The cardinals will go back to their Vatican residence for the night and return to the Sistine Chapel on Thursday morning to conduct two votes in the morning, two in the afternoon, until a winner is found.

The preparations are underway as the cardinals meet privately in more informal sessions to discuss the needs of the Catholic Church going forward and the type of pope who can lead it.

Cardinal Jean-Paul Vesco, the archbishop of Algiers, Algeria, said cardinals were feeling the pressure to find a new pope but weren't ready.

"Of course we don't feel ready," Vesco said as he arrived for Saturday's closed-door meetings. "Because we have to discover the one that God has already chosen. We need a lot more time of prayer together. But I'm sure that at the right moment we will be ready and we will give to the church the pope that God himself wanted."

Singapore Cardinal William Goh, who welcomed Francis on the final stop of his four-nation Asian trip last September, said the right pope would eventually materialize.

"We recognize the achievement (of Pope Francis) but no pope is perfect, no one is able to do everything, so we'll find the best person to succeed St. Peter," he said.

Here's why May the 4th is celebrated as Star Wars Day across the galaxy

By ANDREW DeMILLO Associated Press

It didn't begin a long time ago or in a galaxy far far away, but every May 4 it feels like images, memes and promotional deals involving "Star Wars" have an inescapable gravity.

May 4 — or May the 4th, as fans say — has evolved over the years into Star Wars Day, an informal holiday celebrating the space epic and its surrounding franchise.

What is Star Wars Day?

Star Wars Day was created by fans as a sly nod to one of the films' most popular catchphrases, "May the force be with you." Get it? Good, now May the 4th be with you too.

It's not an official holiday but has become so well-known that even former President Joe Biden marked it last year when "Star Wars" actor Mark Hamill dropped by the White House a day beforehand.

"I think it's a very clever way for fans to celebrate their passion and love for 'Star Wars' once a year," said Steve Sansweet, founder and executive chairman of Rancho Obi-Wan, a nonprofit museum in California that has the world's largest collection of "Star Wars" memorabilia.

How did it begin?

The phrase "May the 4th be with you" was used by fans in the years after the first film was released in 1977, and even appeared in a British political ad in 1979 celebrating Margaret Thatcher's victory as prime minister on May 4 that year.

For some fans, the official Star Wars Day comes on May 25, the date of the first film's release. The Los

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Angeles City Council even declared the date to be Star Wars Day in 2007, although the California Legislature voted in 2019 to designate May 4 as Star Wars Day.

How has it spread?

May the 4th caught on informally among fans through inside jokes shared on social media and viewings of the films to mark the occasion. Businesses eventually joined in on the fun, with brands ranging from Nissan to Jameson Whiskey running ads or posting on social media about it.

Disney, which acquired Lucasfilm in 2012, embraced the day as a way to further promote the franchise with merchandise, special screenings and other events surrounding the brand.

Not all "Star Wars" fans are enthused about how ubiquitous the once-underground joke has become. Chris Taylor, a senior editor at Mashable and author of "How Star Wars Conquered the Universe," labels himself a "May the 4th grinch" in part because of its commercialization.

"I love a good dad joke as much as anyone, but my God you can take it too far," Taylor said.

How is it being celebrated this year?

The day is being celebrated on a large and small scale this year. Disney+ is launching the new series "Star Wars: Tales of the Underworld" on the date, and it comes as the second season gets underway for another franchise series, "Andor."

It also follows the announcement that a new stand-alone "Star Wars" film installment starring Ryan Gosling will be released in 2027.

Disney marks the day with the launch of new "Star Wars" merchandise, ranging from lightsaber sets to jewelry.

Most Major League Baseball teams have marked the day in recent years with special events incorporating "Star Wars" characters. For example, the San Francisco Giants sold special tickets for Saturday's game that included a bobblehead portraying pitcher Logan Webb as "Obi-Webb Kenobi."

