

Groton Daily Independent

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Tuesday, May 6

Senior Menu: Sloopy 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.

Wednesday, May 7

Senior Menu: Ham, au gratin, creamed peas, cheesecake with fruit glaze, dinner roll.
School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Cheese nachos, refried beans.
Groton Chamber Board Meeting, Noon, City. Hall
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.;
League, 6:30 p.m.; Sara Circle, 5 p.m.
Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Thursday, May 8

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, oranges, whole wheat bread.
School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.
Girls Golf at Lee Park Golf Course, 10 a.m.
Junior High Track at Roncalli
Elementary Track and Field Day, 12:30 p.m.
Groton Lions Club Meeting, 104 N Main, 6 p.m.

Friday, May 9

Senior Menu: Cold turkey sub, lettuce/cheese/tomato, macaroni salad, pineapple.
School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: Cheese pizza, green beans.
Track at Aberdeen 2 p.m.

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1440

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

Pulitzer Prize Winners

The 2025 Pulitzer Prize winners were announced yesterday. The highest honor—the public service award—was granted to ProPublica for its “Life of the Mother” series on the impact of US abortion bans.

Other winners include The Washington Post (breaking news) for coverage of the July 13 assassination attempt on then-presidential candidate Donald Trump. Also awarded were Reuters (investigative reporting) and The Baltimore Banner and The New York Times (local reporting) for coverage of the US fentanyl crisis. The New York Times was separately awarded (international reporting) for its coverage of the war in Sudan, and The Wall Street Journal (national reporting) was awarded for its series on Elon Musk.

The Pulitzer Prize for fiction was awarded to “James” by Percival Everett, a reimagining of Mark Twain’s “Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.” The nonfiction prize went to “To the Success of Our Hopeless Cause” by Benjamin Nathans, an account of the Soviet dissident movement.

The Pulitzer—determined by a board of academics and media professionals—is one of the US’ highest distinctions for journalism, literature, and music.

Diddy Trial Begins

Jury selection kicked off yesterday in a Manhattan federal court in the criminal trial of hip-hop mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs, who faces five federal charges, including sex trafficking and racketeering conspiracy. The 55-year-old has been held without bail since his arrest in September and has pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutors allege Combs led a criminal enterprise starting in 2004, using his music and business empire to intimidate, exploit, and traffic women for sex. The indictment details claims of abuse, coercion, and efforts to conceal evidence, including organizing so-called “freak off” parties, with four accusers expected to testify. Combs’ defense argues the encounters were consensual and has turned down a plea deal.

Roughly 150 potential jurors will be questioned individually by the presiding judge and both legal teams, a process expected to last three days. Opening statements are scheduled for May 12, with the trial expected to last several weeks. If convicted on all counts, Combs could face life in prison.

Tax Evasion Settlement

Swiss bank UBS Group AG yesterday agreed to pay \$511M to settle a criminal investigation by the US Justice Department that found Credit Suisse (the bank UBS bought in 2023) helped wealthy Americans evade taxes on more than \$4B in at least 475 offshore accounts. The settlement comes more than a decade after Credit Suisse pledged to halt such practices.

In the most recent case, Credit Suisse admitted to conspiring to help wealthy individuals prepare and file false US tax returns from 2010 to 2021 and was found to have repeatedly failed to fully disclose offshore accounts to authorities. The settlement comes two years after the US Senate Finance Committee found Credit Suisse had breached its 2014 plea agreement with the US government.

UBS said it was not involved in the misconduct, which occurred before UBS bought Credit Suisse for \$3.2B under a Swiss government-brokered deal to avoid a potential banking crisis.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

President Donald Trump announces proposal to implement 100% tariff on films produced outside the US. The 2027 NFL Draft to be hosted in Washington, DC, on the National Mall ... and New York Islanders win NHL Draft Lottery, will get top pick in 2025 NHL draft.

Baltimore Ravens kicker Justin Tucker released from league amid NFL investigation into sexual misconduct allegations.

NBA postseason continues with the conference semifinals; see latest bracket... and NHL Stanley Cup Playoffs second round began yesterday; see latest schedule.

Science & Technology

OpenAI cancels plans to spin out most of the organization into a for-profit company, will restructure as a for-profit public benefit corporation overseen by a nonprofit board.

Physicists capture first-ever image of individual atoms floating through open space, confirming atomic interactions previously theorized but never before confirmed.

James Webb Space Telescope makes most detailed measurement to date of the atmosphere of a "sub-Neptune" exoplanet, the most common type of planet outside of our solar system.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.6%, Dow -0.2%, Nasdaq -0.7%); S&P 500 snaps nine-day winning streak.

Skechers to be acquired for more than \$9B by private equity firm 3G Capital, taking the shoemaker private after 26 years; Skechers shares close up 24% on the news.

Ford suspends 2025 financial guidance due to expected \$2.5B hit from US import tariffs, which it hopes to offset partially; comes after General Motors projected a \$4B to \$5B impact from tariffs.

Politics & World Affairs

Israel's security cabinet reportedly approves government plans to pursue a full reoccupation of the Gaza Strip, moving Palestinians southward.

Israel strikes Yemen's Hodeidah Port; attack comes after a missile claimed by Houthi rebels lands near Israel's main international airport.

Trump administration offers undocumented immigrants free airline tickets and \$1K to leave the US.

Rwanda confirms it is in discussions with the US on accepting deported migrants ... and the US also reportedly in talks with Angola, Equatorial Guinea.

Romania's nationalist-populist candidate George Simion wins first round of elections on platform of cutting aid to Ukraine, fighting corruption; runoff against Bucharest Mayor Nicușor Dan is set for May 18.

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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!

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Sisseton Junior High Track Meet

The junior high track meet was held Monday at Sisseton with Groton Area winning in 17 events.

Boy's Division

100 Meters 7th Grade: 1. Ryder Schwan, 12.54; 2. Trayce Schelle, 13.86; 3. Trey Tietz, 13.90; 6. Ivan Schwan, 14.17; 8. Liam Johnson, 14.44; 10. Kinton Tracy, 14.57; 14. Carlos Rodregiz-Cen..., 15.27

100 Meters 8th Grade: 1. Anthony Tracy, 12.14

200 Meters 7th Grade: 1. Ryder Schwan, 25.76; 2. Trayce Schelle, 28.46; 3. Trey Tietz, 29.50; 5. Kinton Tracy, 30.35; 6. Carlos Rodregiz-Cen..., 30.71; 7. Quinton Flores, 31.53

200 Meters 8th Grade: 1. Anthony Tracy, 25.56

400 Meters 7th Grade: 1. Kyson Kucker, 1:01.20; 2. Keegan Kucker, 1:03.04

800 Meters 7th Grade: 1. Quinton Flores, 2:51.05; 2. Grayden Zeck, 3:00.01

1600 Meters 7th Grade: 2. Grayden Zeck, 6:23.77

200m Hurdles - 30" 7th Grade: 1. Keegan Kucker, 32.14; 2. Kyson Kucker, 34.83

4x100 Relay 7th Grade: 1. (Trayce Schelle, Trey Tietz, Kinton Tracy, Ivan Schwan), 55.51.

4x100 Relay 8th Grade: 2. (Ryder Schwan, Keegan Kucker, Kyson Kucker, Anthony Tracy), 52.38.

4x200 Relay 7th Grade: 1. (Kinton Tracy, Trey Tietz, Trayce Schelle, Ivan Schwan), 1:54.95.

4x200 Relay 8th Grade: 1. (Ryder Schwan, Keegan Kucker, Kyson Kucker, Anthony Tracy), 1:44.44.

Shot Put - 8lb 7th Grade: 8. Gavin Hanten, 18' 4"

Shot Put - 8lb 8th Grade: 3. Sam Crank, 27' 11"

Discus - 1kg 7th Grade: 6. Gavin Hanten, 52' 2"; 8. Ivan Schwan, 46' 6"

Discus - 1kg 8th Grade: 3. Sam Crank, 87' 11"

High Jump 7th Grade: 1. Liam Johnson, 4' 3"

Long Jump 7th Grade: 1. Liam Johnson, 13' 8.75"

Girl's Division

100 Meters 7th Grade: 5. Libby Johnson, 15.10; 6. Charli Jacobsen, 15.18; 9. Mya Moody, 15.41; 12. Hadley Heilman, 16.01

100 Meters 8th Grade: 2. Raquel Tracy, 14.12; 5. Aurora Washenberger, 14.94; 6. Katie Bonn, 15.35

200 Meters 7th Grade: 2. Rowan Patterson, 30.82; 4. Libby Johnson, 31.93; 5. Kinley Sandness, 32.00; 10. Mya Moody, 33.63; 12. Hadley Heilman, 33.94

200 Meters 8th Grade: 2. Raquel Tracy, 30.26; 5. Aurora Washenberger, 31.31; 7. Katie Bonn, 32.17

400 Meters 8th Grade: 2. Tevan Hanson, 1:12.03; 3. Andi Iverson, 1:21.88

100m Hurdles - 30" 7th Grade: 2. Charli Jacobsen, 21.41

100m Hurdles - 30" 8th Grade: 1. Tevan Hanson, 18.04

4x100 Relay 7th Grade: 1. (Brynlee Dunker, Andi Iverson, Charli Jacobsen, Kinley Sandness), 59.92.

4x100 Relay 8th Grade: 3. (Katie Bonn, Tevan Hanson, Rowan Patterson, Raquel Tracy), 1:00.15.

4x200 Relay 7th Grade: 2. (Brynlee Dunker, Andi Iverson, Charli Jacobsen, Kinley Sandness), 2:08.67.

4x200 Relay 8th Grade: 1. (Tevan Hanson, Rowan Patterson, Raquel Tracy, Aurora Washenberger), 2:05.77.

Shot Put - 6lb 7th Grade: 5. Maycee Moody, 21' 5"; 6. Tori Schuster, 20' 2"; 9. Andi Gauer, 15' 5"; 9. Illyanna Dallaire, 15' 5"

Shot Put - 6lb 8th Grade: 8. Neely Althoff, 21' 11.5"; 12. Ari Dinger, 18' 10"

Discus - 1kg 7th Grade: 1. Tori Schuster, 56' 10"; 4. Illyanna Dallaire, 45' 0"; 5. Andi Gauer, 40' 1"; 6. Maycee Moody, 38' 8"

Discus - 1kg 8th Grade: 6. Neely Althoff, 47' 10"; 8. Ari Dinger, 45' 5"

Long Jump 7th Grade: 1. Kinley Sandness, 13' 1.25"; 2. Brynlee Dunker, 13' 0.75"; 3. Rowan Patterson, 11' 10.75"; 4. Mya Moody, 11' 7.25"

OPENING MAY 2ND
CLOSING JUNE 2ND

WEBER LANDSCAPING GREENHOUSE

620 WEST THIRD AVENUE

GROTON

HOURS OF OPERATION

M-F 10-6

SAT 10-4

SUN 12-4



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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

May 6, 2025 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 North Main Street

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

1. Approval of Agenda
 2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
 3. Minutes
 4. Adjourn the 137th City Council
-
5. Convene the 138th City Council – Oath of Office
 - Appoint Vacant Council Seat – Ward 1
 - Election of Officers: President and Vice President
 - Appoint Advisory Committees
 6. Appoint Attorney
 7. Motion to approve bills each meeting & authorize the Finance Officer to pay payroll and all monthly bills in a timely manner to avoid penalties and take advantage of discounts
 8. Department Reports
 9. Community Access Grant/Funding Possibilities for Railroad Avenue – NECOG
 10. Wastewater Project and Funding – NECOG & IMEG
 - a. Approve Engineering Agreement with IMEG
 11. Bills
 12. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
 13. Hire Summer Recreational Employees
 14. Adjournment

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

May 6, 2025, 8:45 A.M.

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
4. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Rental Agreement with All Seasons Motorsports
5. Approve the transfer of 2015 Chevrolet Traverse from the Sheriff Office to Equalization
6. Approve the transfer of 2012 Chevrolet Suburban from the Sheriff Office to Highway Dept.
7. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes for April 29, 2025
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Approval of Election Workers
 - e. Lease Agreements
 - f. Township Bonds
 - g. Travel Request
 - h. Landfill Tonnage Report for April
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. Adjourn

Brown County Commission Meeting

Please join my meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone.

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

You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311)

Access Code: 601-168-909 #

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

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

Presentations may not exceed 3 minutes.

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

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



**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

A cop with a secret

"I don't care if 50 people read this story and 49 think 'What a loser.'"

By Megan Luther

South Dakota News Watch

MITCHELL, S.D. – As guests file into the meeting hall at the Davison County Fairgrounds, organizers grab more chairs. The crowd is bigger than they anticipated — more than 100 people are here for this Thursday afternoon ceremony.

Outside in the 40-degree weather — warm for January — the graduates sneak in one last smoke break.

Grant Lanning walks in 30 minutes before the ceremony in full uniform, wearing his bulletproof vest, Taser and firearm. He catches up with his fellow law enforcement officers and texts with friend Dexton Hicks. They met nearly 20 years ago on their way to National Guard basic training. They've been texting daily the past couple weeks.

"Good luck brother," Dexton writes.

A few days ago, Grant marked his 12th anniversary of being sworn in as a law enforcement officer. "A lot of signs," he replied to Dexton.

The program

Today is not about a diploma or a degree. It's much bigger, more valuable. Today is about second chances and 18 months of hard work.

The four graduates — all women — completed 860 hours of treatment all told, spent 954 hours sharing in support groups, and stayed sober from drugs and alcohol for a combined 2,228 days.

Today they graduate from James Valley DUI and Drug Court. The problem-solving court, as the state calls it, was created in 2007. Participants, who have felony driving under the influence and drug convictions, avoid prison by going through community-based, intensive outpatient treatment. They must volunteer for the program and be accepted.

They have to want it.

There are extensive requirements, including regular court appearances, substance abuse and mental



Grant Lanning poses with his K-9 Rocco when he worked for Lake County Sheriff's Office in Madison, S.D. (Submitted photo)

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health treatment, intensive supervision including random drug and alcohol testing, keeping a job and connecting with the recovery support services. If they fail on any count, a judge can send them to prison. The focus is on rehabilitation instead of punishment, which also saves taxpayer money.

Completing the program is a big deal, worthy of a graduation celebration. The court holds a handful a year, each with a keynote speaker. Sometimes it's a past graduate who's able to relate to life after court. Other speakers have included sheriffs, judges and community members.

While planning for this January graduation, administrators discussed their options and thought Grant would make a solid keynote speaker.

As the jail administrator, he's seen the graduates, sometimes multiple times in the Davison County Jail, and he's been a supporter of the program, rarely missing a graduation.

Court coordinator Sharon Kraft emailed Grant, "We generally ask that you speak 10 to 15 minutes."

No problem, he replied. He'd have a few weeks to write it.

Familiar faces

Today's ceremony begins with Donna Bucher, the James Valley Drug and DUI Court judge, welcoming the crowd and introducing Grant.

His friend Dexon wanted to be here. He's gone through a similar experience and encouraged Grant to speak out. But Dexon, who lives in Kansas City, couldn't make the drive. So while Judge Bucher mentions his bio in the graduation program, Grant, standing in the back, pushes record on his phone.

"Why would we invite someone like him to speak at a graduation?" Bucher asks. "He's law enforcement through and through. He is also a wonderful human with a caring heart, and he wants to see people be successful."

The judge calls Grant to the lectern, and the audience applauds.

"A lot of familiar faces here," Grant smiles. "This is probably one of the only happy times some of you have seen me."

He's met them in jail and even arrested some of them, and not just the graduates. The audience is full of family, friends, alumni and current court participants.

Grant continues on with what you'd expect at a graduation speech, what the graduation coordinators were hoping for. Grant tells those in the audience their job is to support the graduates. He points to the nearly dozen law enforcement officers standing in the back.

"They're not here to see you fail. They're here to support you."

His secret revealed

What no one knows, not the coordinators or his colleagues, is that Grant walked up to that oak lectern with two speeches.

One contains the message the court envisioned: That when people down on their luck make poor choices in life, it doesn't define them.

That's the one he wrote first, the easy one. The one that gave him an out. An opportunity to delay his truth, a reprieve from revealing his secret. Because the second speech Grant wrote is more honest and life-defining.

After being introduced, Grant walked up with both speeches tucked in a black notebook. When he pulled the pages out, on top was the truth, what he'd been hiding for years.

Grant took it as a sign. Let's do this. Let's see what happens.

"So who am I? Well, I'm a small-town kid that grew up with a dream to always be a cop," Grant continues.

He tells how he went to South Dakota State University to study sociology. How he joined the National Guard and during college was deployed to Afghanistan. How he returned, finished his degree and started in law enforcement.

At first, he says, he wanted to put everyone in handcuffs. Now, Grant believes in finding the best solution for someone who's struggling.

"So," Grant clears his throat. "When they asked me to speak, they're going to get a little more than they bargained for."

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Grant's face starts to redden. He gets that way when he's nervous.

"You talk about sober days, right?" he checks with the graduates, then pauses. "2,977 sober days for me."

Eight years, one month, three weeks and six days without alcohol. There it is. The secret is out. Grant Lanning is an alcoholic.

The audience claps. Not what he was expecting.

Grant continues over the applause. "You know what's really hard? All those people I work with, most of them don't know."

"I didn't know," Judge Bucher says from the front row.

"I know you didn't." Maybe now she will let him go a little longer with his speech, Grant jokes.

'Share your story'

He goes on to disclose more.

How he justified his drinking with what he saw in Afghanistan, what he saw as a cop, the death he dealt with as part of his duties. How he hid bottles and was deep into his addiction when he was enforcing the law.

How even when he got sober, he was a miserable person to be around, a dry drunk. What helped him, he says, was helping others.

Toward the end, he tells the graduates how proud he is of them. To keep coming back to show other participants sobriety is possible.

"Don't be afraid to share your story," he concludes, "because you never know who you might help."

The audience gives him a standing ovation.

Grant's boss, Davison County Sheriff Steve Harr, enters from the back. While he missed Grant's speech, the sheriff already knows. Grant told him during his job interview three years ago.

Harr had no reservations hiring Grant. "I've been around the block enough doing this job to realize that people can have issues in their personal life and change."

Harr's former boss, previous Sheriff Steve Brink, also struggled with alcohol. Like Grant, Brink publicly shared about his recovery at a James Valley Drug and DUI Court graduation.

Ten minutes after Grant sat down from his speech, he texted Dexon. "Holy sh- I did it."

"F- yea you did!!!" replied Dexon, who celebrates 11 years of sobriety this month.

"I'm ready for my story to start helping others," Grant texts back, sending Dexon the recording.

Wanting it

Months after his graduation speech, Grant sits down for an interview in a Mitchell deli booth.

Since the ceremony, he's run into a few who were in the audience at graduation, arrested and back in jail.

One of them told him, "You get it." Grant replied, "I do get it, but you have to want it. You have to be able to do this."

After years of drinking, Grant knew when he was ready. For years, he thought he was good at hiding his drinking and the bottles. That his wife, Sydney, believed he was changing his car's oil when he went out to his garage.

"I knew I had a problem for a long time, but I was not ready to look in the mirror and accept it," Grant says.

It was his wife who provided the reflection. One day, Sydney called his bluff. She grabbed Grant's purple Powerade, ready to take a sip, knowing it was spiked with vodka. She was pregnant.

"Don't drink it," he stopped her.

"Where is it?" she asked.

In the garage, back of the freezer, he acknowledges.

She helped him throw it all out. Even the cooking wine.

Recovery isn't just about being sober. For Grant, it's about working on himself, his issues and sharing his story to help others.

Grant feels lighter after going public. No fallout, yet. Nor does he particularly care what others think.

The graduation speech wasn't about him. This story isn't about him. "Look at me. Look how awesome

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I am now because I'm sober," he mocks. "No. That's not what it's about."

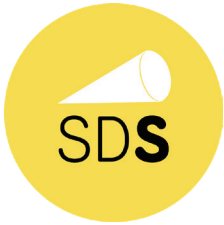
"I don't care if 50 people read this story and 49 think 'What a loser.'"

Grant shares for one – that one person who may be struggling, looking for a sign to get sober. Maybe that person is even wearing a badge.

The possibility of helping one person is worth telling it all.

Megan Luther is a freelance journalist based in Mitchell. She has been in recovery for five years.

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Contact Megan Luther at megan.luther@sdnewswatch.org.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Fight breaks out at penitentiary one month after similar violence that injured officer

BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 5, 2025 5:03 PM

Another round of violence erupted Sunday on the campus of the South Dakota State Penitentiary, the Department of Corrections has confirmed.

The fight between inmates came a little more than a month after two other incidents on the penitentiary campus, one of which injured a female correctional officer.

Those earlier events occurred shortly before the first meeting of a state work group debating the future of the oldest portions of the 144-year-old prison grounds in Sioux Falls. The female correctional officer was injured in the penitentiary, while the other fight took place between inmates in the maximum security Jameson Annex.

The work group toured both the penitentiary and Jameson Annex on April 2.

Michael Winder, spokesman for the department, did not say how many people were involved in Sunday's violence, which he described via email as "a fight." There were no "life-threatening injuries," he wrote, and no correctional officers were injured.

"It is an ongoing investigation," Winder wrote.

Winder did not reply to questions on the location of the violence or how it may have been quelled, but the family member of one inmate told South Dakota Searchlight that the event involved inmates in East Hall.

East Hall was the location of two nights of unrest just over a year ago at the penitentiary, which followed a temporary shutdown of tablet communications. Eleven inmates were charged with crimes for those incidents.

Most of those inmates, prosecuted by the South Dakota Attorney General's Office, have since taken plea deals for intentional damage to property. A man charged with aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer and another charged with reckless burning await trial, court records show. One inmate was acquitted of intentional damage to property at trial after raising questions about the security footage upon which the charge was based.

As of last week, no charges had been filed by the Attorney General's Office for the violence that took place just before the first prison work group meeting in Sioux Falls.

Loved ones behind bars told Nicole Lloyd of Sioux Falls that Sunday's violence involved more than a dozen people, originated in the chow hall and resulted in the use of pepper spray and a lockdown of inmates across the penitentiary.

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

Mercury pollution lands two more South Dakota lakes on fish consumption advisory list

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - MAY 5, 2025 3:43 PM

State officials have added two more South Dakota lakes to the fish consumption advisory list after testing found elevated mercury levels in large walleye.

The state announced Monday that Dry Lake #1 in Clark County and Lake Henry in Kingsbury County have been added to the list.

For Dry Lake #1, health officials recommend limiting consumption of walleye over 21 inches in length. At Lake Henry, the advisory applies to walleye over 24 inches. Walleye in South Dakota can grow to more than 30 inches.

The guidance is based on mercury concentrations detected in fish tissue samples collected through the state's annual monitoring program.

"Our commitment to public health and safety drives the annual fish sampling program," said Department of Health Secretary Melissa Magstadt in a news release.

Mercury, a toxic heavy metal, ends up in fish across the United States largely due to atmospheric deposition. Coal-fired power plants release mercury into the air before it settles into lakes and rivers. Bacteria convert it into methylmercury and fish absorb it.

Fish consumption advisories are not enforceable bans but are issued to help people make informed choices to reduce health risks.

"We encourage everyone to check the DOH website for the latest advisories and take necessary precautions when enjoying locally caught fish," Magstadt said.

Fish consumption advisories

In addition to Dry Lake #1 and Lake Henry, these lakes are on the state's fish consumption advisory list: Bitter Lake: Limit consumption of northern pike (over 30") and any size walleye, particularly for children under age 7 and women who are pregnant, might become pregnant, or are breastfeeding.

Coal Springs Reservoir: Limit consumption of northern pike (over 25"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Cottonwood Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 21"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Dry Lake Number 2: Limit consumption of walleye (over 22"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Elm Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 25"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Hazeldon Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 21"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Horseshoe Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Kiesz Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 16"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Lake Hurley: Limit consumption of Largemouth Bass (over 18"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Lake Isabel: Limit consumption of northern pike (over 25") and Largemouth Bass (over 17"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Lake Minnewasta: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Lardy Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Little Moreau Lake: Limit consumption of northern pike (over 26"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Long Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 17"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

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Lynn Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 25"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.
Middle Lynn Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

New Wall Lake: Limit consumption of black and white crappie (over 13") and Largemouth Bass (over 16"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Newell Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18") and northern pike (over 18"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

North Buffalo Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 21"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

North Island Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18") and Smallmouth Bass (over 19"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Opitz Lake: Limit consumption of northern pike (over 26"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Pickerel Lake: Limit consumption of white bass (over 16"), particularly for children under age 7 and women who are pregnant, might become pregnant, or are breastfeeding.

Pudwell Dam: Limit consumption of walleye (over 18") and Black Crappie (over 12"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Reid Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 23") and northern pike (over 32"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Roosevelt Lake: Limit consumption of largemouth bass (over 18") and northern pike (over 24"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Scott Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 25"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

South Buffalo Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 21"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Swan Lake: Limit consumption of walleye (over 21"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Twin Lakes (Minnehaha County): Limit consumption of any size walleye, particularly for children under age 7 and women who are pregnant, might become pregnant, or are breastfeeding. Walleye tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Twin Lakes (Brookings/Kingsbury counties): Limit consumption of walleye (over 18") and northern pike (over 19"). These tested above recommended limits for mercury.

Source: South Dakota Department of Health

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Noem's DHS offers \$1,000 to immigrants without legal status who self-deport

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - MAY 5, 2025 2:14 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced Monday that the agency will provide \$1,000 in what it called "travel assistance" to people in the United States without permanent legal status if they self-deport.

It's the latest attempt by DHS to try to meet the Trump administration's goal of removing 1 million migrants without permanent legal status from the country. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem touted the option as cost-effective.

"If you are here illegally, self-deportation is the best, safest and most cost-effective way to leave the

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United States to avoid arrest," Noem said in a statement. "This is the safest option for our law enforcement, aliens and is a 70% savings for US taxpayers."

It's unclear from which part of the DHS budget the funding for the travel assistance is coming, as it would roughly cost \$1 billion to reimburse up to \$1,000 to meet the goal of removing 1 million people.

DHS did not respond to States Newsroom's request for comment.

President Donald Trump gave his support for the move Monday afternoon, according to White House pool reports.

"We're going to get them a beautiful flight back to where they came from," the president said.

Self-deportation would be facilitated by the CBP Home app, which was used by the Biden administration to allow asylum seekers to make appointments with U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The payment would apparently not be made in advance. DHS said that once those who use the app to self deport arrive in their home country, they will receive a travel stipend of \$1,000.

