

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 1 of 74

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Fact Brief: Fact brief: Can out-of-state residents register their vehicles in South Dakota?](#)
- [5- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad](#)
- [6- Pennington County Fatal Crash](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: A South Dakota city is pioneering nurse apprenticeships for English-as-second-language residents](#)
- [8- SD SearchLight: Sioux Falls business leaders say region, state will weather the storm of tariff-related uncertainty](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: U.S. House panel debates FEMA's role, as Trump administration eyes 'top-down reform'](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: 'Kennedy Center slated for huge funding increase while local arts slashed under Trump plans](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Congressional budget agency projects sweeping Medicaid cutbacks in states under GOP plans](#)
- [15- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- Subscription Form](#)
- [21- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [22- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [23- News from the Associated Press](#)

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.

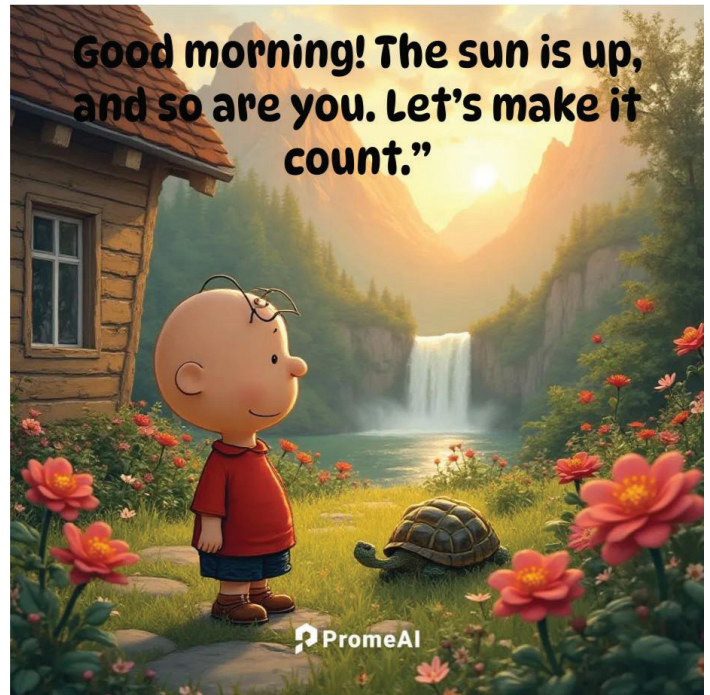
Friday, May 9

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.



Saturday, May 10

Sunday, May 11

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

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

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

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

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

High School Baseball in Groton: Hosting Sisseton-Britton-Webster: Varsity at 2 p.m. JV at 4 p.m.

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

© 2025 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 2 of 74

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.

USS Truman Troubles

A Navy fighter jet from the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier fell into the Red Sea following a failed landing Tuesday. The F/A-18F jet, valued at \$67M, was the second aircraft to fall from the carrier in eight days. All crew were reported safe in both instances, with one crew member sustaining minor injuries.

The Truman has been a key component in Operation Rough Rider, an air campaign ordered by President Donald Trump against Yemen's Houthi rebels in March in response to the Houthis' targeting of ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The US conducted more than 1,000 strikes, costing over \$1B in munitions, before an Oman-brokered ceasefire this week. US officials say Houthis did not strike either of the jets that fell into the sea.

Separately, the Houthis pledged to continue tit-for-tat strikes with Israel, which they say was not included in the ceasefire deal. Estimates reveal an Israeli strike on Yemen's international airport in Sanaa this week caused about \$500M in damage, leaving the airport out of service.

Interest Rates Unchanged

The Federal Reserve held benchmark interest rates steady yesterday for the third consecutive meeting, at a range of 4.25% to 4.5%. The central bank gave no indication of plans to lower rates in the coming months, rebuffing a call from President Donald Trump to spur economic activity with rate cuts (Fed 101).

Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell signaled uncertainty about the direction of the US economy amid the recent spate of tariffs. Powell seemed undecided on whether to prioritize tackling stubborn inflation with higher rates, or to lower rates in anticipation of a predicted economic slowdown. Inflation is expected to reach 3% this year, above the bank's goal of 2%; the US gross domestic product contracted by 0.3% last quarter.

US stock markets rose (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq +0.3%) after news of yesterday's outlook, and as the US prepared for highly anticipated trade talks with China later this week. The discussions will mark the first high-level interaction between the US and China since Trump's inauguration in January.

Disney Abu Dhabi

Disney announced yesterday it will build its seventh theme park. The resort—located in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates—will be Disney's first Middle Eastern attraction and will be built in partnership with UAE developer Miral. Disney did not provide a date for opening; design and build for past resorts have taken around seven years.

Roughly one-third of the world's population lives within a four-hour flight of the UAE, with 120 million people flying to or through the country each year. The resort will be located on Yas Island, a 9.7-square-mile tourist destination that also hosts SeaWorld and Warner Bros. World (a Harry Potter-themed park is under development). The island had 38 million visitors last year.

The announcement came on the heels of Disney's second-quarter earnings call. The experiences unit (including parks, cruises, and consumer products) saw 6% year-over-year revenue growth last quarter. The segment was responsible for 37% of the company's total revenue in FY 2024. Disney shares ended the day up 10.8%.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 3 of 74

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Paris Saint-Germain tops Arsenal to advance to UEFA Champions League Final (May 31) where they'll face off against Inter Milan.

Utah's expansion NHL franchise announces "Mammoth" mascot name after yearlong process.

Music legend Smokey Robinson accused in \$50M lawsuit by four women of sexual assault over a number of years dating back to 2006.

Netflix to roll out major user interface overhaul beginning May 19, including vertical video previews and AI-incorporated search tools.

Science & Technology

Amazon unveils "Vulcan," an AI-powered warehouse robot equipped with a sense of touch; company says it will operate alongside workers and can handle and sort 75% of the company's products.

Neuroscientists reveal how brain circuitry rewires itself when learning new movements; findings may lead to new therapies for neuromotor disorders and spinal injuries.

UK innovation agency to fund \$75M in geoengineering research, supporting projects on modifying the Earth's environment and atmosphere to address climate change.

Business & Markets

Alphabet shares close down 7.5% after Apple's services chief says AI chatbots from OpenAI, Perplexity, and Anthropic will replace search engines like Google; remarks came during testimony in DOJ's antitrust trial against Alphabet.

Ford to raise prices on three models manufactured in Mexico, partly due to pressure from increased tariffs.

Trump administration to rescind and modify Biden-era regulations on the number of advanced AI chips individual countries can buy; rule was set to take effect May 15.

WeightWatchers files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy to shed roughly \$1B in debt from its balance sheet, expects to emerge from bankruptcy process in 45 days and remain a publicly traded company.

Politics & World Affairs

Jury acquits three former Memphis police officers of all state charges, including second-degree murder, in the 2023 death of Tyre Nichols.

The first day of the papal conclave ends with black smoke as 133 cardinals fail to reach the two-thirds majority to elect a new pope in the first vote.

Pakistan says it downed five Indian fighter jets following Indian airstrikes that killed 31 people, wounded 57 others earlier this week; India has not yet commented on the claim, says Pakistani gunfire wounded 15 people in the Indian-administered region of Kashmir.



Fact brief: Can out-of-state residents register their vehicles in South Dakota?

**By Julie Bolding
South Dakota News Watch**

Yes.

South Dakota is an “open registration” state, which means nonresidents from states with higher vehicle registration fees can save money by registering their vehicles here.

Nonresidents wishing to register a vehicle in South Dakota need to bring the following to the treasurer’s office in a South Dakota county:

- Original out-of-state title.

- Out-of-state driver’s license.

- Social Security number.

- A completed South Dakota Motor Vehicle/Boat Title & Registration Application form.

The county treasurer’s office will tell applicants the appropriate fees for the county where they are registering their vehicles. In July 2024, South Dakota began requiring non-residents to pay an additional \$100 fee to register their vehicle. Clay County and Pennington County are popular with out-of-state vehicle owners.

South Dakota is one of 11 states that allow vehicle registration without an in-state license under certain situations, according to Credit Karma.

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



Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: Near the intersection of Main Street and 5th Avenue, Wall, SD

When: 4:33 p.m. Tuesday, May 6, 2025

Driver 1: 58-year-old female from Wall, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 1999 Toyota Camry

Seat belt Used: No

Pennington County, S.D.- One person died in a single vehicle crash Tuesday afternoon in Wall, SD.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

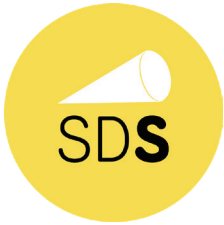
Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 1999 Toyota Camry was in a downtown Wall, SD parking lot near Main Street and 5th Avenue when the vehicle reversed into a wood fence then accelerated north over 5th Avenue and collided head-on with a light pole. The driver was not wearing a seatbelt and died from her injuries.

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

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

###

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



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

A South Dakota city is pioneering nurse apprenticeships for English-as-second-language residents

Huron hopes to tackle shortage with non-native speakers who have nursing backgrounds

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MAY 7, 2025 5:15 PM

Norma Torres Ortiz quit her full-time job at a Huron nursing home in February 2019 to spend her days studying for the national nurse licensure exam.

Her first language isn't English, it's Spanish. Originally from Puerto Rico, she still considers English a struggle.

To pass a challenging professional exam in a language she's still learning, she had to work twice as hard.

It took the 47-year-old two years to pass the test, succeeding in June 2019. Now, she's a travel nurse contracted with Avera Health and working part time at the Huron Regional Medical Center.

"Every single time I write 'RN' by my name, I stop and feel so grateful," Torres Ortiz said. "I didn't think I'd ever pass."

After moving to South Dakota in 2018 in the years after being displaced by Hurricane Maria, Torres Ortiz learned that many other non-English-speaking U.S. citizens, immigrants and refugees with professional nursing backgrounds live in the Huron area.

But like she was initially, they were standing along meatpacking assembly lines or cleaning houses. Studying for the licensure exam, or NCLEX, would mean they'd have to study English harder, take time off work or quit their jobs entirely, she said.

It's a missed opportunity, Torres Ortiz said, as health care systems in Huron, elsewhere in South Dakota and across the country suffer a nursing shortage. South Dakota is projected to have one of the highest nursing shortages in the country by 2030. There are 11 nursing vacancies at Huron Regional Medical Center currently.

So Torres Ortiz led an effort to help non-English speaking nurses study for the exam. It turned into the state's first registered nursing apprenticeship through Huron Regional Medical Center. The program was approved by the state in February.

Apprenticeship serves as alternative to international hiring program

Larger health care systems like Sanford, Avera and Monument are building international nursing programs, recruiting and hiring nurses through work visas. International nurses must also pass the NCLEX to work in the state.

Avera Health has commitments from more than 170 international nurses, with one starting with the hospital system this year and another six planning to start working before the end of the year. Monument has hired international nurses since 2017. Though the program in western South Dakota has employed about 30 nurses a year, the program has dwindled to less than 10 due to federal visa backlogs. Sanford employs more than 700 internationally trained nurses across its five-state footprint, with plans to hire another 300 in the coming year or two.

Employing international nurses is a "long-term strategy" to stabilize the health care workforce, said Erica DeBoer, system vice president and chief nursing officer with Sanford.

"With an aging workforce and population, there's truly not enough individuals to help care for all the patients that need our support," DeBoer said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 8 of 74

Smaller systems like Huron can't afford to hire large numbers of international nurses through an agency, said Brooke Sydow, program manager for the health system. The study group and apprenticeship program allows the system to tap into a market beyond its traditional university and technical college pipeline.

And apprenticeship programs aren't new to the health system. Sydow said the system launched a practical nursing apprenticeship to build its workforce in 2018. A licensed practice nurse provides basic nursing care to patients and works under the supervision of registered nurses.

Reflecting the diversity of the Huron community

Apprentices start the new program by taking a medical language course for English language learners, enrolling in the licensing exam preparation class and training at the Huron hospital alongside a veteran nurse. There are five students in the group, which started in May last year, though Torres Ortiz hopes to see more join.

The classes alone cost the hospital about \$1,350 per person. Sydow expects the total cost per apprentice will vary between \$25,000 and \$50,000, depending on how long they shadow another staff member. Sydow plans to cover all, or nearly all, expenses for apprentices through the hospital or with state funding, to financially support apprentices while they train so they can quit their other jobs and focus on their education. She plans to hire three apprentices in the first round.

It's worth the cost, Sydow said, because the health care system is investing in Huron's increasingly diverse community.

Beadle County is 68% white, 15% Hispanic or Latino and 12% Asian, according to 2023 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The county has the highest percentage of Hispanic or Latino residents in the state.

That diversity is largely due to refugees from the Karen ethnic group, originally from Myanmar (formerly Burma), who moved to Huron starting in 2006, initially to work at a turkey plant. A wave of Hispanic immigrants moved to the county since 2000, also attracted by food processing and manufacturing plants.

"We're trying to make our workforce reflect our community population," Sydow said. "So that's a big piece of it: helping the community feel more connected and at home, so we have practitioners, providers and nurses who are the same as them."

Torres Ortiz would like to help more Puerto Ricans fill immediate nursing needs in South Dakota.

Before she moved to Florida in 2017 after being displaced by Hurricane Maria, she earned her bachelor's degree in nursing in Puerto Rico. But she wasn't able to find a job because there were too few positions for the number of nurses at that time, she said. Instead, she cleaned houses and businesses. She followed her son to South Dakota after he started working in the area.

"When you post a nursing job in Puerto Rico, you could get 20 applications in an hour," Torres Ortiz said. "Here in Huron, you wait months to find and hire someone."

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

Sioux Falls business leaders say region, state will weather the storm of tariff-related uncertainty

Roundtable discussion points to workforce, child care, housing as persistent challenges

BY: JOHN HULT - MAY 7, 2025 8:57 AM

SIOUX FALLS – The term of art is "insolated, but not isolated."

That's how Bob Mundt of the Sioux Falls Development Foundation describes his metro area's position as it faces the unpredictable economic conditions driven by the tariffs imposed – and frequently un-imposed or adjusted from day to day – by President Donald Trump.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 9 of 74

Trump has downplayed the impact of tariffs as speed bumps on the way to a stronger manufacturing sector. While rejecting claims that tariffs will hurt the economy as a whole during an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" over the weekend, he did nod to economist consensus by saying that some goods, which he said Americans could go without, could cost more as a result.

The Sioux Falls metro area, Mundt said, has weathered economic storms in the past thanks to South Dakota's "conservative nature." During a panel discussion at the Sioux Falls Rotary Club this week, Mundt said the market's twists and turns have spurred trepidation, but not panic.

"We tend to react very well to challenges, whether that's tariffs or pandemics or anything else like that," Mundt told the Rotarians who'd gathered at the Military Heritage Alliance.

About a quarter of South Dakota's residents live in the Sioux Falls metro area, located in the lower portion of the state's southeast quadrant, which is one of the most rapidly growing areas in the U.S.

Tyler Tordsen, head of the Sioux Metro Growth Alliance, also sounded a hopeful note on the region's economic fortunes. He pointed to cities like Brandon, just east of Sioux Falls, as proof that expansion has not ceased in light of the topsy turvy economic signals.

"There's a lot of dirt that's moving" in that city, Tordsen said before rattling off a handful of building projects.

"I am hearing hesitation, a little bit, but really nothing that's stopping any projects from moving forward," Tordsen said.

On the retail level, "new entrepreneurs" are still looking for opportunities to expand, Tordsen said. He also said that pre-Trump challenges like workforce development, exacerbated by a dearth of child care options and affordable housing, remain. The unemployment rate in the metro area is 1.8%.

The region's history has shown that those challenges aren't dealbreakers either, he said.

"I remember questions of 'there will be 1,000 jobs at Amazon, how are they ever going to fill those?' and they did," Tordsen said, referencing a distribution center opened in 2022.

An Amazon spokesperson told South Dakota Searchlight that it took around seven months to hire a full staff at the center.

On workforce, Mundt pointed to former Gov. Kristi Noem's \$9 million Freedom Works Here campaign as a net positive for the area, "whether you loved it or hated it." Mundt's organization reached out to about 10,000 of the 11,641 people who filled out a form expressing interest in relocating to South Dakota for work.

Mundt said the foundation pointed potential workers to job openings, but didn't track what happened afterward due to privacy concerns. He can't say for certain how many people moved to Sioux Falls for work, but said spikes in attention can help address the area's skilled labor needs.

"Right now, it's becoming a situation where we need people with specific skill sets," Mundt said.

Dawn Dovre of the South Dakota Department of Labor told South Dakota Searchlight that 4,047 of the people who'd filled out those forms were later connected with job advisers who "offered personalized support, helping with job opportunities, relocation resources, and housing information."

The state doesn't have a firm number of relocations, either. But listings on the SDWORKSjobs website have dropped from 25,000 at the start of the campaign to 18,000 today, Dovre said, "reflecting increased workforce engagement and strong results from the campaign's reach."

Jodi Schwan is the owner of the marketing firm Align Content Studios and operator of the website Sioux-Falls.Business. She told the Rotary crowd the city needs to "tell its story" as a place that can serve as a home base for industries like financial technology, biotech and agribusiness.

"Low-value manufacturing is not coming back to this country, no matter what is said out there," Schwan said. "High-value manufacturing is where the future is. We need to be a location of choice for that."

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

U.S. House panel debates FEMA's role, as Trump administration eyes 'top-down reform'

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 7, 2025 6:02 PM

WASHINGTON — U.S. House lawmakers on Wednesday began debating when the Federal Emergency Management Agency should provide state and local communities with help addressing natural disasters and when aid should be handled by others.

The Appropriations Homeland Security Subcommittee's hearing on FEMA's budget for the upcoming fiscal year came just days after the Trump administration sent its spending proposal to Capitol Hill.

That "skinny" request, however, didn't include an actual spending level for FEMA, only suggesting that Congress cut \$646 million for various non-disaster grant programs, including Targeting Violence and Terrorism Prevention, and the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium.

Chairman Mark Amodei, R-Nevada, urged the FEMA official at the hearing to get the full budget request to the committee sooner rather than later.

"If we don't have the information, it's going to be a problem," he said. "And I'm not threatening. You don't need threatening. We don't work that way."

Amodei also told Cam Hamilton, senior official performing the duties of the administrator at FEMA, that the agency needs to communicate with lawmakers better, especially those on the panel that provides its funding.

"I'm not trying to horn in on your guys' discretion of running your program," Amodei said. "But what I am definitely trying to horn in on is, not being faced with a situation where the bell's already been rung. Now I've got to un-ring the bell."

Amodei was referencing FEMA halting funding for Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, or BRIC, grants, including for three projects within a few miles of his front porch that he didn't know existed until recently.

Hamilton said that Trump administration officials "found a lot of inefficiencies with the design of the program itself, which caused us to have serious concern over whether it was the appropriate use of taxpayer funds for many projects that were funded that we believe were very wasteful."

"But there are also projects that were fully funded that we intend to move forward to completion," Hamilton added. "We're unpacking and analyzing that. Every grant recipient, under BRIC, should receive some form of notification" soon from FEMA regional offices.

No budget numbers

The 90-minute hearing, which would typically have centered around the numbers in FEMA's budget request, was instead a bit of a referendum on the size and scope of the agency, as well as expectations the Trump administration will seek to significantly reduce its mission.

Hamilton, asked point-blank if FEMA should continue to exist, testified that he personally did "not believe it is in the best interest of the American people to eliminate the Federal Emergency Management Agency."

"Having said that, I'm not in a position to make decisions and impact outcomes on whether or not a determination, such as consequential as that should be made," he said. "That is a conversation that should be had between the president of the United States and this governing body on identifying the exact ways and methodologies, in which, what is prudent for federal investment, and what is not."

Illinois Democratic Rep. Lauren Underwood, ranking member on the panel, said she would not support efforts to completely shift FEMA responsibilities onto state and local governments.

State emergency management leaders, she said, "are not equipped to handle the roles FEMA currently plays— marshaling emergency resources for multiple federal agencies, providing flood insurance, conducting damage assessments and distributing billions of dollars in recovery funds."