It's hard to find a place where May the 4th celebrations aren't occurring, from bakeries serving cookies with a "Star Wars" theme to concerts featuring the memorable scores of the films.

It's a town-wide celebration in New Hope, Pennsylvania, which shares its name with the subtitle of the first "Star Wars" film. The town of about 2,600 people, located 30 miles (50 kilometers) northeast of Philadelphia, plans to have costumed characters throughout town with restaurants serving themed items like a "YodaRita."

"I would always joke around and wish people 'May the 4th' — but taking it to this level, I've definitely upped my 'Star Wars' nerdiness," said Michael Sklar, president of the Greater New Hope Chamber of Commerce.

Trump brands his opponents as 'communists,' a label loaded with the baggage of American history

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

For years, President Donald Trump blamed "communists" for his legal and political troubles. Now, the second Trump administration is deploying that same historically loaded label to cast his opponents — from judges to educators — as threats to American identity, culture and values.

Why? Trump himself explained the strategy last year when he described how he planned to defeat his Democratic opponent, then-Vice President Kamala Harris, in the White House election.

"All we have to do is define our opponent as being a communist or a socialist or somebody who is going to destroy our country," he told reporters at his New Jersey golf club in August.

Trump did just that — branding Harris "comrade Kamala" — and he won in November. With the assent of more than 77 million Americans who cast ballots — 49.9% of the vote — Trump is carrying that strategy into his second term.

What he's talking about is not actually 'communism'

In 2025, communism wields big influence in countries such as China, Vietnam, North Korea and Cuba. But not the United States.

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"The core of communism is the belief that governments can do better than markets in providing goods and services. There are very, very few people in the West who seriously believe that," said Raymond Robertson of the Texas A&M University Bush School of Government & Public Service. "Unless they are arguing that the government should run U.S. Steel and Tesla, they are simply not communists."

The word "communist," on the other hand, can carry great emotional power as a rhetorical tool, even now. It's all the more potent as a pejorative — though frequently inaccurate, even dangerous — amid the contemporary flash of social media and misinformation. After all, the fear and paranoia of the Russian Revolution, the "Red Scare," World War II, McCarthyism and the Cold War are fading into the 20th century past.

But Trump, 78 and famous for labeling people he views as obstacles, remembers.

"We cannot allow a handful of communist radical-left judges to obstruct the enforcement of our laws," Trump said Tuesday in Michigan while celebrating his first 100 days in office. The White House did not reply to a request for what Trump means when he calls someone a "communist."

The timing of his use of "communist" is worth noting.

Trump's Michigan speech came during a week of dicey economic and political news. Days earlier, The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs published a poll showing that more Americans disagree with Trump's priorities so far than agree with them, and that many Republicans are ambivalent about his choices of focus. After the speech, the government reported that the economy shrank during the first quarter of 2025 as Trump's tariffs disrupted business.

On Thursday, senior presidential aide Stephen Miller stepped to the White House podium and uttered the same c-word four times in about 35 minutes during a denunciation of past policies on transgender, diversity and immigration issues.

"These are a few of the areas in which President Trump has fought the cancerous, communist woke culture that was destroying this country," Miller told reporters.

His collection of words offered a selection of clickbait for social media users, as well as terms that could catch the attention of older Americans. Voters over age 45 narrowly voted for Trump over his Democratic rivals in 2020 and 2024.

Smack in the middle of Miller's sentence: "communist."

"It tends to be a term that is loaded with negative affect, particularly for older Americans who grew up during the Cold War," said Jacob Neiheisel, a political communications expert at the University at Buffalo. "Appending emotionally laden terms to political adversaries is a way to minimize their legitimacy in the eyes of the public and paint them in a negative light."

A 'Red Scare'-era figure influenced a young Trump

The threat that communists could influence or even obliterate the United States hovered over the country for decades and drove some of the country's ugliest chapters.

The years after World War I and the Russian Revolution in 1917, along with a wave of immigrants, led to what's known as the "Red Scare" of 1920, a period of intense paranoia about the potential for a communist-led revolution in America.