According to DHS, the Trump administration has deported 152,000 people since taking office in January. The Biden administration last year deported 195,000 people from February to April, according to DHS data.

DHS said already one migrant has used the program to book a flight from Chicago to Honduras.

"Additional tickets have already been booked for this week and the following week," the agency said in a statement.

The Trump administration has rolled out several programs to facilitate mass self-deportations, such as a registry to require immigrants in the country without legal authorization to register with the federal government.

Immigrants who don't register with the federal government could face steep fines and a potential prison sentence.

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

SD public broadcasting warns of local impact from Trump's attempt to cut national funding

BY: TODD EPP, NORTHERN PLAINS NEWS LLC - MAY 5, 2025 8:48 AM

South Dakota Public Broadcasting faces a new funding threat after President Donald Trump signed an executive order recently ending federal support for NPR, PBS and their affiliate stations, including SDPB.

The order directs the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to halt all direct and indirect funding to those networks by June 30.

The Trump administration said the action was necessary to ensure that taxpayer dollars no longer support what it calls "blatantly biased and partisan programming." According to the executive order posted on the White House website, the administration cited segments on "diet culture," "queer ducks," and reparations, along with NPR's alleged refusal to report on Hunter Biden's laptop, as examples of editorial bias. The order stated the move is part of "restoring trust in government-funded institutions."

In South Dakota, Friends of SDPB issued an email appeal warning the cuts could affect local journalism, infrastructure and access to national programming. "This would have a significant impact on our airwaves," the email said. "Locally in South Dakota we use these dollars to pay to produce local programming, our national programming bill, and some infrastructure."

Patricia Harrison, president and CEO of the CPB, responded in a statement distributed by the Friends of SDPB: "CPB is not a federal executive agency subject to the President's authority. Congress directly authorized and funded CPB to be a private nonprofit corporation wholly independent of the federal government." Harrison cited 47 U.S.C. § 398(c), which prohibits federal officials from exercising control over public broadcasting.

PBS President and CEO Paula Kerger also responded in a national press release, calling the executive

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order “blatantly unlawful.” She said PBS would “vigorously defend its independence and mission to serve all Americans, especially those in rural and underserved areas.”

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting receives approximately \$525 million annually through congressional appropriations. That funding supports local stations across the country, especially in states like South Dakota, where commercial media is limited. SDPB leaders warn that losing CPB support could reduce production of shows like “South Dakota Focus,” delay infrastructure upgrades and limit emergency broadcasts in rural areas.

Legal scholars and CPB officials say the order will likely face court challenges. According to The New Yorker, CPB has already sued the administration over attempts to remove three of its five board members — a move that would deprive the board of a quorum and halt operations.

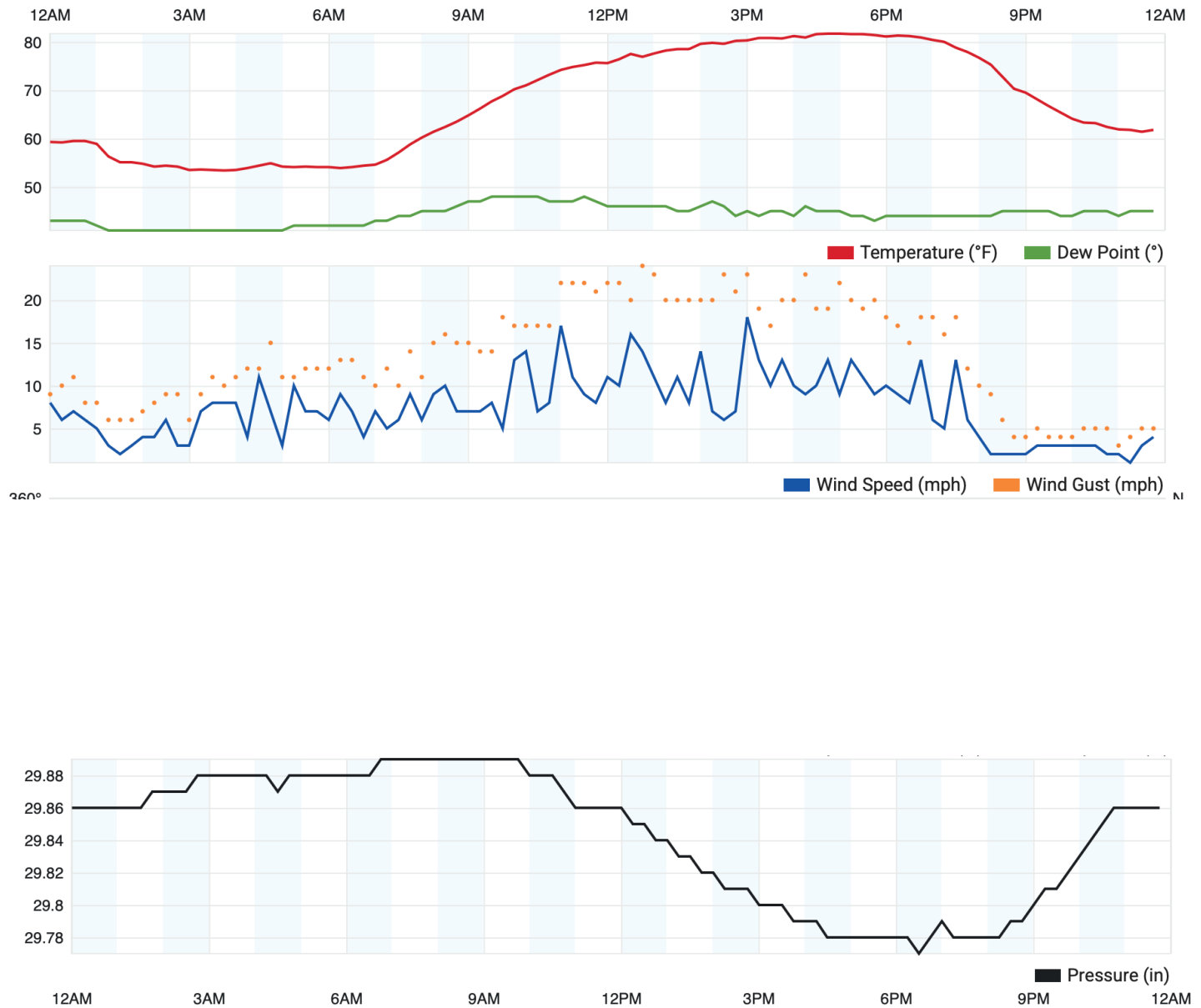
Friends of SDPB is urging listeners to contact South Dakota’s congressional delegation — U.S. Sens. John Thune and Mike Rounds, and Rep. Dusty Johnson — to preserve CPB funding.

Todd Epp is a mostly retired journalist and lawyer from Harrisburg, South Dakota. He is the publisher and editor of Northern Plains News LLC, an independent news organization. He has worked in both commercial and public broadcasting in South Dakota and Kansas.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



High: 74 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 44 °F

Partly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 72 °F

Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 45 °F

Mostly Clear

Thursday



High: 80 °F

Sunny



Warm Weather Continues

May 6, 2025
2:55 AM

This Week:

- Mainly dry
- Highs in the 70s to 80s through Saturday (10-15 degrees above average)
- Approaching 90 Sunday and Monday (15-20 degrees above average)

Maximum Temperature Forecast (°F)

	5/6 Tue	5/7 Wed	5/8 Thu	5/9 Fri	5/10 Sat	5/11 Sun	5/12 Mon
McIntosh	63	68	77	77	78	86	86
Eagle Butte	67	70	77	79	78	85	87
Murdo	73	72	77	81	80	86	89
Mobridge	72	74	81	82	81	88	89
Pierre	77	76	81	84	82	89	91
Gettysburg	74	72	78	81	79	86	87
Kennebec	79	75	79	83	81	87	88
Eureka	71	71	80	82	78	87	88
Chamberlain	81	78	79	84	80	87	84
Miller	77	73	78	83	80	87	87
Ellendale	71	71	80	83	78	87	87
Redfield	78	75	80	84	81	88	89
Aberdeen	74	73	80	84	80	88	88
Huron	83	78	79	85	80	86	87
Britton	72	71	77	82	77	86	86
Clark	78	71	75	81	77	84	84
Webster	74	69	75	79	75	83	83
Watertown	79	71	76	81	78	86	85
Sisseton	74	71	76	82	77	87	86
Brookings	80	73	74	81	77	83	84
Milbank	80	72	77	84	78	87	86
Wheaton	77	72	76	84	78	87	87



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

This week will be dry with highs in the 70s to 80s (this is 10 to 15 degrees above average). Looking at highs in the 80s to around 90 for the end of the weekend and start of next week. Lows through the week will be in the 40s to low 50s.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 4:45 PM

Low Temp: 53 °F at 3:36 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 2:03 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 36 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 93 in 2016

Record Low: 23 in 1931

Average High: 67

Average Low: 40

Average Precip in May.: .65

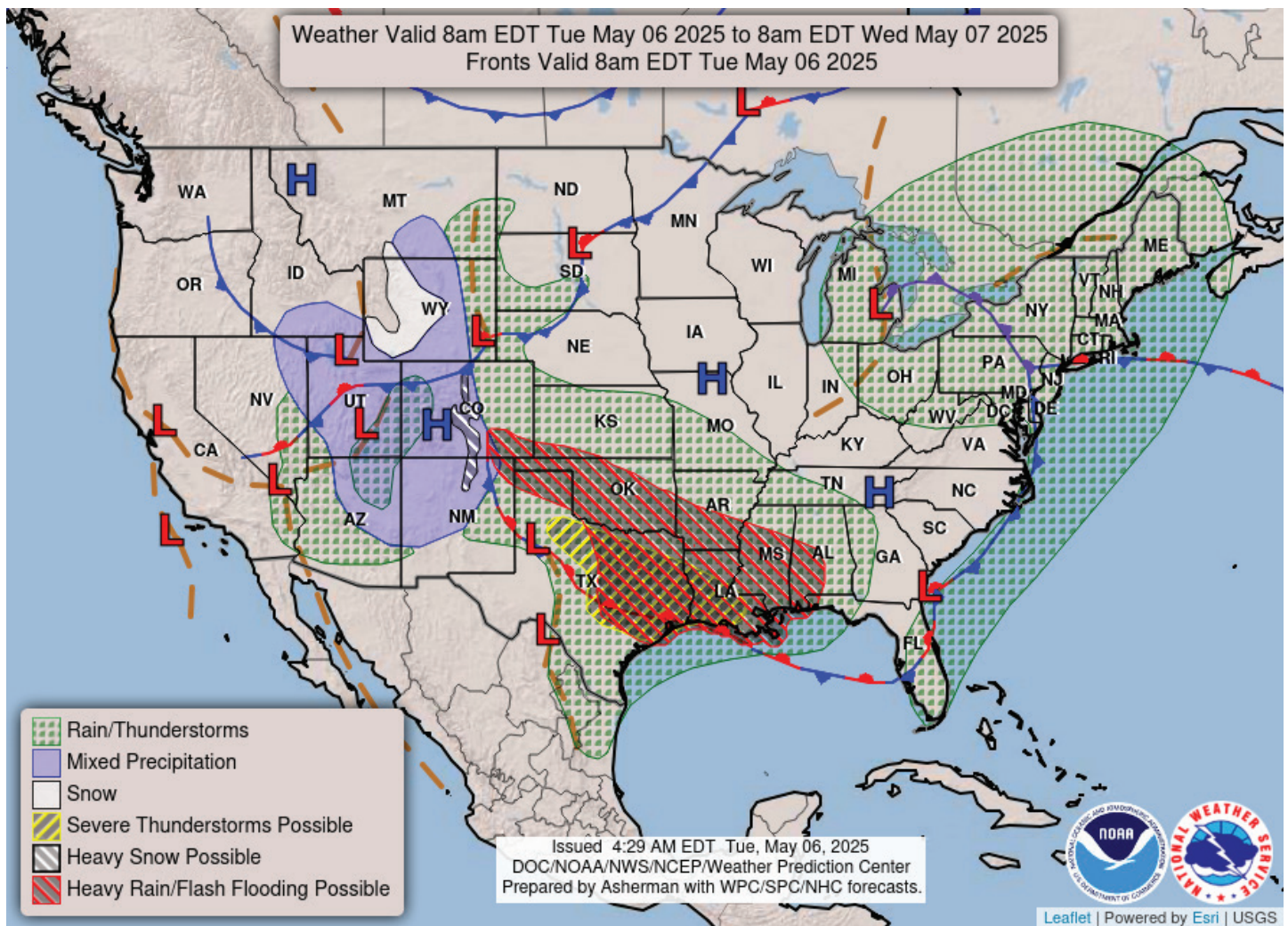
Precip to date in May.: 0.30

Average Precip to date: 4.62

Precip Year to Date: 2.93

Sunset Tonight: 8:47:09 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:09:27 am



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Today in Weather History

May 6th, 1988: High winds produced blowing dust, reducing visibility to less than one-half mile in north-eastern South Dakota. Wind gusts of 62 mph were reported at Aberdeen. A small building was destroyed in Gettysburg, and a building was damaged near Timber Lake. Winds also blew over a tractor-trailer, injuring a man in Okaton.

May 6th, 1999: High winds of 35 to 50 mph, gusting to over 60 mph, blew across central and north central South Dakota from the early morning to the late evening hours, causing some damage. In Pierre, the high winds blew a large tree down and tore loose a piece of the sheet metal cornice atop a downtown building. The high winds knocked the centerfield lights to the ground at the Legion Memorial Park in Mobridge. In Jones County, a semi-tractor trailer was blown over and damaged. A fishing tournament at Lake Oahe had to be postponed due to the high winds.

1933 - Charleston, SC, was deluged with 10.57 inches of rain, an all-time 24 hour record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1975 - A massive tornado hit Omaha, NE, killing three persons, injuring 133 others, and causing 150 million dollars damage. The tornado struck during the late afternoon moving northeastward through the industrial and residential areas of west central Omaha, and lifting over the northern section of the city. The twister, which cut a swath ten miles long and as much as a quarter of a mile wide, was the mostly costly in U.S. history up til that time. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Eighteen cities in California and Oregon reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 91 degrees at Portland OR, 101 degrees at Medford OR, and 104 degrees at Sacramento CA, were the warmest of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A major storm brought high winds to the western half of the country. A wind gust of 74 mph at Pueblo CO broke their May record established just four days earlier, and winds in the Arapahoe Ski Basin area of Colorado reached 85 mph. In North Dakota, the high winds reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust closing many roads. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Sixteen cities in the north central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Morning lows of 17 at Bismarck ND and 26 at Minneapolis MN were the coldest of record for so late in the season. A reading of 43 degrees at the start of the Kentucky Derby was the coldest in 115 years of records. Light snow was reported in the Upper Midwest, with an inch reported at Chicago IL. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Snow and high winds prevailed behind a Pacific cold front crossing the northwestern U.S. Wind gusts above 50 mph were reported in southeastern Idaho, and heavy snow blanketed the Cascade Mountains of Washington State, with twelve inches reported at Stampede Pass. (The National Weather Summary)



THE IMPORTANCE OF WISDOM

Imagine seeds with no soil. Or, fish without water. A body with no bones. The sun with no orbit. Lungs without oxygen.

"What insanity!" would be a natural response.

It's not the way things are. They fall into place naturally:

Soil before seeds

Water before fish

Bones to support flesh

A path for the sun to follow

Oxygen to fill lungs

They reflect planning—

And planning is a result of wisdom.

The story of creation in Scripture reflects wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.

The universe unveils a carefully designed plan: controlled, orderly, predictable, and dependable.

Nothing is random.

Yes, we face "unexpected events," but they pass. Life continues.

Everywhere we look, we see God's wisdom.

And when you think about it... wisdom existed before creation.

Wisdom is something God is.

It's what guided creation.

It's what sustains everything now.

And it's what will guide and guard you—if you live by His Word.

It's almost unbelievable that the Creator of all things would even consider sharing His wisdom with us.

But He does.

And He will—if we live in obedience and trust.

Prayer:

Lord, how marvelous are Your ways.

Open our hearts to see "what can be" if we trust in Your wisdom. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's verse: "By wisdom the Lord founded the earth; by understanding he created the heavens. By his knowledge the deep fountains of the earth burst forth, and the dew settles beneath the night sky." Proverbs 3:19-20

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.02.25

14 37 40 41 68 2

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$90,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 30 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

5 13 20 22 28 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$32,800,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 45 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

3 26 30 32 39 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.03.25

4 9 13 20 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$143,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

21 26 28 62 63 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.05.25

16 34 40 45 66 19

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$65,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 47 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

New salmonella outbreak is linked to backyard poultry, CDC says

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A new salmonella outbreak linked to backyard poultry has sickened at least seven people in six states, health officials said Monday.

Two cases were identified in Missouri, and one each in Florida, Illinois, South Dakota, Utah and Wisconsin, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

People got sick in February and March of this year, the CDC said. They all had the same strain of salmonella — a version that has been traced to hatcheries in the past. The investigation is continuing, health officials said.

Salmonella bacteria cause about 1.35 million infections in the United States every year, and recent outbreaks have been tied to sources such as cucumbers, eggs, unpasteurized milk, fresh basil, geckos and pet bearded dragons.

But one concern is that chickens and other backyard poultry can carry salmonella bacteria even if they look healthy and clean. A backyard poultry-associated outbreak that ended last year was tied to 470 cases spread across 48 states, including one death.

Friedrich Merz's bid to become Germany's 10th chancellor fails in parliament. It's a historic first

By STEFANIE DAZIO and KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — In a historic first, conservative leader Friedrich Merz's bid to become Germany's 10th chancellor since World War II failed by six votes in parliament on Tuesday, a stunning defeat as he had been widely expected to win smoothly.

A candidate for chancellor has never failed to win on the first ballot since the end of the war. Merz needed a majority of 316 out of 630 votes. He only received 310 votes — well short of the 328 seats held by his coalition.

Because the vote was held by secret ballot, it was not immediately clear — and might never be known — who had defected from Merz's camp.

Merz's coalition is led by his center-right Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union. They are joined by the center-left Social Democrats, outgoing Chancellor Olaf Scholz's party. The parties were now to regroup to discuss the next step but it was also unclear how long the process could take.

Merz is seeking to take the helm of the 27-nation European Union's most populous member after Scholz's government collapsed last year and a national election was held in February. Scholz, despite his official farewell on Monday, remains in a caretaker role until a new chancellor takes over.

Germany has the continent's biggest economy and serves as a diplomatic heavyweight. The new chancellor's portfolio would include the war in Ukraine and the Trump administration's trade policy on top of domestic issues, such as Germany's stagnant economy and the rise of a far-right, anti-immigrant party.

What's next?

The lower house of parliament — called the Bundestag — has 14 days to elect a candidate with an absolute majority. Merz can run again, but other lawmakers can also throw their hat in the ring. There is no limit to the number of votes that can be held within the two-week period.

If Merz or any other candidate fails to get that majority during the period of 14 days, the constitution allows for the president to appoint the candidate who wins the most votes as chancellor, or to dissolve the Bundestag and hold a new national election.

Volker Resing, who wrote the recent biography "Friedrich Merz: His Path to Power," expressed surprise

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at the turn of events, something he said that "has never happened before" in post-war Germany.

"It shows how fragile the coalition's situation is and that some lawmakers are prepared to spread uncertainty — that's a warning signal," Resing told The Associated Press after the vote.

Resing said that if Merz gets elected in the second round, then everything will be fine and people may soon forget about this hiccup. But "for now everything is wide open," he added.

80th anniversary of World War II

Tuesday's vote was held on the eve of the 80th anniversary of Germany's unconditional surrender in World War II. The ballots are secret and cast in the restored Reichstag, where graffiti left by Soviet troops has been preserved at several locations in the building.

The shadow of the war in Ukraine also loomed over Tuesday's vote. Germany is the second-biggest supplier of military aid to Ukraine, after the United States.

Overall, Germany is the fourth largest defense spender in the world, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which studies trends in global military expenditures. Only the U.S., China and Russia are ahead of it.

Germany rose to that rank thanks to an investment of 100 billion euros (\$107 billion) for its armed forces, a measure passed by lawmakers in 2022.

The country's defense spending rose again earlier this year, when parliament loosened the nation's strict debt rules for higher defense spending. It's a move that's been closely watched by the rest of Europe as the Trump administration has threatened to pull back from its security support on the continent.

Besides ramping up defense spending, Merz's coalition has pledged to spur economic growth, take a tougher approach to migration and catch up on long-neglected modernization..

AfD's rise

Merz's failure in the voting adds to the challenges ahead — whoever is elected chancellor will face questions about the future of the far-right, anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany party, also known as AfD.

Mainstream German political parties refuse to work with AfD, citing the so-called "firewall" they've upheld against cooperating with far-right parties since the end of the war.

Alice Weidel, AfD's co-leader and a candidate for chancellor during the February elections, wrote that Merz' failure to get elected in the first round shows "what a weak foundation the small coalition of the CDU/CSU and the SPD, which was voted out by the people, is built on."

The AfD is the biggest opposition party in Germany's new parliament.

Last week, the German domestic intelligence service said it has classified AfD — which placed second in national elections in February — as a "right-wing extremist" organization, making it subject to greater and broader surveillance.

Germany's Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution described the party as a threat to the country's democratic order, saying it "disregards human dignity" — in particular by what it called "ongoing agitation" against refugees and migrants.

The federal office's decision prompted blowback from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and U.S. Vice President JD Vance over the weekend. Germany's Foreign Ministry hit back at Rubio after he called on the country to undo the classification.

The domestic intelligence service's measure does not amount to a ban of the party, which can only take place through a request by either of parliament's two chambers or the federal government through the Federal Constitutional Court.

Merz has not commented publicly on the intelligence service's decision.

World shares mostly slip after Wall St breaks its winning streak

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Shares opened mostly lower in Europe on Tuesday after a mixed session in Asia, where Chinese markets advanced as they reopened after "Golden Week" holidays.

Germany's DAX fell 1.2% to 23,076.96, while the CAC 40 in Paris lost 0.6% to 7,682.91. Britain's FTSE

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100 was unchanged at 8,596.40.

The future for the S&P 500 lost 0.7% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was 0.5% lower as investors watched to see what U.S. President Donald Trump does with his tariff policies.

When asked at a routine briefing about comments Trump's comments on the NBC TV network that he won't cancel tariffs on China to pave the way for trade talks, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson reiterated Beijing's stance that the U.S. side "should stop threatening and pressuring and engage in dialogue with China on the basis of equality, respect, and mutual benefit."

"If they want to fight, we will fight to the end; if they want to talk, the door is open," Lin Jian said.

Late last week, China's Commerce Ministry said it was evaluating various U.S. missives about holding talks. Still, Chinese markets advanced after reopening from "Golden Week" holidays. The Shanghai Composite index added 1% to 3,311.89, while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong was up 0.7% at 22,651.65.

A monthly survey measuring future activity in China's services sector fell to its lowest level ever, excluding the pandemic, in a further sign the escalation of U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war is hitting the world's second-largest economy.

A drastic increase in tariffs on U.S. imports of Chinese products, to 145%, has caused a sharp drop in shipping and other logistics.

"Overall optimism among Chinese firms weakened to the lowest level since this series began in April 2012, resulting in further job cuts in April," said the report by Caixin, a financial media group.

However, reports showed a sharp increase in tourism revenues during the holidays that ended Monday, suggesting robust domestic demand, economists said.

Elsewhere in Asia, Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.2% to 8,148.40.

India's Sensex fell 0.2%, while Taiwan's Taiex slipped less than 0.1%. In Indonesia, the JSX was up 1%.

Oil prices gained more than \$1 early Tuesday, bouncing back from a 4-year low following a decision by the OPEC+ group of oil producing nations to raise their output by 411,000 barrels per day as of June 1.

U.S. benchmark crude oil picked up \$1.10 to \$58.23 per barrel, while Brent crude, the international standard, surged \$1.15 to \$61.38 per barrel.

On Monday, the S&P 500 fell 0.6% to 5,650.38, ending a nine-day winning streak, its longest since 2004. The Dow Jones Industrial Average declined 0.2% and the Nasdaq composite shed 0.7%.

Berkshire Hathaway fell 5.1% after legendary investor Warren Buffett announced he would step down as its CEO by the end of the year after six decades at the helm. Buffett will still be its board chairman.

Markets have been absorbing the shock of tariffs and the growing trade war, which has reignited concerns about inflation.

Such issues will overshadow the Federal Reserve's meeting on Wednesday, when it is expected to hold its benchmark interest rate steady. The Fed cut the rate three times in 2024 before taking a breather to watch what happens with inflation, which has been hovering just above the Fed's target rate of 2%.

While still resilient, the U.S. economy shrank 0.3% in the first quarter, the first drop in three years.

Ford Motor Co. said Monday it expects to take a \$1.5 billion hit to its operating profit from tariffs this year. Its shares fell 2.5% in after hours trading.

The latest salvo in the trade war from Trump came Sunday night in a post on his Truth Social platform. He said he has authorized a 100% tariff on movies that are produced outside of the U.S. The impact is unclear, as it is common for films to include production at multiple locations around the world.

Also early Tuesday, the yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.36% from 4.35% late Monday.

The dollar fell to 142.96 Japanese yen from 143.70 yen. The euro was at \$1.1339, up from \$1.1317.

Flight operations at 4 Moscow airports temporarily suspended due to Ukrainian drone attack

By The Associated Press undefined

Russian forces intercepted more than 100 Ukrainian drones fired at almost a dozen regions of Russia, the Defense Ministry in Moscow said Tuesday, in an attack that forced all four airports around Moscow

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to temporarily suspend flights.

Nine other regional Russian airports also temporarily stopped operating as drones struck areas along the border with Ukraine and deeper inside Russia, according to Russia's civil aviation agency, Rosaviatsia, and the Defense Ministry. It was the second straight night that the Moscow region reportedly was targeted.

Two people were injured in the Kursk region, according to local Gov. Alexander Khinshtein, and some damage was reported in the Voronezh region.

The Russian reports couldn't be independently verified.

The drone assault comes two days ahead of a unilateral 72-hour ceasefire in the more than three-year war announced by President Vladimir Putin to coincide with celebrations in Moscow marking Victory Day in World War II.