"Pushing disaster response and recovery fully back to the states is dangerous and unrealistic," Underwood said.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 11 of 74

Hamilton said the Trump administration is looking at ways to institute “top-down reform” and “overhaul the grant process entirely” as well as other possible recommendations from the FEMA review council.

“FEMA was established to provide focused support in truly catastrophic disasters,” Hamilton said. “Yet at times, we have strayed far from that core mission and evolved into an over-extended federal bureaucracy; attempting to manage every type of emergency, no matter how minor.

“Instead of being a last resort, FEMA is all too often used by states and public officials as a financial backstop for routine issues that, frankly, should be handled locally. This misalignment has fostered a culture of dependency, waste, inefficiency, while also delaying crucial aid to Americans who are in genuine need.”

Disaster relief deficit

One of the more immediate budgetary issues facing FEMA is that its disaster relief fund is slated to run at least a \$9 billion deficit before the end of the year, which several lawmakers raised concerns about during the hearing.

The Trump administration, however, does not plan to send Congress a supplemental spending request, asking lawmakers for more money for that account.

The disaster relief fund is able to run deficits, unlike the vast majority of federal programs. When the DRF runs out of funding, FEMA uses something called immediate needs funding to keep providing response and recovery to communities with declared disasters.

Hamilton said, even with the expected use of immediate needs funding again this year, FEMA was prepared to respond to hurricane season and ongoing wildfires.

“There are always challenges that we have to work through,” Hamilton said. “So we are focusing on ways to make us operationally more capable, and also finding ways to be more fiscally practical with our means, so that we don’t buttress us up against those kinds of thresholds nearly as quickly as before.”

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

Kennedy Center slated for huge funding increase while local arts slashed under Trump plans

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - MAY 7, 2025 5:25 PM

WASHINGTON — A Democratic lawmaker is asking why House Republicans approved nearly six times the requested funding for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as President Donald Trump cancels federal grants for arts organizations across the United States.

Rep. Chellie Pingree of Maine, the ranking member of the subcommittee that oversees funding for the Kennedy Center, requested a detailed accounting of the \$256.6 million for the center included in the Republican-led budget reconciliation package.

The Kennedy Center, a renowned venue in Washington, D.C., had originally requested just \$45.73 million for fiscal year 2025. Trump in February took over chairmanship of the center’s board, leading to some artists canceling their performances.

ABC News reported Tuesday that Trump will headline a fundraiser for the center next month.

In a letter Tuesday to Kennedy Center President Richard Grenell, Pingree asked for a breakdown of how the organization plans to spend over \$241.7 million on capital repairs projects, \$7.7 million on operations and maintenance, and a further \$7.2 million on administrative expenses.

The center had only planned on spending \$157 million on repairs projects through 2027 as part of a comprehensive building plan, according to its 2025 budget request.

“I am committed to the Kennedy Center having the resources necessary to carry out its mission now and for many years to come, and I appreciate President Trump’s shared interest in the Center’s future,” wrote Pingree, who co-chairs the bipartisan Congressional Arts Caucus.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 12 of 74

"However, as this Administration seeks to eliminate vital cultural agencies that serve communities across the nation, we must ensure that funds appropriated by Congress are truly benefitting the artists and audiences that make the Kennedy Center great," Pingree wrote.

Pingree slammed the Trump administration's late Friday notice that grant funding from the National Endowment for Arts would be withdrawn from organizations across the country. Trump's budget request to Congress Friday recommended slashing the NEA completely.

Pingree issued a statement Saturday morning saying her office had already begun hearing from Maine arts organizations who received grant termination emails. "These organizations, like countless others, had already made programming decisions for the upcoming season and were counting on these funds to pay artists and workers," Pingree said.

'This project is essential'

A White House official told States Newsroom Wednesday that Trump had worked with Congress to arrive at the Kennedy Center funding figure.

"This project is essential to advancing President Trump's vision of restoring greatness to our Nation's capital. Halting Anti-American propaganda is critical to protecting our children and fostering patriotism," according to the official.

Separately, an emailed statement attributed to White House spokesperson Anna Kelly said that "President Trump cares deeply about American arts and culture, which is why he is revitalizing historic institutions like the Kennedy Center to their former greatness."

The White House did not immediately respond to follow-up questions about the termination of other arts funding.

The Kennedy Center did not respond to States Newsroom's requests for comment about how the funds will be used and whether Grenell had received Pingree's request.

A House Republican document outlining the party's funding goals for 2024 shows the GOP-led House Committee on Appropriations had planned \$44.9 million for the Kennedy Center that year, noting the amount was \$454,000 below 2023 funding levels and \$3.1 million below former President Joe Biden's budget request.

Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

Congressional budget agency projects sweeping Medicaid cutbacks in states under GOP plans

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - MAY 7, 2025 1:58 PM

WASHINGTON — The Congressional Budget Office said Wednesday that potential major cuts and changes to Medicaid under consideration by Republicans could mean states would have to spend more of their own money on the program, reduce payments to health care providers, limit optional benefits and reduce enrollment.

The end result, under some scenarios, could be millions of Americans would be kicked off Medicaid and possibly left without health insurance, said the nonpartisan agency relied on by Congress for budget estimates.

The letter from CBO stemmed from a request by Senate Finance Committee ranking member Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and House Energy and Commerce ranking member Frank Pallone, D-N.J.

Both oppose GOP attempts to slash federal funding for the health care program for lower-income Americans and some people with disabilities. Republicans, who have not settled on an approach, say they are interested in ending waste, fraud and abuse in the program.

CBO Director Phillip Swagel wrote that possible Medicaid changes would likely lead to several outcomes

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 13 of 74

in the states. The impact on states would occur because the federal government covers at least 50% of the cost of the program, with that share increasing in states with lower per capita incomes and those that expanded eligibility under the Affordable Care Act.

Wyden wrote in a statement the CBO letter showed "the Republican plan for health care means benefit cuts and terminated health insurance for millions of Americans who count on Medicaid."

Pallone wrote in a statement of his own that reducing federal funding for the program by hundreds of billions of dollars would lead to "millions of people losing their health care."

"(President Donald) Trump has repeatedly claimed Republicans are not cutting health care, but CBO's independent analysis confirms the proposals under consideration will result in catastrophic benefit cuts and people losing their health care," Pallone wrote. "It's time for Republicans to stop lying to the American people about what they're plotting behind closed doors in order to give giant tax breaks to billionaires and big corporations."

The Medicaid changes would come as Republicans use the complex budget reconciliation process to move a sweeping legislative package through Congress with simple majority votes in each chamber, avoiding the Senate's 60-vote filibuster, which would otherwise require bipartisanship.

The House Energy and Commerce Committee, which is tasked with cutting at least \$880 billion from the programs it oversees — including Medicaid — during the next decade, has yet to release its bill that if approved by the committee will become part of that package.

The panel, led by Kentucky Republican Rep. Brett Guthrie, is expected to debut its proposed changes next week before debating the legislation during a yet-to-be-scheduled markup.

Republicans plan to use the reconciliation package to permanently extend the 2017 tax law, increase spending on border security and defense by hundreds of billions of dollars, overhaul American energy production, restructure higher education aid and cut spending.

Five scenarios

CBO's analysis looked at five specific Medicaid scenarios including:

Congress reducing the federal match rate for the 40 states that expanded Medicaid eligibility under the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

Lawmakers eliminating a 6% threshold that exists for states that collect higher taxes from health care providers and then return that additional money in the form of higher Medicaid payments. CBO writes those "higher Medicaid payments increase the contributions from the federal government to states' Medicaid programs."

Republicans creating a per-enrollee cap on federal spending.

Congress establishing a cap on federal spending for Medicaid enrollees who became eligible for the program after their state expanded eligibility under the ACA.

Lawmakers repealing two Biden-era rules that addressed the Medicare Savings Programs and standardized how states approached enrollment and renewals.

The analysis said states could raise taxes or cut spending on other programs to replace the lost federal revenue that would coincide with the first four scenarios, though CBO "expects that such steps would prove challenging for many states."

"In CBO's view, different states would make different choices regarding how much of the reduced Medicaid funds to replace," the analysis states. "Instead of modeling separate responses for each state, the agency estimated state responses in the aggregate, accounting for a range of possible outcomes."

Overall, CBO expects state governments would be able to replace about half of the lost federal revenue and that they would "reduce provider payment rates, reduce the scope or amount of optional services, and reduce Medicaid enrollment" to address the other half.

Alternatives studied

The first scenario, where lawmakers reduce the federal matching rate for expanded Medicaid popula-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 14 of 74

tions, would save the government \$710 billion during the next decade.

But in 2034, CBO expects that "2.4 million of the 5.5 million people who would no longer be enrolled in Medicaid under this option would be without health insurance."

CBO wrote that in the second, third and fourth scenarios, "Medicaid enrollment would decrease and the number of people without health insurance would increase."

The second scenario of limiting state taxes on health care providers would save the federal government \$668 billion during the 10-year budget window. It would lead to 8.6 million people losing access to Medicaid with a 3.9 million increase in the uninsured population by 2034.

The third projection that looked at a federal cap on spending per enrollee would reduce federal spending by \$682 billion during the next decade. A total of 5.8 million people would lose Medicaid coverage and 2.9 million would become uninsured under that proposal.

And the fourth scenario, where Congress caps federal spending per enrollee in the expansion population, would cut the deficit by \$225 billion during the next 10 years. More than 3 million people would lose Medicaid coverage and 1.5 million would become uninsured under this scenario.

Under the fifth scenario, where GOP lawmakers would change two Biden-era rules, CBO expects that the federal government would spend \$162 billion less over the 2025–2034 window.

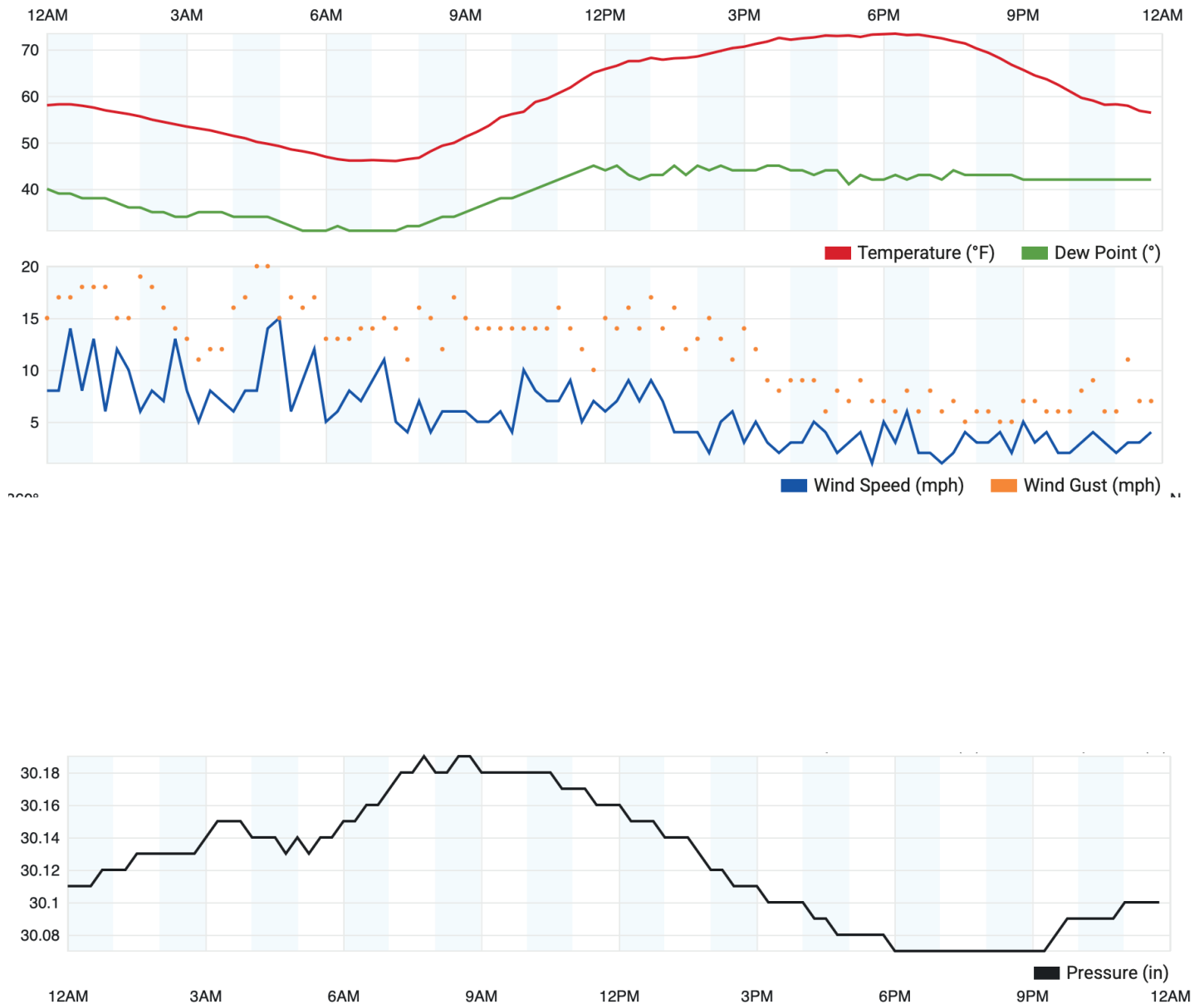
"CBO estimates that, in 2034, 2.3 million people would no longer be enrolled in Medicaid under this option," the letter states. "Roughly 60 percent of the people who would lose Medicaid coverage would be dual-benefit enrollees who would retain their Medicare coverage."

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 15 of 74

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 16 of 74

Today



High: 80 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 51 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 82 °F

Mostly Sunny

Friday Night



Low: 47 °F

Mostly Clear

Saturday



High: 87 °F

Sunny



Today & Tonight



73-84°F



50-55°F

Next 5 Days

High Temperatures

78-87° F

Fri

80-89° F

Sat

82-92° F

Sun

82-90° F

Mon

82-89° F

Tue

Temperatures increasing through the weekend Highs in the 80s to around 90 by Sunday



Increased Grassland Fire Danger Sunday into next week due to hot & dry conditions with winds gusting **35 to 45 mph** Sunday through Tuesday

Clear skies and warm today with mild overnight lows. The coming days will feature increasing highs (90s possible by Sunday) and increased grassland fire danger due to dry conditions and winds gusting between 35 and 45 mph Sunday through Tuesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 17 of 74

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 73 °F at 5:48 PM

Low Temp: 46 °F at 7:22 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 12:46 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 41 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1934

Record Low: 22 in 1945

Average High: 67

Average Low: 41

Average Precip in May.: .87

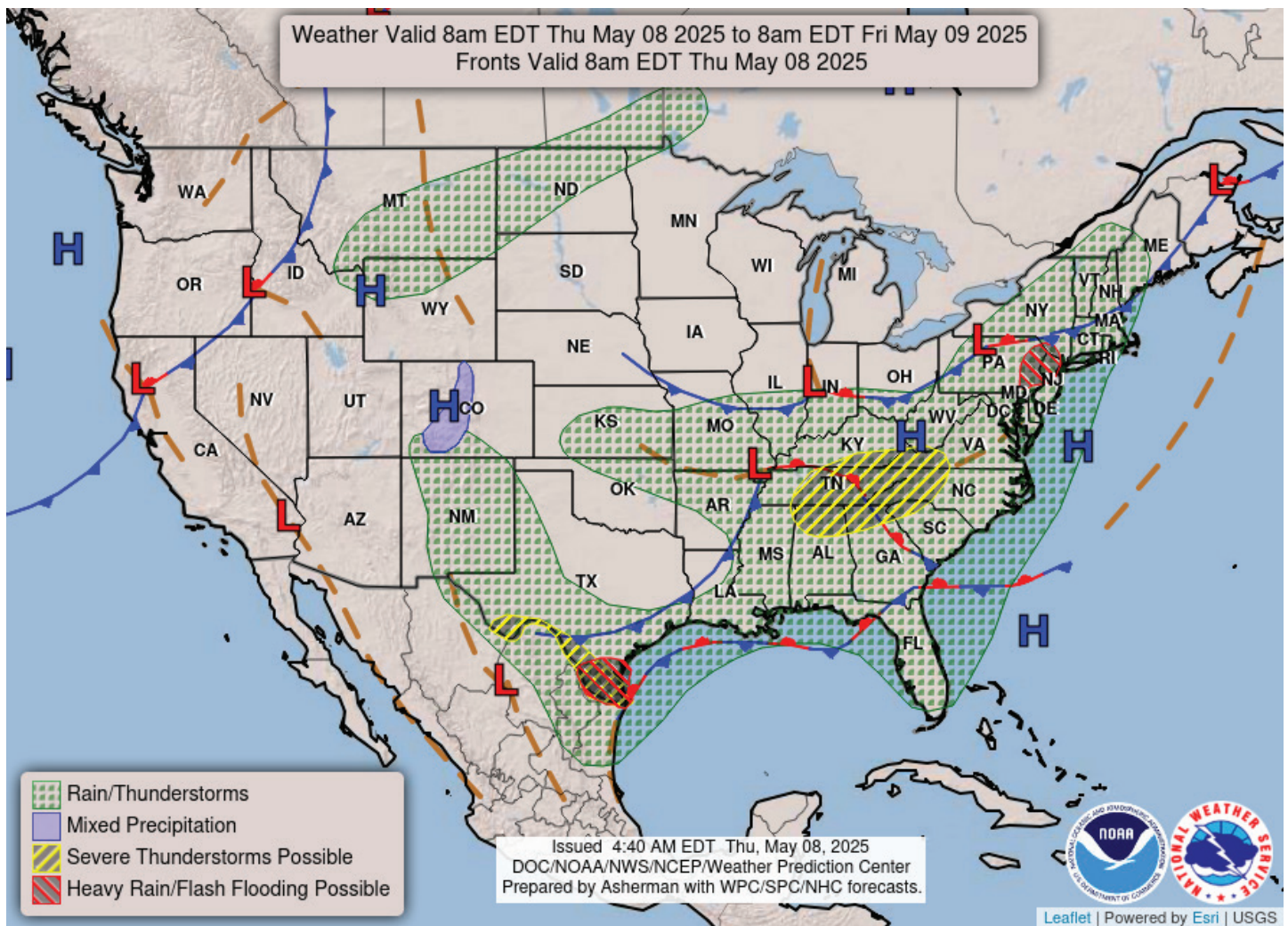
Precip to date in May.: 0.30

Average Precip to date: 4.84

Precip Year to Date: 2.93

Sunset Tonight: 88:49:37 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:06:47 am



Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 18 of 74

Today in Weather History

May 8th, 1934: Pierre recorded its earliest 100 degrees when the high temperature reached 103 degrees. Mobridge also reached 103 degrees, the earliest yearly date for the city.

May 8th, 1965: The strongest tornado recorded in South Dakota tracked across eastern Tripp County. It was part of a more significant tornado outbreak in Nebraska and South Dakota during the afternoon through late evening hours.

May 8th, 1986: Thunderstorms produced two to four inches of torrential rainfall over much of central and eastern South Dakota. The heavy rains caused extensive flooding, with Walworth and Potter Counties reporting the most damage. In those counties, most roads were underwater. Several bridges and roads were also washed out in that area. The heavy rain washed out the dam at Lake Byre in Lyman County, which produced water waist-deep in Kennebec. The city of Kennebec lost its sole water source when the dam broke. Cow Creek in Lyman County also flooded and broke a part of a dam, causing minor property damage. The rain continued to fall into the morning hours on the 9th. Some two-day rainfall totals include 4.33 inches in Kennebec, 4.21 in Shelby, 3.91 at 4 miles west of Mellette, 3.30 in Gettysburg, 3.06 in Blunt, 2.99 in Eureka, 2.75 at 2 NNW of Mobridge; 2.70 inches 2 miles south of Ashton and in Britton.