"McCarthyism" after World War II meant the hunt for supposed communists. It's named for Sen. Joseph McCarthy, the Wisconsin Republican who conducted televised hearings at the dawn of the Cold War that drove anti-communist fears to new heights with a series of threats, innuendos and untruths.

Culturally, the merest suggestion that someone was "soft" on communism could end careers and ruin lives. "Blacklists" of suspected communists proliferated in Hollywood and beyond. McCarthy fell into disgrace and died in 1957.

The senator's chief counsel during the hearings, Roy Cohn, became Trump's mentor and fixer in the 1980s and 1990s, when Trump rose as a real estate mogul in New York. The Cold War was more than three decades old. The threat of nuclear war was pervasive.

Communism started to collapse in 1989 and the Soviet Union was dissolved two years later. It's now Russia, led by President Vladimir Putin.

But communism — at least in one form — lives on in China, with which Trump is waging a trade war that

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could result in fewer and costlier products in the United States. By week's end, Trump was acknowledging the potential consequences of his government stepping in: Americans might soon not be able to buy what they want, or they might be forced to pay more. He insisted China would be hurt more by the tariffs.

The real modern debate, Robertson says, is not between capitalism and communism, but about how much the government needs to step in — and when. He suggests that Trump is not really debating communism vs. capitalism anyway.

"Calling people who advocate for slightly more government involvement 'communists' is typical misleading political rhetoric that, unfortunately, works really well with busy voters who do not have a lot of time to think about technical definitions and economic paradigms," he said in an email. "It is also really helpful (to Trump) because it is inflammatory, making people angry, which can be addictive."

Groups fear Israeli proposal for controlling aid in Gaza will forcibly displace people

By SAM MEDNICK and LEE KEATH Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel has blocked aid from entering Gaza for two months and says it won't allow food, fuel, water or medicine into the besieged territory until it puts in place a system giving it control over the distribution.

But officials from the U.N. and aid groups say proposals Israel has floated to use its military to distribute vital supplies are untenable. These officials say they would allow military and political objectives to impede humanitarian goals, put restrictions on who is eligible to give and receive aid, and could force large numbers of Palestinians to move — which would violate international law.

Israel has not detailed any of its proposals publicly or put them down in writing. But aid groups have been documenting their conversations with Israeli officials, and The Associated Press obtained more than 40 pages of notes summarizing Israel's proposals and aid groups' concerns about them.

Aid groups say Israel shouldn't have any direct role in distributing aid once it arrives in Gaza, and most are saying they will refuse to be part of any such system.

"Israel has the responsibility to facilitate our work, not weaponize it," said Jens Laerke, a spokesperson for the U.N. agency that oversees the coordination of aid Gaza.

"The humanitarian community is ready to deliver, and either our work is enabled ... or Israel will have the responsibility to find another way to meet the needs of 2.1 million people and bear the moral and legal consequences if they fail to do so," he said.

None of the ideas Israel has proposed are set in stone, aid workers say, but the conversations have come to a standstill as groups push back.

The Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, known as COGAT, did not respond to a request for comment and referred AP to the prime minister's office. The prime minister's office did not respond either.

Since the beginning of March, Israel has cut off Gaza from all imports, leading to what is believed to be the most severe shortage of food, medicine and other supplies in nearly 19 months of war with Hamas. Israel says the goal of its blockade is to pressure Hamas to free the remaining 59 hostages taken during its October 2023 attack on Israel that launched the war.

Israel says it must take control of aid distribution, arguing without providing evidence that Hamas and other militants siphon off supplies. Aid workers deny there is a significant diversion of aid to militants, saying the U.N. strictly monitors distribution.

Alarm among aid groups

One of Israel's core proposals is a more centralized system — made up of five food distribution hubs — that would give it greater oversight, aid groups say.