The day celebrating Moscow's defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 is Russia's biggest secular holiday when foreign dignitaries will gather in the Russian capital.

Meanwhile, Russian forces overnight fired at least 20 Shahed drones at Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city near the border with Russia, injuring four people, regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov wrote on Telegram.

The drones started a fire at the biggest market in Kharkiv, Barabashovo, destroying and damaging around 100 market stalls, he said.

Seven more civilians were injured elsewhere in the Kharkiv region by Russian glide bombs and drones, Syniehubov said.

Putin last week declared a brief unilateral truce "on humanitarian grounds" from May 8. Ukraine has called for a longer ceasefire.

Russia has effectively rejected a U.S. proposal for an immediate and full 30-day halt in the fighting by insisting on far-reaching conditions. Ukraine has accepted it the proposal, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says.

U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday at the White House that the brief truce "doesn't sound like much, but it's ... a lot if you knew where we started from."

Foreign leaders who have confirmed their attendance at the Victory Day festivities in Moscow include China's President Xi Jinping, described by Putin as "our main guest."

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, another top ally whom Putin has courted, had been expected in Moscow but he canceled his trip amid tensions with Pakistan.

Other guests include Slovakia's populist Prime Minister Robert Fico, who has openly challenged the European Union's policies over Ukraine. Serbia's President Aleksandar Vucic also has accepted an invitation, his first trip to Russia since the invasion, but his attendance was uncertain after he became ill.

Bangladesh's ex-premier Khaleda Zia returns, adding pressure for elections

By JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — Bangladesh's ailing former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia returned to the country from London on Tuesday after four months of medical treatment, adding to pressure for its interim leaders to hold elections.

The South Asian country has been under a government led by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus since former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was ousted in a students-led mass uprising in August last year.

Zia, Hasina's archrival, and her Bangladesh Nationalist Party have been pushing Yunus' government to hold a national election in December to return the country to democratic rule.

Under Hasina, many opposition political parties including Zia's BNP had either boycotted the polls or accused the authorities of rigging them. Many welcomed Hasina's overthrow as a chance to return to democratic elections, but suspicion and uncertainty have surfaced in recent months about the new government's commitment to hold elections soon. It has said the next election will be held in either December or by June next year, depending on the extent of reforms in various sectors.

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Her elder son, Tarique Rahman, leads the party as acting chief from exile in London.

After Zia landed at 10:43 a.m., she was greeted by senior party leaders at Dhaka's main airport. Zia, sitting in a wheelchair, smiled as she repeatedly raised her right hand to receive greetings.

Crowds gathered outside Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to welcome the returning leader, amid tight security. Thousands of supporters, many carrying Bangladesh and BNP flags, waited along about a 9-kilometer stretch of road leading to her house in Dhaka's upscale Gulshan area.

Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, Zia arrived on a special air ambulance arranged by Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, who also arranged her transport to London in January. Zia suffers from various serious health conditions and she has not attended any public gatherings.

Zia's physical presence in the country has huge symbolic value for her party while Hasina is in exile in India.

Ahead of her arrival, BNP secretary-general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said Tuesday her return will help Bangladesh restore the democratic process.

"This is a joyous moment for us and the nation. At this crucial time for democracy, her presence marks a significant day for the country. We believe that Khaleda Zia's return will facilitate the path to democratic transition," Fakhrul told reporters.

Zia and Hasina have alternately ruled the country as prime ministers since 1991 when the country returned to a democracy after the ouster of authoritarian President H.M. Ershad.

Zia served the country as prime minister three times, twice for full five-year terms and once for just a few months.

During Hasina's 15 years in power, Zia was tried and jailed for 17 years in two corruption cases. Her party said the charges against Zia were politically motivated, an allegation Hasina's government denied. Later, Zia was released from jail on condition that she not leave the country.

Zia is the widow of former military chief-turned-president Ziaur Rahman, who was assassinated in 1981. Hasina is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led Bangladesh's independence struggle against Pakistan in 1971.

80 years after World War II, Germany is still painstakingly searching for its fallen soldiers

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER and VANESSA GERA Associated Press

HALBE, Germany (AP) — In a forest near Berlin, the remains of 107 fallen Wehrmacht soldiers were ceremoniously interred last week. High school students placed white gerbera daisies on small black coffins, and German soldiers lowered them respectfully into a large, freshly dug grave as a military band played a solemn tune.

Hundreds of villagers and relatives of the fallen watched silently, some wiping tears off their cheeks, as the soldiers who died in one of the last large World War II battles fighting for Adolf Hitler's army got their final resting place.

The gestures of remembrance are part of a long, complicated — and sometimes controversial — effort to bring the German dead to rest, 80 years after a war that Nazi Germany started.

It's still not the end — much work remains to identify the dead and notify any surviving family members.

Across Europe, in forests, fields and beneath old farmland, the remains of German soldiers are still being found, exhumed and reburied by teams from a nonprofit organization called the Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge, or German War Graves Commission, which has been doing this work for decades.

A search for the dead

As the world pauses this week to mark the 80th anniversary of the war's end, the continued search for soldiers' remains is a reminder that the conflict's legacy is not only historical or political, but also physical and unfinished, still unfolding across Europe.

"It's very, very important that this is still being done," said Martina Seiger, 57, whose grandfather's bones

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were found and buried a few years ago.

Seiger and her family make a point of attending the burials of other soldiers who died in the battle of Halbe in 1945. It's as close as they can get to some kind of funeral for her grandfather, Werner Novak.

Novak was 21 when he was killed. He had already been injured and sent back from the front to Berlin. He was planning to marry his pregnant fiancée and hoped for a more peaceful future, Seiger said.

Instead, as the Soviet's Red Army was approaching Berlin in the last weeks of war, he was back into battle. Lost in the chaos of war

The process of finding and identifying the remains is slow — many of the missing were buried hastily during retreat or combat, with no markers or records. Some sites are remembered only vaguely, passed down through local knowledge.

Others are beyond reach, beneath modern infrastructure or the front line in eastern Ukraine.

Still, the Volksbund works on, searching across Europe's old battlefields, following tips, checking old military maps and missing soldiers lists. The work continues even in western Ukraine, away from the raging fighting in the country's east.

When possible, the organization brings the remains to cemeteries maintained specifically for German soldiers who died abroad. It says its goal is humanistic: to offer a dignified burial to every person who died in the war, regardless of the role they played. That includes soldiers who served in a military responsible for some of the worst atrocities of the 20th century.

The Volksbund does not frame its mission as one of honoring the fallen, but of identifying them and ensuring they are not left to vanish into the earth, without a name.

A missing father

Wolfgang Bartsch, 83, stood on a small hill near the open graves as the soldiers' bones were laid to rest.

Bartsch has never been able to bury his own father, who died in January 1942 fighting on the front in Russia. He was just three weeks old. Days earlier his mother was killed in an Allied bomb raid on Berlin. He was raised by his grandmother but always felt the pain of growing up without parents.

"My dad is buried somewhere in a nameless grave in Oryol in Russia," he said. "The Volksbund will never be able to recover his bones because I know that lots of settlements were built on top of those graves."

By the Volksbund's estimate, more than 2 million German soldiers remain unaccounted for. Over the past 30 years, since gaining access to former Eastern Bloc territories, the Volksbund has recovered and reburied the remains of a million people.

Work that can be controversial

In some parts of Europe, resentment lingers toward anything perceived as rehabilitating the Nazi military past. But many accept that efforts to find the dead could help close this chapter of history.

"I don't want to rule out the possibility that we have a large number of war criminals in our war graves. We also know that some of them have even been proven to have committed the most serious war crimes," said Dirk Backen, the secretary general of the Volksbund.

"Behind every dead person is a human destiny and that is our main focus," he said. "When you stand in front of the grave of an 18-year-old young Wehrmacht soldier, you naturally ask yourself whether he may have had other plans in life and a different dream than to give his life at the age of 18 for a cause that was also criminal."

Weeks before the burial in Halbe, an exhumation took place in the Polish city of Ostrołęka, where Volksbund employees and local Polish archaeologists dug for the remains of German soldiers in a Polish cemetery wherever it would not involve disturbing a marked grave.

The skeletons were documented that day, March 19, and the bones of each person were sealed into a black bag. Dog tags were saved in the hope the remains can one day be identified. The group plans to rebury them later this year at a military ceremony in Poland.

They deserve to be buried

Łukasz Karol, a Polish archaeologist working on the exhumation, acknowledges having had ethical concerns as he considered the job of unearthing soldiers of an army that invaded Poland and killed some 6 million Polish citizens over the course of the war.

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But he said the work has moral significance and uncovers important scientific information.

"These are also people and they also deserve a burial," Karol said.

Unlike in the immediate postwar years, few families today are actively searching for lost relatives. In many cases, the emotional and generational distance is too great; there is no one left to remember the missing, or the need for closure has faded with time.

For Bartsch, the 83-year-old who attended the burial in Halbe, there is no closure.

"I still can't find peace when I think that so many people are still buried here in the ground without a proper funeral," he said. "My heart would rejoice if only I could bury my father too, but that won't happen."

Beyond a possible Asian or African pope, what are the priorities of the cardinals in the conclave?

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Cardinals electing a new pope have some fundamental questions to weigh, beyond whether to give the Catholic Church its first Asian or African pontiff, or a conservative or progressive.

Although they come from 70 different countries, the 133 cardinals seem fundamentally united in finding a pope who will be able to make the 2,000-year-old church credible and relevant today, especially to young people.

It's a tall task, given the sexual abuse and financial scandals that have harmed the church's reputation and the secularizing trends in many parts of the world that are turning people away from organized religion.

Add to that the Holy See's dire financial state and often dysfunctional bureaucracy, and the job of being pope in the 21st century seems almost impossible.

"We need a superman!" said Cardinal William Seng Chye Goh, the 67-year-old archbishop of Singapore.

The cardinals will begin trying to find him Wednesday afternoon, when those "princes of the church" walk solemnly into the Sistine Chapel to the meditative chant of the "Litany of the Saints." They'll take their oaths of secrecy under the daunting vision of heaven and hell in Michelangelo's "Last Judgement," hear a meditation from a senior cardinal, and then cast their first ballot.

Assuming no candidate secures the necessary two-thirds majority, or 89 votes, the cardinals will retire for the day and return on Thursday. They will have two ballots in the morning and then two in the afternoon, until a winner is found.

Asked what the priorities of the cardinal electors were, Goh told reporters this week that the No. 1 issue was that the new pope must be able to spread the Catholic faith and "make the church relevant in today's time. How to reach out to young people, how to show a face of love, joy and hope."

A pope for the future

But beyond that, there are some real-world geopolitical concerns to take into consideration. The Catholic Church is growing in Africa and Asia, both in numbers of baptized faithful and vocations to the priesthood and women's religious orders. It is shrinking in traditionally Catholic bastions of Europe, with empty churches and the faithful formally leaving the church in places like Germany, many citing the abuse scandals.

"Asia is ripe for evangelization and the harvest of vocations," said the Rev. Robert Reyes, who studied in the seminary with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, the Filipino prelate considered a contender to be the first Asian pope.

But should the pope necessarily reflect the new face of the Catholic Church, and inspire the faithful especially in the parts of the world where the momentum of growth is already under way? Does it even matter?

Pope Francis was the first Latin American pope, and the region still counts the majority of the world's Catholics.

Indian Cardinal Oswald Gracias, the retired archbishop of Mumbai, said the church needs to become more Asian, culturally and spiritually.

The "center of gravity of the world is shifting toward Asia," he said. "The Asian church has much to give to the world."

At 80, Gracias won't be participating in the conclave, but India has four cardinal-electors, and overall

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Asia counts 23, making it the second-biggest voting bloc after Europe, which has 53 (or likely 52, given that one is not expected to participate for health reasons).

One of the big geopolitical issues facing the cardinals is China and the plight of the estimated 12 million Chinese Catholics there.

Under Francis, the Vatican in 2018 inked a controversial agreement with Beijing governing the appointment of bishops, which many conservatives decried as a sellout of the underground Chinese Catholics who had remained loyal to Rome during decades of communist persecution. The Vatican has defended the accord as the best deal it could get, but it remains to be seen if Francis' successor will keep the policy.

The church in Africa

According to Vatican statistics, Catholics represent 3.3% of the population in Asia, but their numbers are growing, especially in terms of seminarians, as they are in Africa, where Catholics represent about 20% of the population. Catholics are 64% of the population in the Americas, 40% of Europe's population and 26% of Oceania's population, according to Vatican statistics from 2023, the last available year.

Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, the archbishop of Kinshasa, Congo, said he is in Rome to elect a pope for the world's 1.4 billion Catholics.

"I am not here for the Congo, I am not here for Africa, I am here for the universal church. That is our concern, the universal church," he told reporters. "When we are done, I will return to Kinshasa and I will put back on my archbishop of Kinshasa hat and the struggle continues."

Cardinal Jean-Paul Vesco, the chatty French-born archbishop of Algiers, Algeria, lamented last week that there hadn't been enough time for the cardinals to get to know one another, since many of them had never met before and hail from 70 countries in the most geographically diverse conclave in history.

By this week, however, he said that any number of candidates were possible.

"It is what I call an artichoke heart," he said. "Every day, I say to myself, 'Ah! Oh my God! There we have it!'"

The role of the Holy Spirit

For the cardinals, there is also the belief that they are guided by the Holy Spirit.

There is a famous quote attributed to then-Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger in 1997, in comments to a Bavarian television station. The future Pope Benedict XVI said the Holy Spirit acted like a good educator in a conclave, allowing cardinals to freely choose a pope without dictating the precise candidate.

"Probably the only assurance he offers is that the thing cannot be totally ruined," Ratzinger reportedly said. "There are too many contrary instances of popes the Holy Spirit would obviously not have picked."

How a cooking contest brought diplomats and Zimbabweans together

By FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — In a world of trade wars, tariffs and tensions, foreign diplomats in Zimbabwe found a more lighthearted way to vie for supremacy: a cooking contest.

Ambassadors swapped briefing notes for recipes in the quest to win the second annual #ambassadorscookoff challenge in the southern African country last month. Their task was to produce the most delicious-looking version of a favorite local village dish of chicken with rice in a peanut butter sauce. The public voted online after the diplomats posted photos of their finished meals.

"The atmosphere in international relations these days is a little bit tense," said France's ambassador to Zimbabwe and cook-off competitor Paul-Bertrand Baret. "We are human beings. As diplomats, we want also to have some fun and to relax."

Baret, in a blow for his food-famous nation, didn't win.

The crown went instead to Dutch Ambassador Margret Verwijk. Other contestants included ambassadors from Canada, the U.K., Australia, Turkey and "flavor master" Murad Baseer, the ambassador of Pakistan, whose meal took third place.

The dish the ambassadors were judged on has its own story.

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It's made with what are known as "road runner" chickens — hardy free-range birds whose tough, flavorful meat is deemed by many to be tastier than that of commercially bred chickens. Known for scavenging and surviving in harsh rural conditions, the chickens are a staple of Zimbabwe village cuisine and often command high prices in urban restaurants.

The cookoff organized by Zimbabwe's popular online foodie community TeamFulo encouraged the foreign envoys to do more than just cook a good meal.

They visited rural and township markets to source their ingredients, learned local cooking practices and immersed themselves in Zimbabwean food, humor and culture. From bargaining at the markets in the local Shona language to cooking on open fires with clay or iron pots, and even tossing in some Zimbabwean slang for flair, the contestants dived in and posted their progress on social media.

For Zimbabweans following online, it provided a rare chance to see foreign diplomats embrace local life with seemingly genuine interest and humility. Followers cheered the ambassadors on and assigned them Shona totems — symbols of kinship and respect.

Australian Ambassador Minoli Perera, whose dish took second place, knelt on a reed mat, blowing into a fire. She stirred a huge iron pot similar to those usually used for big rural feasts. Fans dubbed her "Chihera," a revered totem associated with a lineage of assertive, independent women.

One gushed: "Ambassador, you are truly a daughter-in-law of Africa. I love it, I love it!"

British Ambassador Pete Vowles was a fan favorite. Video of him roasting and pounding peanuts and preparing other ingredients was accompanied by his best Shona commentary for each step. His experience riding home in a packed public minibus while cradling a live road runner chicken like a trophy was a hilarious highlight.

"Send us videos when you cook!" women shouted to him at the market. He even prompted nostalgic comments from online followers like "now you make me miss my rural home!"

Vowles won the Choice Award, given to the ambassador who best connected with the public online and in person.

"You reminded us of the richness in our culinary traditions. You truly brought the spirit of community to life," said TeamFulo. Fulo is local slang for food.

Barets said his social media videos showing him chasing a chicken, shopping at a dusty market and demonstrating his kitchen skills gained attention and boosted interest in more formal posts on France's diplomatic programs in Zimbabwe, which is enjoying improved relations with the United States and European Union following two decades of sanctions that are gradually being removed.

The cookoff provided a unique avenue to connect with ordinary Zimbabweans and "convince them we are human beings and not statutes with neck ties," Barets said.

What's in Trump's big bill? Money for migrant clampdown but tax breaks and program cuts hit 'bumps'

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress is deep into drafting President Donald Trump's big bill of tax breaks, spending cuts and beefed-up funding to halt migrants, but it's "bumpy," one Republican chairman says, with much work ahead to meet House Speaker Mike Johnson's goal of passing the package out of his chamber by Memorial Day.

In fact, the tax cuts portion is still a work in progress. As are the reductions in Medicaid, food stamps and other mainstay government programs. Mostly, the Republicans, who have the majority in Congress, have made progress on parts that would increase spending, adding some \$350 billion to the Pentagon and Homeland Security, including money for the U.S.-Mexico border wall.

"There are some bumps in the road," Rep. Jason Smith of Missouri, the Republican chairman of the powerful Ways and Means tax-writing committee, acknowledged on "Fox News Sunday."

All told, some 11 committees in the House are compiling their bills, and about half have finished up. They

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are being approved at the committee level by Republicans, on party-line votes, with Democrats opposed.

But some of the most-watched committees — Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce and Agriculture — have yet to act. Johnson himself acknowledged on Monday that his Memorial Day deadline may slip, but vowed “our timetable is on pace.”

Once all the committees are done, the different pieces of legislation will be rolled together at the Budget Committee into what Trump calls “one big, beautiful bill.”

If the House can pass the package, it next would go to the Senate, which is drafting its own version, for a final product by July 4.

Democrats say they will fight what House party leader Hakeem Jeffries calls the “extreme Republican agenda.”

Here’s a look at what’s in and out, so far.

Funding for 1 million migrant deportations, 20,000 new officers and the border wall

Two of the committees handling immigration- and border security-related matters have wrapped up their legislation.

Central to the Homeland Security Committee’s bill is \$46.5 billion to revive construction of Trump’s wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, with some 700 miles of “primary” wall, 900 miles of river barriers and more.

It would provide \$4 billion to hire an additional 3,000 new Border Patrol agents as well as 5,000 new customs officers, and \$2.1 billion for signing and retention bonuses.

All told, the Homeland Security Committee approved \$69 billion in new spending.

At the same time, the Judiciary Committee, which handles interior immigration enforcement and legal proceedings, has also completed its \$110 billion bill.

It would impose a \$1,000 fee on migrants seeking asylum — something the nation has never done, putting it on par with few others, including Australia and Iran.

And there are more new fees proposed on various other legal paths to entry, including a \$3,500 fee for those sponsoring unaccompanied children to enter the U.S., a \$2,500 penalty if sponsors of unaccompanied children skip court appearances and a \$1,000 fee for individuals paroled into the U.S.

Overall, the plan is to remove 1 million immigrants annually and house 100,000 people in detention centers. It calls for 10,000 more Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and investigators.

More money for the Pentagon and Trump’s ‘Golden Dome’

The House Armed Services Committee was tasked with drafting legislation with \$100 billion in new spending. But they did that and more, passing a bill with \$150 billion for the Defense Department and national security.

Among the highlights, it would provide \$25 billion for Trump’s “Golden Dome for America,” a long-envisioned missile defense shield, \$21 billion to restock the nation’s ammunition arsenal, \$34 billion to expand the naval fleet with more shipbuilding and some \$5 billion for border security.

It also includes \$9 billion for servicemember quality of life-related issues, including housing, health care and special pay.

Overhaul of the student loan repayment plans

A wholesale revamping of the student loan program is the key to the Education and Workforce Committee’s legislation, with \$330 billion in budget cuts and savings.

The proposal would replace all existing student loan repayment plans with just two: a standard option with monthly payments spread out over 10 to 25 years depending on the amount borrowed, and a “repayment assistance” plan with monthly payments based on a borrower’s income.

The new income-based plan is generally less generous than those it would replace. Minimum payments for the lowest-income borrowers would be higher, and forgiveness would be provided after 30 years of payments instead of 20 or 25. The new repayment plans would take hold in July 2026.

Among other changes, the bill would repeal Biden-era regulations that made it easier for borrowers to get loans canceled if their colleges defrauded them or closed suddenly.

Federal employee pension cuts

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform targeted federal workers’ pensions for a

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projected \$50.9 billion in deficit savings over 10 years.

Most of the savings would come from requiring federal workers hired before 2014 to pay more into the retirement system. They would have to match the 4.4% salary rate paid by federal workers hired since 2014.

The committee also called for basing a retiree's annuity payment on their average top five earning years instead of the top three. And the committee's plan would eliminate a temporary, supplemental payment for newly retired federal workers who retire before they are eligible for Social Security.

Republicans argued that federal employee retirement benefits outpace those in the private sector. But critics, including Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, who voted against the committee's package, said changing a worker's pension during the middle of employment is wrong.

Democrats said the change would result in less take-home pay for many middle-class Americans in the federal workforce.

More drilling, mining on public lands

The House Natural Resources Committee is set to meet Tuesday to consider its bill, which largely matches Trump's executive orders to open public lands and waters to more natural resource development.

It would allow increased leasing of public lands for drilling, mining and logging while clearing the path for more development by speeding up government approvals. Royalty rates paid by companies to extract oil, gas and coal would be cut, reversing former President Joe Biden's attempts to curb fossil fuels to help address climate change.

Oil and gas royalty rates would drop from 16.7% on public lands and 18.75% offshore to a uniform 12.5%. Royalties for coal would drop from 12.5% to 7%.

The measure calls for four oil and gas lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge over the next decade. It also seeks to boost the ailing coal industry with a mandate to make available for leasing 6,250 square miles of public lands — an area greater in size than Connecticut.

Republican supporters say the lost revenue would be offset by increased development. It's uncertain if companies would have an appetite for leases given the industry's precipitous decline in recent years as utilities switched to cleaner burning fuels and renewable energy.

India's leader Modi touted all was well in Kashmir. A massacre of tourists shattered that claim

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN, SHEIKH SAALIQ and RAJESH ROY Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India (AP) — Hundreds of Indian tourists, families and honeymooners, drawn by the breathtaking Himalayan beauty, were enjoying a picture-perfect meadow in Kashmir. They didn't know gunmen in army fatigues were lurking in the woods.

When the attackers got their chance, they shot mostly Indian Hindu men, many of them at close-range, leaving behind bodies strewn across the Baisaran meadow and survivors screaming for help.

The gunmen quickly vanished into thick forests. By the time Indian authorities arrived, 26 people were dead and 17 others were wounded.

India has described the April 22 massacre as a terror attack and blamed Pakistan for backing it, an accusation denied by Islamabad. India swiftly announced diplomatic actions against its archrival Pakistan, which responded with its own tit-for-tat measures.

The assailants are still on the run, as calls in India for military action against Pakistan are growing.

World leaders are scrambling to de-escalate the tensions between two nuclear-armed neighbors, which have historically relied on third countries for conflict management.

But the massacre has also touched a raw nerve.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has governed Kashmir with an iron fist in recent years, claiming militancy in the region was in check and a tourism influx was a sign of normalcy returning.

Those claims now lie shattered.

India admits security lapse

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Security experts and former intelligence and senior military officers who have served in the region say Modi's government — riding on a nationalistic fervor over Kashmir to please its supporters — missed warning signs.

The government acknowledged that in a rare admission.

Two days after the attack, Kiren Rijiju, India's parliamentary affairs minister, said that a crucial all-party meeting discussed "where the lapses occurred."

"We totally missed ... the intentions of our hostile neighbor," said Avinash Mohananey, a former Indian intelligence officer who has operated in Kashmir and Pakistan.

The meadow, near the resort town of Pahalgam, can be reached by trekking or pony rides, and visitors cross at least three security camps and a police station to reach there. According to Indian media, there was no security presence for more than 1,000 tourists that day.

Pahalgam serves as a base for an annual Hindu pilgrimage that draws hundreds of thousands of people from across India. The area is ringed by thick woods that connect with forest ranges in the Jammu area, where Indian troops have faced attacks by rebels in recent years after fighting ebbed in the Kashmir Valley, the heart of an anti-India rebellion.

The massacre brought Modi's administration almost back to where it started when a suicide car bombing in the region in 2019 prompted his government to strip Kashmir of its semi-autonomy and bring it under direct federal rule. Tensions have simmered ever since, but the region has also drawn millions of visitors amid a strange calm enforced by an intensified security crackdown.

"We probably started buying our own narrative that things were normal in Kashmir," Mohananey said.

In the past, insurgents have carried out brazen attacks and targeted Hindu pilgrims, Indian Hindu as well as Muslim immigrant workers, and local Hindus and Sikhs. However, this time a large number of tourists were attacked, making it one of the worst massacres involving civilians in recent years.

The attack outraged people in Kashmir and India, where it led to calls of swift action against Pakistan.

Indian television news channels amplified these demands and panelists argued that India should invade Pakistan. Modi and his senior ministers vowed to hunt down the attackers and their backers.

Experts say much of the public pressure on the Indian government to act militarily against Pakistan falls within the pattern of long, simmering animosity between both countries.

"All the talk of military options against Pakistan mainly happens in echo chambers and feeds a nationalist narrative," in India, New Delhi-based counterterrorism expert Ajai Sahni said.

"It doesn't matter what will be done. We will be told it was done and was a success," he said. "And it will be celebrated nonetheless."

Modi's optimism misplaced, experts say

Experts also say that the Modi government's optimism was also largely misplaced and that its continuous boasting of rising tourism in the region was a fragile barometer of normalcy. Last year, Omar Abdullah, Kashmir's top elected official, cautioned against such optimism.

"By this attack, Pakistan wants to convey that there is no normalcy in Kashmir and that tourism is no indicator for it. They want to internationalize the issue," said D.S. Hooda, former military commander for northern India between 2014 to 2016.