May 8th, 1995: Flooding caused by snowmelt from two significant snowstorms in April continued throughout May. The flooding was aggravated by widespread torrential rains, especially from the early morning of the 8th through the early morning of the 9th. Rainfall amounts ranged from one to four inches. Some higher rainfall amounts include 5.50 inches at Wakpala, 4.50 at Chelsea and Leola, 4.20 at Ipswich, 4.10 inches 12 north of McLaughlin, and 3.91 inches at Aberdeen. A worker was injured near Claremont when the train derailed due to the weakening of the rail bed caused by high water. The extensive flooding continued to cause road damage and many road closures.

1784 - A deadly hailstorm in South Carolina hit the town of Winnsborough. The hailstones, measuring as much as nine inches in circumference, killed several persons, and a great number of sheep, lambs and birds. (David Ludlum)

1803 - A freak spring storm produced heavy snow from southern Indiana to New England. The storm made sleighing possible in Massachusetts, but also ruined shade trees in Philadelphia. (David Ludlum)

1981 - The Dallas/Fort Worth area experienced its worst hailstorm of record as baseball to grapefruit size hail, accompanied by 100 mph winds, caused nearly 200 million dollars damage. Hail accumulated eight inches deep at Cedar Hill TX. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Twenty-eight cities in the northwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The record high of 95 degrees at Redding CA was their fifth in a row, and the record high of 102 degrees at Hanover WA was just one degree shy of their record for May. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms in the Mississippi Valley spawned a total of 57 tornadoes, including 24 in Wisconsin, and a record 22 tornadoes in one day in Iowa. There were also more than 200 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Baseball size hail was reported at Terre Bonne Mo. At Rockford IL one person was temporarily trapped inside a portable toilet toppled by thunderstorm winds gusting to 80 mph. Fortunately, not a single person was killed in the "Mother's Day" tornado outbreak. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-one cities in the eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Lows of 28 degrees at Asheville NC and 31 degrees at Greer SC were records for May. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in northwestern and north central Kansas during the evening and night. Thunderstorms produced hail three inches in diameter at Brewster, and wind gusts to 92 mph south of Wakeeney. Thunderstorms over northwest Iowa deluged the town of Boone with five inches of rain flooding basements and leaving some areas under four feet of water. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 19 of 74



HOMESCHOOLING

Early childhood education begins at home.

From the very first moment a child opens its eyes, hears a noise from any source, experiences warmth or cold or feels the pangs of hunger, the opportunity to teach and learn is present and profound.

Though an infant does not know the difference between a Bible or catalog, the object will make an impression which will eventually be interpreted.

And if there are more catalogs than Bibles, the child will one day understand the priorities of the parents. Homes have walls and floors, shelves and ceilings.

But what parents place on the walls or hang from the ceilings or place on the shelves is a choice.

In my childhood home, everywhere we looked were objects that had a reference to God.

I still remember my mother explaining or interpreting the meaning of pictures or using an old globe to tell a story about missionaries and what they did for Jesus.

It was an important part of our family life.

What I was taught through being "schooled at home" remains a very important part of my life and ministry today.

* "Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction; pay attention and gain understanding... When I was a boy in my father's house and an only child of my mother... he taught me: keep my commands, get wisdom and understanding!"

How precious!

** "My son, I'm passing my wisdom to you that came from my father... when I was young and tender." God's wisdom was passed from grandfather to father to child. We are all passing on what is of value to us, too.

Prayer:

Father, we each leave a legacy to everyone we meet.

May it bring honor and glory to Your name!

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's verse: " My children, listen when your father corrects you. Pay attention and learn good judgment, for I am giving you good guidance. For I am giving you good guidance. Don't turn away from my instructions. For I, too, was once my father's son, tenderly loved as my mother's only child. My father taught me, "Take my words to heart. Follow my commands, and you will live. Get wisdom; develop good judgment. Don't forget my words or turn away from them." Proverbs 4:1-5

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 20 of 74

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 21 of 74



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.06.25

16 17 43 46 58 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$100,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 2 Mins
37 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

3 6 9 13 17 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$33,140,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 17 Mins
37 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

5 7 37 39 46 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 32 Mins 37
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

5 12 17 26 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$149,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 32
Mins 37 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

9 31 32 50 57 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 1 Mins
36 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 05.07.25

14 15 30 40 59 20

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$82,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 1 Mins
37 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 22 of 74

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

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 23 of 74

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Poll: South Dakota Republicans support Trump but policies mixed

South Dakota News Watch undefined

Sioux Falls, SD (South Dakota News Watch)

Nearly three-quarters of Republican voters in South Dakota approve of President Donald Trump's leadership in the first 100 days of his second White House stint, but there are pockets of discontent with some of his policies, according to a poll co-sponsored by South Dakota News Watch.

The survey of 500 registered GOP voters showed that 73% approve of Trump's presidential leadership so far in 2025, while 25% disapprove. The statewide survey was also co-sponsored by the Chiesman Center for Democracy at the University of South Dakota.

When asked if they have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Trump, a question about general political popularity, 68% of Republican voters said favorable, a rating higher than any South Dakota politician.

"He said what he wanted to get done and he's setting out to do it," said Lee McInroy, 84, of Dell Rapids, a Trump supporter who attended Republican Jon Hansen's campaign kickoff event for governor on April 24 in Sioux Falls.

"People voted for Trump to get in the White House and do these things (immigration crackdown and tariffs), and now he's doing them and the other party is going after him for it."

Trump's popularity is strongest in South Dakota's rural areas, matching a national trend.

Of the state's two highest population centers, Republican voters in the Sioux Falls metro area responded with 64% approval, while West River (Rapid City) was at 62%, both below the national average for Trump's favorability among Republicans.

Mason-Dixon Polling and Strategy conducted the poll April 9-11, using random selections from a telephone-matched state voter registration list that included both landline and cellphone numbers.

The poll also included a survey of South Dakota registered voters regardless of party, with a breakdown of 255 Republicans, 126 Independents and 119 Democrats.

Those voters showed mixed support for Trump administration policies, including fewer than half (49%) who approve of the efforts by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to cut federal spending under the direction of billionaire Elon Musk.

The poll showed that 48% of overall South Dakota voters disapprove of the efforts, which have led to cuts in programs involving the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, tribal initiatives, nonprofit organizations and other agencies.

There's a stark party breakdown, with 70% of Republican voters supporting the DOGE spending cuts, as opposed to 45% of registered Independents and 7% of Democrats.

The poll showed that men (54%) are more supportive than women (44%), which Michael Card, emeritus professor of political science at the University of South Dakota, said could be attributable to DOGE's potential impact on schools and public health.

Musk said recently that he'll be spending less time in Washington slashing government costs and more time running Tesla after his electric vehicle company reported a big drop in profits.

Trump carried South Dakota with 63% of the vote in the 2024 election, consistent with his 62% showings in 2016 and 2020.

But one of the president's signature policies, tariffs, is less popular in a state whose reliance on agricultural trade makes it more susceptible to the risks of trade wars with China, Canada and Mexico.

The News Watch poll showed that 50% of South Dakota voters support Trump's tariff policies, compared to 47% who disapprove.

The party breakdown of support was 73% Republican, 45% Independent and 6% Democrat.

Trump has imposed hundreds of billions of dollars a year in new import taxes -- some of them partially suspended -- while launching a trade war against China and pledging to wrap up deals with other countries

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 24 of 74

that are temporarily facing tariffs of 10%. Financial markets are swinging with every twist and turn from Trump's tariff pronouncements.

"There's a balance between wanting to negotiate strong trade agreements and asking those countries to come to the table to negotiate in good faith while they're being slapped with tariffs," DaNita Murray, executive director of South Dakota Corn, told News Watch.

Card said much of the unease in South Dakota likely stems from Trump's first term, when China retaliated with a 25% tariff that greatly reduced farm exports to that country.

"If you're in corn, soybeans and hogs, it's very clear because you have a memory from less than a decade ago of what happened to your market," said Card. "And even though it's a subsidized industry, those protections are going to be gone unless they get bailed out again, and it's not clear that's going to happen this time around."

When it comes to confidence in elections, Trump's victory over Democratic nominee Kamala Harris in 2024 appears to have changed some perspectives.

The News Watch poll showed that 82% of South Dakota voters were confident in the accuracy of the 2024 election vote count, including 55% who said they were very confident.

Of Republicans polled, 59% said they were very confident, compared to 56% of Independents and 46% of Democrats.

It's a sharp contrast from a November 2023 poll co-sponsored by News Watch and the Chiesman Center, which showed 56% of South Dakotans confident in the accuracy of American elections, including 20% who said they were very confident.

Just 7% of Republicans in that poll said they were very confident, and nearly half (49%) said they did not accept the outcome of the 2020 presidential election, when Trump lost to Democrat Joe Biden.

"There's plenty of recent experience to show that the losing party is sort of inoculated to believe that the elections aren't fair, and vice versa," said Card.

As for general outlook of the country, 68% of overall poll respondents said they were optimistic in the future of the United States, including 22% who were very optimistic.

Nearly 9 in 10 Republicans (89%) said they were optimistic, compared to 60% of Independents and 33% of Democrats.

The positivity extended to "very optimistic" for 34% of Republicans, 17% of Independents and just 2% of Democrats.

This story is provided as a service of the Institute for Nonprofit News' On the Ground news wire. The Institute for Nonprofit News (INN) is a network of more than 475 independent, nonprofit newsrooms serving communities throughout the US, Canada, and globally. On the Ground is a service of INN, which aggregates the best of its members' elections and political content, and provides it free for republication. Read more about INN here: <https://inn.org/>.

Please coordinate with carson.walker@sdnewswatch.org should you want to publish photos for this piece. This content cannot be modified, apart from rewriting the headline. To view the original version, visit: <https://www.sdnewswatch.org/poll-south-dakota-republican-donald-trump-gop-doge/>

US and UK expected to announce a trade deal that Trump says will cement their relationship

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and Britain are expected to announce a trade deal on Thursday that will lower the burden of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs and deliver a political victory for U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that a deal due to be announced at 10 a.m. EDT (1400 GMT) will be a "full and comprehensive one that will cement the relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom for many years to come."

It's the first bilateral trade deal announced since Trump began slapping tariffs on U.S. trading partners.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 25 of 74

He said: "Many other deals, which are in serious stages of negotiation, to follow!"

Starmer's office said the prime minister would give an "update" about U.S. trade talks later Thursday.

"As you know, talks with the U.S. have been ongoing and you'll hear more from me about that later today," Starmer said at a defense conference in London.

The agreement is likely to fall short of a full free trade deal, but will provide tariff relief to certain sectors.

The president has imposed a 10% tax on imports from Britain, as well as 25% tariffs on autos, steel and aluminum on the premise that doing so would foster more factory jobs domestically.

A major goal of British negotiators has been to reduce or lift the import tax on U.K. cars and steel. The U.S. is the largest destination for British cars, accounting for more than a quarter of U.K. auto exports in 2024, according to the Office for National Statistics.

Britain has also sought tariff exemptions for pharmaceuticals, while the U.S. wants greater access to the British market for agriculture products. Starmer's government has said it won't lower U.K. food standards to allow in chlorine-rinsed American chicken or hormone-treated beef.

The British government will see a deal it as a vindication of Starmer's emollient approach to Trump, which has avoided direct confrontation or criticism. Unlike the European Union, Britain did not announce retaliatory tariffs on U.S. goods in response to Trump's import taxes.

A trade deal with the United Kingdom would be symbolically important, and a relief for British exporters. But an agreement would do little to address Trump's core concern about persistent trade deficits that prompted him to impose import taxes on countries around the world.

The U.S. ran a \$11.9 billion trade surplus in goods with the U.K. last year, according to the Census Bureau. The \$68 billion in goods that the U.S. imported from the U.K. last year accounted for just 2% of all goods imported into the country.

The U.S. is much more important to the U.K. economy. It was Britain's biggest trading partner last year, according to government statistics, though the bulk of Britain's exports to the U.S. are services rather than goods.

Trump has shown a desire to strike a trade agreement with the U.K. since it voted in 2016 to leave the European Union. Yet as recently as Tuesday, Trump showed no awareness of the possible terms of the deal when asked about its possibility.

"They're offering us concessions?" Trump told reporters. "I hope so... They do want to make a deal very badly."

Trump has previously said that his leverage in talks would be U.S. consumers, but he appeared to suggest that the U.K. would also start buying more American-made goods.

"I think that the United Kingdom, like every other country, they want to ... go shopping in the United States of America," he said.

A trade deal with the U.S. is one of several that Starmer's government is seeking to strike. On Tuesday, Britain and India announced a trade after three years of negotiations. The U.K. is also trying to lift some of the barriers to trade with the EU imposed when Britain left the bloc in 2020.

No new pope elected yet after black smoke pours out of Sistine Chapel's chimney

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Cardinals failed again Thursday morning to find a successor to Pope Francis, sending black smoke billowing up through the Sistine Chapel chimney after two more inconclusive rounds of conclave voting.

The black smoke poured out at 11:50 a.m. (0950 GMT), signalling that the second and third ballots of the conclave had failed to find consensus on a leader for the 1.4 billion-member Catholic Church.

With no one securing the necessary two-thirds majority, or 89 votes, the 133 cardinals returned to the Vatican residences where they are being sequestered. They will have lunch and then return to the Sistine Chapel for the afternoon voting session. Two more ballots are possible Thursday.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 26 of 74

Despite the disappointment, hopes were still high that a pope would be chosen quickly, perhaps as early as Thursday.

"I hope by this evening, returning to Rome, I'll find white smoke," said Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the 91-year-old dean of the College of Cardinals who presided over the Mass before the conclave. Re is not participating in the balloting because only cardinals under 80 are eligible to cast their vote.

Re, who was quoted by Italian media as speaking Thursday in Pompeii, said he was certain that cardinals would elect "the pope that the church and world need today."

Eyes on the chimney

For the general public, the rhythm of the voting is dictated in many ways by the Vatican television cameras: You know a smoke signal is near when the cameras resume their fixed shot on the Sistine Chapel's skinny chimney, with white smoke indicating a winner, and black meaning no consensus.

On Thursday, large school groups joined the mix of humanity awaiting the outcome in St. Peter's Square. They blended in with people participating in pre-planned Holy Year pilgrimages and journalists from around the world who have descended on Rome to document the election.

"We are hoping for the white smoke tonight," said Pedro Deget, 22, a finance student from Argentina who is travelling in Italy with his family. He said his family visited Rome during the Argentine pope's pontificate and were hoping for a new pope in his image.

"Francis did well in opening the church to the outside world, but on other fronts maybe he didn't do enough. We'll see if the next one will be able to do more," Deget said from the piazza.

On Wednesday night, the billowing black smoke poured out of the chapel chimney just after 9 p.m., about 4.5 hours after the cardinals filed into the Sistine Chapel to take their oaths. The late hour prompted speculation about what took so long for the 133 electors to cast and count their ballots. Hypotheses abound: Did they have to redo the vote? Did someone get sick or need translation help? Did the papal preacher take a long time to deliver his meditation before the voting began?

"They probably need more time," said Costanza Ranaldi, a 63-year-old who travelled from Pescara in Italy's Abruzzo region to the Vatican.

Some of the 133 voting cardinals had said they expected a short conclave to replace Francis. But it will likely take a few rounds of voting for one man to secure the two-thirds majority, or 89 ballots, necessary to become the 267th pope.

For much of the past century, the conclave has needed between three and 14 ballots to find a pope. John Paul I — the pope who reigned for 33 days in 1978 — was elected on the fourth ballot. His successor, John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

Conjecture on contenders

The cardinals opened the secretive, centuries-old ritual Wednesday afternoon, participating in a rite more theatrical than even Hollywood could create.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the 70-year-old secretary of state under Francis and a leading contender to succeed him as pope, assumed leadership of the proceedings as the most senior cardinal under age 80 eligible to participate.

Parolin seemed to have received the blessings from none other than Re, the respected elder among the cardinals. During the traditional exchange of peace during the pre-conclave Mass on Wednesday, Re was caught on a hot mic telling Parolin "Auguri doppio" or "double best wishes." Italians debated whether it was just a customary gesture acknowledging Parolin's role running conclave, or if it might have been an informal endorsement or even a premature congratulations.

The cardinals were sequestered from the outside world, their cellphones surrendered and airwaves around the Vatican jammed to prevent all communications until they find a new pope.

Francis named 108 of the 133 "princes of the church," choosing many pastors in his image from far-flung countries like Mongolia, Sweden and Tonga that had never had a cardinal before.

His decision to surpass the usual limit of 120 cardinal electors has both lengthened the amount of time it takes for each vote to be processed and injected more uncertainty into a process that is always full of

mystery and suspense.

The Bank of England is expected to cut interest rates in the face of US tariffs threat

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The Bank of England is widely expected to look past near-term inflationary pressures in the British economy and opt to cut interest rates on Thursday as a result of the potential shock to global growth emanating from the tariff policies of the Trump administration.

Most economists believe it's a near-certainty that the nine-member Monetary Policy Committee will sanction a quarter-point reduction in the bank's main interest rate, to 4.25%. Some think there may even be one or two members opting for an even bigger half-point cut.

The decision is to be announced at 12:02 p.m., two minutes later than usual as a result of the two-minute silence for Victory in Europe Day.

The decision has been complicated by mounting speculation that the United States and the United Kingdom will announce a limited trade deal later Thursday that will lower the burden of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs.

Economists are going to be particularly interested in the bank's accompanying economic forecasts as they will be the first since Trump made his tariff announcement in early April. Though most tariffs were paused for 90 days following the ensuing market turmoil, including the 10% baseline tariff applied to U.K. goods entering the U.S., the backdrop for the global economy remains highly uncertain.

"With U.S. trade policy presenting a new demand shock, there have been early signs that the MPC is willing to adopt a more proactive approach to loosening policy," said Edward Allenby, U.K. economist at Oxford Economics.

The forecasts, particularly those regarding growth and inflation, will provide a steer as to whether a more proactive approach is likely. Since it started cutting interest rates in August 2024 from the 16-year high of 5.25%, the MPC has been consistent in lowering borrowing costs every three months.

The imposition of U.S. tariffs on British goods, and the potential for a U.S.-China trade war in particular, has the potential to weigh on growth as well as oil prices, which would consequently depress price pressures by lowering demand.

Though U.K. inflation stands at 2.6% and could well hit double the bank's target rate of 2% in coming months as a result of a raft of price increases in April, such as domestic energy and water bills, economists think rate-setters will opt for a cut, given the anticipated slowdown.

Unlike the Bank of England, and the European Central Bank, which last month cut interest rates too, the U.S. Federal Reserve kept rates unchanged Wednesday as its policymakers wait to see how Trump's tariffs affect the U.S. economy before making any moves.

Inflation rates around the world are way down from levels seen a couple of years ago, partly because central banks dramatically increased borrowing costs from the near zero rates during the coronavirus pandemic. Prices then began to shoot up, first as a result of supply chain issues and later because of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which pushed energy costs higher.

As inflation rates have declined from multidecade highs, central banks, including the Fed, have started cutting interest rates, though few, if any, economists think that rates will fall back to the super-low levels that persisted in the years after the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 and during the pandemic.

80 years ago World War II in Europe was over. Celebrating V-E Day is now tinged with some dread

By RAF CASERT and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Even if the end of World War II in Europe spawned one of the most joyous days the continent ever lived, Thursday's 80th anniversary of V-E Day is haunted as much by the specter of current-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 28 of 74

day conflict as it celebrates the defeat of ultimate evil.

Hitler's Nazi Germany had finally surrendered after a half-decade of invading other European powers and propagating racial hatred that led to genocide, the Holocaust and the murdering of millions.

That surrender and the explosion of hope for a better life is being celebrated with parades in London and Paris and towns across Europe while even the leaders of erstwhile mortal enemies France and Germany are bonding again.

Germany's new foreign minister, Johann Wadephul, paid tribute to "the enormous sacrifices of the Allies" in helping his country win its freedom from the Nazis and said that millions of people were "disenfranchised and tormented by the Nazi regime."