Israel has proposed having all aid sent through a single crossing in southern Gaza and using the military or private security contractors to deliver it to these hubs, according to the documents shared with AP and aid workers familiar with the discussions. The distribution hubs would all be south of the Netzarim Corridor

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that isolates northern Gaza from the rest of the territory, the documents say.

One of the aid groups' greatest fears is that requiring Palestinians to retrieve aid from a small number of sites — instead of making it available closer to where they live — would force families to move to get assistance. International humanitarian law forbids the forcible transfer of people.

Aid officials also worry that Palestinians could end up permanently displaced, living in "de facto internment conditions," according to a document signed by 20 aid groups operating in Gaza.

The hubs also raise safety fears. With so few of them, huge crowds of desperate Palestinians will need to gather in locations that are presumably close to Israeli troops.

"I am very scared about that," said Claire Nicolet, emergency coordinator for Doctors Without Borders.

There have been several occasions during the war when Israeli forces opened fire after feeling threatened as hungry Palestinians crowded around aid trucks. Israel has said that during those incidents, in which dozens died, many were trampled to death.

Given Gaza's population of more than 2 million people, global standards for humanitarian aid would typically suggest setting up about 100 distribution sites — or 20 times as many as Israel is currently proposing — aid groups said.

Aside from the impractical nature of Israel's proposals for distributing food, aid groups say Israel has yet to address how its new system would account for other needs, including health care and the repair of basic infrastructure, including water delivery.

"Humanitarian aid is more complex than food rations in a box that you pick up once a month," said Gavin Kelleher, who worked in Gaza for the Norwegian Refugee Council. Aid boxes can weigh more than 100 pounds, and transportation within Gaza is limited, in part because of shortages of fuel.

Experts say Israel is concerned that if Hamas seizes aid, it will then make the population dependent on the armed group in order to access critical food supplies. It could use income from selling the aid to recruit more fighters, said Kobi Michael, a senior researcher at two Israeli think tanks, the Institute for National Security Studies and the Misgav Institute.

Private military contractors

As aid groups push back against the idea of Israel playing a direct distribution role within Gaza, Israel has responded by exploring the possibility of outsourcing certain roles to private security contractors.

The aid groups say they are opposed to any armed or uniformed personnel that could potentially intimidate Palestinians or put them at risk.

In the notes seen by AP, aid groups said a U.S.-based security firm, Safe Reach Solutions, had reached out seeking partners to test an aid distribution system around the Netzarim military corridor, just south of Gaza City, the territory's largest.

Aid groups urged each other not to participate in the pilot program, saying it could set a damaging precedent that could be repeated in other countries facing crises.

Safe Reach Solutions did not respond to requests for a comment.

Whether Israel distributes the aid or employs private contractors to it, aid groups say that would infringe on humanitarian principles, including impartiality and independence.

A spokesperson for the EU Commission said private companies aren't considered eligible humanitarian aid partners for its grants. The EU opposes any changes that would lead to Israel seizing full control of aid in Gaza, the spokesperson said.

The U.S. State Department declined to comment on ongoing negotiations.

Proposals to restrict who can deliver and receive aid

Another concern is an Israeli proposal that would allow authorities to determine if Palestinians were eligible for assistance based on "opaque procedures," according to aid groups' notes.

Aid groups, meanwhile, have been told by Israel that they will need to re-register with the government and provide personal information about their staffers. They say Israel has told them that, going forward, it could bar organizations for various reasons, including criticism of Israel, or any activities it says promote the "delegitimization" of Israel.

Arwa Damon, founder of the International Network for Aid, Relief and Assistance, says Israel has in-

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creasingly barred aid workers from Gaza who had previously been allowed in. In February, Damon was denied access to Gaza, despite having entered four times previously since the war began. Israel gave no reason for barring her, she said.

Aid groups are trying to stay united on a range of issues, including not allowing Israel to vet staff or people receiving aid. But they say they're being backed into a corner.

"For us to work directly with the military in the delivery of aid is terrifying," said Bushra Khalidi, Oxfam's policy lead for Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. "That should worry every single Palestinian in Gaza, but also every humanitarian worker."