Hooda said the "choice of targets and the manner in which the attack was carried out indicates that it was well-planned."

"If there would have been a good security cover, maybe this incident would not have happened," he said.

India sees Pakistan connection to the attack

Indian security experts believe the attack could be a retaliation for a passenger train hijacking in Pakistan in March by Baloch insurgents. Islamabad accused New Delhi of orchestrating the attack in which 25 people were killed. India denies it.

Mohananey said that Indian authorities should have taken the accusations seriously and beefed-up security in Kashmir, while arguing there was a striking similarity in both attacks since only men were targeted.

"It was unusual that women and children were spared" in both cases, Mohananey said.

Two senior police officers, who have years of counterinsurgency experience in Kashmir, said after the

train attack in Pakistan that they were anticipating some kind of reaction in the region by militants.

The officers, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter, said that security officials perceived the threat of an imminent attack, and Modi's inauguration of a strategic rail line in the region was canceled. A large-scale attack on tourists, however, wasn't anticipated, because there was no such precedence, the officers said.

Hooda, who commanded what New Delhi called "surgical strikes" against militants in the Pakistan-controlled part of Kashmir in 2016, said that the attack has deepened thinking that it was time to tackle the Pakistani state, not just militants.

Such calculus could be a marked shift. In 2016 and 2019, India said that its army struck militant infrastructure inside Pakistan after two major militant attacks against its soldiers.

"After this attack," Hooda said, India wants to stop Pakistan "from using terrorism as an instrument of state policy."

"We need to tighten our security and plug lapses, but the fountainhead of terrorism needs to be tackled," Hooda said. "The fountainhead is Pakistan."

The Latest: The Met Gala opens as rain fails to dim the stars for fashion's biggest night

NEW YORK (AP) — Fashion's biggest night got underway Monday at the Met Gala in a rainy Manhattan. This is the first Met Gala to focus exclusively on Black designers, and the first in more than 20 years to have a menswear theme. This year's theme is based on the Metropolitan Museum of Art's spring exhibit, "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style."

Among the hosts are Pharrell Williams, Lewis Hamilton, Colman Domingo and A\$AP Rocky. LeBron James was made honorary chair but will not attend because of a knee injury.

The guest list includes about 450 people from tech, sports, art, entertainment and more.

Vogue's Anna Wintour is the gala's mastermind. The gala raises the bulk of the budget for the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute.

Rain fell in the city as guests began walking the carpet.

For full coverage of the Met Gala, visit: <https://apnews.com/hub/met-gala>

Here's the latest:

Rihanna makes her arrival at the Met Gala

Rihanna shut down a rainy Met Gala and showed off her newly announced baby bump.

Her Marc Jacobs look included tied sleeves of a men's suit that served as a bustle behind her as she posed for the cameras, the last to walk the carpet as usual. Her hair hung long in a mermaid twist behind her.

After waiting until 10 p.m. for her arrival, the remaining members of the press scurried out.

'F1' actor Damson Idris arrives in a designer racing suit

Damson Idris is kicking off the "F1" campaign in style. The actor pulled up to the event in a race car from the film wearing a Tommy Hilfiger-designed racing suit and embellished helmet featuring 20,000 Swarovski crystals. Eventually, he took off the kit and helmet to reveal a tailored suit.

Idris wasn't the only person repping the upcoming film (in theaters June 27), in which he stars alongside Brad Pitt as an up-and-coming racer in the glamorous world of Formula One. Seven-time Formula 1 champion Lewis Hamilton, who was involved in the film from the earliest days as a consultant, is a co-chair of the Met Gala.

'White Lotus' stars arrive on the carpet

Several cast members from the recently wrapped Season 3 of "The White Lotus" turned out on the blue carpet, including Aimee Lou Wood and Walton Goggins, Patrick Schwarzenegger and Lisa.

Goggins and Lisa walked separately, but Wood and Schwarzenegger spoke to Vogue before walking the carpet together.

Bollywood megastar Shah Rukh Khan makes his Met Gala debut

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Shah Rukh Khan is a Bollywood megastar, with legions of fans the world over. At 59, with decades of fame under his belt, he's finally making his Met Gala debut — in Sabyasachi.

Bollywood celebrities aren't strangers to the Met Gala, but it's rarer for a male actor to appear. In recent years, Alia Bhatt, Deepika Padukone and crossover star Priyanka Chopra Jonas have represented the Hindi film industry at the annual fundraiser.

"I've not done too many red carpets, I'm very shy," Khan, toting a cane and necklace with a large K, told Vogue. He credited his attendance to Sabyasachi, and said he informed the designer he only wore black and white.

"Just to give you a little bit of context, Shah Rukh Khan is probably one of most famous men in the world," the designer, who sported a literal feather in his cap, said. "And his fan following is legendary, and we nearly had a stampede outside of our hotel when he came out."

A\$AP Rocky confirms baby no. 3 with Rihanna

"It feels amazing, you know," gala co-chair A\$AP Rocky told reporters who congratulated him after outlets reported the couple was expecting their third child. "It's time that we show the people what we was cooking up. And I'm glad everybody's happy for us 'cause we definitely happy, you know."

TMZ reported earlier Monday that Rihanna and the rapper were expecting their third child. A representative for Rihanna didn't immediately return The Associated Press' request for comment. Photos taken of the singer Monday walking in New York showed her with what appeared to be a baby bump.

"Honestly, it's a blessing nonetheless," Rocky told the AP. "Because you know how like some people in other situations at times can be envious of other people. But we've been seeing love for the most part. And we real receptive to that and appreciate that, you know what I mean? That's love. Love is love."

Some choose gowns and no pants over suited looks

Despite the "Tailored For You" menswear dress code, there were a surprising number of stars wearing gowns on the blue carpet.

From rapper Megan Thee Stallion to model Gigi Hadid, the celebrities chose dresses over suited looks.

Sabrina Carpenter wore ... most of a Pharrell Williams for Louis Vuitton suit. Most, because it featured a jacket and no pants.

Simone Biles and Jonathan Owens make Met Gala appearance a day before anniversary

Simone Biles and Jonathan Owens made a stylish pit stop at the Met Gala just a day before celebrating their anniversary.

The Olympian and the Chicago Bears defensive back showed up dapper and dazzling, admitting Met prep was more nerve-wracking than a gymnastics meet or NFL game.

"I train for the Olympics my whole life, and this is like a one-day event," Biles joked in her short blue dress. "Got in yesterday, we did all the fittings and it's just a lot. It's stressful."

The couple attended the Kentucky Derby on Saturday.

Pro-Palestinian protesters gather near the gala

Pro-Palestinian protesters gathered about a block away from the gala as the area immediately around the museum had been cordoned off by police.

Organizers calling for protesters to "surround" the Met in social media posts claimed the Manhattan institution is "tied to genocide in every way possible."

Within Our Lifetime also called out celebrities for continuing to "flaunt their extreme wealth and materialism" as residents of Gaza suffered in the ongoing war with Israel.

Video clips shared on social media showed some protesters hopping over barricades as they marched in the rain through Central Park. Other clips showed protesters met by vocal counterprotesters supporting Israel.

New York City police said Monday evening that no arrests had been made.

It's the second year in a row that protests have taken place outside the gala.

Diana Ross arrives in a massive train

Allow Diana Ross to collect her flowers. The Motown icon arrived in a massive ivory train as a starstruck

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Zendaya — and everyone else — looked on. In some ways, it recalled the memorable yellow train wore by Rihanna a decade ago — the Guo Pei couture gown that lit up the internet at the 2015 Met Gala.

Ross had six men helping her with her train at the top of the Met steps. She fanned herself from the heat as they helped her remove her long feathered train. She said the dress was vintage and she'd had it forever.

The inside of the train, she told Vogue, had the names of "all my children and my eight grandchildren" embroidered in it.

Zendaya wore a white suit with a hat.

Coco Jones hits the red carpet before kicking off tour

R&B star Coco Jones is having a better time than most. Last week, she released her debut album, "Why Not More?" And on Monday, she stunned in custom Manish Malhotra at the Met Gala — an ivory white suit with a long train.

"This is where fashion meets intention," Jones told Vogue on the carpet. "I think this is going to be historic for our culture."

And Tuesday: A tour kicks off in Philadelphia for the singer. Not a bad way to start the week.

Choir sings Motown classic on the carpet

A choir of tuxedo-dressed men added some liveliness to the carpet erupting in the classic "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell.

Vogue host LaLa Anthony and others cheered on the choir.

At the bottom of the carpet, Anna Wintour beamed at the choir as Colman Domingo danced in place.

Teyana Taylor was among the early arrivals.

Host Pharrell Williams wears jacket with thousands of pearls

Pharrell Williams' jacket consists of 15,000 pearls and took 400 hours to construct, a representative with him confirmed.

Williams is Louis Vuitton's men's creative director and a gala co-chair.

Met Gala pays tribute to Black fashion and designers and includes Rihanna pregnancy surprise

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Lifestyles Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Rihanna shut down a rainy Met Gala on Monday in a pinstripe look and a huge hat, her newly announced baby bump on display after announcing her pregnancy with baby No. 3 earlier in the day.

Her Marc Jacobs look included tied sleeves of a men's suit that served as a bustle behind her as she posed for the cameras, the last to walk the carpet as usual. Her hair hung long in a mermaid twist behind her.

Men's suiting and tailoring was the evening's theme. It came complete with a tuxedoed choir and lots of women rocking pinstripes and other men's detailing. Emma Chamberlain, Zendaya, Teyana Taylor and many other women went with traditional men's detailing.

Chamberlain and Zuri Hall were among those who wore sleek, sexy gowns that play on men's suiting in pinstripes as they walked up the grand steps of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Zendaya, a co-host last year, wore a perfectly tailored white trouser suit with a matching wide-brim hat from Louis Vuitton.

Janelle Monáe epitomized the night's theme, the Black dandy, in exaggerated pinstripes by Thom Browne. Lauryn Hill honored menswear in a butter yellow suit with exaggerated tailoring that screamed Black power.

The menswear vibe for women was frequent and expected, "women wanting to maintain a traditionally feminine dress silhouette while still respecting the theme," said William Dingle, director of style for blackmenswear.com, a cultural impact agency that focuses on uplifting Black men.

Alicia Keys and her husband, Swizz Beatz, leaned WAY in on the pinstripes in red. She rocked a head of bejeweled braids. He rocked a do-rag.

Doja Cat, always fearless when it comes to fashion, donned a Marc Jacobs bodysuit look with orange and black wildcat detailing and broad-shouldered pinstripes. Taylor went for a stunning Zoot Suit look with a

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red, feather-adorned top hat and a huge matching cape dripping with flowers and bling. She collaborated with famed costumer designer Ruth E. Carter.

The Zoot was popularized in Harlem in the 1940s.

Madonna, "no stranger to gender-bending fashion," Dingle said, showed up in a monochrome taupe tuxedo clutching a cigar. It was Tom Ford by Haider Ackermann, the designer who took over when Ford stepped aside.

Kylie Jenner, in Ferragamo, mimicked men's tailoring in a gray and black corseted look, while sister Kim Kardashian went embossed black leather dandy, vamping under a tall black hat. Her custom look was by Chrome Hearts. It was low slung and open at the hip with broad straps at the back.

Sister Kendall Jenner was in an elegant skirt and jacket, the most subdued of the three. The designer was the British-Nigerian-Brazilian designer Torishéju Dumi.

And then there were the bombshells ...

Megan Thee Stallion in Michael Kors and Dua Lipa in black Chanel included. Megan's look had a high side slit and floral lace embellishment. Lipa was giving elevated flapper in feathers and an "S" curl style for her hair. And Miley Cyrus oozed womanhood in a custom cropped black crocodile jacket and long black taffeta skirt by Alaïa.

Diana Ross, meanwhile, swallowed the carpet in a huge white train, escorted by her son, Evan Ross.

Lizzo debuted blonde hair to go with her pink and black Christian Siriano gown with a plunge at the front. It was so tight at the legs she struggled to walk.

Cardi B, who always goes big at the Met Gala, stunned in a low-cut Burberry pantsuit. She showed off a new hairstyle and eye color, appearing to wear green contacts to match her ivy-colored look.

The standouts among the men

As for the men, co-host A\$AP Rocky told The Associated Press that Anna Wintour suggested he wear a Black designer.

"So I wore myself," the musician said of his custom suit designed by his creative agency, AWGE, complete with a black parka and diamond-crested umbrella. "Everything is designed by yours truly."

Rocky, Rihanna's partner and dad to their two kids, confirmed to reporters that baby No. 3 in on the way. He spoke about it after Rihanna was photographed walking in the rain with her baby bump out in a blue crop top and skirt.

"It feels amazing, you know," Rocky said. "It's time that we show the people what we was cooking up. And I'm glad everybody's happy for us 'cause we definitely happy, you know."

He added: "Honestly, it's a blessing nonetheless. Because you know how like some people in other situations at times can be envious of other people. But we've been seeing love for the most part. And we real receptive to that and appreciate that, you know what I mean? That's love. Love is love."

The dress code explained

What, exactly, was the suggested dress code of the night, "Tailored for You," is inspired by Black dandyism. And what, exactly, is the Met Gala for? To raise money for the Met's Costume Institute. The gala raised a record \$31 million before it began.

Marie Claire, editor in chief of Marie Claire, noted a few trends done well.

"Top trends from the night: Black and white (Zoe Saldaña, Whoopi Goldberg, Gabrielle Union), pinstripes (Alicia Keys and Swizz Beats), suiting (Lupita Nyong'o, Ego Nwodim), hats (Lupita Nyong'o, Whoopi Goldberg and Teyana Taylor)."

More on the men

Colman Domingo, one of the evening's hosts, wore a pleated, gold adorned cape over a gray and black suit, his jacket a pearled windowpane design with a huge dotted black flower. His look, including his cape and a dotted black scarf at his neck, evoked the late André Leon Talley, the fashion icon who made history as a rare Black editor at Vogue.

Domingo, in Valentino, arrived with Vogue's Wintour, dressed in a pastel blue coat over a shimmery white gown by Louis Vuitton, a gala sponsor. Fellow co-chair Lewis Hamilton donned a jaunty ivory tuxedo with a cropped jacket, a matching beret and cowrie shell embellishment.

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Hamilton's look carried deep meaning.

"The color of ivory denotes purity and status; cowries pass from hand to hand, the regal sash turns shamanic," he wrote on Instagram.

Claire Stern, Elle digital director added: "Known for championing Black designers, the F1 star once again used his platform to celebrate heritage and creativity on one of fashion's biggest stages."

Domingo has epitomized contemporary dandyism in a variety of looks over the years.

Pharrell Williams, another co-host, was demure in a double-breasted, beaded evening jacket and dark trousers. He kept his dark shades on while posing for the cameras. Williams walked with his wife, Helen Lasichanh, in a black bodysuit and matching jacket.

Williams, the Louis Vuitton menswear creative director, said his 15,000 pearls were arranged in a pinstripe design and the jacket took 400 hours to construct.

Walton Goggins, a guest this year with others from "The White Lotus," wore a deconstructed suit look with seams out and a pleated skirt he twirled for the cameras.

LeBron James, the NBA superstar, was named honorary chair of the evening but bowed out at the last minute due to a knee injury.

Other Met Gala looks that stood out

Monica L. Miller, whose book inspired the evening, wore a bejeweled cropped cape over a dress adorned with cowrie shells by Grace Wales Bonner. It's a direct connection to a piece in the gala's companion Metropolitan Museum of Art spring exhibit that Miller guest curated.

What other women killed the menswear game? Coco Jones in an ivory tuxedo coat with a train over matching trousers, both covered in chunky embellishment.

"Coco Jones absolutely leaned in," Dingle said. "I love the pearl and gem embellishments here, as well as the long coat, and even the necklace. Because she's taller, the long coat even further elongates her legs. This is a fantastic look."

Her look was by Indian designer Manish Malhotra. She said she wanted to honor Black excellence by going all out.

Gigi Hadid, on the other hand, went all woman. She pulled up the spirit of Josephine Baker in a shimmering velvet gold halter gown by Miu Miu that hugged her hips, hip hugging being a big trend of the night for the women.

Bad Bunny, ever a fashion rebel, wore a custom black Prada suit. The best detail: his woven hat, which appeared to be a reference to the pava, a straw hat associated with the Puerto Rican jíbaro.

Crowds flock to celebrate the century-old Bun Festival in Hong Kong

By CHAN LONG HEI and ALICE FUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Crowds flocked to the outlying Cheung Chau Island in Hong Kong to celebrate the Bun Festival, held each year in a century-old tradition to ward off evil and pray for peace and blessings.

The festivities began with a parade of children in costumes, called "Piu Sik," which translates as "floating color." Children dressed as legendary deities or historic characters are carried on stands above the gathered crowds, meandering through the island's narrow lanes.

The highlight of the festival comes at midnight with a "bun-scrambling" competition, where climbers race up a tower covered with plastic buns. Whoever gets the most buns of greatest value wins the race. Buns near the top have higher value.

The competition was suspended for decades after an accident in 1978 when a bun tower collapsed and caused injuries. The tradition resumed in 2005.

Legend has it that the colorful custom began after a deadly plague devastated the island of Cheung Chau. Residents followed the local Taoist tradition of imploring the deities for help and used white steamed buns as offerings to drive away the evil spirits.

Nowadays, residents and visitors to the island eat the white steamed buns as part of the celebrations.

They are called "Ping On Bao" in Cantonese, meaning "peace" buns, and are stamped with two red Chinese characters meaning "peace" and "safety."

Boat believed to be carrying migrants capsizes off California coast, leaving 3 dead and 7 missing

By JULIE WATSON and CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A small boat believed to be carrying migrants capsized early Monday off San Diego's coast and left three people dead and four injured, while U.S. Coast Guard crews were searching for seven others, officials said.

Initially nine people were reported missing but later two were found and detained, U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Hunter Schnabel said. He did not know which agency detained the individuals or why. The U.S. Border Patrol did not immediately respond to an email asking if they were involved.

U.S. Coast Guard Petty Officer Chris Sappey said it was unclear where the boat was coming from before it flipped shortly after sunrise about 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of the Mexico border. He described the vessel as a panga, single or twin-engine open fishing boats commonly used by smugglers.

"They were not tourists," Sappey said. "They are believed to be migrants."

Migrants are increasingly turning to the risky alternative offered by smugglers to travel by sea to avoid heavily guarded land borders, including off California's coast. Pangas leave the Mexican coast in the dead of night, sometimes charting hundreds of miles north.

The four injured people were taken to Scripps Memorial Hospital La Jolla, the hospital said in an email. All were being treated for respiratory related issues after arriving by ambulance. Three were in their 30s and one was a teen. No other details were provided.

The Coast Guard deployed a helicopter and boat to search for the missing.

Hikers and others at Torrey Pines State Beach reported seeing a boat capsize near the shore at about 6:30 a.m., said Lt. Nick Backouris of the San Diego County Sheriff's Department.

"A doctor hiking nearby called in and said, 'I see people doing CPR on the beach, I'm running that way,'" Backouris said.

Winds were light in the area, with slow-rolling waves reaching about 6 feet (1.8 meters), according to Sebastian Westerink, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service office in San Diego. The water temperature was 63 degrees (17 Celsius), he said.

A bulldozer moved the panga on the beach as the search was underway. The wooden skiff that was over 20 feet long (6 meters) had scuffed blue paint and wooden planks for seats. Inside the boat were a pair of running shoes, more than a dozen life vests, an empty waterproof cell phone bag and various water bottles. Its engine was visibly damaged.

In 2023, eight people were killed when two migrant smuggling boats approached a San Diego beach in heavy fog. One boat capsized in the surf. It was one of the deadliest maritime smuggling cases in waters off the U.S. coast.

A federal judge sentenced a San Diego man to 18 years in prison in 2022 for piloting a small vessel overloaded with 32 migrants that smashed apart in powerful surf off San Diego's coast, killing three people and injuring more than two dozen others.

Prosecutors said Antonio Hurtado was high on drugs when he drove the migrants into rough, stormy seas in the dark in May 2021. As 5-to-8-foot (1.5-2.4-meter) waves pounded the vessel, he jumped overboard and swam to shore, abandoning the passengers he had told to hide in the cabin and under deck. The boat capsized and broke apart as they were hurled into the early morning waters.

Worldwide, nearly 9,000 people died last year attempting to cross borders, the UN agency for migration said last month. The death toll set a record for the fifth year in a row.

The U.N. Missing Migrant Project puts the number of the dead and missing in the central Mediterranean at over 24,506 from 2014 to 2024, many of them lost at sea. The project says the number may be greater as many deaths go unrecorded.

The federal Bureau of Prisons has lots of problems.

Reopening Alcatraz is now one of them

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

Eleven inmate deaths in less than two months. More than 4,000 staff vacancies. A \$3 billion repair backlog. And now, a stunning directive from President Donald Trump for the crisis-plagued federal Bureau of Prisons to "REBUILD, AND OPEN ALCATRAZ!" — the notorious penitentiary on an island in San Francisco Bay that last held inmates more than 60 years ago.

Even as the Bureau of Prisons struggles with short staffing, chronic violence and crumbling infrastructure at its current facilities, Trump is counting on the agency to fulfill his vision of rebooting the infamously inescapable prison known in movies and pop culture as "The Rock."

Trump declared in a social media post Sunday that a "substantially enlarged and rebuilt" Alcatraz will house the nation's "most ruthless and violent Offenders." It will "serve as a symbol of Law, Order, and JUSTICE," he wrote on Truth Social.

Newly appointed Bureau of Prisons Director William K. Marshall III said Monday that the agency "will vigorously pursue all avenues to support and implement the President's agenda" and that he has ordered "an immediate assessment to determine our needs and the next steps."

"USP Alcatraz has a rich history. We look forward to restoring this powerful symbol of law, order, and justice," Marshall said in a statement, echoing Trump's post. "We will be actively working with our law enforcement and other federal partners to reinstate this very important mission."

Alcatraz was once an exemplar

Alcatraz, a 22-acre (8.9 hectare) islet with views of the Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco skyline, was once the crown jewel of the federal prison system and home to some of the nation's most notorious criminals, including gangsters Al Capone and George "Machine Gun" Kelly.

But skyrocketing repair and supply costs compelled the Justice Department to close the prison in 1963, just 29 years after it opened, and the Bureau of Prisons has long since replaced Alcatraz with modern penitentiaries, including a maximum-security prison in Florence, Colorado.

The former and perhaps future penitentiary is now a popular tourist attraction and a national historic landmark. It's controlled by the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, meaning the Bureau of Prisons could be in for an interagency tug of war if it tries to wrest away control of the island.

Trump's Alcatraz directive is yet another challenge for the Bureau of Prisons as it struggles to fix lingering problems while responding to the president's priorities on incarceration and immigrant detention. The agency's mission, as redefined under Trump, includes taking in thousands of immigration detainees under an agreement with the Department of Homeland Security.

The problems at the Bureau of Prisons transcend administrations and facilities.

An ongoing Associated Press investigation has uncovered deep, previously unreported flaws within the Bureau of Prisons over the last few years, including widespread criminal activity by employees, dozens of escapes, the free flow of guns, drugs and other contraband, and severe understaffing that has hampered responses to emergencies.

Last year, then-President Joe Biden signed a law strengthening oversight of the agency. It remains the Justice Department's largest agency, with more than 30,000 employees, 155,000 inmates and an annual budget of about \$8 billion, but the Trump administration's cost-cutting measures have eliminated some pay bonuses that were credited with retaining and attracting new staff.

That has resulted in long overtime shifts for some workers and the continued use of a policy known as augmentation, where prison nurses, cooks, teachers and other workers are pressed into duty to guard inmates.

Infrastructure is buckling, too. A Bureau of Prisons official told Congress at a hearing in February that more than 4,000 beds within the system — the equivalent of at least two full prisons — are unusable because of dangerous conditions like leaking or failing roofs, mold, asbestos or lead.

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Deaths have plagued the federal prison system

Since mid-March, 11 federal prison inmates have died. They include David Knezevich, a 37-year-old Florida businessman who was found dead April 28 in a suspected suicide at a federal jail in Miami. He was awaiting trial on charges he kidnapped and killed his estranged wife in Spain.

And on April 24, inmate Ramadhan Jaabir Justice was killed in a fight at the federal penitentiary in Pollock, Louisiana, where he was serving a nearly 11-year sentence for a conviction related to an armed robbery.

As Trump was ordering Alcatraz's reopening Sunday, correctional officers at the same Miami jail were fighting to curb the spread of tuberculosis and COVID-19, isolating inmates after they tested positive for the diseases. Last month, immigration detainees at the facility ripped out a fire sprinkler and flooded a holding cell during a lengthy intake process.

Meanwhile, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of Alcatraz, the Federal Correctional Institution in Dublin, California, has sat idle for more than a year after the Bureau of Prisons cleared it of inmates in the wake of rampant sexual abuse by employees, including the warden.

In December, the agency made the closure permanent and idled six prison camps across the country to address "significant challenges, including a critical staffing shortage, crumbling infrastructure and limited budgetary resources."

While Trump hails Alcatraz as a paragon of the federal prison system's cherished past, other facilities stand as reminders of its recent troubles.

They include the federal jail in Manhattan, which remains idle after Jeffrey Epstein's suicide there in 2019 exposed deep flaws in its operations, and a troubled federal lockup in Brooklyn, where 23 inmates have been charged in recent months with crimes ranging from smuggling weapons in a Doritos bag to the stabbing last month of a man convicted in the killing of hip-hop legend Jam Master Jay.

Threatened by Trump tariffs, Japan walks a delicate tightrope between US and China

By MARI YAMAGUCHI and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just as Japan's top trade negotiator traveled to Washington for another round of tariff talks last week, a bipartisan delegation bearing the name of "Japan-China Friendship" wrapped up a visit to Beijing.

A week earlier, the head of the junior party in Japan's ruling coalition was in Beijing delivering a letter from Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba addressed to Chinese President Xi Jinping. Details of the letter are unknown, but the two sides discussed U.S. tariffs in addition to bilateral issues.

Among all U.S. allies being wooed by Beijing in its tariff stare-down with Washington, Japan stands out.

It is a peculiar case not only for its staunch commitment to its alliance with the United States but also for its complicated and uneasy history with the neighboring Asian giant — particularly the war history from the 20th century that still casts a shadow over the politics of today.