"Hardly any day has shaped our history as much as May 8, 1945," he said in a statement. "Our historical responsibility for this breach of civilization and the commemoration of the millions of victims of the Second World War unleashed by Nazi Germany gives us a mandate to resolutely defend peace and freedom in Europe today."

Gloomy outlook

His comments underscore that former European enemies may thrive — to the extent that the 27-nation European Union even won the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize — but that the outlook has turned gloomy over the past year.

Bodies continue to pile up in Ukraine, where Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion started the worst war on the continent since 1945. The rise of the hard right in several EU member states is putting the founding democratic principles of the bloc under increasing pressure.

"The time of Europe's carefree comfort, joyous unconcern is over. Today is the time of European mobilization around our fundamental values and our security," Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said at a Dutch memorial event in the lead-up to the celebrations.

It makes this unlikely stretch of peace in Europe anything but a given.

And even NATO, that trans-Atlantic military alliance that assured peace in Europe under the U.S. nuclear umbrella and its military clout, is under internal strain rarely seen since its inception.

U.S. contributions to the war effort

The United States was instrumental in turning the tide of the war in Europe, invading along with Allies the D-Day beaches in France's Normandy on June 6, 1944 in what proved to be the tipping point of the war in Europe that inexorably led to the invasion of Germany and the defeat of Hitler.

On Wednesday, U.S. President Donald Trump proclaimed Thursday as a day for the United States to celebrate victory in World War II, insisting the country should better recognize its essential role in the war.

"We are going to start celebrating our victories again!" he said.

The war did drag on beyond Europe especially in the Pacific against Japan, but even Taiwan joined in marking the day for the first time — and highlighting current-day threats. Instead of Russia, it was centering on China, its immediate rival. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory to be annexed by force if necessary.

"Military aggression against another country is an unjust crime that is bound to fail," Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said.

He added that both Taiwan and Europe were "now facing the threat of a new authoritarian bloc."

European celebrations

Commemorations have been going all week through Europe, and Britain has taken a lead. Here too, the current-day plight of Ukraine in its fight against Russia took center stage.

"The idea that this was all just history and it doesn't matter now somehow, is completely wrong," U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said. "Those values of freedom and democracy matter today."

In London later Thursday, a service will be held in Westminster Abbey and a concert, for 10,000 members of the public, at Horse Guards Parade. In Paris, French President Emmanuel Macron is expected to oversee a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe.

And in Berlin, Chancellor Friedrich Merz will again highlight how Germany has remodeled itself into a beacon of European democracy by laying a wreath at the central memorial for the victims of war and tyranny.

And, symbolically, Russia and President Vladimir Putin will be totally out of lockstep with the rest of Europe, celebrating its Victory Day one day later with a huge military parade on Red Square in central Moscow to mark the massive Soviet contribution to defeat Nazi Germany.

Burn patients face excruciating recovery as medicines dwindle under Israeli blockade of Gaza

By MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

KHAN YOUNIS, Gaza (AP) — Hamza Abu Shabab cringed in pain as his mother pulled off his shirt and eased his bandaged head back onto his pillow so she could apply ointment to his small, burned body.

The 7-year-old suffered third degree burns across his head, neck and shoulders when, frightened by an Israeli airstrike, he spilled a hot plate of rice and lentils onto himself in his family's tent in southern Gaza last month.

His recovery has been slowed by Israel's blockade, now in its third month, that bars all medicine, food, fuel and other goods from entering Gaza. His burns have gotten infected — the boy's immune system is weakened by poor nutrition and supplies of antibiotics are limited, said his mother, Iman Abu Shabab.

"Had there not been a siege or it was a different country, he would have been treated and cured of his wounds," she said at her son's bedside in Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis.

Israel's blockade, imposed since March 2, has forced hospitals and clinics across Gaza to stretch limited stocks of medicines even as needs increase. For burn patients, the lack of supplies is particularly excruciating.

Burns are painful and susceptible to infection, but hospitals, including Nasser are short on painkillers, anesthetics, dressings and hygiene materials, said Julie Faucon, the medical coordinator for Gaza and the occupied West Bank with Doctors Without Borders.

Burn cases are surging

Since Israel resumed bombardment across Gaza in mid-March, the number of patients with strike-related burns coming into Nasser Hospital has increased fivefold, from five a day to 20, according to Doctors Without Borders, which supports the facility. The burns are also bigger, covering up to 40% of people's bodies, Faucon said.

Some patients have died because burns impacted their airways and breathing or because they developed severe infections, she said.

While strikes are a main cause of burns, people also seek treatment for accidents, such as spilling hot liquids. That is in part due to the squalid living conditions, with hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians squeezed into tents and crowded shelters, often cooking over wood fires.

Hamza was one of more than 70 patients in Nasser Hospital's burns and orthopedic ward — as many as it could hold — with more streaming in for daily care.

His mother said Hamza has undergone nine surgeries, including four on his face. The hospital ran out of the liquid painkillers used for children, and he struggles to swallow the larger pills, she said.

Lack of food also slows recovery

In another room, 4-year-old Layan Ibrahim Sahloul sits despondently among her dolls, with second-degree burns across her face, foot and stomach. A week ago, a strike on her house in Khan Younis killed her pregnant mother and two siblings, burying her under the rubble.

Layan has difficulty moving and has become withdrawn and in a constant state of fear, said her aunt, Raga Sahloul. She also suffers from malnutrition, she said.

"I am scared it will take her months instead of weeks to heal," said her aunt.

The number of malnourished children has swelled under Israel's ban on food to Gaza, with aid groups warning that people are starving. Without proper nutrition, patients' recovery is slowed and their bodies can't fight infection, say health professionals.

At the meeting of Netanyahu's security Cabinet this week, which decided to expand operations in Gaza, ministers were told that "at this point there is enough food in Gaza," without elaborating, according to two

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 30 of 74

Israeli officials, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the meeting.

Israel says its blockade and renewed military campaign aim to pressure Hamas to release the remaining 59 hostages it holds and to accede to Israel's demands that it disarm. Rights groups have said the blockade is a "starvation policy" and a potential war crime.

The United Nations has warned that Gaza's health-care system is on the brink of collapse, overwhelmed by casualties with essential medicines running out.

Life in tents brings suffering

Doctors say they're also worried about prospects for long term care for burn patients. Many need reconstructive surgery, but few plastic surgeons remain in Gaza. Israel has increasingly rejected entry for international medical staff in recent weeks, aid workers say, though some continue to have access.

At the end of April, 10-year-old Mira al-Khazandar was severely burned on her arms and chest when a strike hit near her tent. Worried that she will have permanent scars, her mother combs pharmacies looking for ointments for her.

Mira's been able to return to the family's tent to recover, but she suffers from the sand and mosquitos there, said her mother Haneen al-Khazandar. She has to go regularly to the hospital, which risks infecting her burns and causes her pain, standing under the sun waiting for transport.

"She is slowly recovering because there is no treatment and no medicines and no food," she said. "She is tired, she can't sleep all night because of the pain, even after I give her medicine, it doesn't help."

India fires attack drones into Pakistan and several are shot down, Pakistani military says

By BABAR DOGAR and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP) — India fired attack drones into Pakistan on Thursday, with one wounding four soldiers, the Pakistani military said, a day after missiles struck several locations and killed more than two dozen people. Several drones were shot down, officials said.

Hours after the first drone attacks, India's Defense Ministry said it targeted air defense systems in several locations in Pakistan, but did not say whether it used drones.

Tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbors have soared since gunmen killed 26 people, mostly Indian Hindu tourists, in India-controlled Kashmir last month. India accused Pakistan of being behind the assault. Islamabad denies that.

Indian strikes on Wednesday killed 31 civilians, including women and children, according to Pakistani officials. More people were killed on both sides of the border in heavy exchanges of fire that followed. It was their worst confrontation since 2019, when the rivals came close to war.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has vowed to avenge the deaths in the strikes, raising fears that the two countries could be headed toward another all-out conflict.

The relationship between India and Pakistan has been shaped by conflict and mutual suspicion, most notably in their competing claims over the Himalayan region of Kashmir. They have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

Drones fired at Pakistan

India fired several Israeli-made Harop drones at Pakistan overnight and into Thursday afternoon, according to army spokesman Lt. Gen. Ahmad Sharif.

Pakistani forces shot down 25, he said. A civilian was killed and another wounded when debris from a downed drone fell in Sindh province.

One drone damaged a military site near the city of Lahore and wounded four soldiers, and another fell in the garrison city of Rawalpindi, near the capital, according to Sharif.

"The armed forces are neutralizing them as we speak," Sharif said on the state-run Pakistan Television early Thursday afternoon.

The Harop drone, produced by Israel's IAI, is one of several in India's inventory, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies' Military Balance report.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 31 of 74

According to IAI, the Harop combines the capabilities of a drone and a missile and can operate at long ranges.

In Lahore, local police official Mohammad Rizwan said a drone was downed near Walton Airport, an airfield in a residential area about 25 kilometers (16 miles) from the border with India that also contains military installations.

Local media reported that two additional drones were shot down in other cities of Punjab province, of which Lahore is the capital.

In Punjab's Chakwal district, a drone crashed into farmland. Authorities have secured the wreckage and are investigating the drone's origin and purpose.

Fears of an escalating conflict

With tensions high, India evacuated thousands of people from villages near the two countries' highly militarized frontier in Kashmir. Tens of thousands of people slept in shelters overnight, officials and residents said Thursday.

About 2,000 villagers also fled their homes in Pakistani-administered Kashmir.

Mohammad Iftikhar boarded a vehicle in Chakothi with his family on Thursday as heavy rain lashed the region. "I am helplessly leaving my home for the safety of my children and wife," he said.

Flights remained suspended at over two dozen airports across northern and western regions in India, according to travel advisories by multiple airlines. Pakistan has suspended flights at four of its airports — Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, and Sialkot — according to the Civil Aviation Authority.

India's Foreign Ministry said that 13 civilians were killed and 59 wounded the previous day during exchanges of fire across the de facto border. An Indian soldier was also killed by shelling Wednesday, according to the Indian army.

Pakistani officials said six people have been killed near highly militarized frontier in exchanges of fire over the past day.

Yes, New Zealand still has more sheep than people. But humans are catching up

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — The vast number of sheep in New Zealand relative to the country's scant human population has long been the subject of jokes aimed at New Zealanders abroad. It's true: The country is one of a handful in the world that's still home to more sheep than people.

But humans are catching up, according to new figures released Tuesday. With a population of 23.6 million sheep and 5.3 million people, there are about 4.5 sheep for each New Zealander, government statistics agency data showed.

That's down from 22 sheep per person in 1982, when farming sheep for meat and wool was New Zealand's biggest earner. Now, years of falling wool prices prompted by a global shift to synthetic fibers have led farmers to change what they do with their land, the sector's biggest lobby group said.

A shrinking flock

By land area, New Zealand is about the size of the United Kingdom, but it has a human population 13 times smaller than the U.K. That means there's plenty of room for sheep.

For close to 150 years, the sheep industry was the backbone of New Zealand's economy and numbers boomed — peaking in 1982 when there were more than 70 million sheep and just 3.2 million people. Before "Lord of the Rings" brought waves of tourists to the country, images of green fields filled with placid sheep against backdrops of snow-capped mountains dominated the country's marketing abroad.

But over years of decline for global wool prices since — and despite recent rallies — the national flock has steadily diminished. Now dairy holds the biggest share of New Zealand's agriculture and horticulture-dominant export market.

Farmers try something new

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 32 of 74

In 2023, Stats NZ, a government agency, said New Zealand in 2022 dipped below five sheep per person for the first time. The national flock had lost a million more sheep in Tuesday's figures, which recorded livestock numbers as of June 2024.

Toby Williams, a spokesperson for sector lobby group Federated Farmers, said sheep farmers have switched to more lucrative pursuits — dairy, or the conversion of land from farming to pine forestry in order to sell carbon offsets.

"If I'm really honest, the wool industry is almost at that tipping point, if not already there, of not having a wool industry anymore," he said.

Measures to bolster wool

The government has drawn up measures intended to slow the decline, including an announcement in 2024 that they will place limits on the scale of farmland that can be converted to carbon forestry.

New government procurement guidelines launched in April urge the use of New Zealand wool products — such as carpets and insulation — in newly constructed or refurbished public buildings. But those measures are not expected to halt declining sheep numbers.

Some sheep-farming countries are recording similar trends. New Zealand's closest neighbor Australia — the source of most of the sheep jokes about New Zealanders — is also home to more sheep than people, but the national flock is shrinking there too.

The gap is slimmer: There are about three sheep per Australian.

Civil rights leaders say acquittals in Tyre Nichols' death highlight the need for police reform

By ADRIAN SAINZ, JONATHAN MATTISE and GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — After three former Memphis police officers were acquitted Wednesday in the beating death of Tyre Nichols, community and civil rights leaders expressed outrage over another disappointment in the long push for police reform.

Nichols' death at a traffic stop more than two years ago sparked nationwide protests and renewed calls for systemic change as the first post-George Floyd case that revealed the limits of an unprecedented reckoning over racial injustice in Black America.

Now, Wednesday's acquittals again show the need for reforms at the federal level, civil rights leaders said.

"Tyre and his family deserve true justice — not only in the courtroom, but in Congress, by passing police reform legislation once and for all," NAACP President Derrick Johnson posted on social media. "Traffic stops should never be a death sentence, and a badge should never— ever — be a shield to accountability."

The Rev. Al Sharpton, who spoke Wednesday to Nichols' mother and stepfather, said they were outraged.

"Justice can still be delivered," Sharpton added in a statement, referring to the officers' upcoming sentencing in a federal civil rights case. "Tyre's death was preventable, inexcusable, and tragic."

Nichols, 29, was on his way home on Jan. 7, 2023, when he was stopped for an alleged traffic violation. He was pulled out of his car by officers, one of whom shot at him with a Taser. Nichols ran away, according to video footage that showed him brutally beaten by five officers. An autopsy found he died from blows to the head.

Three officers were acquitted Wednesday of all state charges, including second-degree murder, in the fatal beating. All five officers, the city of Memphis and the police chief are being sued by Nichols' family for \$550 million. A trial has been scheduled for next year.

"Let this be a rally and cry: We must confront the broken systems that empowered this injustice and demand the change our nation — and Tyre's legacy — deserves," said civil rights attorney Benjamin Crump, who is representing the family in the lawsuit.

After Floyd's 2020 murder by a former Minneapolis police officer, states adopted hundreds of police reform proposals, creating civilian oversight of police, more anti-bias training and stricter use-of-force limits, among other measures. But federal reforms in the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act have been stuck in Congress without enough bipartisan support to get enacted during the Biden administration.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 33 of 74

The Nichols case sparked a 17-month federal investigation into the Memphis Police Department, which found a host of civil rights violations, including using excessive force, making illegal traffic stops and disproportionately targeting Black people.

Last year, police traffic-stop reforms put in place in Memphis after Nichols' death were repealed by GOP Gov. Bill Lee, despite pleas from civil rights advocates.

One of the ordinances had outlawed traffic stops for reasons unrelated to a motorist's driving, such as a broken taillight and other minor violations. Lee echoed arguments from Republican lawmakers who said Nichols' death needed to result in accountability for officers who abuse power, not new limits on traffic stops.

Speaking after Wednesday's acquittal, Shelby County District Attorney Steven Mulroy said: "Our office will continue to push for accountability for everybody who violates the law, including if not especially, those who are sworn to uphold it."

"If we're going to have any silver lining from this dark cloud of both the event itself and in my view today's verdict, it has to be that we need to reaffirm our commitment to police reform," he said.

Thaddeus Johnson, a former Memphis police commander and a senior fellow at the Council on Criminal Justice, said Nichols' beating and Wednesday's acquittal compound wounds from generations of policing problems in the majority-Black city.

"I do believe that reform is local, but I do believe this has kind of put a black eye on things," Johnson told the AP. "People feel like police cannot be held accountable. Or they won't be held accountable."

Andre Johnson, a pastor at Gifts of Life Ministries in Memphis and a community activist, said he was disappointed but not surprised at the verdict.

"It is extremely difficult to convict officers even when they are on camera," he said, calling the acquittal "a loud and clarion acknowledgement that certain groups of people do not matter."

"For a lot of people who have had engagement with police officers, the message is loud and clear: that even if we get you on camera, doing what you did to Tyre, that you cannot face justice."

What to know on the second day of the conclave to elect the next pope

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Cardinals are meeting in a secret, sacred conclave for a second day as they seek a new pontiff to follow Pope Francis. The conclave opened at the Vatican on Wednesday afternoon but a first round of voting resulted in black smoke billowing from the Sistine Chapel.

The 133 cardinals who are eligible to choose the next pontiff are trying again Thursday to elect a successor to Francis to guide the 1.4 billion strong Roman Catholic church at time of human upheaval.

Here are some things to know about the election of the 267th pontiff of the Catholic Church.

Why is the conclave being held now?

The conclave was called after Francis died on April 21 at age 88. There was a delay between his death and the conclave to allow time for a funeral, burial and a period of mourning. It was also necessary to give cardinals time to arrive in Rome from all corners of the Earth, and to let them get acquainted before entering the conclave, an ancient ritual steeped in mystery and ritual.

What happens in a conclave?

The cardinals are cut off from the world while at the Vatican, between residences and the Sistine Chapel, where they vote in secret — and in silence — beneath Michelangelo's famed ceiling fresco of the Creation and his monumental "Last Judgment."

The process — fictionalized in the 2024 political thriller "Conclave" — is said to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and is designed to be both contemplative and free from outside interference.

They began the mystery-steeped ritual of choosing a new pontiff with a morning Mass before entering in procession into the Sistine Chapel.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 34 of 74

To maintain secrecy and security, the Vatican asked cardinals to hand over their phones for the duration of the conclave and is deactivating cellphone coverage. It also was using signal jammers around the Sistine Chapel and the Domus Santa Marta hotel and adjacent residence where the cardinals are sleeping to prevent surveillance and communication with the outside world.

White or black smoke signals?

The electors cast paper ballots, and voting continues until one candidate receives a two-thirds majority, or 89 votes. After voting, ballots are burned in a special stove — black smoke signals no decision, while white smoke means a new pope has been chosen.

Electors must be under 80 years old, and are more geographically diverse than ever. They represent Catholicism's growing presence in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as its traditional power base in Europe.

How long does it take?

The longest conclave in history lasted nearly three years, but it's reasonable to assume that this conclave will be much, much shorter.

Cardinals this week said they expect a short conclave, though it will likely take at least a few rounds of voting.

For most of the past century, it has taken between three and eight ballots to find a pope. John Paul I — the pope who reigned for 33 days — was elected on the third ballot in 1978. His successor, St. John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

Who are the contenders?

There are no official candidates for the papacy, but some cardinals are considered "papabile," or possessing the characteristics necessary to become pope.

After John Paul II broke the Italian hold on the papacy in 1978, the field has broadened considerably, such that cardinals from far-flung countries are now seen as contenders. The past three popes have hailed from Poland (John Paul II), Germany (Benedict XVI) and Argentina (Francis).

Of the 133 cardinals expected to vote at the conclave, 108 were appointed by Francis. They may feel a loyalty to continuing his legacy — even though the late pontiff didn't choose cardinals based on ideology, but rather for their pastoral priorities and geographical diversity.

What happens after a new pope is chosen?

Once a candidate receives the necessary votes and accepts, he chooses a papal name and enters the "Room of Tears" — named for the emotional weight of the responsibility ahead — to don his papal vestments.

Minutes later, he is introduced to the world from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica with the proclamation in Latin: "Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!" ("I bring you tidings of great joy: We have a pope!")

That will be immediately followed by the revelation of his baptismal name, in Latin, followed by the papal name he has chosen.

A line that stretches back to St. Peter and Jesus

Every new pope is seen as a successor to St. Peter, the apostle believed by Catholics to have been appointed by Jesus as the head of the church. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells him, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church," a verse that forms the biblical basis for the papacy.

According to tradition, Peter traveled to Rome to spread the Christian message and was martyred there during the reign of the Emperor Nero, around 64 A.D., as Christians were being persecuted. He was said to be crucified upside down at his own request, considering himself unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus.