Justice Department will switch its focus on voting and prioritize Trump's elections order, memo says

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

The Justice Department unit that ensures compliance with voting rights laws will switch its focus to investigating voter fraud and ensuring elections are not marred by "suspicion," according to an internal memo obtained by The Associated Press.

The new mission statement for the voting section makes a passing reference to the historic Voting Rights Act, but no mention of typical enforcement of the provision through protecting people's right to cast ballots or ensuring that lines for legislative maps do not divide voters by race. Instead, it redefines the unit's mission around conspiracy theories pushed by Republican President Donald Trump to explain away his loss to Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

Trump's attorney general at the time, William Barr, said there was no evidence of widespread fraud in that election. Repeated recounts and audits in the battleground states where Trump contested his loss, including some led by Republicans, affirmed Biden's win and found the election was run properly. Trump and his supporters also lost dozens of court cases trying to overturn the election results.

But in Trump's second term, the attorney general is Pam Bondi, who backed his effort to reverse his 2020 loss. The president picked Harmeet Dhillon, a Republican Party lawyer and long time ally who also has echoed some of Trump's false claims about voting, to run the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, where the voting section is housed.

"The Civil Rights Division has always worked to make sure Americans have access to the polls and that their votes matter," said Stacey Young, an 18-year Department of Justice veteran who left that division days after Trump's inauguration in January and founded Justice Connection, an organization supporting the agency's employees. "The division's job is not to promote the politically expedient fiction that voting fraud is widespread."

The department did not respond to a request for comment.

Trump has already demonstrated his interest in using the Justice Department to pursue those who stood up for the 2020 election by directing the department to investigate one of his former appointees who publicly vouched for the safety and accuracy of the 2020 vote count.

"The mission of the Voting Rights Section of the DOJ Civil Rights Division is to ensure free, fair, and honest elections unmarred by fraud, errors, or suspicion," the mission statement declares.

It adds that the unit will "vigorously enforce" Trump's executive order seeking to reshape how elections are run. Parts of that order have been put on hold by a judge.

The executive order signed late last month calls for people to provide documented proof of U.S. citizenship each time they register to vote; would require all mail ballots to be received by Election Day, which is counter to the law in 18 states; and directs an independent federal agency, the Election Assistance Commission, to amend its guidelines for voting machines.

Several legal analysts say much of the order is unconstitutional because only states and, for federal contests, Congress, can set election procedures. The Constitution provides no provision for the president to set the rules for elections.

The new mission statement for the Civil Rights Division also says the voting unit will focus on ensuring

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that “only American citizens vote in U.S. federal elections.” It’s already illegal for noncitizens to vote. People have to attest they are U.S. citizens when they register and attempts to vote by noncitizens can lead to felony charges and deportation.

Repeated investigations have turned up just a tiny number of noncitizens casting ballots, often doing so accidentally, out of the hundreds of millions of votes over recent contests. A proof-of-citizenship requirement in Kansas a little over a decade ago blocked 31,000 eligible U.S. citizens from registering to vote before it was overturned by the courts.

But Republicans, including Trump, have continued to insist there must be far more noncitizens casting votes and are pushing to tighten election laws to screen them out.

Notably, the roughly 200-word statement on the voting rights section mentions fighting “fraud” twice, as well as investigating “other forms of malfeasance.” The Department of Justice already investigates and prosecutes voting fraud, but in a separate division on the criminal side. The voting section is a civil unit that does not investigate potential crimes.

Now, however, it will “protect the right of American citizens to have their votes properly counted and tabulated,” according to the statement. It was unclear what that refers to. There have been no widespread cases of votes being improperly tabulated.

Justin Levitt, who served as President Joe Biden’s senior policy adviser for democracy and voting rights, noted that because the voting rights section does not pursue prosecutions, its power is sharply limited by the specifics of civil rights laws and what judges will approve.