"On one hand, they are neighbors and they are important economic partners. There's a lot that connects Japan and China," said Matthew Goodman, director of the Greenberg Center for Geoeconomics at the Council on Foreign Relations. "But on the other hand, I think there are limits to how far they're going to lean into China."

While Japan won't walk away from its alliance with the United States, the linchpin of the Asian country's diplomacy and security policies, "it's also true that the tariffs and uncertainty that Trump has created for Japan is really shaking things up in Tokyo," Goodman said.

Last month, President Donald Trump announced a 24% tariff on Japanese goods in a sweeping plan to levy duties on about 90 countries. The White House has since paused the tariffs but a 10% baseline duty on all countries except China, allowing time for negotiations. Still, Trump's 25% tax on aluminum, steel and auto exports have gone into effect for Japan.

The tariff moves, as well as Trump's "America First" agenda, have cast doubts among the Japanese if

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the United States is still a dependable ally, while China is rallying support from tariff-threatened countries — including Japan.

In Beijing, Japan sees positive signs

When Tetsuo Saito led Japan's Komeito Party delegation to Beijing in late April, China hinted at difficulty in its tariff dispute with the United States, signaling its willingness to improve ties with Tokyo. An unnamed senior Chinese official said his country was "in trouble" when discussing Trump's 145% tariff on Chinese products, according to Japanese reports.

Saito's visit was soon followed by that of the bipartisan delegation of Japan-China Friendship Parliamentarians' Union. Zhao Leji, Beijing's top legislator, told the delegation that China's National People's Congress would be "willing to carry out various forms of dialogue and exchanges."

Beijing did not lift a ban on Japan's seafood imports as the Japanese delegates hoped, but it signaled positive signs on its assessment of the safety of the discharges of treated radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. Beijing banned Japan's seafood products in 2023, citing those concerns.

Ties between Tokyo and Beijing have long been rocky. In the past several years, they squabbled not only over the seafood ban but also long-standing territorial disputes over the Senkaku, or Diaoyu, islands in the East China Sea, Beijing's growing military assertiveness and violence against Japanese nationals in China — an issue complicated by the nations' uneasy history.

Tokyo's closer ties with Washington during Joe Biden's presidency also upset Beijing, which saw it as part of the U.S. strategy to contain China and has lectured Tokyo to "face squarely and reflect on the history of aggression."

An imperial power in Asia for centuries, China fell behind Japan in the 19th century when Japan began to embrace Western industrialization and grew into a formidable economic and military power. It invaded China in the 1930s and controlled the northeastern territory known as Manchuria. War atrocities, including the Nanking Massacre and the use of chemical and biological weapons and human medical experiments in Manchuria, have left deep scars in China. They have yet to be healed, though Japan's conservative politicians today still attempt to deny the aggression.

Ishiba, elected Japan's prime minister in October, has a more neutral view on his country's wartime history than the late Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his two successors. Weeks after taking office, Ishiba held talks with Xi on the sidelines of a leaders' summit.

Chinese scholars, however, see Tokyo's recent engagements with Beijing as a pragmatic move to hedge against U.S. protectionism and not a long-term strategy for stability with China.

The odds are low for Japan to move into China's orbit, Goodman said. "They have for a long time had to manage an important but challenging relationship with China," he said. "And that is, again, a long-standing problem for Japan, going back centuries or millennia."

Seeking tariff deals and stable ties in the US

While Japan might welcome the friendlier tone from Beijing, it is trying to stabilize Japan-U.S. relations under Trump's "America First" agenda, and it is hoping to settle the tariff dispute without confronting Washington, with an eye on preventing Beijing from exploiting any fallout in Japan-U.S. relations.

Japan was among the first countries to hold tariff talks with Washington. During the first round in mid-April, Trump inserted himself into the discussions, a sign of the high stakes for the United States to reach a deal with Japan. The Trump administration reportedly pushed for Japan to buy more U.S.-made cars and open its market to U.S. beef, rice and potatoes.

After the second round of negotiation in Washington last week, Ryosei Akazawa, the country's chief tariff negotiator, said he pushed Japan's request that the U.S. drop tariffs and was continuing efforts toward an agreement acceptable to both sides. He said Japan's auto industry was already hurting from the 25% tariff and that he needed to be "thorough but fast."

Asked about China, Akazawa said only that his country keeps watching the U.S.-China tariff development "with great interest." He noted Japan's deep trade ties with China.

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Competing in Southeast Asia

While China and Japan are working to mend ties, the two are also competing in the Southeast Asia region, where Trump has threatened high tariffs as well. The region is deeply integrated into China's supply chain but under pressure from the West to diversify and reduce its reliance on China. With younger and growing populations as compared to East Asia, the region is considered an important growth center.

Japan, as a major postwar development aid contributor, has gradually regained trust in the region, which also was scarred by Japan's World War II past.

On Wednesday, Ishiba returned from Vietnam and the Philippines after agreeing with their leaders to further strengthen security and economic ties. During the visit, Ishiba stressed Japan's commitment to maintaining and strengthening a multilateral free-trade system in each country. Ishiba also had telephone talks with his Malaysian and Singaporean counterparts earlier this month about U.S. tariffs.

Just weeks earlier, Xi was in Vietnam, Malaysia and Cambodia, also stressing free trade and seeking stronger supply chains.

At a recent discussion at the Washington-based think tank Hudson Institute, Itsunori Onodera, Japan's governing party policy chief, warned of "very unstable" feelings among many Asian countries faced with high tariffs from the United States.

"There's a danger they might become more distant and become closer to China," Onodera said. "This is not something that Japan wants, either."

New York Times wins 4 Pulitzers, New Yorker 3; Washington Post wins for coverage of Trump shooting

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York Times won four Pulitzer Prizes and the New Yorker three on Monday for journalism in 2024 that touched on topics like the fentanyl crisis, the U.S. military and last summer's assassination attempt on President Donald Trump.

The Pulitzer's prestigious public service medal went to ProPublica for the second straight year. Kavitha Surana, Lizzie Presser, Cassandra Jaramillo and Stacy Kranitz were honored for reporting on pregnant women who died after doctors delayed urgent care in states with strict abortion laws.

The Washington Post won for "urgent and illuminating" breaking news coverage of the Trump assassination attempt. The Pulitzer's honored Ann Telnaes, who quit the Post in January after the news outlet refused to run her editorial cartoon lampooning tech chiefs — including Post owner Jeff Bezos — cozying up to Trump. The Pulitzer's praised her "fearlessness."

The Pulitzer's honored the best in journalism from 2024 in 15 categories, along with eight arts categories including books, music and theater. The public service winner receives a gold medal. All other winners receive \$15,000.

The New York Times showed its breadth with awards honoring reporting from Afghanistan, Sudan, Baltimore and Butler, Pennsylvania. Doug Mills won in breaking news photography for his pictures of the Trump assassination attempt, including one that captured a bullet in the air near the GOP candidate.

The Times' Azam Ahmed and Christina Goldbaum and contributing writer Matthieu Aikins won an explanatory reporting prize for examining U.S. policy failures in Afghanistan. Declan Walsh and the Times' staff won for an investigation into the Sudan conflict.

A big milestone for a new local news outlet

The Times was also part of a collaboration with The Baltimore Banner, whose reporters Alissa Zhu, Nick Thieme and Jessica Gallagher won in local reporting for stories on that city's fentanyl crisis and its disproportionate effect on Black men. The Banner was created three years ago, with several staffers who had left the Baltimore Sun.

"This is a huge milestone for us," editor in chief Kimi Yoshino said in an interview. "I told the newsroom today that never in my wildest dreams did I think we would be here at this moment. It is a testament to the power of local news, the need for local news and what journalists can do when they focus on impor-

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tant stories in our community.”

The Banner created a statistical model that it shared with journalists in cities like Boston, Chicago and San Francisco for stories there, she said.

Reuters won for its own investigative series on fentanyl, showing how lax regulation both inside and outside the United States makes the drug inexpensive and widely available. inewssource.org in San Diego was a finalist in the illustrated reporting and commentary category for its stories on fentanyl.

The New Yorker’s Mosab Abu Toha won for his commentaries on Gaza. The magazine also won for its “In the Dark” podcast about the killing of Iraqi civilians by the U.S. military and in feature photography for Moises Saman’s pictures of the Sednaya prison in Syria.

The Wall Street Journal won a Pulitzer for its reporting on Elon Musk, “including his turn to conservative politics, his use of legal and illegal drugs and his private conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin,” the Pulitzer board said. The Journal was also a finalist for its “cool-headed” reporting on the plight of Evan Gershkovich, who was imprisoned in Russia.

A special citation for a career covering civil rights

The Pulitzers also gave a special citation to the late Chuck Stone for his work covering the civil rights movement. The pioneering journalist was the first Black columnist at the Philadelphia Daily News and founded the National Association of Black Journalists.

Mark Warren of Esquire won the feature writing prize for his portrait of a Baptist pastor and small-town mayor who died by suicide after his secret online life was exposed by a right-wing news site.

Alexandra Lange, a contributing writer for Bloomberg CityLab won an award in criticism for “graceful and genre-expanding” writing about public spaces for families.

The Houston Chronicle Raj Mankad, Sharon Steinmann, Lisa Falkenberg and Leah Binkovitz won the Pulitzer in editorial writing for its series on dangerous train crossings.

The Associated Press was a finalist in breaking news reporting for its own coverage of the Trump assassination attempt, and in investigative reporting for its partnership with PBS FRONTLINE and the Howard Center for Investigative Journalism at the University of Maryland and at Arizona State University for stories documenting more than 1,000 deaths at the hands of police using methods of subduing people that were supposed to be non-lethal.

Hegseth directs 20% cut to top military leadership positions

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth on Monday directed the active duty military to shed 20% of its four-star general officers as the Trump administration moves forward with deep cuts that it says will promote efficiency but that critics worry could result in a more politicized force.

Hegseth also told the National Guard to shed 20% of its top positions and directed the military to cut an additional 10% of its general and flag officers across the force, which could include any one-star or above or officer of equivalent Navy rank.

The cuts are on top of more than a half-dozen top general officers that President Donald Trump or Hegseth have fired since January, including the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. CQ Brown Jr. They also have fired the only two women serving as four-star officers, as well as a disproportionate number of other senior female officers.

In the earlier rounds of firing, Hegseth said the eliminations were “a reflection of the president wanting the right people around him to execute the national security approach we want to take.”

As Pentagon chief, Hegseth has touted his efforts to root out any programming or leadership that endorses diversity in the ranks, tried to terminate transgender service members and begun sweeping changes to enforce a uniform fitness standard for combat positions.

In a memo announcing the cuts Monday, Hegseth said they would remove “redundant force structure to optimize and streamline leadership.” He said the aim was to free the military from “unnecessary bureaucratic layers.”

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Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., a Marine who served in Iraq and is now on the House Armed Services Committee, said he sees Hegseth's actions as trying to politicize the military.

"He's creating a formal framework to fire all the generals who disagree with him — and the president," Moulton told AP at the Capitol.

He said certainly any organization can look for efficiencies but Hegseth has long been explicit about his agenda. "He wrote a book about it. He wants to politicize the military," Moulton said. "So it's hard to see these cuts in any other context."

Moulton warned of fallout for the troops. "It is essential that our troops understand they are getting constitutional orders, not political orders," he said, "because otherwise you don't have a democracy, otherwise you have a military that just works well for one political party or another."

Adding to the turmoil in the Pentagon, Hegseth in recent weeks has dismissed or transferred multiple close advisers, tightly narrowing his inner circle. He also has been facing questions from both Democrats and Republicans about his handling of sensitive information and use of the Signal messaging app.

There are about 800 general officers in the military, but only 44 of those are four-star general or flag officers. The Army has the largest number of general officers, with 219, including eight four-star generals.

The number of general officer positions in the military is set by law. Members of Congress were not provided with the advance notification they normally would receive on the cuts but were given a "very brief alert" this afternoon, according to a congressional staffer, who spoke on condition of anonymity to provide details not made public.

The cuts were first reported by CNN.

The Pentagon is under pressure to slash spending and personnel as part of the broader federal government cuts pushed by Trump and ally Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency.

Hegseth last week ordered a sweeping transformation of the Army to "build a leaner, more lethal force," including merging or closing headquarters, dumping outdated vehicles and aircraft, slashing as many as 1,000 headquarters staff in the Pentagon and shifting personnel to units in the field.

Also last week the Army confirmed that there will be a military parade on Trump's birthday in June, as part of the celebration around the service's 250th birthday. Officials say it will cost tens of millions of dollars.

Israel launches airstrikes on Yemen a day after Houthi rebels strike Israeli airport

MELANIE LIDMAN undefined

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's military targeted Houthi rebels in Yemen's Red Sea province of Hodeida on Monday with a punishing round of airstrikes, killing at least one person and wounding 35. The strikes came a day after the Iranian-backed rebels launched a missile that hit Israel's main airport.

The rebels' media office said at least six strikes hit the crucial Hodeida port Monday afternoon. Other strikes hit a cement factory in the Bajil district, located 55 kilometers (34 miles) northeast of Hodeida city, the rebels said. The extent of damage at the two facilities wasn't immediately clear.

The Israeli military said more than 20 Israeli fighter planes took part in the operation, dropping more than 50 munitions on dozens of targets.

Hodeida residents said they heard explosions at the port, with flames and smoke seen rising over the area. Ambulance sirens were also heard across the city, they said.

"It was very strong," Ahmed Saleh, who lives close to the port, said of the explosions.

In Bajil, fires and thick columns of smoke were seen over the cement factory, which the Houthis said was hit by both U.S. and Israeli strikes. Ambulances also rushed to the area, said resident Khalid Seif.

The Houthi-run health ministry said at least one person was killed and 35 others were wounded in the Israeli strikes on the factory. It said rescuers were still searching for missing people.

On Sunday, the Houthis launched a missile from Yemen that struck an access road near Israel's main airport, briefly halting flights and commuter traffic. Four people were lightly injured. It was the first time a missile struck the grounds of Israel's airport since the start of the war.

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The Houthis claimed that the strikes were a joint Israeli-American operation. However, a U.S. defense official said U.S. forces did not participate in the Israeli strikes on Yemen on Monday. The strikes were not part of Operation Rough Rider, which is the ongoing U.S. military operation against the Houthis in Yemen to prevent them from targeting ships in the Red Sea that started March 15. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

Separately, the U.S. military launched multiple strikes Monday on Sanaa, another U.S. official said. That official also spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

Nasruddin Amer, head of the Houthi media office, said the Israeli strikes won't deter the rebels, vowing they will respond to the attack.

"The aggressive Zionist-American raids on civilian facilities will not affect our military operations against the Zionist enemy entity," he said on social media.

He said the Houthis will escalate their attacks and won't stop targeting shipping routes and Israel until it stops the war in Gaza.

The Houthis have targeted Israel throughout the war in solidarity with Palestinians, raising their profile at home and internationally as the last member of Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" capable of launching regular attacks on Israel. The U.S. military under President Donald Trump has launched an intensified campaign of daily airstrikes targeting the Houthis since March 15.

Houthi rebels have fired at Israel since the war with Gaza began on Oct. 7, 2023. The missiles have mostly been intercepted, although some have penetrated Israel's missile defense systems, causing damage. Israel has struck back against the rebels in Yemen.

The Israeli military said it targeted the Hodeida port because Houthi rebels were using it to receive weapons and military equipment from Iran. Rebel-held Hodeida, about 145 kilometers (90 miles) southwest of the capital Sanaa, has been key for food shipments into Yemen as its decade-long war continues.

Israel has struck Yemen, and specifically the port city of Hodeida, multiple times. It previously struck Hodeida and its oil infrastructure in July after a Houthi drone attack killed one person and wounded 10 in Tel Aviv. In September, Israel struck Hodeida again, killing at least four people after a rebel missile targeted Israel's Ben Gurion airport as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was arriving back to the country. In December, Israeli strikes killed at least nine people in Hodeida. The Houthis have launched multiple missiles toward Israel in the past week.

The attack on Ben-Gurion International Airport on Sunday came hours before Israeli Cabinet ministers voted to expand the war in Gaza, including to seize the Gaza Strip and to stay in the Palestinian territory for an unspecified amount of time. While air traffic resumed after an hour, the attack could lead to cancellations of many airlines, which had recently resumed flights to Israel.

Trump has threatened a 100% tariff on movies made outside the US. Here's what we know

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is eyeing Hollywood for his next round of tariffs, threatening to levy all films produced outside the U.S. at a steep rate of 100%.

Over the weekend, Trump accused other countries of "stealing the movie-making capabilities" of the U.S. and said that he had authorized the Commerce Department and the U.S. Trade Representative to immediately begin the process of implementing this new import tax on all foreign-made films. But further specifics or dates weren't provided. And the White House confirmed that no final decisions had been made as of Monday.

Trump later said that he would meet with industry executives about the proposal but a lot remains unclear about how an import tax on complex, international productions could even be implemented.

If imposed, experts warn that such a tariff would dramatically hike the costs of making movies today. That uncertainty could put filmmakers in limbo, much like other industries that have recently been caught in the crosshairs of today's ongoing trade wars.

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Unlike other sectors that have recently been targeted by tariffs, however, movies go beyond physical goods, bringing larger intellectual property ramifications into question. Here's what we know.

Why is Trump threatening this steep movie tariff?

Trump is citing national security concerns, a justification he's similarly used to impose import taxes on certain countries and a range of sector-specific goods.

In a Sunday night post on his social media platform Truth Social, Trump claimed that the American movie industry is "DYING to a very fast death" as other countries offer "all sorts of incentives" to draw filmmaking away from the U.S.

Trump has previously voiced concern about movie production moving overseas. And in recent years, U.S. film and television production has been hampered between setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hollywood guild strikes of 2023 and the recent wildfires in the Los Angeles area. Incentive programs have also long-influenced where movies are shot both abroad and within the U.S., with more production leaving California to states like Georgia and New Mexico -- as well as countries like Canada.

But unlike other sectors targeted by Trump's recently-imposed tariffs, the American film industry currently holds a trade deficit that's in the U.S.'s favor.

In movie theaters, American-produced movies overwhelmingly dominate the domestic marketplace. Data from the Motion Picture Association also shows that American films made \$22.6 billion in exports and \$15.3 billion in trade surplus in 2023 — with a recent report noting that these films "generated a positive balance of trade in every major market in the world" for the U.S.

Last year, international markets accounted for over 70% of Hollywood's total box office revenue, notes Heeyon Kim, an assistant professor of strategy at Cornell University. She warns that tariffs and potential retaliation from other countries impacting this industry could result in billions of dollars in lost earnings and thousands of jobs.

"To me, (this) makes just no sense," she said, adding that such tariffs could "undermine otherwise a thriving part of the U.S. economy."

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, which represents behind-the-scenes entertainment workers across the U.S. and Canada, said in a statement Monday that Trump had "correctly recognized" the "urgent threat from international competition" that the American film and television industry faces today. But the union said it instead recommended the administration implement a federal production tax incentive and other provisions to "level the playing field" while not harming the industry overall.

How could a tax on foreign-made movies work?

That's anyone's guess.

"Traditional tariffs apply to physical imports crossing borders, but film production primarily involves digital services — shooting, editing and post-production work that happens electronically," notes Ann Koppuzha, a lawyer and business law lecturer at Santa Clara University's Leavey School of Business.

Koppuzha said that film production is more like an applied service that can be taxed, not tariffed. But taxes require Congressional approval, which could be a challenge even with a Republican majority.

Making a movie is also an incredibly complex — and international — process. It's common for both large and small films to include production in the U.S. and in other countries. Big-budget movies like the upcoming "Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning," for instance, are shot around the world.

U.S. studios frequently shoot abroad because tax incentives can aid production costs. But a blanket tariff across the board could discourage that or limit options, Kim said — hurting both Hollywood films and the global industry that helps create them.

"When you make these sort of blanket rules, you're missing some of the nuance of how production works," added Steven Schiffman, a longtime industry veteran and adjunct professor at Georgetown University. "Sometimes you just need to go to the location, because frankly it's way too expensive just to try to create in a soundstage"

Schiffman points to popular titles filmed outside the U.S. — such as Warner Bros' "Harry Potter" series, which was almost entirely shot in the U.K. "The cost to have done that would have like literally double to produce those movies under this proposed tariff," he said.

Could movie tariffs have repercussions on other intellectual property?

Overall, experts warn that the prospect of tariffing foreign-made movies ventures into uncharted waters. "There's simply no precedent or sense for applying tariffs to these types of creative services," Koppuzha said. And while the Trump administration could extend similar threats to other forms of intellectual property, like music, "they'd encounter the same practical hurdles."

But if successful, some also warn of potential retaliation. Kim points to "quotas" that some countries have had to help boost their domestic films by ensuring they get a portion of theater screens, for example. Many have reduced or suspended such quotas over the years in the name of open trade — but if the U.S. places a sweeping tariff on all foreign-made films, these kinds of quotas could come back, "which would hurt Hollywood film or any of the U.S.-made intellectual property," Kim said.

And while U.S. dominance in film means "there are fewer substitutes" for retaliation, Schiffman notes that other forms of entertainment — like game development — could see related impacts down the road.

Others stress the potential consequences of hampering international collaboration overall.

"Creative content distribution requires thoughtful economic approaches that recognize how modern storytelling flows across borders," notes Frank Albarella, U.S. media and telecommunications sector leader at KPMG. "The question hanging over every screen: Might we better nurture American storytelling through smart, targeted incentives, or could we inadvertently force audiences to pay more for what could become a narrower creative landscape?"

Brazilian judge orders arrest of man over alleged plot targeting Lady Gaga concert in Rio

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — A Brazilian judge on Monday ordered the arrest of a man suspected of being involved in an alleged plot to place explosives at a concert by singer Lady Gaga in Rio de Janeiro.

Judge Fabiana Pagel of the Rio Grande do Sul state court did not name the suspect in her ruling, but said he is a man investigated by Rio de Janeiro police as the alleged mastermind of the plot.

Police in Rio Grande do Sul state, which borders Argentina and Uruguay, said Sunday they had released a man under investigation for the alleged plot after he paid his bail.

Brazilian media reported that is the same man jailed on Monday by Judge Pagel.

Rio police did not reveal names of either of its two suspects or show images of the explosives that the alleged plotters intended to use. Felipe Cury, secretary of the Rio police, said authorities believed the suspects sought to target Brazil's LGBTQ community.

The Rio event on Saturday was the biggest show of the pop star's career, attracting an estimated 2.5 million fans to Copacabana Beach. Security was tight at Saturday's concert, with 5,200 military and police officers deployed to the beach where fans were reveling.

Warren Buffett will remain chairman at Berkshire Hathaway when Greg Abel takes over as CEO in 2026

By JOSH FUNK AND BERNARD CONDON AP Business Writers

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — When Greg Abel becomes Berkshire Hathaway's new CEO next year he will of course take on additional responsibilities, but with Warren Buffett remaining as chairman, the surprise change announced at the annual meeting over the weekend is in some ways just another milestone in the company's succession plans.

Shareholders have been worrying about how to replace the world's greatest investor for decades — even before the 94-year-old hit a typical retirement age. So years ago, Berkshire's board started devoting part of every meeting to the succession question.

Then in 2018, Buffett began publicly handing over the reins when he put Abel in charge of all of Berkshire's dozens of manufacturing, retail, railroad and utility businesses. Fellow Vice Chairman Ajit Jain was given responsibility for the insurance companies including Geico, while Buffett kept responsibility for investing

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Berkshire's billions. Berkshire confirmed that Abel would be Buffett's successor in 2021 after former Vice Chairman Charlie Munger let it slip at a shareholder meeting.

Starting next year, Abel will have the final say on all of Berkshire's companies and investments, but he will also still have Buffett, Jain and two investment managers — Ted Weschler and Todd Combs — coming to the office every day to help. And the CEOs of Berkshire's many different subsidiaries handle all the day-to-day operations.

"Greg's already been doing it for a couple of years, so his job really doesn't change. His title does, but his job's not really changing that much," said Bob Miles, who has taught a course about Buffett and Berkshire at the University of Nebraska-Omaha for 15 years.

Berkshire's board approved the 62-year-old Abel's promotion to CEO and kept Buffett as chairman on Sunday. Berkshire Class B shares fell more than 5% Monday in response to the news after hitting an all-time high Friday, but many investors praised the plan.

"I think it gives Warren a little more bandwidth instead of running this conglomerate," Macrae Sykes, portfolio manager at Gabelli Funds, said in an interview with The Associated Press. "It gives Greg more transparency on the opps with also Warren still being his mentor as chairman,"

Unmatched track record of success

In six decades at the helm, Buffett turned a Massachusetts textile company into a sprawling but nimble conglomerate that owns everything from Daily Queen and See's Candies to BNSF Railway and massive insurance and utility companies. As the company grew, Buffett's reputation grew with it as shares of Berkshire Hathaway climbed steadily, exceeding major indexes by wide margins and returning an average 19.9% each year to investors versus 10.4% for the Standard & Poor's 500.

The decision to continue with the Oracle of Omaha, as Buffett is known, as head of the board differs from the succession plans laid out in the event of Buffett's death. The billionaire has long said that Howard Buffett, the second-born of his three children, should become chairman when he is gone to protect Berkshire's culture.

Abel will take over in a precarious time as the U.S. launches trade wars against friend and foe alike, which Buffett has called a mistake. But that could also create investment opportunities for Berkshire if there is a crisis.

So much money, so few places to put it

Then there is Berkshire's \$348 billion in cash.

Buffett says he doesn't see many bargains to invest that money in now, not even Berkshire's own stock, but he assured some of the estimated 40,000 attendees of the company's annual meeting in Omaha, Nebraska, over the weekend that one day the company would be "bombarded with opportunities."

Abel, a low-key Canadian with a love a hockey who makes it a priority to coach his kids' teams, said Saturday that he wouldn't change Berkshire's approach to investing, which he learned from Buffett. Maintaining Berkshire's fortress-like balance sheet will always be a priority, he said.

Eventually, Berkshire might have to consider paying a dividend, which Buffett always resisted because he believed he could deliver better returns by reinvesting the cash. For now, Buffett and Abel want to keep building cash, so they are prepared when opportunities arise.

High praise for Abel

Buffett endorsed Abel, vowing to keep all of his shares that give him control of 30% of Berkshire Hathaway. Abel is a more hands-on manager than Buffett, asking managers tough questions and encouraging them to collaborate with other subsidiaries when it makes sense.