St. Peter's Basilica now stands over what is believed to be his tomb.

Why does the pope matter beyond the Catholic Church?

Though the pope leads a religious institution, his influence extends far beyond it. Pope John Paul II played a pivotal role in supporting the Solidarity movement in his native Poland and encouraging resistance to Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. His moral leadership was credited by many with helping to hasten

the end of the Cold War.

Pope Francis, the first pontiff from Latin America, became a prominent voice on global issues from climate change to migration and economic inequality. He called for compassion toward refugees, warned against the dangers of nationalism, and urged action to protect the planet — stances that resonated well beyond church walls, and at times put him at odds with political leaders.

A name to signal a papal direction

The first sign of the new pope's priorities will come in the name he chooses.

A Francis II might signal a new pope's embrace of Francis' legacy of prioritizing the poor and marginalized; a Pius would hint at a traditionalist restoration.

Judge temporarily blocks Trump administration's new transit and homelessness grant conditions

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A federal judge on Wednesday temporarily blocked the Trump administration from imposing new conditions on hundreds of millions of dollars worth of mass transit grants for the Seattle area or homelessness services grants for Boston, New York, San Francisco and other local governments.

The new conditions were designed to further President Donald Trump's efforts to eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion policies; coerce local officials into assisting with the administration's mass deportation efforts; and cut off information about lawful abortions, according to the lawsuit filed last week by eight cities and counties.

The administration argued that Senior U.S. District Judge Barbara Rothstein in Seattle did not have jurisdiction over the lawsuit because it was essentially a contract dispute that should have been brought in the Court of Federal Claims — an argument the judge rejected.

Rothstein wrote that the local governments had shown they were likely to win the case, because the conditions being imposed on the grants had not been approved by Congress, were not closely related to the purposes of the grants and would not make the administration of the grants more efficient.

"Defendants have put Plaintiffs in the position of having to choose between accepting conditions that they believe are unconstitutional, and risking the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grant funding, including funding that they have already budgeted and are committed to spending," Rothstein wrote.

Her order blocks U.S. Housing and Urban Development and the Federal Transportation Administration for 14 days from enforcing the new grant conditions or withholding or delaying funding awarded under the grants. The local jurisdictions said they would seek a longer-term block in the meantime.

The Trump administration did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

King County, which includes Seattle, sued over changes to grant conditions for homelessness services as well as mass transit funding that helps pay for maintenance of the region's light rail system. Boston and New York, Pierce and Snohomish Counties in Washington, the city and county of San Francisco, and Santa Clara County in California all sued over the changes to homelessness services grants.

"Today's ruling is a positive first step in our challenge to federal overreach," King County Executive Shannon Braddock said in a statement. "We will continue to stand up against unlawful actions to protect our residents and the services they rely on."

The conditions highlighted in the plaintiff's restraining order motion included barring grant recipients from using the funding in a way that promotes "illegal immigration or abets policies that seek to shield illegal aliens from deportation." Another condition bars them from using the funding to "promote elective abortions."

How a Chinese delicacy got caught in the crossfire of Trump's trade war

By SALLY HO and MANUEL VALDES Associated Press

SUQUAMISH, Wash. (AP) — For over two decades, Suquamish tribal member Joshua George has dived into the emerald waters of the Salish Sea looking for an unusually phallic clam that's coveted thousands of miles away.

George is a geoduck diver. Pronounced "gooey-duck," the world's largest burrowing clam has been harvested in tidelands by George's Indigenous ancestors in the Pacific Northwest since before Europeans arrived.

In recent years it has also become a delicacy in China, with Washington state sending 90% of its geoducks there, creating a niche yet lucrative American seafood export.

But the escalating trade war between the U.S. and China is now crippling an entire industry that hand-harvests geoducks, leaving Washington state divers without work, Seattle exporters without business and Chinese aficionados with fewer of these prized clams.

"It's the first time in 24 years where I don't know when or if we'll be going back to work or if I have to find another job or what we're going to do," George said.

U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff-driven economic feud with China, which dates back to his first term in office, swiftly resumed in February within weeks of taking back the White House. By April, Trump had placed tariffs of at least 145% on China, which led China to retaliate with tariffs of 125% on the U.S.

Top U.S. officials are set to meet with a high-level Chinese delegation this weekend in Switzerland in the first major talks between the two nations since the latest tariffs were imposed, but it is unclear where those talks will lead.

Enter the geoduck, weighing about 2 pounds and so entrenched in local culture that it is the mascot for Evergreen State College in Olympia. The meaty mollusk is best described as sweet and briny, and it's often sliced raw for crisp sashimi out west while China consumers prefer it chewy in stir-fries or hot pot soups. Pre-tariff costs were as high as \$100 per pound in restaurants, so it's a dish generally reserved for special occasions like Chinese New Year, or to celebrate a business gathering.

Unlike other products with long-lasting shelf life and standing inventory, the trade war has had an immediate, direct effect on the delicate geoducks, which are shipped alive the same day of harvest.

"The whole market, everybody just had to stop," said Jim Boure, general manager of Suquamish Seafoods, an enterprise of the Suquamish Tribe. "We started getting phone calls from buyers saying orders are canceled."

Fewer geoducks are being harvested

The millions of pounds of geoducks shipped annually to China come from two main sources: wild harvests on tracts of seafloor that are split between the Washington State Department of Natural Resources and Puget Sound Treaty Indian Tribes, and tideland farms. The state's share is auctioned to private exporters that often hire contract divers to harvest them.

As of late April, Washington state divers had only pulled about half of the expected harvest from the state tracts, said Blain Reeves, an aquatic resources division manager for the state's Department of Natural Resources. Last year, the state and tribes collectively harvested about 3.4 million pounds of wild Washington geoduck for sale. The state generated \$22.4 million in revenue for their half of the clams, which went toward paying for aquatic restoration projects locally. The state doesn't track how much is harvested by private farmers.

"If only half the pounds that were contracted are harvested, then our revenue is halved," Reeves said.

The Suquamish operation has no orders to harvest for at the moment, but it still must keep up with the maintenance to stay ready for business if and when China comes calling.

On a recent April day, George's team made a quick trip to collect a handful of the clams for state lab testing.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 37 of 74

"When we're doing the job, and it's not all this other political stuff behind the scenes and everything else, we love this," said George, adding that diving, which takes place early in the day so that the geoducks are on an airplane by evening, has allowed him to watch his kids grow up.

Fellow diver Kyle Purser said he cherishes his underwater job, but now fears it's being taken away.

"When you're watching your money disappear and you've got families to feed and not knowing when you're going to get your next paycheck, (it's) very stressful," he said.

America's loss is Canada's gain

The geoduck import market was already facing weaker demand in recent years due to the Chinese economy's struggle to regain post-pandemic momentum. While the tariffs have only exacerbated troubles for geoduck sellers in Washington, there's also been an unintended consequence: The American trade war has inadvertently boosted the Canadian geoduck business, which is facing a mere 25% tariff from China in comparison to the 125% for the U.S.

Washington state in the U.S. and Canada's British Columbia province are the two primary places where the wild geoducks grow naturally for commercial harvest. The two countries did healthy business primarily serving Chinese appetites for decades, in part because quantities are limited. It's a labor-intensive and heavily-regulated harvest, as divers must go several feet below the surface to dig for them.

"They love the fact that it tastes like the sea," said James Austin, president of Canada's Underwater Harvesters Association. "It's a product that's really a hit with the Chinese. It's all about the wild coastline. It's really prestigious."

Austin said he expects there will be 2.75 million pounds of Canadian geoducks harvested in 2025, worth approximately \$60 million Canadian dollars (\$43.4 million USD) in revenue.

While demand has been relatively low but still steady for Canadian's geoducks, Austin said they're now the leading exporters for China, which has helped them negotiate higher prices as a result. For example, after Canada got hit with a 25% tariff in March, export sale prices dropped to \$12 per pound, and after the U.S. got hit with a 125% tariff in April, Canadian geoducks are now being sold for \$17 a pound.

"We have no competitors right now," Austin said.

Yang Bin at Beihai Huaxiashougang Health Industry Company in Beihai city of Guangxi province in China said their seafood wholesale important business no longer gets geoduck from the U.S.

"We don't care about U.S. tariffs because we can get geoduck from other countries with stable prices," Yang said.

Waiting for geoducks

On their first week back to work since the tariff fight brought business to a standstill in Washington state, Derrick McRae and his brother pulled up about 800 pounds of wild geoducks in just one April day.

He donned a full-body diving outfit with an oxygen line tethered to his boat to dive under the cold waters of an inland sea channel west of Seattle. Kneeling on the seafloor, McRae used a water spray gun to move the sand covering the geoducks. In the cloud of sediment, he felt for the neck with his hand, pulling the clam and stuffing it in a net attached to him.

"We're just kind of waiting on the edge of our seats to see what happens next," McRae said.

At one of the southernmost inlets, farmer Ian Child said the tariff disruption is not just hurting his bottom line but the entire farming process. He usually places young geoducks in the sand in the summer, but he can't mix new crops with any existing unharvested clams.

"I think that the demand is still over there for the product," he said of China. "I think they still want it. It's just a matter of where the tariffs will land."

South Korea says North Korea has fired several missiles toward its eastern waters

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Thursday fired various types of short-range ballistic missiles into its eastern sea, South Korea's military said, adding to a run in military displays that raised animosities

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 38 of 74

in the region. South Korean military officials were analyzing whether the tests were linked to the North's weapons exports to Russia during its war in Ukraine.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said multiple missiles were launched from the area around the eastern port city of Wonsan from about 8:10 to 9:20 a.m., with the farthest traveling about 800 kilometers (497 miles). It didn't immediately confirm the exact number of the missiles it detected.

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for the Joint Chiefs, said in a briefing the North Korean launches were possibly intended to test the performance of weapons it plans to export, as the country continues to send military equipment and troops to fuel Russia's warfighting against Ukraine.

Lee said the tests likely involved a short-range ballistic missile system launched from vehicles — possibly modeled after Russia's Iskander missile — and also large-caliber rocket artillery systems, which experts say blur the line between traditional artillery and ballistic systems due to their self-propulsion and guided flight.

The Joint Chiefs said South Korean and U.S. intelligence authorities detected the launch preparations in advance and tracked the missiles after they were launched. The countries were sharing the launch information with Japan, the Joint Chiefs said. It issued a statement denouncing the launches as a "clear act of provocation" that threatens peace and stability in the region.

Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani told reporters that none of the North Korean missiles reached Japan's exclusive economic zone and there was no damage to vessels or aircraft in the area. Nakatani said Japan's government "sternly protested and strongly condemned" the launches through the North Korean embassy in Beijing.

It was the North's first known ballistic activity since March 10, when it fired several ballistic missiles hours after U.S. and South Korean troops began an annual combined military exercise, and the country's sixth launch event of the year.

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have escalated in recent months as North Korean leader Kim Jong Un continues to accelerate the development of his nuclear and missile program and supply weapons and troops to support Russia's war against Ukraine.

Thursday's launch came a day after North Korean state media said Kim urged munition workers to boost the production of artillery shells amid his deepening alignment with Moscow.

After denying its war involvement for months, North Korea last month confirmed for the first time that it had sent combat troops to help Russia in recapturing parts of the Kursk region, which had fallen to a surprise Ukrainian incursion last year. Moscow also acknowledged the North Korean involvement, with Russian President Vladimir Putin issuing a statement thanking the North for sending troops to support his forces and promising not to forget their sacrifices.

Recent South Korean intelligence assessments suggest that North Korea has sent about 15,000 soldiers to Russia, and that nearly 5,000 of them have been killed or injured while fighting against Ukrainian forces. Washington and Seoul have also accused North Korea of supplying Russia with various types of military equipment, including artillery systems and shells and ballistic missiles.

Analysts say North Korea's official acknowledgment of its military support for Russia is likely aimed at cementing a deeper, long-term partnership with Moscow and securing greater compensation, potentially including advanced military technology that could enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear-armed forces.

By formalizing its role as a participant in the war, North Korea may also be positioning itself to seek compensation in future negotiations to end the conflict in Ukraine, according to a recent report by the Institute for National Security Strategy, a think tank affiliated with South Korea's intelligence agency.

Sen. John Fetterman raises alarms with outburst at meeting with union officials, AP sources say

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — Democratic Sen. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania was meeting last week with representatives from a teachers union in his home state when things quickly devolved.

Before long, Fetterman began repeating himself, shouting and questioning why "everybody is mad at

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 39 of 74

me," "why does everyone hate me, what did I ever do" and slamming his hands on a desk, according to one person who was briefed on what occurred.

As the meeting deteriorated, a staff member moved to end it and ushered the visitors into the hallway, where she broke down crying. The staffer was comforted by the teachers who were themselves rattled by Fetterman's behavior, according to a second person who was briefed separately on the meeting.

The interaction at Fetterman's Washington office, described to The Associated Press by the two people who spoke about it on the condition of anonymity, came the day before New York Magazine published a story in which former staff and political advisers to Fetterman aired concerns about the senator's mental health.

That story included a 2024 letter, also obtained by the AP, in which Fetterman's one-time chief of staff Adam Jentleson told a neuropsychiatrist who had treated Fetterman for depression that the senator appeared to be off his recovery plan and was exhibiting alarming behavior, including a tendency toward "long, rambling, repetitive and self-centered monologues."

Asked about the meeting with teachers union representatives, Fetterman said in a statement through his office that they "had a spirited conversation about our collective frustration with the Trump administration's cuts to our education system." He also said he "will always support our teachers, and I will always reject anyone's attempt to turn Pennsylvania's public schools into a voucher program."

Fetterman earlier this week brushed off the New York Magazine story as a "one-source hit piece and some anonymous sources, so there's nothing new." Asked by a reporter in a Senate corridor what he would say to people who are concerned about him, Fetterman said: "They're not. They're actually not concerned. It's a hit piece. There's no news."

Reached by telephone, Aaron Chapin, the president of the Pennsylvania State Education Association who was in the meeting with Fetterman, said he didn't want to discuss what was a private conversation.

Surviving a stroke, battling depression

The teachers union encounter adds to the questions being raised about Fetterman's mental health and behavior barely three years after a he survived a stroke on the 2022 campaign trail that he said almost killed him. That was followed by a bout with depression that landed him in Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for six weeks, barely a month after he was sworn into the Senate.

The scrutiny also comes a time when Fetterman, now serving third year of his term, is being criticized by many rank-and-file Democrats in his home state for being willing to cooperate with President Donald Trump, amid Democrats' growing alarm over Trump's actions and agenda.

Fetterman — who has been diagnosed with cardiomyopathy, in which the heart muscle becomes weakened and enlarged, and auditory processing disorder, a complication from the stroke — has talked openly about his struggle with depression and urged people to get help.

In November, he told podcast host Joe Rogan that he had recovered and fended off thoughts of harming himself.

"I was at the point where I was really, you know, in a very dark place. And I stayed in that game and I am staying in front of you right now and having this conversation," Fetterman said.

But some who have worked closely with Fetterman question whether his recovery is complete.

In the 2024 letter to Dr. David Williamson, Jentleson warned that Fetterman was not seeing his doctors, had pushed out the people who were supposed to help him stay on his recovery plan and might not be taking his prescribed medications. Jentleson also said Fetterman had been driving recklessly and exhibiting paranoia, isolating him from colleagues.

"Overall, over the last nine months or so, John has dismantled the early-warning system we all agreed upon when he was released," Jentleson wrote. "He has picked fights with each person involved in that system and used those fights as excuses to push them out and cut them off from any knowledge about his health situation."

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where Williamson works, declined to make him available for an interview, citing privacy and confidentiality laws protecting patient medical information.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 40 of 74

A lone wolf in the Senate

Fetterman has long been a wild card in the political realm, forging a career largely on his own, independently from the Democratic Party.

As a small-town mayor in Braddock, the plainspoken Fetterman became a minor celebrity for his bare-knuckled progressive politics, his looks — he's 6-foot-8 and tattooed with a shaved head — and his unconventional efforts to put the depressed former steel town back on the map.

He endorsed the insurgent Democrat Bernie Sanders in 2016's presidential primary and ran from the left against the party-backed Democrat in 2016's Senate primary. In 2020, when he was lieutenant governor, he became a top surrogate on cable TV news shows for Joe Biden's presidential bid and gathered a national political following that made him a strong small-dollar fundraiser.

Elected to the Senate in 2022, he has made waves with his casual dress — hoodies and gym shorts — at work and at formal events and his willingness to chastise other Democrats.

Fetterman returned to the Senate after his hospitalization in 2023 a much more outgoing lawmaker, frequently joking with his fellow senators and engaging with reporters in the hallways with the assistance of an iPad or iPhone that transcribes conversations in real time.

Yet two years later, Fetterman is still something of a loner in the Senate.

He has separated himself from many of his fellow Democrats on Israel policy and argued at times that his party needs to work with, not against, Trump. He met with Trump and Trump's nominees — and voted for some — when other Democrats wouldn't.

He has stood firmly with Democrats in other cases and criticized Trump on some issues, such as trade and food aid.

One particularly head-scratching video of Fetterman emerged earlier this year in which he was on a flight to Pittsburgh apparently arguing with a pilot over his seatbelt.

Despite fallout with progressives over his staunch support of Israel in its war in Gaza, Fetterman was still an in-demand personality last year to campaign in the battleground state of Pennsylvania for Biden and, after Biden dropped his reelection bid, Vice President Kamala Harris.

Since Trump won November's election — and Pennsylvania — things have changed. Many one-time supporters have turned on Fetterman over his softer approach to Trump and his willingness to criticize fellow Democrats for raising alarm bells.

It nevertheless brought Fetterman plaudits.

Bill Maher, host of the political talk show "Real Time with Bill Maher," suggested that Fetterman should run for president in 2028. Conservatives — who had long made Fetterman a target for his progressive politics — have sprung to Fetterman's defense.

Still, Democrats in Pennsylvania say they are hearing from people worried about him.

"People are concerned about his health," said Sharif Street, the state's Democratic Party chairman. "They want to make sure he's OK. People care about him. There's a lot of love for him out there."

The more Trump talks about making trade deals, the more confusing the tariff picture gets

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The more President Donald Trump talks about his efforts to reach deals with America's trading partners, the more confusing the tariff picture gets. His team seems good with that, saying Trump is using "strategic uncertainty" to his advantage.

Trump says the United States does not have to sign any agreements, and that it could sign 25 of them right now. He says he is looking for fair deals on all sides, and that he does not care about other countries' markets. He says his team can sit down to negotiate the terms of a deal, and that he might just impose a set of tariffs on his own.

"I am struggling to make sense of it," Chad Bown, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, wrote in an email.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 41 of 74

Late Wednesday on his social media site, Trump wrote that he'll be holding a news conference Thursday morning concerning a "MAJOR TRADE DEAL WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF A BIG, AND HIGHLY RESPECTED, COUNTRY." He added that it would be "THE FIRST OF MANY!!!"

Although Trump's team holds up his best-selling book "The Art of the Deal" as proof that he has a master plan, much of the world is on tenterhooks. That has meant a volatile stock market, hiring freezes and all kinds of uncertainty even as Trump continues to promise that new factories and jobs are on the horizon.

A look at how the trade talks may play out:

Trump still wants tariffs

As part of any deal, Trump wants to keep some of his tariffs in place. He believes the import taxes can generate massive revenues for a heavily indebted federal government even though other countries see the whole point of striking a deal as getting rid of tariffs.

"They're a beautiful thing for us," Trump said recently about tariffs. "If you can use them, if you can get away with using them, it's going to make us very rich. And we'll be paying off debt, we'll be lowering your taxes very substantially because so much money will be taken in that we'll be able to lower your taxes even beyond the tax cut that you're going to be getting."

So far this year, the U.S. government has collected \$45.9 billion from tariffs, about \$14.5 billion more than last year, according to the Bipartisan Policy Center. Those revenues could escalate sharply given the 10% baseline tariffs, the 145% rate being charged on Chinese goods and rates as high as 25% on steel, aluminum, auto and Mexican and Canadian imports.