“For the civil section of the Civil Rights Division, courts need to be buying what they’re selling,” he said.

Waltz ouster adds to tumult in Trump’s national security team but consolidates power in fewer hands

By ERIC TUCKER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s removal of national security adviser Mike Waltz brings further disruption to a national security team that has already endured scrutiny over using the Signal messaging app to discuss sensitive military operations as well as mounting questions over the leadership of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and the firing of the four-star general who led the National Security Agency.

The staff shake-up comes as the administration confronts foreign policy issues that include Iran’s rapidly advancing nuclear ambitions, a trade fight with China and conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine that have defied easy resolutions despite Trump’s initial confidence that he could settle both wars quickly.

But Waltz’s departure also presents an opportunity for Trump to consolidate foreign policy in just a few hands, with the Republican president asserting even more power over decision-making and relying on a select group of people who have entirely embraced his “America First” agenda. Those influential voices include special envoy Steve Witkoff and Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who on Thursday was named to replace Waltz on an acting basis while Waltz was nominated as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

“I would think he has just about what he wants” in terms of consolidated power, said William Banks, founding director of what is now called the Syracuse University Institute for Security Policy and Law. “There aren’t many outliers.”

Gaining Trump’s confidence or losing it

Rubio may once have seemed an unlikely choice for such prominent positions given that the onetime Trump rival and hawkish conservative was derided by Trump as “Little Marco” during the 2016 presidential campaign.

But since then, the former Florida senator has proved adept at aligning himself with Trump’s foreign policy positions, presiding over a massive overhaul of the State Department while steering clear of some of the pitfalls that other national security leaders have encountered.

Waltz, for instance, faced intense criticism in March after revelations that he added journalist Jeffrey Goldberg to a private text chain on an encrypted messaging app that was used to discuss planning for an

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airstrike against Houthi militants in Yemen.

He also was considered to be part of a neoconservative wing of the Republican Party that had supported the war in Iraq and other U.S. military interventions abroad, including in Syria and Libya, that have now found disfavor in today's GOP. The former Florida congressman has advocated for further diplomatically isolating Russian President Vladimir Putin, whom Trump has viewed at moments with admiration.

The Pentagon, too, has been a source of tumult, with Hegseth directing firings of top military officers and now ousting his own top civilian advisers in response to leak allegations. There are now multiple vacancies in key positions at a critical time for the military. Other missteps have included a broad edict for the military services to erase images celebrating diversity, leading to the brief removal of online content of prominent figures such as Jackie Robinson and causing a public outcry.

Reports of Elon Musk being offering a classified Pentagon briefing on China and Hegseth posting airstrike plans in two Signal chats with dozens of people have spurred calls for the defense secretary's firing. But Trump has stood by him.

Trump's national security team could be "charitably" described as "a work in progress," said Daniel Fried, a former U.S. ambassador to Poland and a National Security Council official under both the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations, citing what he said were concerns about coordination and portfolios.

"I'm not saying that the Trump foreign policy team is doomed. But the lack of coordination, the lack of consistency, the sense of chaotic decision-making isn't just a media myth," Fried said.

Trump's approach to foreign policy

The national security adviser post, established in 1953, matters to the functioning of a cohesive government. That official is intended to serve as a hub in coordinating information, soliciting advice among agencies and developing policy recommendations for the president.

But the argument for balance in policymaking is unlikely to resonate with Trump. Over the course of his career, he has claimed expert knowledge on everything from Islamic militants to taxes and technology.

Heather Conley, a former deputy assistant secretary of state during the George W. Bush administration, said Trump often gives greater weight to advice and recommendations from television and social media than his senior advisers.

"There is very little role for policy coordination because the president is clearly setting the policy on a daily, hourly basis," Conley said.

The NSC didn't immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

Even as Trump has elevated Rubio, there are signs that Trump also has welcomed the input of a far-less conventional source: far-right activist Laura Loomer.