"It's way better with Greg than with me because I didn't want to work as hard as he works and I can get away with it because we've got a basically good business -- a very good business — and I wasn't in danger of you firing me by virtue of the ownership and the fact that we could do pretty well," Buffett said. "The fact that you can do pretty well doesn't mean you couldn't do better, and Greg can do better at many things," he said.

The CEOs of Berkshire subsidiaries who report to Abel have praised his management style of personal accountability, but also autonomy. See's Candy CEO Pat Egan worked with Abel at Berkshire's utility unit

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for years before he took over the candymaker six years ago and said Abel makes sure he's considered every contingency.

"He's allowed me to make a lot of decisions that he may or may not have agreed with, but he'll support us at the end of the day, no matter what as long as we're operating with integrity and principles and the long game," Egan said.

But Morningstar analyst Gregory Warren wrote that Buffett's succession announcement left him with plenty of questions and Abel will have to prove himself.

"Abel, in our view, will be held to a different standard than Buffett, with a greater focus on how well Berkshire is performing—especially with it being likely that there will be some churn in the company's shareholders as we move past the end of an era for the firm," Warren said.

Buffett's philanthropy continues

Buffett has always delegated the decisions about how to distribute his fortune, worth nearly \$160 billion, to others through annual share donations to the Gates Foundation and four family foundations run by his children.

The Gates Foundation has received the biggest donations worth more than \$40 billion since he started giving away his fortune in 2006.

He said last summer that his three children will decide how to distribute his remaining fortune after his death, but donations to the Gates Foundation will end. Buffett has said he expects it to take a decade to give away all his shares after his death, ensuring extended support for Abel from the family.

Trump administration says it will pay immigrants in the US illegally \$1,000 to leave the country

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pushing forward with its mass deportation agenda, President Donald Trump's administration said Monday that it would pay \$1,000 to immigrants who are in the United States illegally and return to their home country voluntarily.

The Department of Homeland Security said in a news release that it would also pay for travel assistance — and that people who use an app called CBP Home to tell the government they plan to return home will be "deprioritized" for detention and removal by immigration enforcement.

"If you are here illegally, self-deportation is the best, safest and most cost-effective way to leave the United States to avoid arrest," Secretary Kristi Noem said. "DHS is now offering illegal aliens financial travel assistance and a stipend to return to their home country through the CBP Home App."

The department said it had already paid for a plane ticket for one migrant to return home to Honduras from Chicago and said more tickets have been booked for this week and next.

It's a major part of Trump's administration

Trump made immigration enforcement and the mass deportation of immigrants in the United States illegally a centerpiece of his campaign, and he is following through during the first months of his administration. But it is a costly, resource-intensive endeavor.

While the Republican administration is asking Congress for a massive increase in resources for the Immigration and Customs Enforcement department responsible for removing people from the country, it's also pushing people in the country illegally to "self-deport."

It has coupled this self-deportation push with television ads threatening action against people in the U.S. illegally and social media images showing immigration enforcement arrests and migrants being sent to a prison in El Salvador.

The Trump administration has often portrayed self-deportation as a way for migrants to preserve their ability to return to the United States someday, and the president himself suggested it on Monday while speaking to reporters at the White House. He said immigrants who "self-deport" and leave the U.S. might have a chance to return legally eventually "if they're good people" and "love our country."

"And if they aren't, they won't," Trump said.

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But Aaron Reichlen-Melnick, a senior fellow at the American Immigration Council, which advocates for immigrants, said there's a lot for migrants to be cautious about in the latest offer from Homeland Security.

He said it's often worse for people to leave the country and not fight their case in immigration court, especially if they're already in removal proceedings. He said if migrants are in removal proceedings and don't show up in court they can automatically get a deportation order and leaving the country usually counts as abandoning many applications for relief including asylum applications.

It can be an intricate process

And Homeland Security is not indicating that it is closely coordinating with the immigration courts so that there are no repercussions for people in immigration court if they leave, he said.

"People's immigration status is not as simple as this makes it out to be," Reichlen-Melnick said.

He questioned where Homeland Security would get the money and the authorization to make the payments — and he suggested they are necessary because the administration can't arrest and remove as many people as it has promised so it has to encourage people to do it on their own.

"They're not getting their numbers," he said.

As part of its self-deportation effort, the Trump administration has transformed an app that had been used by the Biden administration to allow nearly 1 million migrants to schedule appointments to enter the country into a tool to help migrants return home. Under the Biden administration, it was called CBP One; now it's dubbed CBP Home.

Homeland Security said "thousands" of migrants have used the app to self-deport.

But Mark Krikorian, who heads the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates for less immigration, said he doesn't see the offer of paying people to go home as an admission that something in the Trump administration's immigration enforcement agenda isn't working.

Considering the millions of people who are in the country illegally, he said, it's impossible to deport all of them so the administration has to combine its own enforcement efforts with encouraging people to go home voluntarily.

Krikorian said he supports the idea of paying migrants to leave although he questioned how it would work in reality.

"How do you make sure that they've actually gone home? Do you make them sign an agreement where they agree not to challenge their removal if they were to come back?" he questioned. "The execution matters, but the concept is sound."

This has been tried before

Other countries have tried various iterations of paying migrants to return home.

There's a reason it's attractive to governments wanting to encourage migrants to go. It costs less to buy someone a plane ticket and some incentive money than it does to pay to find them, detain them if necessary, wait for the courts to rule on their case and then send them home.

The Department of Homeland Security said that it costs \$17,121 to arrest, detain and remove someone in the U.S. illegally.

Voluntary returns also don't require extensive government-to-government negotiations to get a country to take back its citizens, which can be a major benefit. There are a number of countries that either don't take back their own citizens who are being returned by U.S. immigration enforcement officials or make that process challenging.

A 2011 study by the Migration Policy Institute and the European University Institute found that there were about 128 programs — often referred to as pay-to-go programs — around the world.

But the study found that, with a few exceptions such as one program to return people in the 1990s from Germany to Bosnia, these voluntary return programs generally failed at encouraging large numbers of people to go home.

It is not clear whether these programs resulted in migrants who took the payments actually staying in their home countries and not trying to emigrate again.

Ahead of the conclave, Vatican staff vow secrecy under threat of excommunication

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Cleaners and cooks. Doctors and nurses. Even drivers and elevator operators. The support staff for the cardinals who will elect the successor to Pope Francis took an oath of secrecy Monday ahead of the conclave that's starting on Wednesday.

The punishment for breaking the oath? Automatic excommunication.

The oaths of about 100 people were taken in the Pauline Chapel at the Vatican for all those assigned to the conclave, Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said. They include clerics in support roles, among them confessors speaking various languages.

The cardinals will take their oaths in the Sistine Chapel on Wednesday, before they cast their first ballots.

An array of lay women and men are required to house and feed the cardinals. A conclave's duration cannot be predicted — and it will only be known when white smoke rises out of the Sistine Chapel chimney to signal a winner.

All those people will be sequestered to be on hand for any medical needs, and maintain the majesty and ritual appropriate for the election of the next head of the 1.4 billion-strong Catholic Church. Of the 133 cardinals expected to vote at the conclave, 108 were appointed by Francis.

The cardinals will be living in residences on Vatican grounds, and they can either walk the roughly 1 kilometer (less than a mile) to the Sistine Chapel or take a special bus that runs only within the sealed Vatican grounds — and for that, drivers are also needed.

Phones and secrecy

Bruni initially said Monday that cardinals would be asked to leave their mobile phones at their Vatican residence, Santa Marta, but that they wouldn't be confiscated.

But hours later, at an evening briefing, he said that they would hand their phones over at Santa Marta and only get them back at the end of the conclave.

But, he added, the matter goes "beyond just technical questions," but is a "process united also with prayer, with meditation, with thought about who the person could be whom the Lord has identified as the pope of Rome."

The Vatican also plans to use signal jamming around the Sistine Chapel and the residences to prevent electronic surveillance or communication outside the conclave, with the Vatican gendarmes overseeing the security measures.

The oath

The provisions for the oath-taking are laid down in Vatican law.

St. John Paul II rewrote the regulations on papal elections in a 1996 document that remains largely in force, though Pope Benedict XVI amended it twice before he resigned in 2013. He tightened the oath of secrecy, making clear that anyone who reveals what went on inside the conclave faces automatic excommunication.

Under John Paul's rules, excommunication was always a possibility, but Benedict made it explicit.

Those taking the oath now declare that they "promise and swear that, unless I should receive a special faculty given expressly by the newly elected pontiff or by his successors, I will observe absolute and perpetual secrecy with all who are not part of the College of Cardinal electors concerning all matters directly or indirectly related to the ballots cast and their scrutiny for the election of the Supreme Pontiff.

"I likewise promise and swear to refrain from using any audio or video equipment capable of recording anything which takes place during the period of the election within Vatican City, and in particular anything which in any way, directly or indirectly, is related to the process of the election itself.

"I take this oath fully aware that an infraction thereof will incur the penalty of automatic excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See. So help me God and these Holy Gospels, which I touch with my hand."

A final appeal for victims

As the Vatican prepared for the conclave, its child protection advisory commission on Monday urged

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cardinals to prioritize the clergy sexual abuse issue, saying the Catholic Church's very credibility depends on accountability, transparency and justice for victims.

The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors is a Vatican department created by Pope Francis to advise the church on best practices to fight abuse. Made up of clergy and lay experts, the commission issued a call to prayer to the cardinals who are meeting in Rome this week before entering into the conclave on Wednesday.

"Let no concern of scandal obscure the urgency of truth," the text said. "Let no consideration for reputation impede our paramount responsibility to take action on behalf of those who have been abused."

The abuse scandal has badly compromised the Catholic hierarchy's credibility in many countries around the world, with revelations of decades of abuse and cover-up by bishops and religious superiors. Francis and before him Pope Benedict XVI took some steps to address the scandal, but a culture of impunity still reigns, there is no transparency from the Vatican about cases, and victims say the very process the church has put in place to deal with allegations is often retraumatizing.

The statement acknowledged the harm the scandal has done to the church's reputation and said the cardinals bear a responsibility to victims. "The church's credibility depends on real accountability, transparency, and action rooted in justice," it said.

The commission's president, Cardinal Sean O'Malley, is participating in the pre-conclave discussions but will not be voting in the election itself because he is over the age limit of 80.

Israel plans to seize Gaza under a new plan, officials say

By TIA GOLDENBERG and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel approved plans Monday to seize the Gaza Strip and to stay in the Palestinian territory for an unspecified amount of time, two Israeli officials said, a move that, if implemented, would vastly expand Israel's operations there and likely draw fierce international opposition.

The new plan, which was approved in an early morning vote by Israeli Cabinet ministers, also calls for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to move to Gaza's south. That would likely amount to their forcible displacement and exacerbate an already dire humanitarian crisis.

Details of the plan were not formally announced, and its exact timing and implementation were not clear. Its approval came hours after the Israeli military chief said the army was calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers. The plan may be another measure by Israel to try to pressure Hamas into making concessions in ceasefire negotiations.

A third person, a defense official, said the new plan would not begin until after U.S. President Donald Trump wraps up his expected visit to the Middle East this month, allowing for the possibility that Israel might agree to a ceasefire in the meantime. All three officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing military plans.

Later Monday, the Israeli military targeted Houthi rebels in Yemen's Red Sea city of Hodeida with a punishing round of airstrikes. The strikes came a day after the Iranian-backed rebels launched a missile that hit Israel's main airport. The rebels' media office said at least six strikes hit the Hodeida port. Other strikes hit a cement factory, the rebels said.

Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 after a decades-long occupation and then imposed a blockade on the territory along with Egypt. Capturing and potentially occupying the territory again for an indefinite period would not only further dash hopes for Palestinian statehood, it would embed Israel inside a population that is deeply hostile to it and raise questions about how Israel plans to govern the territory, especially at a time when it is considering how to implement Trump's vision to take over Gaza.

Since Israel ended a ceasefire with the Hamas militant group in mid-March, Israel has unleashed fierce strikes on the territory that have killed hundreds. It has captured swaths of territory and now controls roughly 50% of Gaza. Before the truce ended, Israel halted all humanitarian aid into the territory, including food, fuel and water, setting off what is believed to be the worst humanitarian crisis in nearly 19 months of war.

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The war began when Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel, killing 1,200 people and taking about 250 hostages. Israel says 59 captives remain in Gaza, although about 35 are believed to be dead.

Israel's offensive has displaced more than 90% of Gaza's population and, Palestinian health officials say, killed more than 52,000 people there, many of them women and children. The officials do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count.

At least 42 people were killed by Israeli strikes from Sunday through Monday afternoon, according to hospitals and the Palestinian Health Ministry in Gaza. The Israeli military offered no immediate comment on the strikes.

Israel is trying to ratchet up pressure on Hamas

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday cabinet ministers had decided on a "powerful operation in Gaza," including "a movement of the population to protect it."

The plan also imposes Israeli control over aid distribution. Israel accuses Hamas of diverting aid for its own use or to distribute to strengthen its rule in Gaza, though Israel has not provided evidence. A spokesman for the U.N. humanitarian office, Jens Laerke, denied there was significant diversion of aid, saying the U.N. employs "a solid system to monitor and prevent" such theft.

The officials said Israel was in touch with several countries about Trump's plan to take over Gaza and relocate its population, under what Israel has termed "voluntary emigration." That proposal has drawn widespread condemnation, including from Israel's allies in Europe, and rights groups have warned it could be a war crime under international law.

For weeks, Israel has been trying to ratchet up pressure on Hamas to get the group to agree to its terms in ceasefire negotiations. But the measures do not appear to have moved Hamas away from its negotiating positions.

The previous ceasefire was meant to lead the sides to negotiate an end to the war, but that has remained elusive. Israel says it will not agree to end the war until Hamas' governing and military capabilities are dismantled. Hamas, meanwhile, has sought an agreement that winds down the war without agreeing to disarm.

Israel's expansion announcement angered families of hostages who fear that any extension of the conflict endangers their loved ones. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum, which supports families, urged Israel's decision-makers to prioritize the hostages and secure a deal quickly.

At a Knesset committee meeting Monday, Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is being held hostage, called on soldiers "not to report for reserve duty for moral and ethical reasons."

Some reservists have indicated they will refuse to serve in a war they increasingly view as politically motivated.

Israel wants to prevent Hamas from handling aid

The defense official said the plan would "separate" Hamas from the aid by using private firms and by using specified areas secured by the Israeli military. The official added that Palestinians would be screened to prevent Hamas from accessing the aid.

According to a memo circulated among aid groups and seen by The Associated Press, Israel told the United Nations that it will use private security companies to control aid distribution in Gaza. The U.N., in a statement Sunday, said it would not participate in the plan as presented, saying it violates its core principles.

The memo summarized a meeting between the Israeli defense body in charge of coordinating aid to Gaza, called COGAT, and the U.N. It was written by a group briefed on the meeting and sent Sunday to aid organizations.

According to the memo, under COGAT's plan, all aid will enter Gaza through the Kerem Shalom crossing, on approximately 60 trucks daily, and be distributed directly to people. Some 500 trucks entered Gaza every day before the war.

The memo said that facial-recognition technology will be used to identify Palestinians at logistics hubs and text message alerts will notify people in the area that they can collect aid.

COGAT did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

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The UN accuses Israel of wanting to control aid as a 'pressure tactic'

After Israel said it was going to assert more control over aid distribution in Gaza, the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs sent an email to aid groups, urging them to reject any "draconian restrictions on humanitarian work."

The email, which OCHA sent Monday to aid groups and was shared with the AP, further stated that there are mechanisms in place to ensure aid is not diverted.

Earlier, OCHA said in a statement that the plan would leave large parts of the population, including the most vulnerable, without supplies. It said the plan "appears designed to reinforce control over life-sustaining items as a pressure tactic — as part of a military strategy."

Aid groups have said they are opposed to using any armed or uniformed personnel to distribute aid that could potentially intimidate Palestinians or put them at risk.

Hamas decried Israel's efforts to control distribution of humanitarian aid in Gaza as a violation of international law.

In a statement Monday, the militant group said the effort is "an extension of the starvation policy" adopted by the Israeli government in Gaza.

Army pausing helicopter flights near Washington airport after close calls

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Army is pausing helicopter flights near a Washington airport after two commercial planes had to abort landings last week because of an Army Black Hawk helicopter that was flying to the Pentagon.

The commander of the 12th Aviation Battalion directed the unit to pause helicopter flight operations around Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport following Thursday's close calls, two Army officials confirmed to The Associated Press on Monday. One official said the flights have been paused since Friday.

The pause comes after 67 people died in January when a passenger jet collided in midair with a Black Hawk helicopter at Reagan airport.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity to provide details that were not publicly announced. The unit is continuing to fly in the greater Washington, D.C., region.

The unit had begun a return to flight within the last week, with plans to gradually increase the number of flights over the next four weeks, according to an Army document viewed by the AP.

Thursday's close call involved a Delta Air Lines Airbus A319 and a Republic Airways Embraer E170, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

They were instructed by air traffic control to "perform go-arounds" because of a "priority air transport" helicopter, according to an emailed statement from the Federal Aviation Administration.

The priority air transport helicopters of the 12th battalion provide transport service to top Pentagon officials. It was a Black Hawk priority air transport known as PAT25 that collided with the passenger jet in midair in January.

That crash was the worst U.S. midair disaster in more than two decades. In March, the FAA announced that helicopters would be prohibited from flying in the same airspace as planes near Reagan airport.

The NTSB and FAA are both investigating the latest close call with an Army helicopter.

The Army said after the latest incident that the UH-60 Blackhawk was following published FAA flight routes and air traffic control from Reagan airport when it was "directed by Pentagon Air Traffic Control to conduct a 'go-around,' overflying the Pentagon helipad in accordance with approved flight procedures."

But helicopter traffic remains a concern around that busy airport. The FAA said that three flights that had been cleared for landing Sunday at Reagan were ordered to go around because a police helicopter was on an urgent mission in the area. All three flights landed safely on their second approaches.

The NTSB said after the January crash that there had been an alarming number of close calls near Reagan in recent years, and the FAA should have acted sooner.

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Investigators have highlighted 85 close calls around Reagan airport in the three years before the crash that should have signaled a growing safety problem. FAA officials said they did analyze every close call but missed the alarming trend.

Since then, the FAA launched a review of data at airports nationwide with heavy helicopter traffic that identified safety concerns at the Las Vegas airport related to all the helicopter tours there. That review is ongoing.

Reuters first reported the pause in Army helicopter flights.

In New Jersey on Monday, flight delays and cancellations persisted at Newark Liberty International Airport. The FAA attributed arriving flight delays of nearly four hours to a combination of an air traffic controller shortage, thick cloud cover and antiquated air traffic control equipment that needs to be upgraded.

Romanian premier resigns after his coalition's candidate fails to advance in presidential runoff

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — Romanian Prime Minister Marcel Ciolacu announced his resignation on Monday, a day after the governing coalition's joint candidate failed to advance to the runoff in the closely watched rerun of the presidential election.

The coalition's candidate, Crin Antonescu, was third in Sunday's first round, far behind top finisher hard-right nationalist George Simion and pro-Western reformist Bucharest Mayor Nicusor Dan.

"Rather than let the future president replace me, I decided to resign myself," the prime minister told reporters after a meeting at the headquarters of his Social Democratic Party, or PSD.

Sunday's rerun underscored strong anti-establishment sentiment among Romanians and signaled a power shift away from traditional mainstream parties. It also renewed the political turmoil that has gripped the European Union and NATO member country.

The rerun took place months after a top court annulled the previous race following allegations of electoral violations and Russian interference, which Moscow has denied. The unprecedented decision plunged Romania into its worst political crisis in decades.

The prime minister had said one aim of forming the coalition last December — after the failed election — was to field a common candidate to win the presidency. After Sunday's vote, he said, the coalition now "lacks any credibility." It is made up of the leftist PSD, the center-right National Liberal Party, the small ethnic Hungarian UDMR party and national minorities.

Ciolacu said his party would not officially support either candidate in the final presidential vote on May 18. "Every PSD supporter will vote as they wish, according to their own conscience," he said.

An interim prime minister will be selected from the current Cabinet of ministers and appointed by interim President Ilie Bolojan, who noted Ciolacu's resignation and is expected to make an appointment on Tuesday.

Sunday's vote was the second time in Romania's post-communist history, including the voided election cycle, that the PSD party did not have a candidate in the second round of a presidential race.

As in many EU countries, anti-establishment sentiment is running high in Romania, fueled by high inflation, a large budget deficit and a sluggish economy. Observers say the malaise has bolstered support for nationalist and far-right figures like Calin Georgescu, who won the first round in the canceled presidential election. He is under investigation and barred from the rerun.

Cristian Andrei, a Bucharest-based political consultant, says Ciolacu may have resigned to give his party "negotiation options" for a future coalition after the runoff.

"The decision can defuse some anti-coalition sentiment before the presidential runoff," he said, but added that any negotiations to form a new Cabinet would "increase the sentiment that the older political parties are struggling to keep control of power."

Simion, the 38-year-old frontrunner in Sunday's vote and the leader of the Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, will face Dan in a runoff that could reshape the country's geopolitical direction.

In 2019, Simion founded the AUR party, which rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election by proclaiming to stand for "family, nation, faith, and freedom." It has since become Romania's second-largest party in the legislature.

Dan, a 55-year-old mathematician and former anti-corruption activist who founded the Save Romania Union party in 2016, ran on a pro-EU ticket. He told the media early Monday that "a difficult second round lies ahead, against an isolationist candidate."

Iran's top diplomat in Pakistan to mediate in the escalation with India over the Kashmir attack

By MUNIR AHMED and MUHAMMAD YOUSAF Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Iran's foreign minister held talks with top Pakistani officials on Monday to try and mediate in the escalation between Islamabad and New Delhi after last month's deadly attack on tourists in the Indian-controlled part of Kashmir, as the United Nations urged both sides to exercise restraint.

Abbas Araghchi's visit to Islamabad was the first by a foreign dignitary since tensions flared in the wake of the April 22 massacre of 26 people, most of them Indian Hindu tourists, in the town of Pahalgam, which India blames on Pakistan. Islamabad denies the accusation.

A call for restraint

Tehran has offered to help ease tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

Araghchi held separate meetings with President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who thanked him for his peace efforts, according to government statements. Araghchi will visit India this week, according to Pakistani state-run media.

Antonio Guterres, the U.N. Secretary General, also urged both sides later Monday to exercise restraint: "Make no mistake: A military solution is no solution," he told reporters.

"Now is the time for maximum restraint and stepping back from the brink," Guterres said. "The United Nations stands ready to support any initiative that promotes de-escalation, diplomacy, and a renewed commitment to peace."

Islamabad has offered to cooperate with an international investigation. India hasn't accepted the offer so far, and several world leaders have urged both sides to show restraint and avoid further escalation.

Trading accusations

Pakistan's military has been on high alert after Cabinet Minister Attaullah Tarar cited intelligence indicating that India could attack.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said in televised remarks Monday that Pakistan "will exercise full restraint, but if India takes any adventurous step, then we will give a befitting response."

According to a ministry statement, Dar, in talks with Araghchi, rejected what he described as India's attempts to implicate Pakistan in the Kashmir attack.

Dar had earlier welcomed mediation to defuse the tensions with India. Since last week, he said that he's spoken to more than a dozen foreign dignitaries, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

"We will not be the first to take any escalatory step," Dar said, adding that he had warned the international community should there be "any act of aggression by India, Pakistan will resolutely defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

He also accused the Indian air force of attempting to breach Pakistani airspace on April 29. Pakistan scrambled aircraft and forced Indian jets to turn back, he said. There was no immediate comment from India on those claims.

Pakistani Information Minister Attaullah Tarar led Monday a group of journalists to the mountain village of Bella Noor Shah, near Muzaffarabad — the main city in Pakistan-administered Kashmir — where he said that New Delhi had falsely claimed the presence of a militant training camp.

Residents of the village told reporters they had never seen any such camp in the area.

Meanwhile, Indian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal wrote on X that Russian President

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Vladimir Putin spoke with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday and "strongly condemned the terror attack in Pahalgam."

Pakistan test fires another short-range missile

Pakistan's military said Monday that it test fired a short-range missile, the second such test launch after a medium-range missile on Saturday.

The military said that the Fatah surface-to-surface missile has a range of 120 kilometers (75 miles) and was launched from an undisclosed location. Such missiles are never fired toward India, and usually end up reaching the Arabian Sea or the deserts of southern Balochistan province

A region split between nuclear-armed rivals

Kashmir is split between India and Pakistan and claimed by both in its entirety. The two countries have fought two of their three wars over the Himalayan region and their ties have been shaped by conflict, aggressive diplomacy and mutual suspicion, mostly because of their competing claims over Kashmir.

Militants in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir have been fighting New Delhi's rule since 1989. Many Muslim Kashmiris support the rebels' goal of uniting the territory, either under Pakistani rule or as an independent country.

Mushaal Hussein, the wife of a top Kashmiri rebel leader, Mohammed Yasin Malik, accused India of falsely implicating Pakistan in the attack on tourists. She made her remarks Monday after attending a flag-lowering ceremony, a dramatic daily show of strength on both sides of the border. Malik, who is imprisoned in India on terror charges, married her in Pakistan in 2009.

A diplomatic tit-for-tat

The latest flare-up led the two countries to expel each other's diplomats and nationals, as well as the shuttering of airspace.

Dar, Pakistan's foreign minister, denounced India's unilateral decision to suspend a water-sharing treaty.

In the town of Akhnoor in Indian-controlled Kashmir, where the Chenab River flows into Pakistan, residents said that water levels were so low, people could walk across the river on Monday.

"I have never seen this river dry in my life," said 55-year-old farmer Bal Krishan, adding that he agreed with "Modi's decision to suspend the treaty and punish" Pakistan.

There was no immediate comment from officials.

Tourist boats capsize in sudden storm in southwest China, leaving 10 dead

BEIJING (AP) — Four boats capsized in a sudden storm at a tourist spot in southwestern China, killing 10 people, state media said Monday.

More than 80 people fell into a river when strong winds hit the scenic area in Guizhou province late Sunday afternoon, state broadcaster CCTV said.

The boats capsized after a sudden rain and hail storm on the upper reaches of the Wu River, a tributary of the Yangtze, China's longest river. In one video shared by state media, a man could be seen performing CPR on another person, while one of the vessels drifted upside down.