To reach Trump's stated goals of repaying the \$36 trillion debt and reducing income taxes, his tariffs would need to raise at least \$2 trillion annually without causing the economy to crash in ways that lead to lower overall tax revenues. That would be close to impossible mathematically.

How do negotiations work?

The Republican administration has said 17 of its major 18 trading partners have essentially presented them with term sheets, which list the possible compromises that they are prepared to make. Agreeing to a mutual understanding of the terms would be only the start of any trade talks.

But foreign leaders have said it is unclear exactly what Trump wants or how deals could be codified into a durable agreement. They also know Trump approved the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement in 2020, only to charge new tariffs on those same two trading partners this year.

While meeting with Trump on Tuesday, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney suggested the next version of that agreement would need to be strengthened to prevent a repeat of the fentanyl-related tariffs imposed this year by Trump that Canada saw as arbitrary.

"Some things about it are going to have to change," Carney said.

Can the US reach a deal with China?

The 145% tariffs on China — and the 125% tariffs on the U.S. that Beijing imposed in response — hang over the entire negotiating process. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent acknowledges that those tariffs are not "sustainable."

The first talks between the U.S. and China are set to begin this weekend in Switzerland, but they will likely be limited to finding ways to de-escalate tensions enough for meaningful negotiations to take place.

The key issue is that China is the world's dominant manufacturer, which makes also makes it a leading exporter in ways that can supplant domestic industries. Because China suppresses domestic consumption and focuses on production, the rest of the world buys what it makes because there is not enough internal demand. The U.S. wants to rebalance trade, but it has done so also through tariffs on countries that could be its natural allies in defending their auto and tech industries against China.

"Obviously in this trade puzzle, China is the biggest piece," Bessent said this week. "Where do we end up with China?"

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian has suggested that a meaningful way for the Trump administration to jump-start talks would be to pull back on its rhetoric and punitive import taxes.

"If the U.S. truly wants to resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiation, it should stop threatening and pressuring and engage in dialogue with China on the basis of equality, respect and mutual benefit,"

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 42 of 74

Lin said Tuesday.

Asked on Wednesday whether he would reduce the tariffs on China as a condition for negotiations, Trump said, "No."

The president also disputed statements by the Chinese government that his administration sought the talks in Geneva. "Well, I think they ought to go back and study their files," Trump said.

Would Congress need to approve any deals?

Not necessarily.

Trump unilaterally imposed his universal tariffs without Congress, using the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act to do so, which has led to multiple lawsuits. The administration also maintains that any agreements to change the rates would not need congressional approval.

Previously, presidents, including Trump in his first term with his "Phase One" China deal, could negotiate only "more limited agreements that have focused on select bilateral trade and tariff issues," according to a Congressional Research Service report updated this April. Other examples of limited deals include a 2023 agreement on critical minerals and a 2020 deal on digital trade with Japan.

The challenge is that Trump has also made nontariff barriers such as safety regulations for autos and the value added taxes charged in Europe part of his talks. He wants other countries to change their nontariff policies in exchange for the U.S. reducing the new tariffs he introduced. Other countries, in return, might object to U.S. subsidies to its companies.

In theory, it would take House and Senate approval to complete a deal that would address "non-tariff barriers and require changes to U.S. law," the Congressional Research Service report said.

Is it really a deal if Trump just imposes it?

If other countries fail to satisfy him, Trump has suggested he will just do some kind of internal deals and set a tariff rate, although he technically already did that with his April 2 "Liberation Day" tariffs. The import taxes announced by Trump then led to a financial market sell-off that caused him to pause some of his new tariffs for 90 days and charge the lower 10% baseline rate while negotiations take place.

It appears Trump will agree not to impose the originally threatened tariffs if he thinks other countries are making adequate concessions, essentially meaning that the U.S. gives up nothing because the tariffs are new. But Trump might also pull back his tariffs without necessarily getting much in return.

"Trump is notorious for making maximalist demands and then retreating as negotiations go on, so we'll see how long he sticks with his formula," said William Reinsch, a senior adviser at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington think tank. "But so far it is pretty clear that countries coming in and wanting a 'normal' trade negotiation with both sides making substantive concessions are being rebuffed."

Donald Trump taps wellness influencer close to Robert F. Kennedy Jr. for surgeon general

By SEUNG MIN KIM and MATTHEW PERRONE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is tapping Dr. Casey Means, a physician-turned-wellness influencer with close ties to Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., as his nominee for surgeon general after withdrawing his initial pick for the influential health post.

Trump said in a social media post Wednesday that Means has "impeccable 'MAHA' credentials" — referring to the "Make America Healthy Again" slogan — and that she will work to eradicate chronic disease and improve the health and well-being of Americans.

"Her academic achievements, together with her life's work, are absolutely outstanding," Trump said. "Dr. Casey Means has the potential to be one of the finest Surgeon Generals in United States History."

In doing so, Trump withdrew former Fox News medical contributor Janette Nesheiwat from consideration for the job, marking at least the second health-related pick from Trump to be pulled from Senate consideration. Nesheiwat had been scheduled to appear before the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee Thursday for her confirmation hearing.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 43 of 74

Means and her brother, former lobbyist Calley Means, served as key advisers to Kennedy's longshot 2024 presidential bid and helped broker his endorsement of Trump last summer. The pair made appearances with some of Trump's biggest supporters, winning praise from conservative pundit Tucker Carlson and podcaster Joe Rogan. Calley Means is currently a White House adviser who appears frequently on television to promote restrictions on SNAP benefits, removing fluoride from drinking water and other MAHA agenda items.

Casey Means has no government experience and dropped out of her surgical residency program, saying she became disillusioned with traditional medicine. She founded a health tech company, Levels, that helps users track blood sugar and other metrics. She also makes money from dietary supplements, creams, teas and other products sponsored on her social media accounts.

In interviews and articles, Means and her brother describe a dizzying web of influences to blame for the nation's health problems, including corrupt food conglomerates that have hooked Americans on unhealthy diets, leaving them reliant on daily medications from the pharmaceutical industry to manage obesity, diabetes and other chronic conditions.

Few health experts would dispute that the American diet — full of processed foods — is a contributor to obesity and related problems. But Means goes further, linking changes in diet and lifestyle to a raft of conditions including infertility, Alzheimer's, depression and erectile dysfunction.

"Almost every chronic health symptom that Western medicine addresses is the result of our cells being beleaguered by how we've come to live," Means said in a 2024 book co-written with her brother.

Food experts say it's overly simplistic to declare that all processed foods are harmful, since the designation covers an estimated 60% of U.S. foods, including products as diverse as granola, peanut butter and potato chips.

"They are not all created equal," said Gabby Headrick, a nutrition researcher at George Washington University's school of public health. "It is much more complicated than just pointing the finger at ultra-processed foods as the driver of chronic disease in the United States."

Means has mostly steered clear of Kennedy's controversial and debunked views on vaccines. But on her website, she has called for more investigation into their safety and recommends making it easier for patients to sue drugmakers in the event of vaccine injuries. Since the late 1980s, federal law has shielded those companies from legal liability to encourage development of vaccines without the threat of costly personal injury lawsuits.

She trained as a surgeon at Stanford University but has built an online following by criticizing the medical establishment and promoting natural foods and lifestyle changes to reverse obesity, diabetes and other chronic diseases.

If confirmed as surgeon general, Means would be tasked with helping promote Kennedy's sprawling MAHA agenda, which calls for removing thousands of additives and chemicals from U.S. foods, rooting out conflicts of interest at federal agencies and incentivizing healthier foods in school lunches and other nutrition programs.

Nesheiwat, Trump's first pick, is a medical director for an urgent care company in New York and has appeared regularly on Fox News to offer medical expertise and insights. She is a vocal supporter of Trump and shares photos of them together on social media. Nesheiwat is also the sister-in-law of former national security adviser Mike Waltz, who has been nominated to be Trump's ambassador to the United Nations.

But she had recently come under criticism from Laura Loomer, a far-right ally of Trump who was instrumental in ousting several members of the president's National Security Council. Loomer posted on X earlier this week that "we can't have a pro-COVID vaccine nepo appointee who is currently embroiled in a medical malpractice case and who didn't go to medical school in the US" as the surgeon general.

Independent freelance journalist Anthony Clark reported last month that Nesheiwat earned her medical degree from the American University of the Caribbean School of Medicine in St. Maarten, despite saying that she has a degree from the University of Arkansas School of Medicine. The White House pulled Nesheiwat's nomination because of doubts about her confirmation prospects, according to a person familiar with

the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's reasoning.

"I am looking forward to continuing to support President Trump and working closely with Secretary Kennedy in a senior policy role to Make America Healthy Again! My focus continues to be on improving the health and well-being of all Americans, and that mission hasn't changed," Nesheiwat wrote on social media Wednesday.

The surgeon general, considered the nation's doctor, oversees 6,000 U.S. Public Health Service Corps members and can issue advisories that warn of public health threats.

In March, the White House pulled from consideration the nomination of former Florida GOP Rep. Dave Weldon to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. His skepticism on vaccines had raised concerns from key Republican senators, and he withdrew after being told by the White House that he did not have enough support to be confirmed.

The withdrawal was first reported by Bloomberg News.

A woman who called a Black child a slur has raised a backlash but also thousands of dollars

By TERRY TANG and SARAH RAZA Associated Press

NOTE CONTENTS: This story contains a term that refers to a racial slur.

A video showing a Minnesota woman at a playground last week openly admitting to using a racist slur against a Black child has garnered millions of views. Maybe equally viral has been a crowdfunding effort that has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to help the woman now relocate her family.

In the video, a man in Rochester, a city roughly 90 miles (145 kilometers) south of Minneapolis, confronts the woman for calling a 5-year-old boy the N-word. The woman appears to double-down on the racist term and flips off the man confronting her with both of her middle fingers.

The woman, who could not be reached for comment, has since amassed over \$700,000 through Christian fundraising platform GiveSendGo for relocation expenses because of threats she received over the video. The fundraising page said she used the word out of frustration because the boy went through her 18-month-old child's diaper bag. The Associated Press has not verified this assertion.

"I called the kid out for what he was," she wrote, adding that the online videos have "caused my family, and myself, great turmoil."

The flurry of monetary contributions has reignited multiple debates, from whether racist language and attacks are becoming more permissible to the differences between "cancel culture" and "consequence culture." Many want to see the woman face some sort of comeuppance for using a slur, especially toward a child. Others say despite her words, she does not deserve to be harassed.

The NAACP Rochester chapter started its own fundraising campaign for the child's family. The GoFundMe page had raised \$340,000 when it was closed Saturday per the wishes of the family, who want privacy, said the civil rights organization. It was speaking on behalf of the family of the child, who the organization said was on the autism spectrum.

"This was not simply offensive behavior—it was an intentional racist, threatening, hateful and verbal attack against a child, and it must be treated as such," the NAACP Rochester chapter said in a statement.

The Rochester Police Department investigated and submitted findings to the Rochester City Attorney's Office for "consideration of a charging decision," spokesperson Amanda Grayson said in a statement Monday.

GiveSendGo did not immediately respond Tuesday to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Some say defending the woman defends racism

The donations did and did not surprise Dr. Henry Taylor, director for the Center of Urban Studies at the University at Buffalo.

But shifts in the political and cultural climate have emboldened some people to express racist and bigoted views against people of color or those they consider outsiders. A more recent backlash, from the

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 45 of 74

White House to corporate boardrooms, against diversity, equality and inclusion initiatives have amplified those feelings.

The racism "hovering beneath the surface" comes from blame, Taylor said. "People are given someone to hate and someone to blame for all of the problems and challenges that they are facing themselves," Taylor said.

The volume of monetary contributions in the Rochester case is reminiscent of the surge of support for individuals like Kyle Rittenhouse, Daniel Penny and George Zimmerman. Rittenhouse, Penny and Zimmerman were cleared of wrongdoing or legally found to have acted in self-defense or in defense of others — Penny and Zimmerman after the death of a Black victim and Rittenhouse after fatally shooting two white protesters at a racial justice demonstration against police.

Backlash against 'cancel culture' persists

In the woman's case, a contingent of supporters just want to fight cancel culture, said Franciska Coleman, an assistant professor of law at University of Wisconsin Law School, who has written about cancel culture and social regulation of speech. For some it can include donating "to everyone who they in quotes try to 'cancel.'"

Some people are focused on how "it just seems too much that this mother of two young kids is getting death threats and rape threats," Coleman said.

Conservative commentators have gone online to applaud her for not capitulating to angry internet mobs while acknowledging she used a hateful word. "No one's excusing it. But she didn't deserve to be treated like a domestic terrorist," conservative podcast host Matt Walsh said in a Facebook post.

Some fight over justifications and consequences

There's an important distinction, Coleman said, between "cancel culture" and "consequence culture." The latter is about holding people accountable for actions and words that cause injury such as with "this poor child."

That is what many people want to see in this Rochester woman's case. Because a formal system of punishment may not impose consequences for the woman's racist behavior, "we have to do it informally," Coleman said.

She and Taylor agree that, in conventional societal thinking, using racist slurs against someone who has frustrated or even provoked you is never acceptable. Those who think otherwise, even now, are seen as being on the fringes.

But donors on the woman's GiveSendGo page unabashedly used racist language against the boy, prompting the site to turn off the comments section. Others excused her behavior as acting out of aggravation. There are communities where the racial slur is only unacceptable in "racially mixed company," Coleman said.

Social media websites and crowdfunding platforms have helped people around the world speak with each other and with their wallets. It's intensified by the anonymity these platforms allow.

"Feeling that no one will know who you are enables you to act on your feelings, on your beliefs in an aggressive and even mean-spirited way that you might not do if you were exposed," Taylor said.

Federal Reserve leaves key rate unchanged as it sees risk of higher prices and higher unemployment

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve kept its key interest rate unchanged Wednesday, brushing off President Donald Trump's demands to lower borrowing costs, and said that the risks of both higher unemployment and higher inflation have risen, an unusual combination that puts the central bank in a difficult spot.

The Fed kept its rate at 4.3% for the third straight meeting, after cutting it three times in a row at the end of last year. Many economists and Wall Street investors still expect the Fed will reduce rates this year, but the sweeping tariffs imposed by Trump have injected a tremendous amount of uncertainty into the U.S. economy and the central bank's policies.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 46 of 74

During a press conference after the release of the policy statement, Chair Jerome Powell underscored that the tariffs have dampened consumer and business sentiment but have yet to noticeably harm the economy. At the moment, Powell said, there's too much uncertainty to say how the Fed should react to the duties.

"If the large increases in tariffs that have been announced are sustained, they're likely to generate a rise in inflation, a slowdown in economic growth, and a rise in unemployment," Powell said. The impacts could be temporary, or more persistent, he added.

"There's just so much that we don't know," he added. "We're in a good position to wait and see."

It is unusual for the Fed to face the risk of both higher prices and more unemployment. Typically, rising inflation occurs when consumers are spending freely and businesses, unable to meet all the resulting demand, raise their prices instead, as happened after the pandemic. Meanwhile, increasing unemployment occurs in a weaker economy, which usually slows spending and cools inflation.

A combination of both higher unemployment and steeper inflation is often referred to as "stagflation" and strikes fear in the hearts of central bankers, because it is hard for them to address both challenges. It last occurred on a sustained basis during the oil shocks and recessions of the 1970s.

Most economists say, however, that Trump's sweeping tariffs do pose the threat of stagflation. The import taxes could both lift inflation by making imported parts and finished goods more expensive, while also raising unemployment by causing companies to cut jobs as their costs rise.

The Fed's goals are to keep prices stable and maximize employment. Typically, when inflation rises, the Fed raises rates to slow borrowing and spending and cool inflation, while if layoffs rise, it would cut rates to spur more spending and growth.

At the beginning of the year, analysts and investors expected the Fed would reduce its key rate two or three times this year, as the inflation spike that followed the pandemic continued to cool. Some economists also think the Fed should cut in anticipation of slower growth and worsening unemployment from the tariffs. But Powell was adamant that with the economy in good shape for now, the Fed can stay on the sidelines.

Several months ago, many analysts also expected the economy would achieve a "soft landing," in which inflation would finally drop back to its target of 2%, while unemployment would stay low amid solid growth.

Yet on Wednesday Powell said that was less likely to be achieved.

"If the tariffs are ultimately put in place at those levels ... then we won't see further progress toward our goals," Powell said. "At least for the next, let's say, year, we would not be making progress toward those goals -- again, if that's the way the tariffs shake out."

Powell also said the Fed's next move will depend in part on which indicator worsens the most: inflation or unemployment.

"Depending on how things play out, it could include rate cuts, it could include us holding where we are, we just need to see how things play out before we make those decisions," he said.

Krishna Guha, an analyst at EvercoreISI, said the Fed's assessment of current conditions likely pushes back the timetable for a rate cut. "The combination of the two-sided risk assessment and the characterization of the economy as solid suggest the (Fed) is not looking to tee up a June cut at this juncture." Many economists think the Fed may not be ready to cut until September.

Trump announced sweeping tariffs against about 60 U.S. trading partners in April, then paused most of them for 90 days, with the exception of duties against China. The administration has subjected goods from China to a 145% tariff. The two sides are scheduled to hold their first high-level talks since Trump launched his trade war this weekend in Switzerland.

The central bank's caution could lead to more conflict between the Fed and the Trump administration. On Sunday, Trump again urged the Fed to cut rates in a television interview. Trump has backed off threats to try to fire Powell, but could reconsider if the economy stumbles in the coming months.

Asked at the press conference whether Trump's calls for lower rates has any influence on the Fed, Powell said, "(It) doesn't affect doing our job at all. We're always going to consider only the economic data, the outlook, the balance of risks, and that's it."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 47 of 74

If the Fed were to cut rates, it could lower other borrowing costs, such as for mortgages, auto loans, and credit cards, though that is not guaranteed.

A big issue facing the Fed is how tariffs will impact inflation. Nearly all economists and Fed officials expect the import taxes will lift prices, but it's not clear by how much or for how long. Tariffs typically cause a one-time increase in prices, but not necessarily ongoing inflation.

For now, the U.S. economy is mostly in solid shape, and inflation has cooled considerably from its peak in 2022. Consumers are spending at a healthy pace, though some of that may reflect buying things like cars ahead of tariffs. Businesses are still adding workers at a steady pace, and unemployment is low.

Still, there are signs inflation will worsen in the coming months. Surveys of both manufacturing and services firms show that they are seeing higher prices from their suppliers. And a survey by the Federal Reserve's Dallas branch found that nearly 55% of manufacturing firms expect to pass on the impact of tariff increases to their customers.

Things to know about the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — The acquittal Wednesday of three former Memphis police officers of state charges in the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols is the latest development in a case that has prompted calls for police reforms and a continuing quest for justice by his family more than two years after the 29-year-old Black man's death.

An out-of-town jury from a majority-white county took about 8 1/2 hours over two days to find Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith not guilty after a nine-day trial in state court in Memphis, which is majority Black.

Nichols ran away from a chaotic traffic stop after he was yanked out of his car, pepper-sprayed and shot with a Taser in January 2023. Five Black officers caught him and punched, kicked and hit him with a police baton. They struggled to handcuff Nichols as he called out for his mother just steps from his home. Nichols died three days after the beating.

Video captured by officers' body cameras and a police pole camera showed the officers milling about, talking and laughing as Nichols struggled with his injuries.

The ex-officers were acquitted of second-degree murder, aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression. They still face the prospect of years in prison after they were convicted of federal charges in October, even though they also were acquitted of the most serious charges there.

Two other former officers previously pleaded guilty in both state and federal court, including Emmitt Martin, whom defense attorneys blamed for most of the violence.

The state trial jury was chosen in Hamilton County, which includes Chattanooga, after Judge James Jones Jr. ordered the case be heard outside of Shelby County, which includes Memphis. Defense lawyers had argued that intense publicity made seating a fair jury difficult.

In December, the U.S. Justice Department said a 17-month investigation showed the Memphis Police Department uses excessive force and discriminates against Black people.