Last month, she appeared to take credit for Trump's firing of Air Force Gen. Tim Haugh as head of the NSA and the Pentagon's Cyber Command after a 33-year career in intelligence and cyber operations. Loomer said she had raised questions to Trump about Haugh's ties to retired Gen. Mark Milley, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Trump's first term but later became a critic, and she questioned Haugh's loyalty.

On Friday, Loomer said she recommended to Trump in a private meeting last month that he remove Waltz from his job.

Changes from the first Trump administration

The Waltz ouster notwithstanding, Trump has tried to project a more ordered administration than during his first term. Those four years were marked by big personnel changes among his national security leadership and bitter disagreements with officials he felt were trying to rein him in or box in his choices.

He replaced three national security advisers, and fired an FBI director and secretary of state. He clashed with one defense secretary who resigned after differing with Trump over the abrupt withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria and dismissed another who broke with him over using the military during racial justice protests in 2020.

The removal of a national security adviser with views not in perfect alignment with his own may help free Trump from some of the constraints he felt from government agencies in his first term.

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Yet at a moment when Trump is trying to find endgames to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza while trying to negotiate an Iran nuclear deal and waging a global tariff war, leaning on Rubio to serve in both roles may be suboptimal.

Appearing Thursday night on Fox News Channel's "Hannity," Rubio centered his comments on the foreign policy news of the day — including the U.S. role in trying to broker peace between Russia and Ukraine — rather than on a leadership transition that now has him juggling two major positions.

"The fact that Rubio has multiple titles may mean that his stock is rising, but not necessarily," Fried said. "And that's part of the problem. If it's not clear who is in charge and it's not clear where you go to get answers, that's not a recipe for leverage. It's a recipe for uncertainty and paralysis."

Today in History: May 4

Four killed during anti-war protest at Kent State University

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, May 4, the 124th day of 2025. There are 241 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 4, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire on student demonstrators during an anti-war protest at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others.

Also on this date:

In 1886, at Haymarket Square in Chicago, a labor demonstration for an 8-hour workday turned into a deadly riot when a bomb exploded, killing seven police officers and at least four civilians.

In 1904, the United States took over construction of the Panama Canal from France.

In 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval clash fought entirely with carrier aircrafts, began in the Pacific during World War II. (The outcome was considered a tactical victory for Japan, but ultimately a strategic victory for the Allies.)

In 1961, the first group of "Freedom Riders" left Washington, D.C., to challenge racial segregation on interstate buses and in bus terminals.

In 1998, Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski was given four life sentences plus 30 years by a federal judge in Sacramento, California, under a plea agreement that spared him the death penalty.

In 2006, a federal judge sentenced Zacarias Moussaoui to life in prison for his role in the 9/11 attacks, telling the convicted terrorist, "You will die with a whimper."

In 2011, President Barack Obama said he had decided not to release death photos of Osama bin Laden because their graphic nature could incite violence and create national security risks. Officials told The Associated Press that the Navy SEALs who stormed bin Laden's compound in Pakistan shot and killed him after they saw him appear to reach for a weapon.

In 2023, former Proud Boys leader Enrique Tarrio and three other members of the far-right extremist group were convicted of a plot to attack the U.S. Capitol in a desperate bid to keep Donald Trump in power after the Republican lost the 2020 presidential election. (Tarrio was later sentenced to 22 years in prison, but was pardoned by Trump on January 20, 2025, the first day of Trump's second term in office.)

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician Ron Carter is 88. Pulitzer Prize-winning political commentator George Will is 84. Actor Richard Jenkins is 78. Country singer Randy Travis is 66. Comedian Ana Gasteyer is 58. Actor Will Arnett is 55. Basketball Hall of Famer Dawn Staley is 55. Rock musician Mike Dirnt (Green Day) is 53. Designer and TV personality Kimora Lee Simmons is 50. Sportscaster/TV host Erin Andrews is 47. Singer Lance Bass (NSYNC) is 46. Actor Ruth Negga is 44. Golfer Rory McIlroy is 36.