Initial reports said two tourist boats had capsized, but state media said on Monday that four boats were involved. The other two boats had no passengers, and the seven crew members were able to save themselves, CCTV said.

Guizhou's mountains and rivers are a major tourism draw, and many Chinese were traveling during a five-day national holiday that ended Monday.

Chinese President Xi Jinping called for all-out efforts to find the missing and care for the injured, the official Xinhua News Agency said on Sunday. Seventy people were sent to a hospital, most with minor injuries.

Noting a recent series of fatal accidents, Xi underscored the importance of strengthening safety at tourist attractions, large public venues and residential communities, as well as for the rush of people returning at the end of major holidays.

CCTV said the capsized boats had a maximum capacity of about 40 people each and were not overloaded.

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An eyewitness told state-owned Beijing News the waters were deep but that some people had managed to swim to safety. However, the storm had come suddenly and a thick mist obscured the surface of the river.

Trump threatens a 100% tariff on foreign-made films, saying the movie industry in the US is dying

By JILL COLVIN and JAKE COYLE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is opening a new salvo in his tariff war, targeting films made outside the U.S.

In a post Sunday night on his Truth Social platform, Trump said he has authorized the Department of Commerce and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to slap a 100% tariff “on any and all Movies coming into our Country that are produced in Foreign Lands.”

“The Movie Industry in America is DYING a very fast death,” he wrote, complaining that other countries “are offering all sorts of incentives to draw” filmmakers and studios away from the U.S. “This is a concerted effort by other Nations and, therefore, a National Security threat. It is, in addition to everything else, messaging and propaganda!”

The White House said Monday that it was figuring out how to comply with the president’s wishes.

“Although no final decisions on foreign film tariffs have been made, the Administration is exploring all options to deliver on President Trump’s directive to safeguard our country’s national and economic security while Making Hollywood Great Again,” said spokesperson Kush Desai.

It’s common for both large and small films to include production in the U.S. and in other countries. Big-budget movies like the upcoming “Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning,” for instance, are shot around the world.

Incentive programs for years have influenced where movies are shot, increasingly driving film production out of California and to other states and countries with favorable tax incentives, like Canada and the United Kingdom.

Yet Trump’s tariffs are designed to lead consumers toward American products. And in movie theaters, American-produced movies overwhelmingly dominate the domestic marketplace.

China has ramped up its domestic movie production, culminating in the animated blockbuster “Ne Zha 2” grossing more than \$2 billion this year. But even then, its sales came almost entirely from mainland China. In North America, it earned just \$20.9 million.

In New Zealand, where successive governments have offered rebates and incentives in recent years to draw Hollywood films to the country, the film industry has generated billions of dollars in tourism revenue driven by the “Lord of the Rings” and “Hobbit” films, which featured the country’s pristine and scenic vistas. More recently, the blockbuster “Minecraft” movie was filmed entirely in New Zealand, and U.S. productions in 2023 delivered \$1.3 billion New Zealand dollars (\$777 million) to the country in return for NZ\$200 million in subsidies, according to government figures.

New Zealand Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said he was awaiting more details of Trump’s measures before commenting on them but would continue to pitch to filmmakers abroad, including in India’s Bollywood. “We’ve got an absolutely world class industry,” he said. “This is the best place to make movies, period, in the world.”

The Motion Picture Association, which represents major U.S. film studios and streaming services, didn’t immediately respond to messages Sunday evening.

The MPA’s data shows how much Hollywood exports have dominated cinemas. According to the MPA, the American movies produced \$22.6 billion in exports and \$15.3 billion in trade surplus in 2023.

Trump, a Republican, has made good on the “tariff man” label he gave himself years ago, slapping new taxes on goods made in countries around the globe. That includes a 145% tariff on Chinese goods and a 10% baseline tariff on goods from other countries, with even higher levies threatened.

By unilaterally imposing tariffs, Trump has exerted extraordinary influence over the flow of commerce, creating political risks and pulling the market in different directions. There are tariffs on autos, steel and

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aluminum, with more imports, including pharmaceutical drugs, set to be subject to new tariffs in the weeks ahead.

Trump has long voiced concern about movie production moving overseas.

Shortly before he took office, he announced that he had tapped actors Mel Gibson, Jon Voight and Sylvester Stallone to serve as "special ambassadors" to Hollywood to bring it "BACK — BIGGER, BETTER, AND STRONGER THAN EVER BEFORE!"

U.S. film and television production has been hampered in recent years, with setbacks from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hollywood guild strikes of 2023 and the recent wildfires in the Los Angeles area. Overall production in the U.S. was down 26% last year compared with 2021, according to data from ProdPro, which tracks production.

The group's annual survey of executives, which asked about preferred filming locations, found no location in the U.S. made the top five, according to the Hollywood Reporter. Toronto, the U.K., Vancouver, Central Europe and Australia came out on top, with California placing sixth, Georgia seventh, New Jersey eighth and New York ninth.

The problem is especially acute in California. In the greater Los Angeles area, production last year was down 5.6% from 2023 according to FilmLA, second only to 2020, during the peak of the coronavirus pandemic. Last, October, Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, proposed expanding California's Film & Television Tax Credit program to \$750 million annually, up from \$330 million.

Other U.S. cities like Atlanta, New York, Chicago and San Francisco have also used aggressive tax incentives to lure film and TV productions. Those programs can take the form of cash grants, as in Texas, or tax credits, which Georgia and New Mexico offer.

"Other nations have been stealing the movie-making capabilities from the United States," Trump told reporters at the White House on Sunday night after returning from a weekend in Florida. "If they're not willing to make a movie inside the United States we should have a tariff on movies that come in."

Federal Reserve likely to defy Trump, keep rates unchanged this week

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve will likely keep its key short-term interest rate unchanged on Wednesday, despite weeks of harsh criticism and demands from President Donald Trump that the Fed reduce borrowing costs.

After causing a sharp drop in financial markets two weeks ago by saying he could fire Fed Chair Jerome Powell, Trump subsequently backed off and said he had no intention of doing so. Still, he and Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent have said the Fed should cut rates.

They argue that inflation has steadily cooled and high borrowing costs are no longer needed to restrain price increases. The Fed sharply ramped up its short-term rate in 2022 and 2023 as pandemic-era inflation spiked.

Separately, Elon Musk, the head of Trump's Department of Government Efficiency, last Wednesday suggested that DOGE should look more closely at the Fed's spending on its facilities.

The heightened scrutiny shows that even as the Trump administration backs off its threats to fire Powell, the Fed is still subject to unusually sharp political pressures, despite its status as an independent agency.

Even so, the Fed will almost certainly leave its key rate unchanged at about 4.3% when it meets Tuesday and Wednesday. Powell and many of the other 18 officials that sit on the Fed's rate-setting committee have said they want to see how Trump's tariffs affect the economy before making any moves.

Trump, however, on Friday said on the social media platform Truth Social that there is "NO INFLATION" and claimed that grocery and egg prices have fallen, and that gas has dropped to \$1.98 a gallon.

That's not entirely true: Grocery prices have jumped 0.5% in two of the past three months and are up 2.4% from a year ago. Gas and oil prices have declined — gas costs are down 10% from a year ago — continuing a longer-running trend that has continued in part because of fears the economy will weaken.

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Still, AAA says gas prices nationwide average \$3.18 a gallon.

Inflation did drop noticeably in March, an encouraging sign, though in the first three months of the year it was 3.6%, according to the Fed's preferred gauge, well above its 2% target.

Without tariffs, economists say it's possible the Fed would soon reduce its benchmark rate, because it is currently at a level intended to slow borrowing and spending and cool inflation. Yet the Fed can't now cut rates with Trump's broad tariffs likely to raise prices in the coming months.

Vincent Reinhart, chief economist at BNY, said that the Fed is "scarred" by what happened in 2021, when prices rose amid supply snarls and Powell and other Fed officials said the increase would likely be "transitory." Instead, inflation soared to a peak of 9.1% in June 2022.

This time they will be more cautious, he said.

"That's a Fed that is going to have to wait for evidence and be slow to adjust on that evidence," Reinhart said.

Plus, Trump's badgering of Powell makes it harder for the Fed chair to cut rates because doing so anytime soon would be seen as knuckling under to the White House, said Preston Mui, an economist at Employ America.

"You could imagine a world where there isn't pressure from the Trump administration and they cut rates ... sooner, because they feel comfortable making the argument that they're doing so because of the data," he said.

For his part, Powell said last month that tariffs would likely push up inflation and slow the economy, a tricky combination for the Fed. The central bank would typically raise rates — or at least keep them elevated — to fight inflation, while it would cut them to spur the economy if unemployment rose.

Powell has said that the impact of the tariffs on inflation could be temporary — a one-time price increase — but most recently said it "could also be more persistent." That suggests that Powell will want to wait, potentially for months, to ensure tariffs don't sustainably raise inflation before considering a rate cut.

Some economists forecast the Fed won't cut rates until its September meeting, or even later.

Yet Fed officials could move sooner if the tariffs hit the economy hard enough to cause layoffs and push up unemployment. Wall Street investors appear to expect such an outcome — they project that the first cut will occur in July, according to futures pricing.

Separately, Musk criticized the Fed Wednesday for spending \$2.5 billion on an extensive renovation of two of its buildings in Washington, D.C.

"Since at the end of the day, this is all taxpayer money, we should certainly look to see if indeed the Federal Reserve is spending \$2.5 billion on their interior designer," Musk said. "That's an eyebrow raiser."

Fed officials acknowledge that the cost of the renovations have risen as prices for building materials and labor have spiked amid the post-pandemic inflation. And former Fed officials, speaking on background, say that local regulations forced the Fed to do more of the expansion underground, rather than making the buildings taller, which added to the cost.

Meanwhile, Kevin Warsh, a former Fed governor and a potential candidate to replace Powell as chair when Powell's term expires next year, said recently that the Fed has attracted greater scrutiny because of its failure to keep prices in check.

"The Fed's current wounds are largely self-inflicted," he said in a speech during an International Monetary Fund conference in late April, in which he also slammed the Fed for participating in a global forum on climate change. "A strategic reset is necessary to mitigate losses of credibility, changes in standing, and most important, worse economic outcomes for our fellow citizens."

Powell, for his part, said last month that "Fed independence is very widely understood and supported in Washington, in Congress, where it really matters."

In battle against transgender rights, Trump targets HUD's housing policies

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH and SALLY HO Associated Press

As a transgender man, the words "you're a girl" gutted Tazz Webster, a taunt hurled at him from the day he moved into his St. Louis apartment.

The government-subsidized building's manager also insisted on calling Webster by the wrong name, the 38-year-old said, and ridiculed him with shouts of, "You're not a real man!"

"I just felt like I was being terrorized," Webster told The Associated Press. "I felt that I was being judged and mistreated, like I was less of a human being."

Then one day in March 2022, the manager shoved Webster so hard he stumbled backward. After regaining his balance, Webster said he pushed the manager back. Four months later he was homeless.

Webster filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity office, the agency tasked with investigating housing discrimination and enforcing the landmark Fair Housing Act that guarantees equal access to housing for all Americans.

Webster's harassment allegation was serious enough that it was investigated for more than two years, until the office suddenly notified him in February it was dropping his case without a finding, citing lack of jurisdiction.

The timing of the closure was not a coincidence.

In the months since President Donald Trump took back the White House and installed a loyalist to lead the federal housing department, HUD Secretary Scott Turner and his team have moved swiftly and strategically to undo, uproot and remake the agency's decades of work and priorities.

In the crosshairs is an intense focus on transgender people, as HUD retreats from long-established fair-housing protections by closing their discrimination complaints and, more broadly, moving to undo the Obama-era Equal Access Rule that cemented transgender people's rights to discrimination protection in housing.

"It's time to get rid of all the far-left gender ideology and get government out of the way of what the Lord established from the beginning when he created man in his own image — male and female," Turner said in announcing in February that he was halting enforcement of the Equal Access Rule.

Sex discrimination in the Fair Housing Act

At issue is the fact that discrimination against LGBTQ+ people wasn't specifically cited in the Fair Housing Act. But the Equal Access Rule enacted in 2012 under former President Barack Obama further defined sex discrimination to include sexual orientation and gender identity.

The policy was expanded in 2016 to cover transgender people seeking help at federally funded emergency shelters, escalating opposition from the right.

In 2020, the first Trump administration unsuccessfully moved to relieve shelters of any obligation to serve transgender people. Now, advocates fear an emboldened Trump will go further and forbid shelters from accommodating gender identity altogether, as his administration announces unspecified revisions to the Equal Access Rule.

"Our protections can't be a pingpong ball that changes every four years," said Seran Gee, an attorney for Advocates for Trans Equality.

Everything Webster owned was trashed

After being left with permanent injuries in a car crash, Webster, who survives on disability payments, was grateful to move in April 2021 into an apartment near the city's 1,300-acre (526-hectare) Forest Park, scene of the 1904 World's Fair and home to museums and a zoo.

His rent was initially less than \$200 per month, he said. That is because Branscome Apartments had a contract with the federal government to provide subsidized housing to people with disabilities and low-income seniors.

But the HUD money also comes with strings, said Linda Morris, staff attorney for the ACLU's Women's Rights Project, who leads the organization's housing discrimination work.

"The Equal Access Rule applies to HUD-funded programs and shelters," said Morris, who doesn't repre-

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sent Webster. "If an entity is going to accept federal funding they have to comply."

Under the rule, HUD-funded housing and programs must provide equal access to everyone regardless of gender identity, and can't require intrusive questioning.

Four months after the shoving incident, Webster found his door kicked in and his belongings trashed, even though, he said, he was up to date on his rent and never received an official eviction notice.

Gone were his king-size bed, dishes, Social Security card and birth certificate. Even worse was the loss of the obituary for his mother, who died when he was 12, and her necklace, a treasured memento.

"I had nothing," said Webster, who had been mostly staying away from the apartment for fear of another run-in with the manager. "I was so afraid to be there, I would go to my friend's house and spent nights at a time and then come back, switch my clothes," and leave.

Court records in an eviction case filed against Webster in April 2022 cited repeated unsuccessful efforts to serve him. After he was gone, the case was dropped.

Last August, Webster filed a lawsuit in Missouri state court alleging he was illegally evicted.

"There was never a court order allowing them to change the locks, allowing them to throw away his belongings," said attorney KB Doman of Arch City Defenders, an advocacy group representing Webster.

The suit seeks \$25,000 in property damage and for "severe emotional stress and trauma." The apartment has denied the allegations in court filings.

Stephen Strum, the attorney representing the building, declined the AP's requests for comment on the HUD case and said the pending lawsuit "merely alleges that my client did not properly follow the steps for evicting."

To Doman, Webster's case reflects a larger trend.

"A lot of people that would have some recourse, at least through HUD investigating, really are just out on their own now," she said. "It's going to be harder for trans people to find safe, stable housing, and it's very hard already."

Closure of Webster's case is just one of many, HUD attorneys say

Since Turner took the helm at HUD, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity has instructed staff to pause investigations of all gender identity discrimination cases, according to two HUD attorneys who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of losing their jobs or benefits.

One said letters were then issued closing the cases for lack of jurisdiction. HUD has not disclosed how many cases have been dropped.

Webster's letter and another provided to the AP cite Trump's executive order calling for the federal government to define sex as only male or female.

Morris, of the ACLU, said she has never seen an executive order cited in a jurisdictional closure of a complaint.

"So that's really alarming," said Morris, who described the closures as "very much consistent with this administration's broader attacks on trans people and on civil rights more broadly."

Asked about policy changes concerning transgender discrimination, HUD spokesperson Kasey Lovett said the agency was enforcing the Fair Housing Act while implementing Trump's executive order "restoring biological truth to the federal government."

In a statement citing Trump's order, she said government policy recognizes two sexes that "are not changeable and are grounded in fundamental and incontrovertible reality."

'A nationwide federal push to erase trans identity'

Bea Gonzalez, a transgender man, was kicked out of a suburban St. Louis domestic violence shelter on a chilly night in November 2021, along with his three children, then 2, 5 and 7.

The family was just settling into a room after filling out paperwork at Bridgeway Behavioral Health Women's Center when Gonzalez was told they had to go because he disclosed he was a transgender man.

"I wasn't about to go back into the closet," the 33-year-old said of his insistence on telling the truth even after it was suggested he keep his trans identity secret.

He needed a domestic violence shelter, he said, for greater security for the children and because he feared for his safety as a trans man in a men's shelter, some of which don't accept children anyway.

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The city had no domestic violence shelters for men, said his attorney Kalila Jackson. "In the St. Louis metropolitan area, there was no place else for him to go. There were no other options."

The family was sent to a motel, but when they arrived they discovered it hadn't been paid for, and the organization that sent them there was closed. "So I was stranded," said Gonzalez, who did not have a car. "I had to call a friend who was able to let us stay for the night."

Jackson said Bridgeway received HUD funding and that its policy of barring transgender men was a violation of the Equal Access Rule and "straight up sex discrimination."

Jackson said the message the shelter sent was this: "You're biologically a girl, you should dress as a girl. Since you say that you are a man, we are not going to accept you here."

HUD didn't address Gonzalez's or Webster's complaints when the AP sought comment on their cases.

HUD investigated Gonzalez's complaint for 2 1/2 years until it suddenly notified him in March the agency was dropping it without a finding. The company operating the shelter, Preferred Family Healthcare, did not respond to the AP's requests for comment.

After 455 days of being shuttled between six shelters in six cities in two states — Missouri and Illinois — Gonzalez ultimately found stable housing, where his children live with him part time.

He sees what happened as part of what he describes as a "nationwide federal push to erase trans identity."

Shelters struggle to comply with Trump directives

Advocates are concerned by HUD's shift, noting high rates of discrimination — and homelessness — among people who are LGBTQ+.

Nearly one-third of trans people say they have been homeless at some point in their lives, while 70% who stayed in a shelter reported being harassed, assaulted or kicked out because of their gender identity, according to an Advocates for Trans Equality survey released in 2015, a year before Obama expanded protections for trans people in shelters.

Teens who come out to families who aren't accepting are particularly at risk, said Ann Oliva, CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness.

Some shelters that might have served them in the past are becoming less welcoming now amid upheaval with the Equal Access Rule, Oliva said.

"Folks who are trans just won't go if they don't think that they're going to be treated with respect," she said, adding that is particularly problematic for young people who are "vulnerable to sex traffickers and to other types of abuse."

Further complicating the situation are seemingly contradictory requirements in new HUD contracts with nonprofits that find permanent housing and run shelters for the homeless. One section stipulates they can't promote "gender ideology" while another requires compliance with anti-discrimination law, according to a copy provided to the AP.

Organizations say they are confused.

"What is promoting gender ideology? What does that mean?" asked Jeannette Ruffins, CEO of Home-ward NYC, a nonprofit that runs three permanent housing sites for LGBTQ+ young adults, as well as a homeless shelter.

"Does housing LGBTQ young adults promote gender identity?" she asked. "You know, they're coming to us. This is already their gender identity. Like I'm not promoting it."

Ruffins called a board meeting to discuss potential "vulnerabilities" on their website, something she said most New York City nonprofits were doing as well.

Her organization made small changes to their website, saying they were LGBTQ+ "affirming and friendly" in a few places rather than LGBTQ+ "serving," hoping that will make them less of a target.

In Memphis, Tennessee, a nonprofit that provides emergency shelter for transgender people is looking to increase capacity because of the uncertainty.

Kayla Gore, executive director of My Sistah's House, said it can do that because it doesn't take federal funding.

"People are confused," Gore said. "They don't know what to do because they want to protect their bottom line."

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'This is the world'

Nearly three years after losing his apartment, Webster remains homeless, staying with friends and sometimes sleeping on the floor.

He is on a waiting list for subsidized housing because he can't afford rent otherwise. But he expects the massive federal funding cuts and Trump administration directives banning diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives will make the wait even longer.

"Let's be honest. This is the world," he said. "People, they do hateful things. If you legalize them to hating, then they feel like they have a right."

Who is George Simion, a nationalist who topped polls in Romania's presidential redo?

By STEPHEN McGRATH Associated Press

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — George Simion, a nationalist and vocal supporter of U.S. President Donald Trump, won Romania's first-round presidential election redo by a landslide after capitalizing on widespread anti-establishment sentiment.

The 38-year-old leader of the hard-right Alliance for the Unity of Romanians, or AUR, will face a pro-Western reformist in a May 18 runoff that could reshape the European Union and NATO member country's geopolitical direction.

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

"For 35 years, the Romanian people lived the lie that we are a democratic country," Simion, who came fourth in last year's race and later backed Georgescu, told The Associated Press last week. "And now the people are awakening."

Who is George Simion?

Born in 1986 in Romania's eastern city of Focsani, Simion took a bachelor's degree in business and administration in Bucharest, and later a master's degree at a university in the northeastern city of Iasi researching communist-era crimes. He also became involved in soccer ultra groups.

He took part in civic activism, including joining a protest movement against a controversial gold mining project by a Canadian company in a mountainous western region of Romania that contains some of Europe's largest gold deposits. He also campaigned for reunification with neighboring Moldova.

In 2019, Simion founded the AUR party, which rose to prominence in a 2020 parliamentary election by proclaiming to stand for "family, nation, faith, and freedom," and has since doubled its support to become Romania's second largest party in the legislature. It opposes same-sex marriage and has close ties to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Simion supports Trump and told AP last week that the AUR party is "perfectly aligned with the MAGA movement," referring to the U.S. president's Make America Great Again movement.

What does the MAGA-style populist stand for?

Simion's political platform has been built on a fiercely anti-establishment agenda and populist rhetoric. During the COVID-19 pandemic, his party staged multiple protests against vaccination and lockdowns, capitalizing on a widespread distrust of the authorities.

He labelled the canceled election last year a "coup d'etat," and adopted stronger populist rhetoric and religious messaging to tap into Georgescu's electorate. He has branded Romania's current political system as a "hybrid regime" that failed to deliver democracy after the 1989 revolution toppled communism.

"They voted for the change, and they were not allowed to make this change," he told the AP. "This is why I'm running again as a duty towards democracy, towards the constitutional order, to restore the rule of law, to restore the will of the Romanian people."

A Simion presidency would pose unique foreign policy conundrums. His activities in Moldova led to an expulsion and multiple entry bans on allegations of trying to destabilize the country. He is also banned

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from entering neighboring Ukraine for “systemic anti-Ukrainian” activities. “It is in their interest to have good relations with us,” he said of the two countries.

In March, Simion sparked controversy after remarking during a protest that those responsible for barring Georgescu’s second bid for presidency should be “skinned in a public square,” prompting prosecutors to launch a criminal probe for inciting violence. He denied the accusation saying it was a political metaphor.

What is his stance on the EU and NATO?

Observers have long viewed him of being pro-Russian and warn that his presidency would undermine both Brussels and NATO as the war rages on in Ukraine. He refuted the accusations as a “smear campaign” by leftists and said Russia has been the “main threat” to Romania in the last 200 years and remains so today.

“This is why we need a strong NATO and we need troops on the ground in Romania, in Poland and in the Baltic states,” he said, although he was against sending further military aid to Ukraine.

“The danger is not who will be the next president of Romania but ... those who want to create a distance and to form two different opposing geopolitical blocs” between the European Union and the U.S., he said.

On the EU, Simion said, “We want more power to the 27 states, not toward the European institutions,” and that he is “totally aligned” with the position of Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who was the only EU head of government to attend Trump’s inauguration in January.

What do his critics say?

Siegfried Muresan, a Romanian member of the European Parliament, said Monday that a Simion presidency would be “bad news” for Romania and Europe, and accused the AUR leader of having “disdain for democratic processes.”

“George Simion is not a conservative politician. He is an anti-European extremist. His election would endanger Romania, threaten European stability, and serve as a strategic victory for Russia,” he said. “He offers no viable solutions to Romania’s challenges.”

For Claudiu Tufis, an associate professor of political science at the University of Bucharest, accusations that Simion is extremist or pro-Russian are overblown. He says a Simion presidency could look similar to Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who has long been a thorn in the side of Brussels.

“My main criticism has to do first with his values. He’s a strong opponent of any sort of what people are considering to be identity politics, so he’s going to push back very hard on LGBT issues and gender issues,” Tufis told AP.

He added that Simion lacks a strong team to deal with major crises. “When it comes to dealing with geopolitical crisis, they are completely and utterly unprepared,” he said.

Former Abercrombie & Fitch CEO is ruled unfit for trial and ordered hospitalized

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal judge ruled Friday that the former CEO of Abercrombie & Fitch is not competent to stand trial on sex trafficking charges and ordered him hospitalized to see if his mental condition improves.

Michael Jeffries’ lawyers sought the ruling last month, writing in a letter filed in a New York federal court that the 80-year-old requires around-the-clock care because he has Alzheimer’s disease, Lewy body dementia and the “residual effects of a traumatic brain injury.”

The defense, as well as prosecutors, requested that Jeffries be placed in federal Bureau of Prisons custody so he can be hospitalized and receive treatment that might allow his criminal case to proceed.

“The court finds by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant is presently suffering from a mental disease or defect rendering him mentally incompetent to the extent that he is unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him or to assist properly in his defense,” Judge Nusrat Choudhury wrote in her decision.

She directed the attorney general’s office to place Jeffries in a hospital for up to four months.

Jeffries has been free on \$10 million bond since pleading not guilty in October to federal charges of sex

trafficking and interstate prostitution.

Prosecutors say he, his romantic partner and a third man used the promise of modeling jobs to lure men to drug-fueled sex parties in New York City, the Hamptons and other locations. The charges announced in October echo sexual misconduct accusations made in a civil case and the media in recent years.

In their letter, Jeffries' lawyers said at least four medical professionals concluded that their client's cognitive issues are "progressive and incurable" and that he will not "regain his competency and cannot be restored to competency in the future."

Jeffries left Abercrombie in 2014 after more than two decades at the helm. His partner, Matthew Smith, has also pleaded not guilty and remains out on bond, as has their co-defendant, James Jacobson.

The UN's top court dismisses Sudan's genocide case alleging the Emiratis funded RSF rebels

By MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The top United Nations court on Monday dismissed a case brought by Sudan accusing the United Arab Emirates of breaching the genocide convention by arming and funding the rebel paramilitary Rapid Support Forces in the deadly Sudanese civil war.