Who was Tyre Nichols?

Tyre Nichols was originally from California, but he moved to Memphis to live with his mother, RowVaughn Wells, and his stepfather Rodney Wells.

Nichols worked with his stepdad at Memphis-based FedEx. Tall and slim, Nichols liked photography and skateboarding. He was on his way home to enjoy a sesame chicken dinner prepared by his mother when he was pulled over in his car by three members of the Memphis Police Department's Scorpion Unit.

The unit targeted drugs, illegal guns and violent offenders to amass arrests, while sometimes using force against unarmed people. It was disbanded shortly after Nichols' death.

A chaotic traffic stop

According to trial testimony, officers saw Nichols speeding and tried to stop him. Nichols did not pull

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 48 of 74

over for about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers), making it a "high risk" stop in their eyes. He eventually stopped at a red light in a left-turn lane.

Haley and Martin pounced quickly, yanking Nichols out of the car and pulling him to the ground while giving him expletive-filled orders to comply. Nichols told the officers that he didn't do anything, that he just wanted to go home, and that they were "doing a lot right now."

At one point, Martin said "let go of my gun," but there was no evidence Nichols actually went for the weapon. Pepper spray was deployed, and the officers were hit. Nichols managed to get away and was shot with a Taser as he ran towards his house.

Tackled, pummeled and left to struggle with his injuries

Bean tackled Nichols from behind. As he and Smith grappled with Nichols, Mills arrived and used more pepper spray. Mills, angry that he sprayed himself, testified that he hit Nichols three times in the arm with a police baton.

Martin kicked and punched Nichols multiple times in the head. Haley kicked Nichols once before he was handcuffed.

Nichols was kept on the ground, seated against a police car. Nichols was left to struggle with his injuries with little or no medical care for 19 minutes before he was taken to a hospital.

Nichols died three days later of blunt force trauma to the head. A medical examiner said Nichols had tears and bleeding in the brain.

Prosecutors claim excessive force

Prosecutors argued that the officers used excessive, deadly force in trying to handcuff Nichols and were criminally responsible for each others' actions.

The officers also had a duty to intervene and stop the beating and tell medical personnel that Nichols had been struck in the head, but they failed to do so, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors relied heavily on the graphic video of the beating to make their case. Jurors were repeatedly shown the video during the trial.

As the officers stood around talking about the beating, Bean said Nichols had been "eating" the blows and Smith said they hit Nichols with "so many pieces," or punches.

Haley took a cellphone photo of a severely-injured Nichols and shared it 11 times.

Defense witnesses, arguments sway the jury

Defense attorneys emphasized that it was Martin, not their clients, who kicked and punched Nichols several times in the head. The actions of Bean, Haley and Smith were only meant to get handcuffs on Nichols, they argued.

The defense also seemed to score points with its use-of-force experts, who testified that the officers acted in compliance with police department policies and widely accepted law enforcement standards. Attorneys for Bean and Smith called character witnesses who testified that the men did their job with skill, compassion and honor.

Defense attorneys noted in closing arguments that credit and debit cards that did not belong to Nichols were found in his car and said that was likely why Nichols ran from the traffic stop. The lawyers have argued that the beating would not have happened if Nichols had allowed himself to be handcuffed.

The jury could have convicted the officers on lesser charges including reckless homicide. Right after the verdicts were read, the officers hugged each other and their lawyers.

What's next for Nichols' family?

Shelby County District Attorney Steve Mulroy said he spoke to Nichols' family and said, "They were devastated. ... I think they were outraged."

Nichols' family will still see a measure of justice. All five officers face extended time in federal prison, where there is no parole. Mills and Martin also will receive punishment after their guilty pleas in state court, though it may coincide with the length of their federal prison terms.

Meanwhile, the five officers, the city of Memphis and the police chief are being sued by Nichols' family for \$550 million. A trial has been scheduled for the summer of 2026.

Some migrants were told they'd be sent to Libya, attorneys say as they try to block the deportations

By REBECCA SANTANA, LINDSAY WHITEHURST and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. authorities informed some migrants of plans to deport them to Libya, a country they are not from and that has a history of human rights violations, attorneys said Wednesday. A judge said they can't be deported without a chance to challenge such a move in court.

The legal scramble comes as the Trump administration is pushing forward with plans to carry out mass deportations, including efforts to send migrants to a country where they are not a citizen. The most controversial example of so-called third-country removals has been sending Venezuelans to a notorious El Salvador prison.

Sending deportees to Libya, a country with a documented history of migrant abuse, would mark a major escalation of the administration's push for third countries to take in people being removed from the United States.

A U.S. official said earlier Wednesday there were plans to fly migrants to Libya on a military plane but did not have details on the timing of the C-17 flight. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations.

Immigration attorneys say some of their clients, including people from Vietnam, Laos and the Philippines, were told by immigration enforcement agents that they were going to be deported to Libya. Some were told they were going to Saudi Arabia, they said.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers gathered six people who are detained in southern Texas in a room early Tuesday and told them that they needed to sign a document agreeing that they would be removed to Libya, immigration attorneys representing people from Vietnam said in a court filing, citing reports from relatives of those in detention.

"When they all refused, they were each put in a separate room and cuffed in (basically, solitary) in order to get them to sign it," the lawyers wrote.

In another example, a lawyer for a man from the Philippines wrote to ICE in San Antonio saying his client had learned he was going to be sent to Libya. The attorney wrote that his client "fears being removed to Libya and must therefore be provided with an interview before any removal occurs."

Judge says migrants must get a chance to contest deportations

The attorneys went to court Wednesday asking U.S. District Judge Brian E. Murphy in Massachusetts to intervene. Murphy has been overseeing a lawsuit against the Trump administration over its practice of deporting people to countries where they are not citizens.

He ruled in March that even if people have otherwise exhausted their legal appeals, they can't be deported away from their homeland before getting a "meaningful opportunity" to argue that it would jeopardize their safety.

On Wednesday, he said any "allegedly imminent" removals to Libya would "clearly violate this Court's Order." He also ordered the government to hand over details about the claims.

In addition to the Venezuelans sent to El Salvador, the administration has deported people to Panama and Costa Rica who were not citizens of those countries.

Sending someone to a country that is not their own has raised a host of questions about due process and, particularly in the case of El Salvador, whether they are going to be subject to further abuse.

Outside of those three Central American nations, the Trump administration has said it's exploring other third countries for deportations. Asked Wednesday about whether Libya was one of those countries, the administration had little to say.

President Donald Trump directed questions to the Department of Homeland Security. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem said during a news conference in Illinois that she "can't confirm" media reports of plans to send people to Libya.

The State Department said it does not "discuss the details of our diplomatic communications with other governments."

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 50 of 74

Libya denies reports of a deportation deal

The Tripoli-based government of Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibah said in a statement Wednesday that there was "no deal or coordination" with the U.S. to receive migrants. However, it said "some parallel parties" could have agreed to receive them.

That appears to refer to its rival administration in east Libya, which is controlled by powerful military commander Khalifa Hifter. Libya has been split for years between rival administrations in the east and west, each backed by armed groups and foreign governments.

The Hifter-led Libya National Army, which controls eastern and southern Libya, also released a statement, denying any deal or understanding to receive migrants from the U.S.

"There won't be any acceptance or reception of them (the migrants) on the territories secured by the Libyan Armed Forces whatever the reasons and justifications are," it said.

Abuses against migrants in detention in Libya have been widely documented, with U.N. investigators saying they had evidence of possible crimes against humanity, including accounts of murder, torture, enslavement, extrajudicial killings and rape.

Migrants have told The Associated Press about repeated beatings and torture while ransoms were demanded of their families. Their bodies showed traces of old and recent injuries, and signs of bullet and knife wounds on their backs, legs, arms and faces.

Feds vow to overhaul US air traffic control system while fixing problems at troubled Newark airport

By JOSH FUNK Associated Press

A deadly midair collision in January between a military helicopter and a commercial airliner, several additional crashes and technical problems that resulted in mass cancellations at New Jersey's biggest airport have prompted officials to pledge a fix for the nation's outdated air traffic control system and vow to hire more controllers.

Doing so, they say, would help ensure safety and prevent the kind of problems that have plagued the Newark, New Jersey, airport since its radar system briefly failed last week.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy plans to unveil a multi-billion-dollar plan to overhaul the nation's air traffic control system Thursday, while the Federal Aviation Administration works to quickly solve technology and staffing problems in Newark and avoid similar crisis elsewhere.

Amid turmoil, one thing seems clear: An aging system struggles to handle the nation's more than 45,000 daily flights.

It's uncertain whether Duffy's plan that President Donald Trump supports will get the necessary congressional funding to be more effective than previous reform efforts during the last three decades. But Duffy says it's necessary. Already more than \$14 billion has been invested in upgrades since 2003 but none have dramatically changed how the system works.

"We are on it. We are going to fix it. We are going to build a brand new system for all of you and your families and the American people," Duffy said.

But details are scant. It's unclear whether the plan will involve privatizing the air traffic control system as Trump backed in his first term. Duffy has not highlighted that possibility. Thursday's announcement is expected to attract dozens of unions, which would likely oppose privatization, along with trade groups, industry representatives and family members of victims of the January crash.

History of problems

For years, the system has operated well enough to be largely neglected by every administration, said University of Illinois professor Sheldon Jacobson, who has studied risks in aviation. "But well enough isn't good enough when it comes to air travel because people's lives are at risk."

Jacobson is skeptical Duffy's proposal will succeed. But there could be renewed support following the collision between an American Airlines jet and an Army helicopter over Washington D.C. in January, and a plane that flipped and caught fire in Toronto.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 51 of 74

The weaknesses of the nation's air traffic control system have for years been highlighted in reports and hearings. Most recently, a Government Accountability Office review released in March declared that 51 of the FAA's 138 systems were considered unsustainable and another 54 were potentially unsustainable. A 2023 outage in FAA's Notice to Airmen system forced the grounding of every flight nationwide for more than two hours.

"We're dealing with an outmoded system and we have an outdated infrastructure," said former Continental Airlines CEO Frank Lorenzo, who helped establish a major hub in Newark that United Airlines still maintains years after acquiring Continental. "We haven't really given it the attention that it requires."

Outdated technology

The president of National Air Traffic Controllers Association told Congress that the majority of the FAA's telecommunications infrastructure at more than 4,600 sites relies at least in part on aging copper wires, instead of more reliable fiber optic lines that can handle more data. Unexpected outages related to those lines routinely cause ground stops at airports and appear to have led to the problems in Newark.

The radar system air traffic controllers in Philadelphia use to direct planes in and out of the Newark airport went offline for at least 30 seconds on April 28. That facility relies on radar data sent over lines from New York that may have failed, some of which are old copper phone lines. The FAA relies on those lines because Newark controllers were moved from New York to Philadelphia last summer to address staffing issues.

The FAA said Wednesday it plans to replace any old copper wires with fiber optics and add three new data lines between New York and Philadelphia. The agency is also working to get additional controllers trained and certified.

It wasn't immediately clear how long either step will take, but Duffy has said he hopes the situation in Newark will improve by summer, which is when an ongoing runway construction project is scheduled for completion. Several controllers remain on extended trauma leave after the radar outage, which worsened staff shortages in Philadelphia.

In response, the FAA has slowed traffic in and out of Newark to ensure flights can be handled safely, leading to cancellations. Duffy also said FAA will meet with all airlines to determine how many flights the airport can handle. On Wednesday, Newark led the nation with 42 canceled departures and 46 canceled arrivals, according to FlightAware.com. That's even after United cut 35 daily flights at the airport starting last weekend.

Some upgrades have been completed

The FAA has made incremental improvements as part of its Nextgen program that was established in 2003. Advancements include development of the ADS-B system that provides more precise aircraft locations to controllers and other planes. That system has been a focal point of the investigation of the January crash because the Black Hawk helicopter was not using it to broadcast its location at the time of the collision.

Duffy has also tried to supercharge air traffic controller hiring by shortening the time it takes to get into the academy and improving student success rates. The FAA is also offering bonuses to experienced controllers to discourage early retirement.

A major challenge to upgrading the aviation infrastructure is that the FAA must keep the current system operating while developing a new system — and then find a way to seamlessly switch over. That's partly why the agency has pursued more gradual improvements in the past.

"The problem has existed for decades. It's not because of neglect, but because it's a hard problem to solve," said Jeff Guzetti, who is a former accident investigator who also worked in the Transportation Department's Inspector General's office for several years that was focused on aviation. "And it requires money and good management. And the FAA has been has had shortages of both money and in some cases good management for years."

House Republicans push to sell hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands in the West

By MATTHEW DALY and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans added a provision to their sweeping tax cut package authorizing sales of hundreds of thousands of acres of public lands in Nevada and Utah, prompting outrage from Democrats and environmentalists who called it a betrayal that could lead to drilling, mining and logging in sensitive areas.

Republicans on the House Natural Resources Committee adopted the land sales proposal early Wednesday morning. The initial draft had not included it amid bipartisan opposition.

The land sale provision was put forward by Republican Reps. Mark Amodei of Nevada and Celeste Maloy of Utah.

The parcels could be used for economic development, mining and infrastructure projects such as the expansion of an airport and a reservoir in Utah, according to local officials and plans for the areas.

Some sites would be considered for affordable housing, which is much needed in fast-growing parts of Nevada.

The sites include up to 200,000 acres (80,000 hectares) in Clark County Nevada, which includes Las Vegas, according to Nevada Democratic Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto. That's less than 1% of more than 50 million acres (20 million hectares) of federal land overall in the state.

Also included is land in Pershing County, Nevada, where Amodei has advocated for selling or exchanging about 350,000 acres of public lands and allowing sales to mining companies.

Cortez Masto in a statement called it "a land grab to fund Republicans' billionaire giveaway tax bill."

"In the dead of night, Representative Mark Amodei pushed House Republicans to move forward with an insane plan that cuts funding from water conservation and public schools across Nevada," she said.

The parcels in Utah would be sold at fair market value to local governments and make up only a third of 1% of public lands in the state, according to Maloy's office.

"The sales from these small parcels of land will generate significant federal revenue, and have broad local support. It's a tailored, parochial budgetary measure," said House Natural Resources Committee spokesperson John Seibels.

Colorado Republican Rep. Jeff Hurd voted against the provision.

The Nevada parcels are also in Lyon and Washoe Counties. The Utah parcels are in the western portion of the state, including around the city of St. George and near Zion National Park.

Seibels said the land sales provision resulted from a "community-driven effort" by the impacted counties.

The sales provision advanced as the Natural Resources committee voted 26-17 to allow increased leasing of public lands for natural resource extraction, while clearing the path for more development by speeding up government approvals.

Republicans said the overall bill would generate at least \$18 billion in new revenue and savings.

Royalty rates paid by companies to extract oil, gas and coal would be cut, reversing former Democratic President Joe Biden's attempts to curb fossil fuels to help address climate change.

The measure is part of Trump's big bill of tax breaks, spending cuts and beefed-up funding to halt migrants. House Speaker Mike Johnson has set a goal of passing the package out of his chamber by Memorial Day. All told, 11 different House committees are crafting portions of the bill.

Montana Rep. Ryan Zinke, a Republican and former Interior secretary in the first Trump administration, had said before the vote that he was drawing a "red line" on federal land sales.

"It's a no now. It will be a no later. It will be a no forever," said Zinke, whose state includes large parcels of federally owned lands. He is not on the Natural Resources Committee but his office said he would oppose any legislation to sell lands that reaches the House floor.

About 1 million square miles is under federal control. Most of that land is in Alaska and Western states. That includes 63% in Utah and 80% in Nevada.

Zinke and Rep. Gabe Vasquez, D-N.M., are leading a new bipartisan Public Lands Caucus intended to

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 53 of 74

protect and expand access to America's public lands. The caucus launched with a Wednesday news conference hours after the resources panel vote.

Asked about the land sale provisions, Zinke said he understood frustrations over restrictions on logging and mineral extraction. But he indicated federal lands should remain under government management.

"I prefer the management scheme and I give as an example a hotel. If you don't like the management of a hotel, don't sell the hotel; change the management," he said.

Oil and gas royalty rates would drop from 16.7% on public lands and 18.75% offshore to a uniform 12.5% under the committee-passed bill, which still faces a vote in the full House and Senate once it is incorporated into the final legislative package. 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.

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum and Housing and Urban Development Secretary Scott Turner in March proposed using "underutilized" federal land for affordable housing. Turner said some 7 million homes are needed. Officials under Biden also sought to use public lands for affordable housing, although on a smaller scale.

The agencies have not yet released more details of the plan.

Most airports are operating smoothly on the first day of the REAL ID requirement

By OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Most airports around the United States operated smoothly as new REAL ID requirements took effect Wednesday because travelers without the updated document were still allowed to move through security easily.

Those without the IDs were given pieces of paper informing them that going forward they would need to present REAL ID or other federally accepted ID for air travel within the U.S. It includes a QR code travelers can use to see a list of acceptable identifications.

"The ID you presented is NOT REAL ID-compliant," the paper reads. "You will need a REAL ID or other acceptable form of identification for your next flight or you may expect delays."

Suzy Roberts, a traveler who didn't have a REAL ID, passed through security without a hitch at Oakland airport in Northern California. Officials gave her the TSA handout, advised her to call the DMV to make an appointment, and said she might have to go through extra screening.

"I'm going through — they're just gonna do extra security and they'll take my photo," Roberts explained as she waited for her bag to be screened before her flight to Los Angeles.

The relative calm at airports was bolstered by the fact that 81% of travelers already have REAL IDs, according to the Department of Homeland Security.

Nathan Carter was one of them.

"I feel pretty well prepared. I've had real ID for a while," he said as he prepared to return home to Kansas City from Philadelphia.

The new requirement for domestic flights has been the subject of much discussion on social media in recent weeks, with people expressing confusion about whether they can travel without a REAL ID, sharing details about wait times and seeking advice on how to meet the requirements.

Airport security checkpoints also accepted passports and tribal identification as usual.

No lines at the airport, lines to get IDs

Many airports reported wait times of a few minutes at security checkpoints on their websites on Wednesday morning. LaGuardia Airport in New York City reported no wait at one TSA PreCheck checkpoint and

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 54 of 74

wait times ranging from 2 to 11 minutes in the general lines. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport's website showed wait times at its security checkpoints ranging from 5 to 16 minutes.

Nashville International Airport posted on social media that wait times were less than 20 minutes on Wednesday morning, but urged travelers to help keep things running smoothly by bringing a REAL ID.

The day ahead of the deadline, people lined up at government offices across the country to secure their compliant IDs. In Chicago, officials established a Real ID Supercenter for walk-in appointments, while officials in California and elsewhere planned to continue offering extended hours for the crush of appointments.

Michael Aceto waited in line at a DMV in King of Prussia, in the Philadelphia suburbs, for about two and a half hours Tuesday before getting his REAL ID.

"It's a pain in the butt. It's really a lot of time. Everybody's got to take off from work to be here," he said. "It's a big waste of time as far as I'm concerned."

Travelers without REAL ID still will be able to fly

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem told a congressional panel on Tuesday that those who still lack an identification that complies with the REAL ID law "may be diverted to a different line, have an extra step."

There's already an extra screening process in place for people who lose or forget their IDs while traveling.

It wasn't clear Wednesday how many people without REAL IDs were facing extra screening beyond being handed the TSA flier.

REAL ID is a federally compliant state-issued license or identification card that Homeland Security says is a more secure form of identification. It was a recommendation by the 9/11 Commission and signed into law in 2005. It was supposed to be rolled out in 2008 but the implementation had been repeatedly delayed.

"The whole idea here is to better validate those individuals that were encountering a checkpoint to ensure they are who exactly they say they are," said Thomas Carter, TSA's Federal Security Director in New Jersey.

If people without REAL IDs give themselves extra time, he said, they likely shouldn't miss their flights. "I do not have a belief that this will cause people to miss their flights if they take that additional time in."

REAL ID also will be needed for certain federal facilities

Besides serving as a valid form of identification to fly domestically, people will also need a REAL ID to access certain federal buildings and facilities.