Judges found that the International Court of Justice lacked the authority to continue the proceedings. While both Sudan and the UAE are signatories to the 1948 genocide convention, the United Arab Emirates has a carveout to the part of the treaty that gives The Hague-based court jurisdiction.

"The violent conflict has a devastating effect, resulting in untold loss of life and suffering, in particular in West Darfur. The scope of the case before the court is, however, necessarily circumscribed by the basis of jurisdiction invoked in the application," Yuji Iwasawa, the court's president said, reading out the decision.

Both Sudan and the UAE are signatories to the 1948 genocide convention. The UAE, however, has a caveat to part of the treaty which legal experts said would make it unlikely that the case would proceed.

The UAE applauded the decision. "The court's finding that it is without jurisdiction affirms that this case should have never been brought forward," Reem Ketait, a senior official at the UAE's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told reporters after the hearing ended.

Around a dozen pro-Sudanese protestors gathered outside the court, shouting as Ketait spoke.

In March, Sudan asked the International Court of Justice for several orders, known as provisional measures, including telling the UAE to do all it could to prevent the killings and other crimes targeting the Masalit people. In a hearing last month the UAE argued the court had no jurisdiction.

Sudan descended into a deadly conflict in mid-April 2023 when long-simmering tensions between its military and rival paramilitary forces broke out in the capital, Khartoum, and spread to other regions.

Both the Rapid Support Forces and Sudan's military have been accused of abuses.

The UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula which is also a U.S. ally, has been repeatedly accused of arming the RSF, something it has strenuously denied despite evidence to the contrary.

From debate to dialogue: In a contentious era, 'Ethics Bowl' offers students a gentler alternative

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — A contrast:

At the National Speech and Debate Tournament, two high school students take the stage. The first articulates the position he has been assigned to defend — people should have a right to secede from their government — and why it is correct. Another student, assigned the opposite position, begins to systematically tear down her opponent's views.

A year later and 800 miles away, two teams of high school students convene at the University of North Carolina for the National High School Ethics Bowl finals. A moderator asks about the boundaries of discourse — when a public figure dies, how do you weigh the value and harm of critical commentary about their life?

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Teams have not been assigned positions. One presents their ideas. The opposing team asks questions that help everyone to think about the issue more deeply. No one attacks.

Many a young debater may learn the rhetorical skills to become a successful lawyer or politician, subduing an opponent through wit and wordplay. But are they learning skills that will make them better citizens of an increasingly complex and contentious republic?

In an age when many Americans are wondering whether it is still possible to have a principled, respectful disagreement over important issues, proponents of Ethics Bowl say it points the way.

Discussion replaces contentiousness

Ethics Bowl may resemble debate. After all, it's two teams discussing a controversial or difficult topic. But they are very different.

In Ethics Bowl, teams aren't assigned a specific position on an issue that they have to defend regardless of their beliefs. Instead, members are given cases to discuss and make their own decisions about what they consider the best position. Teams can, and often do, come to similar conclusions. It is — and this is important — OK for them to agree. Scoring is based on how deeply they explore the issues, including other viewpoints.

Robert Ladenson, who developed the Ethics Bowl as a college philosophy classroom exercise back in 1993 and went on to lead the Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl for decades, explains what he considers an ethical understanding of an issue in an oral history for the University of Illinois in 2023.

It means "having some capacity to view, from the inside, the ethical outlooks of people who disagree with you. That means not simply being aware of what they've said or what they've written, or being able to develop a nifty debaters' responses to the viewpoints they hold — but really looking inside the other view and trying to understand it from the other person's way of looking at the world."

It's a reach for understanding and common ground

That plays out at Ethics Bowl. Take the case "See Spot Clone," about whether it is ever ethical to clone a beloved pet.

Harpeth Hall from Nashville starts the discussion with six minutes to present their thoughts. There are millions of homeless pets, so the ethical choice is to adopt, they believe. Cloning is self-serving for the human. The pet cannot consent to being cloned. Also, cloning may involve unknown health issues for the cloned pet, as in the renowned case of Dolly the sheep. The team also believes that death is a part of life, and it is important for people to confront death.

Now it is the turn of team B, Miami's Archimedean Upper Conservatory — not to attack and refute, but to ask questions that expand the discussion. What about pet breeders? Where do they fit on the ethical continuum? Also, what's so wrong with cloning a pet for your own happiness? Are all selfish pursuits bad?

Team A responds that breeding is better than cloning but worse than adopting a stray. They point out that a cloned pet will not have the same personality, and that could bring the owner pain instead of comfort.

Next the judges ask questions. What if there were no possible health problems for the cloned animal? What if the animal is not cloned to comfort an owner but for a more noble purpose? Would it be ethical to clone a skilled search-and-rescue dog?

Cloning is still a threat to the "natural cycle of life," Team A contends. And there is no guarantee that the temperament and personality that make an excellent service animal would be retained in a clone.

Once the round is complete, the moderator introduces a new case.

Easy answers are avoided

In a society awash in shortcuts and simple solutions, simply setting the ground rules for contentious conversations can be a high hill to climb. At the Ethics Bowl, though, it's part of the point: The process of conversation is as important as the outcome. And subtlety matters.

A good Ethics Bowl case is one where "two well-meaning individuals can take in all of the same facts and information and come to diametrically opposite, value-driven answers," says Alex Richardson, who directed the National Bowl for five years.

The cases students grapple with include real-life scenarios pulled from the headlines, like the less-than-

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respectful response to the murder of United Healthcare CEO Brian Thompson. There are also more philosophical issues, like whether humans should pursue immortality. And there are dilemmas that teenagers deal with every day, like whether not posting on Instagram about a hate crime in your community makes you complicit.

That last case was a difficult one for the team from Harpeth Hall, they say, but it helped them clarify some of their thoughts around social media.

"We came to the conclusion that no one is obligated to share information," says Katherine Thomas. "But then there was a difference like when you're talking about Taylor Swift, when she actually could register 500,000 people to vote but she decides not to. Is she actually complicit in that? She has the actual power to make change, where I don't, really, with my 200 followers."

Another case considered whether to confront an uncle who makes sexist remarks at the dinner table. Discussing the issue with her Harpeth Hall teammates helped Thalia Vidalakis think through when it might be good to speak up and when "it's good to just be there for your family and recognize that there's going to be differences."

It unfolds in a low-key way

A group of teenagers sits at a table with sticker-covered water bottles and the occasional Red Bull. They are allowed only pens and blank paper, no previous notes, but their backpacks litter the room. Their opponents sit at a neighboring table. In between is a moderator. Facing them are three judges pulled from the UNC philosophy department, Ethics Bowl leaders from other states, even the community at large. There is no dress code, so the teens come in whatever they consider nice clothes.

The teams have been discussing a group of cases for weeks, but they don't know which they'll be asked about. Once the question is read, they are given a few minutes to discuss. That's when one or two of the teammates generally scurry around the table to huddle. Intense whispering and furious scribbling ensue.

It's clearly a contest. There is a winning team and a trophy. But students say it is not competitive in a traditional sense.

"We're all sad that it has to end. But I agree that it's not about beating people," says Lizzie Lyman, whose first-year team from Midtown High School in Atlanta lost in the semifinals of the national championship. "When it becomes about winning and beating the other team, it gets hostile and ... just unsavory. When it's about constructively answering a question and just having a really interesting, engaging conversation, that's where you get to have all these amazing conversations."

Competitiveness isn't only beside the point. It can even be counterproductive in achieving the desired goal. That's how Mae Bradford of the winning team BASIS Flagstaff from Arizona sees it. Her assessment: "Something that's rare and unique about Ethics Bowl is that those who don't focus on winning and instead focus on truth and respect and getting to the moral heart of the issue will win."

Changing minds, one kid at a time

Part of the point of the Ethics Bowl is to create well-rounded students who ingest other viewpoints and engage without arguing. A 2022 survey of participants in nationals found that 100% believed that their critical thinking skills had improved. A large majority said their ethical or political beliefs had changed.

There is clearly a thirst for a different kind of competition. The National High School Ethics Bowl is only 12 years old, and this year saw 550 teams competing in regional bowls around the country.

Sona Zarkou, also on the BASIS Flagstaff team, sees herself as a case study in Ethics Bowl benefits. When she practiced debate, she says, she was "kind of a jerk" — "very quick to attack and very rude" about opposing views. In Ethics Bowl she sees herself "turn the discussion to something a lot more respectful, a lot more truth-oriented."

Rhiannon Boyd, a judge at this year's competition as well as a high school teacher and coach and the organizer of the Virginia High School Ethics Bowl, has seen the positive changes as well. Two of her students last year were on opposite ends of the political spectrum. Their disagreement was great. Could they be on the same team together? In the end, both joined and made it all the way to nationals.

Their differing opinions remain. But now, Boyd says, they are "really good friends."

"They can see each other's strengths because they were sitting side by side at nationals in a huddle trying to build off of each other's ideas," she says. "They could see that leveraging those differences was actually the thing that made them strong."

Ethics Bowl: Lesson learned. ____

AP National Writer Allen G. Breed contributed to this report.

AP Analysis: Iran talks tough and launches missile all while seeking a new nuclear deal with the US

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran is talking tough — while still wanting to talk more with the United States over a possible nuclear deal.

In the last days, Tehran has backed an attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels that slipped through Israel's missile defenses to strike near Ben-Gurion International Airport. It aired footage of its own ballistic missile test while defense minister called out threats by U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth against the Islamic Republic. And an organization linked to its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard unveiled a new mural with a map of Israel overlaid by possible missile targets in the shape of a Yemeni jambiyya, an ornamental dagger worn by Yemeni men.

But all the while, Iran maintains it wants to reach a nuclear deal with the U.S. after talks scheduled to take place last weekend in Rome didn't happen. That's even as Trump administration officials continue to insist that Tehran must give up all its ability to enrich uranium in order to receive sanction relief — something Iran repeatedly has said is a nonstarter for the negotiations.

Israel-Hamas war changes equation for Iran

All this together can feel contradictory. But this is the position where Iran now finds itself after having been ascendant in the Mideast with its self-described "Axis of Resistance," countries and militant groups finding common cause against Israel and the U.S.

That changed with the attack by the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, which killed some 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage back to the Gaza Strip. Israel launched a devastating war on Hamas in Gaza that rages on even today — and may be further escalating after Israel approved plans Monday to capture the entire Gaza Strip and remain there for an unspecified amount of time. Israel's war has killed more than 52,000 people in Gaza, many of them women and children, according to Palestinian health officials, who do not distinguish between combatants and civilians in their count.

In the course of the war, Hamas, Lebanon's Hezbollah and other Iran-backed militants have been beaten back by Israeli attacks. Syrian President Bashar Assad, long backed by Iran, saw his family's over 50-year rule end in December as rebels swept the country.

That's left Iran with just Yemen's Houthi rebels, though they too now face an intensified campaign of strikes by the Trump administration.

Iran carefully applauds Houthi strike on Israel

The strike Sunday on Ben-Gurion repeatedly earned highlights in Iranian state media. However, Iran's Foreign Ministry made a point to insist that the attack had "been an independent decision" by the group.

Expert opinion varies on just how much influence Iran wields over the Houthis. However, Tehran has been instrumental in arming the Houthis over Yemen's decadelong war in spite of a United Nations arms embargo.

"The Yemeni people, out of their human feelings and religious solidarity with the Palestinians, and also to defend themselves in the face of continuous aggression by America, have taken some measures," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said Monday.

Meanwhile, Iranian Defense Minister Gen. Aziz Nasirzadeh called out comments by his American counterpart who had warned that Iran would "pay the CONSEQUENCE" for arming the Houthis with weapons.

"I advise the American threatening officials, especially the newcomer defense minister of the country, to

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read the history of Iran in the recent four decades," the general said. "If they read, they will notice that they should not speak to Iran using the language of threats."

Iran has not, however, responded to Israeli airstrikes targeting its air defenses and ballistic missile program in October.

Nuclear deal remains a top Iranian priority

But getting to a new nuclear deal with the U.S., which could see Tehran limit its enrichment and stockpile of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions, remains a priority for Iran. Its troubled rial currency, once over 1 million to \$1, has strengthened dramatically on just the talks alone to 840,000 to \$1.

The two sides still appear a long way from any deal, however, even as time ticks away. Iranian media broadly described a two-month deadline imposed by President Donald Trump in his initial letter sent to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Trump said he wrote the letter on March 5, which made it to Iran via an Emirati diplomat on March 12.

Meanwhile, the U.S. campaign on Yemen and Israel's escalation in Gaza continues to squeeze Tehran.

That's on top of American officials including Trump threatening sanctions on anyone who buys Iranian crude oil, as well as following a new, harder line saying Iran shouldn't be able to enrich uranium at all. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who strongly encouraged Trump to unilaterally withdraw American in 2018 from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, also has been pushing for the same.

Iran likely has been trying to get messages to America despite last weekend's planned talks in Rome being postponed. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi flew to Islamabad to meet his Pakistani counterpart, Ishaq Dar. A readout from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry acknowledged the men discussed the nuclear negotiations.

Araghchi got a colder reception from Kaja Kallas, the foreign policy chief of the European Union. While European nations have had warmer ties to Iran in the past, Tehran's arming of Russia in its war on Ukraine has angered many in the EU.

I called on Iran to stop military support to Russia and raised concerns over detained EU citizens and human rights," Kallas wrote Monday on the social platform X. "EU-Iran ties hinge on progress in all areas."

EPA announces broad reorganization that includes shuffle of scientific research

By MICHAEL PHILLIS Associated Press

The Environmental Protection Agency on Friday announced a broad reorganization as part of the Trump administration's drive to cut costs that some activists worry will harm the agency's independent scientific research.

Administrator Lee Zeldin announced changes that included creating a new unit within his office "to align research and put science at the forefront of the agency's rulemakings." He said the overall reorganization would boost efficiency and save at least \$300 million annually, though he didn't detail how the money would be saved.

Though Zeldin didn't mention it by name, some scientists and activists saw it as an attack on EPA's Office of Research and Development, which has long provided the scientific underpinnings for EPA's mission to protect the environment and human health. The agency said it would shift "its scientific expertise and research efforts to program offices" that focus on major issues like air and water.

Separately on Friday, President Donald Trump unveiled a proposed budget to cut that office's funding by \$235 million.

Trump's budget said the cut would put "an end to unrestrained research grants, radical environmental justice work, woke climate research, and skewed, overly-precautionary modeling that influences regulations — none of which are authorized by law."

Agency researchers have improved air pollution monitoring, found high levels of PFAS in drinking water sources, provided flood prevention resources and made more information available on chemical safety.

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EPA's possible plans to lay off as many as 1,155 staffers in the office — as much as three-fourths of its workers — became public in March. Those cuts are part of a broader push by Zeldin to cut EPA's budget by about two-thirds.

The Office of Research and Development has 10 facilities across the country. It was designed to be insulated from politics so it can produce essential science.

Camden Weber, climate and energy policy specialist at the Center for Biological Diversity, said, "is a textbook move from the authoritarian playbook."

"By gutting key institutions and driving away experts, this attack will endanger public health, clean air, and environmental progress, while undermining independent scientific research in America," Weber said.

"This is a reorganization, not a reduction in force," EPA spokeswoman Molly Vaseliou said.

Zeldin's announcement also included the creation of the Office of State Air Partnerships to work "with, not against" states and other agencies to handle plans for pollution reduction by states. The EPA has long had authority to impose its own plan if states were seen as not doing enough to cut pollution.

The EPA said that change would make sure states get consistent treatment no matter their geography.

"The problem is that some areas of the country have much worse air pollution, and it cannot be treated as a one-size-fits-all," said Kyla Bennett, director of science policy at the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a nonprofit that supports public employees who raise issues of environmental ethics or science integrity.

The new office for scientific review will be called the Office of Applied Science and Environmental Solutions. EPA said it would "gain more than 130" experts in science and other fields to complete long-delayed reviews of hundreds of chemicals and thousands of pesticides.

"When finalized, EPA expects to have staffing levels near those seen when President Ronald Reagan occupied the White House," Zeldin said.

EPA had about 15,000 employees before cuts began. The agency's employment during the Reagan years ranged from roughly 11,000 to around 14,400 people.

Trump says he's going to reopen Alcatraz prison. Doing so would be difficult and costly

By JILL COLVIN and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump says he is directing his government to reopen and expand Alcatraz, the notorious former prison on a hard-to-reach California island off San Francisco that has been closed for more than 60 years.

In a post on his Truth Social site Sunday evening, Trump wrote that, "For too long, America has been plagued by vicious, violent, and repeat Criminal Offenders, the dregs of society, who will never contribute anything other than Misery and Suffering. When we were a more serious Nation, in times past, we did not hesitate to lock up the most dangerous criminals, and keep them far away from anyone they could harm. That's the way it's supposed to be."

"That is why, today," he said, "I am directing the Bureau of Prisons, together with the Department of Justice, FBI, and Homeland Security, to reopen a substantially enlarged and rebuilt ALCATRAZ, to house America's most ruthless and violent Offenders."

Trump's directive to rebuild and reopen the long-shuttered penitentiary was the latest salvo in his effort to overhaul how and where federal prisoners and immigration detainees are locked up. But such a move would likely be an expensive and challenging proposition. The prison was closed in 1963 due to crumbling infrastructure and the high costs of repairing and supplying the island facility, because everything from fuel to food had to be brought by boat.

Bringing the facility up to modern-day standards would require massive investments at a time when the Bureau of Prisons has been shuttering prisons for similar infrastructure issues.

The prison — infamously inescapable due to the strong ocean currents and cold Pacific waters that

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surround it — was known as the “The Rock” and housed some of the nation’s most notorious criminals, including gangster Al Capone and George “Machine Gun” Kelly.

It has long been part of the cultural imagination and has been the subject of numerous movies, including “The Rock” starring Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage.

Still in the 29 years it was open, 36 men attempted 14 separate escapes, according to the FBI. Nearly all were caught or didn’t survive the attempt.

The fate of three particular inmates — John Anglin, his brother Clarence and Frank Morris — is of some debate and was dramatized in the 1979 film “Escape from Alcatraz” starring Clint Eastwood.

Alcatraz Island is now a major tourist site that is operate by the National Park Service and is a designated National Historic Landmark.

Trump, returning to the White House on Sunday night after a weekend in Florida, said he’d come up with the idea because of frustrations with “radicalized judges” who have insisted those being deported receive due process. Alcatraz, he said, has long been a “symbol of law and order. You know, it’s got quite a history.”

A spokesperson for the Bureau of Prisons said in a statement that the agency “will comply with all Presidential Orders.” The spokesperson did not immediately answer questions from The Associated Press regarding the practicality and feasibility of reopening Alcatraz or the agency’s role in the future of the former prison given the National Park Service’s control of the island.

Former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat whose district includes the island, questioned the feasibility of reopening the prison after so many years. “It is now a very popular national park and major tourist attraction. The President’s proposal is not a serious one,” she wrote on X.

The island serves as a veritable time machine to a bygone era of corrections. The Bureau of Prisons currently has 16 penitentiaries performing the same high-security functions as Alcatraz, including its maximum security facility in Florence, Colorado, and the U.S. penitentiary in Terre Haute, Indiana, which is home to the federal death chamber.

The order comes as Trump has been clashing with the courts as he tries to send accused gang members to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador, without due process. Trump has also floated the legally dubious idea of sending some federal U.S. prisoners to the Terrorism Confinement Center, known as CECOT.

Trump has also directed the opening of a detention center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to hold up to 30,000 of what he has labeled the “worst criminal aliens.”

The Bureau of Prisons has faced myriad crises in recent years and has been subjected to increased scrutiny after Jeffrey Epstein’s suicide at a federal jail in New York City in 2019. An AP investigation uncovered deep, previously unreported flaws within the Bureau of Prisons. AP reporting has disclosed widespread criminal activity by employees, dozens of escapes, chronic violence, deaths and severe staffing shortages that have hampered responses to emergencies, including assaults and suicides.

The AP’s investigation also exposed rampant sexual abuse at a federal women’s prison in Dublin, California. Last year, President Joe Biden signed a law strengthening oversight of the agency after AP reporting spotlighted its many flaws.

At the same time, the Bureau of Prisons is operating in a state of flux — with a recently installed new director and a redefined mission that includes taking in thousands of immigration detainees at some of its prisons and jails under an agreement with the Department of Homeland Security. The agency last year closed several facilities, in part to cut costs, but is also in the process of building a new prison in Kentucky.

Trump is swiftly undoing transgender protections in HUD’s housing policies

By SALLY HO and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

The Trump administration is swiftly remaking housing policy as the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development retreats from long-established fair-housing protections for transgender people.

In recent months, HUD has been targeting the Obama-era Equal Access Rule that expanded protections to include sexual orientation and gender identity. Also in the bull’s-eye are fair-housing complaint investi-

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gations and federally funded homeless shelters.

"This administration wants to pretend trans people don't exist," said Hannah Adams, a senior staff attorney at the National Housing Law Project. "Whatever they're doing is not in line with HUD's supposed mission to provide a safety net for families that are struggling in this country."

HUD said in a statement that it is upholding the landmark Fair Housing Act that guarantees equal access to housing for all Americans, as well as implementing what it called Trump's executive order "restoring biological truth to the federal government."

Here are key takeaways about how HUD is taking on the battle over transgender rights.

Defining LGBTQ+ rights in the Fair Housing Act

The Fair Housing Act identifies sex as one of seven protected classes for housing discrimination. But it wasn't until the Obama administration established the Equal Access Rule in 2012 that those protections were extended to cover sexual orientation, gender identity and marital status.

In 2016, the rule was expanded to include transgender people seeking help at federally funded emergency shelters.

Four years later, a 2020 Supreme Court ruling established that a landmark civil rights law protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment. Housing advocates and HUD in 2021 under the Biden administration interpreted that as broader affirmation that LGBTQ+ people were also protected in the fair housing law.

Kim Johnson, public policy manager at the National Low Income Housing Coalition, said transgender people experience homelessness at a disproportionately higher rate despite being less than 1% of the general population. The spirit of the Fair Housing Act is to protect everyone who is vulnerable to discrimination, she said, even if the text of the law does not explicitly include gender identity as a protected class.

"We really need to ensure we're upholding what the law means, and the fact is that transgender people are some of the most marginalized people in this country," Johnson said.

HUD drops housing discrimination cases

Since President Donald Trump appointed Scott Turner to take the helm at HUD, the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity has instructed staff to pause investigations of all gender identity discrimination cases, according to two HUD attorneys who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of losing their jobs or benefits.

One said letters were then issued closing the cases for lack of jurisdiction.

HUD has not disclosed how many cases have been dropped. A National Fair Housing Alliance report identified at least 195 discrimination complaints involving gender identity in 2023, though HUD has not specified how many cases are still outstanding.

With changes to the Equal Access rule and other guidance still unclear, what happens now often depends on where a case is filed. In blue states with laws offering protections beyond federal law, HUD can direct tenants facing LGBTQ+ discrimination to state-run offices still taking cases, said a HUD employee who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely discuss the hot-button topic.

To Sasha Samberg-Champion, HUD deputy general counsel in the Biden administration and now special counsel for civil rights at the National Fair Housing Alliance, "There is no public policy justification for permitting discrimination in the housing market against people because they are transgender. None."

Homeless shelters struggle to comply with Trump's directives

Community leaders say they're facing seemingly contradictory requirements in new HUD contracts with nonprofits that find permanent housing for the homeless and run shelters.

One section stipulates that nonprofits can't promote "gender ideology" while at the same time another requires compliance with anti-discrimination law, according to a copy provided to the AP.

In Memphis, Tennessee, a nonprofit that provides emergency shelter for transgender people is looking to increase capacity because of the uncertainty.

Kayla Gore, executive director of My Sistah's House, said it can do that because it doesn't take federal funding. But other shelters are removing information from their websites about serving the LGBTQ+ community, fearful that federal funding will be stripped if they don't, she said.

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"People are confused," Gore said. "They don't know what to do because they want to protect their bottom line."

Uncertain future for the Equal Access Rule

Soon after being sworn in as HUD secretary in February, Turner announced he was halting enforcement of the Equal Access Rule and quietly filed a proposal to revise the policy. HUD officials have declined to say what the proposed changes are.

In 2020, the first Trump administration unsuccessfully moved to relieve shelters of any obligation to accommodate transgender people.

With Trump back for a second term, advocates fear his administration will feel even more emboldened to go further and forbid shelters from accommodating gender identity altogether.

"Unfortunately, it's making an already vulnerable class of people more vulnerable," said Seran Gee, an attorney for Advocates for Trans Equality.

"Our protections can't be a pingpong ball that changes every four years."

Today in History: May 6

The Hindenburg crashes in flames in New Jersey

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, May 6, the 126th day of 2025. There are 239 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 6, 1937, the hydrogen-filled German airship Hindenburg caught fire and crashed while attempting to dock at Lakehurst, New Jersey; 35 of the 97 people on board and one crew member on the ground were killed.

Also on this date:

In 1882, President Chester Alan Arthur signed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which barred Chinese laborers from immigrating to the U.S. for 10 years. (The act would remain in effect until 1943.)

In 1889, the Eiffel Tower opened to the public as part of the Paris World's Fair.

In 1935, the Works Progress Administration was established under an executive order signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1954, medical student Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mile during a track meet in Oxford, England, finishing in 3:59.4.

In 1994, former Arkansas state worker Paula Jones filed a suit against President Bill Clinton, alleging he'd sexually harassed her in 1991. (Jones reached a settlement with Clinton in November 1998.)

In 1994, the Channel Tunnel connecting England and France beneath the English Channel was officially opened in a ceremony attended by Queen Elizabeth II and French president François Mitterrand.

In 2004, President George W. Bush apologized for the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by American soldiers at Abu Ghraib prison, calling it "a stain on our country's honor and reputation," but rejected calls for Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's resignation.

Today's Birthdays: Rock musician Bob Seger is 80. Country musician Jimmie Dale Gilmore is 80. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair is 72. TV host Tom Bergeron is 70. Actor Roma Downey is 65. Actor-director George Clooney is 64. Hockey Hall of Famer Martin Brodeur is 53. Actor Adrienne Palicki is 42. Actor Gabourey Sidibe (GA'-bah-ray SIH'-duh-bay) is 42. NBA point guard Chris Paul is 40. Actor-comedian Sasheer Zamata is 39. Rapper Meek Mill is 38. Actor-singer Naomi Scott is 32. WNBA forward Angel Reese is 23.