State government offices that issue driver's licenses and state IDs have seen a significant increase in demand for REAL ID and some have extended their office hours to meet the demand. Some officials have recommended people delay getting REAL ID compliant licenses and cards if they don't have flights planned in the next few months.

"Wait until after the current rush," said Erin Johnson, a spokesperson with the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Warriors sideline Curry for at least a week with hamstring strain, putting rest of series in flux

By DAVE CAMPBELL AP Sports Writer

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Golden State Warriors are planning to play without Stephen Curry for at least the next three games of their second-round series against Minnesota, after an MRI exam on Wednesday confirmed a mild strain of the star guard's left hamstring.

The Warriors said Curry would be sidelined at least a week after the injury on Tuesday night forced him out early in the second quarter of Game 1, which they went on to win 99-88. He had 13 points in 13 minutes to help Golden State build a comfortable lead and take home-court advantage away from the Timberwolves.

"Every year the playoffs are about adapting, whether it's a game plan or an injury or a lineup, so we just have to adapt," coach Steve Kerr said. "We've done this before, and we're confident we can do this again."

Game 2 is in Minneapolis on Thursday, before the series moves west to San Francisco for Game 3 on Saturday and Game 4 on Monday. The earliest return for Curry appears to be Game 5 on May 14, which

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 55 of 74

is conveniently followed by three straight off days before Game 6 on May 18.

Curry has never had a significant hamstring injury in his career, creating yet more mystery around the length of this absence and whether the Warriors can tread water long enough without the all-time leading 3-point shooter in NBA history to get him back near the end of the series. They'd be unwise to bank on that, though.

"We think we have the best defense in the league, and that's been proven over the last couple of months," Kerr said.

Curry missed multiple games because of injuries during the 2016 and 2018 playoffs, absences the Warriors adeptly endured on their way to the NBA Finals in both scenarios. They lost to Cleveland in seven games for the 2016 championship, and they swept the Cavaliers in 2018 for a third title in four years. Without Curry during those two postseason runs, they went 9-3.

This Golden State roster hardly stacks up to those predecessors, however, when Curry and Draymond Green were much younger and other standouts like Klay Thompson and Andre Iguodala were integral to their success. By 2018, they had Kevin Durant, too.

For now, the Warriors were feeling good about the all-hands-on-deck effort led by Jimmy Butler, Buddy Hield and Green in Game 1, in which Kerr used 12 different players.

Without Curry, the ball will go through Butler on most possessions, as it did on Tuesday. The six-time All-Star, whose acquisition in a trade with Miami three months ago helped spark and solidify the Warriors on both offense and defense, had 20 points, 11 rebounds and eight assists in Game 1. He scored 20 or more points in four of the five full games he played in the first round against Houston.

"Everybody is live. Everybody who comes into the game is looking to make plays," Timberwolves guard Mike Conley said. "So you have to be almost even more so locked in on the game and who you're matched up with and the tendencies. Because they're not looking for just Curry. Obviously, Buddy is going to be more aggressive, Jimmy is going to be more aggressive, but they've got guys who can put the ball in the hole, and they may try to do that collectively as a group."

3 former Memphis officers acquitted in fatal beating of Tyre Nichols after he fled a traffic stop

By ADRIAN SAINZ and KRISTIN M. HALL Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Three former Memphis officers were acquitted Wednesday of all state charges, including second-degree murder, in the fatal beating of Tyre Nichols after he ran away from a traffic stop, a death that sparked nationwide protests and prompted renewed calls for police reforms in the U.S.

An out-of-town jury from a majority-white county took about 8 1/2 hours over two days to find Tadarrius Bean, Demetrius Haley and Justin Smith not guilty on all charges after a nine-day trial in state court in Memphis, which is majority-Black. After the jury's verdict was read, the defendants hugged their lawyers as relatives of the former officers cried. Outside the courtroom, one relative yelled, "Thank you, Jesus!"

Martin Zummach, Smith's attorney, told The Associated Press by text: "It's easy to defend a good person. It's nerve racking to represent an innocent man."

The three defendants still face the prospect of years in prison after they were convicted of federal charges, though they were acquitted of the most serious charges there, too. Two other former officers previously pleaded guilty in both state and federal court, including Emmitt Martin, who defense attorneys blamed for the majority of the violence.

Bean and Smith are out on bond and under house arrest after their federal convictions. Haley is being held in federal prison.

Nichols, a 29-year-old Black man, fled a traffic stop after he was yanked out of his car, pepper-sprayed and hit with a Taser. Five officers who are also Black caught up with him and punched, kicked and hit him with a police baton, struggling to handcuff Nichols as he called out for his mother just steps from his home. Nichols died Jan. 10, 2023, three days after the beating.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 56 of 74

Footage of the beating captured by a police pole camera also showed the officers milling about, talking and laughing as Nichols struggled with his injuries, video that prompted intense scrutiny of police in Memphis.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who represents Nichols' family, issued a statement expressing outrage at the outcome of the trial.

"Today's verdicts are a devastating miscarriage of justice," the statement reads. "The world watched as Tyre Nichols was beaten to death by those sworn to protect and serve."

Memphis District Attorney Steve Mulroy said he respects the jury but thinks the evidence was there for every charge that prosecutors brought.

"Was I surprised that there wasn't a single guilty verdict on any of the counts or any of the lesser-included offenses, given the overwhelming evidence that we presented? Yes, I was surprised. Do I have an explanation for it? No."

He said he spoke to Nichols' family briefly and, "They were devastated. ... I think they were outraged, and we can understand why they would be outraged, given the evidence."

Defense attorneys said Martin was responsible for the most violence

Former Memphis officers Desmond Mills Jr. and Martin, who were also involved in the beating, did not stand trial in state court after they agreed to a plea deal with prosecutors. They also pleaded guilty in federal court, where sentencing for all five officers is pending.

At trial, defense attorneys emphasized that Martin kicked and punched Nichols several times in the head.

The defense also seemed to score points with their use-of-force experts, who testified that the three officers on trial acted in compliance with police department policies and widely accepted law enforcement standards. Attorneys for Bean and Smith called character witnesses who testified that the men were good officers who did their job the right way.

Mills testified for the prosecution, saying he regrets his failure to stop the beating, which led to Nichols' death from blunt force trauma. Nichols suffered tears and bleeding in the brain, Dr. Marco Ross, the medical examiner who performed the autopsy, said in court testimony.

The officers had been charged with second-degree murder, aggravated assault, aggravated kidnapping, official misconduct and official oppression. In addition to beating Nichols, prosecutors also said the officers failed to intervene and failed to tell medical personnel that Nichols had been hit repeatedly in the head.

The defense argued that Nichols was resisting arrest

Mills acknowledged on the stand that he had a duty to intervene, but didn't. He admitted Nichols never punched or kicked any of the officers.

But Mills also bolstered the defense's case when he said Nichols was actively resisting arrest and not complying with orders to present his hands to be cuffed. Under cross-examination, he indicated he would not have struck Nichols if Nichols had put his hands behind his back. He also agreed that an officer is not safe until a suspect is handcuffed and searched for a weapon.

Zummach noted in closing arguments that credit and debit cards that did not belong to Nichols were found in his car when it was searched after the beating and said it was likely why Nichols ran from the traffic stop. Defense lawyers have argued that the fatal beating would not have taken place if Nichols had just allowed himself to be handcuffed.

"This is Emmitt Martin's and Tyre Nichols' doing," Zummach said.

The jury for the state trial was chosen in Hamilton County, which includes Chattanooga, after Judge James Jones Jr. ordered the case be heard from people outside of Shelby County, which includes Memphis. Defense lawyers for the officers had argued that intense publicity made seating a fair jury difficult.

Prosecutor Paul Hagerman told reporters outside the courtroom that the Chattanooga area was chosen for jury selection after the city was shown in a study to have the least amount of pre-trial publicity among Tennessee's largest cities.

In December, the U.S. Justice Department said a 17-month investigation showed the Memphis Police Department uses excessive force and discriminates against Black people.

The five officers, the city of Memphis and the police chief are being sued by Nichols' family for \$550

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 57 of 74

million. A trial has been scheduled for next year.

What to know about the conclave to elect the next pope

By VANESSA GERA Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — One hundred and thirty-three cardinals sequestered themselves behind the Vatican's medieval walls for a conclave to elect a successor to Pope Francis. Here are some things to know about the election of the 267th pontiff of the Catholic Church, which has 1.4 billion faithful across the world.

Why is the conclave being held now?

The conclave was called after Francis died on April 21 at age 88. There was a delay between his death and the conclave to allow time for a funeral, burial and a period of mourning. It was also necessary to give cardinals time to arrive in Rome from all corners of the Earth, and to let them get acquainted before entering the conclave, an ancient ritual steeped in mystery and ritual.

What happens in a conclave?

A solemn day began with a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica. The cardinals walked in procession into the frescoed Sistine Chapel, chanting the meditative "Litany of the Saints" and the Latin hymn "Veni Creator," imploring the saints and the Holy Spirit to help them pick a pope.

The cardinals are cut off from the world at the Vatican, between residences and the Sistine Chapel, where they vote in secret — and in silence — beneath Michelangelo's famed ceiling fresco of the Creation and his monumental "Last Judgment."

The process — fictionalized in the 2024 political thriller "Conclave" — is said to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and is designed to be both contemplative and free from outside interference.

Taking no chances, the Vatican is asking cardinals to hand over their phones for the duration of the conclave and is deactivating cell phone coverage at the Vatican. It is using signal jammers around the Sistine Chapel and the Domus Santa Marta hotel and adjacent residence where the cardinals will sleep, to prevent surveillance and communication with the outside world.

White or black smoke signals?

The electors cast paper ballots, and voting continues until one candidate receives a two-thirds majority, or 89 votes. After voting, ballots are burned in a special stove — black smoke signals no decision, while white smoke means a new pope has been chosen.

Electors must be under 80 years old, and are more geographically diverse than ever. They represent Catholicism's growing presence in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, as well as its traditional power base in Europe.

How long does it take?

The longest conclave in history lasted nearly three years, but it's reasonable to assume that this conclave will be much, much shorter.

Cardinals this week said they expect a short conclave, though it will likely take at least a few rounds of voting.

A first round produced dark smoke that rose into Wednesday's night sky, sending a disappointed crowd to disperse in all directions.

For most of the past century, it has taken between three and eight ballots to find a pope. John Paul I — the pope who reigned for 33 days — was elected on the third ballot in 1978. His successor, St. John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

Who are the contenders?

There are no official candidates for the papacy, but some cardinals are considered "papabile," or possessing the characteristics necessary to become pope.

After John Paul II broke the Italian hold on the papacy in 1978, the field has broadened considerably, such that cardinals from far-flung countries are now seen as contenders.

Of the 133 cardinals expected to vote at the conclave, 108 were appointed by Francis. They may feel a loyalty to continuing his legacy — even though the late pontiff didn't choose cardinals based on ideology,

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 58 of 74

but rather for their pastoral priorities and geographical diversity.

What happens after a new pope is chosen?

Once a candidate receives the necessary votes and accepts, he chooses a papal name and enters the "Room of Tears" — named for the emotional weight of the responsibility ahead — to don his papal vestments.

Minutes later, he is introduced to the world from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica with the proclamation in Latin: "Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum: Habemus Papam!" ("I bring you tidings of great joy: We have a pope!")

That will be immediately followed by the revelation of his baptismal name, in Latin, followed by the papal name he has chosen.

A line that stretches back to St. Peter and Jesus

Every new pope is seen as a successor to St. Peter, the apostle believed by Catholics to have been appointed by Jesus as the head of the church. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells him, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church," a verse that forms the biblical basis for the papacy.

According to tradition, Peter traveled to Rome to spread the Christian message and was martyred there during the reign of the Emperor Nero, around 64 A.D., as Christians were being persecuted. He was said to be crucified upside down at his own request, considering himself unworthy to die in the same manner as Jesus.

St. Peter's Basilica now stands over what is believed to be his tomb.

Why does the pope matter beyond the Catholic Church?

Though the pope leads a religious institution, his influence extends far beyond it. Pope John Paul II played a pivotal role in supporting the Solidarity movement in his native Poland and encouraging resistance to Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. His moral leadership was credited by many with helping to hasten the end of the Cold War.

Pope Francis, the first pontiff from Latin America, became a prominent voice on global issues from climate change to migration and economic inequality. He called for compassion toward refugees, warned against the dangers of nationalism, and urged action to protect the planet — stances that resonated well beyond church walls, and at times put him at odds with political leaders.

A name to signal a papal direction

The first sign of the new pope's priorities will come in the name he chooses.

A Francis II might signal a new pope's embrace of Francis' legacy of prioritizing the poor and marginalized; a Pius would hint at a traditionalist restoration.

Black smoke pours from Sistine Chapel chimney, indicating no pope was elected as conclave opens

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Black smoke poured out of the Sistine Chapel chimney on Wednesday, signalling that no pope had been elected as 133 cardinals opened the secretive, centuries-old ritual to choose a new leader of the Catholic Church.

The cardinals participating in the most geographically diverse conclave in the faith's 2,000-year history took just one round of voting Wednesday evening. After failing to find a winner on the first ballot, they retired for the night and will return to the Sistine Chapel on Thursday morning to try to find a successor to Pope Francis.

They had opened the conclave Wednesday afternoon, participating in a rite more theatrical than even Hollywood could create, a wash of red-robed cardinals, Latin chants, incense and solemnity that underscored the seriousness of the moment.

Outside in St. Peter's Square, the scene was festive, as thousands of people flocked to the piazza to watch the proceedings on giant video screens, applauding when the Sistine Chapel's doors slammed shut and the voting began. They waited for hours, watching screens that showed just a skinny chimney and

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 59 of 74

occasional seagull. After the vote dragged on to dinnertime, some left in frustration, but those who stayed cheered when the smoke finally billowed out.

"My hope is that cardinals will choose a man who can be a peacemaker and could reunify the church," said Gabriel Capry, a 27-year-old from London.

A diverse group of cardinals

Hailing from 70 countries, the cardinals were sequestered Wednesday from the outside world, their cellphones surrendered and airwaves around the Vatican jammed to prevent all communications until they find a new pope.

Francis named 108 of the 133 "princes of the church," choosing many pastors in his image from far-flung countries like Mongolia, Sweden and Tonga that had never had a cardinal before.

His decision to surpass the usual limit of 120 cardinal electors and include younger ones from the "global south" — often marginalized countries with lower economic clout — has injected an unusual degree of uncertainty in a process that is always full of mystery and suspense.

Many cardinals hadn't met until last week and lamented they needed more time to get to know one another, raising questions about how long it might take for one man to secure the two-thirds majority, or 89 ballots, necessary to become the 267th pope.

"Wait and see, a little patience, wait and see," said Cardinal Mario Zenari, the Vatican's ambassador to Syria.

The oath and "Extra omnes"

The cardinals had entered the Sistine Chapel in pairs, chanting the meditative "Litany of the Saints" as Swiss Guards stood at attention. The hymn implores the saints to help the cardinals find a leader of the 1.4 billion-strong church.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the 70-year-old secretary of state under Francis and himself a leading contender to succeed him as pope, assumed the leadership of the proceedings as the senior cardinal under age 80 eligible to participate.

He stood before Michelangelo's vision of heaven and hell, "The Last Judgment," and led the other cardinals in a lengthy oath. Each one followed, placing his hand on the Gospel and promising in Latin to maintain utmost secrecy.

Earlier in the day, the dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, presided over a morning Mass in St. Peter's Basilica urging the voters to set aside all personal interests and find a pope who prizes unity. He prayed for a pope who could awaken the conscience of the world.

He reminded the cardinals that the awesomeness of the Sistine Chapel's frescoes is meant to remind the cardinals of the weighty responsibility they bear. In his regulations for the conclave, Re recalled, St. John Paul II wrote that in the Sistine Chapel, "everything is conducive to an awareness of the presence of God."

After the cardinals took their oaths, the master of papal liturgical ceremonies, Archbishop Diego Ravelli, called out "extra omnes," Latin for "all out" and anyone not eligible to vote left before the chapel doors closed. An elderly cardinal remained to deliver a meditation, but after he finished, he too, had to leave since he was too old to vote.

While cardinals this week said they expected a short conclave, it will likely take at least a few rounds of voting. For much of the past century, it has taken between three and 14 ballots to find a pope. John Paul I — the pope who reigned for 33 days in 1978 — was elected on the fourth ballot. His successor, John Paul II, needed eight. Francis was elected on the fifth in 2013.

Lobbying before the conclave

The cardinals are supposed to resist any "secular" influences in their choice of pope, but such lobbying abounded in Rome in the days before the conclave as various groups reminded cardinals of what ordinary Catholics want in a leader.

Young Catholics penned an open letter reminding cardinals that there is no church without young people, women and the laity. Conservative Catholic media slipped cardinals copies of a glossy book containing their assessments of contenders. Survivors of clergy sexual abuse warned cardinals that they would be held accountable if they failed to find a leader who will crack down on decades of abuse and cover-up.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 60 of 74

Advocates for women's ordination sent pink smoke signals Wednesday over the Vatican to demand that women be allowed to be priests and participate in a conclave.

Even the White House got involved, posting a photo of President Donald Trump dressed as a pope. Trump said it was a joke, but the gesture was denounced by former Italian Premier Romano Prodi as "indecent" political interference in matters of faith that hark back to times when secular rulers intervened in conclaves.

Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the archbishop of New York, said there was also plenty of lobbying going on among cardinals themselves.

"You invite each other out," Dolan said on SiriusXM's The Catholic Channel before the conclave began. "And you're pretty blunt. Now, we're not, you know, we're not horse trading here. We're saying, 'Tell me about this guy. You're from Latin America. Go through the list of bishops. Tell me some of these fellas. Am I right to be enchanted by this guy?'"

Lisette Herrera, a 54-year-old tourist from the Dominican Republic, was deeply moved to find herself by chance in Rome as the conclave began. She decided Wednesday morning to skip the Spanish Steps and Trevi Fountain and pray instead in St. Peter's Square.

"I'm praying to the Holy Spirit for a young pope who would stay with us for a long time," she said. "I don't believe in conclave politics, I just feel that the Holy Spirit is here and that's all we need to know."

Challenges facing a new pope

Many challenges await the new pope and weigh on the cardinals — above all whether to continue and consolidate Francis' progressive legacy on promoting women, LGBTQ+ acceptance, the environment and migrants, or roll it back to try to unify a church that became more polarized during his pontificate. The clergy sex abuse scandal hung over the pre-conclave talks.

Since Francis chose 80% of the voters, continuity is likely, but the form it might take is uncertain and identifying front-runners has been a challenge.

But some names keep appearing on lists of "papabile," or cardinals having the qualities to be pope. In addition to Parolin, they include:

— Filipino Cardinal Luis Tagle, 67, a top candidate to be history's first Asian pope. He headed the Vatican's evangelization office responsible for the Catholic Church in much of the developing world.

— Hungarian Cardinal Peter Erdo, 72, the archbishop of Budapest, is a leading candidate representing the more conservative wing of the church.

Strikes across Gaza kill at least 92 as Israel prepares to ramp up its offensive

By WAFAA SHURAFU and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes across Gaza killed at least 92 people, including women, children and two journalists, officials said Wednesday, as Israel prepares to ramp up its campaign in the strip, with the devastating war now entering its 20th month.

Two Israeli airstrikes on Wednesday targeted an area in central Gaza, killing at least 33 people and wounding 86, including several children, though the actual death toll is likely higher, according to health officials.

The Israeli military had no immediate comment on the strikes.

This came as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday there is "doubt" about the survival of three hostages previously believed alive in Gaza. The statement was a day after U.S. President Donald Trump said only 21 of 24 hostages believed alive had survived.

The news sent families of remaining captives in Gaza into panic.

The new bloodshed Wednesday comes days after Israel approved a plan to intensify its operations in the Palestinian enclave, which would include seizing Gaza, holding on to captured territories, forcibly displacing Palestinians to southern Gaza and taking control of aid distribution along with private security companies.

Israel is also calling up tens of thousands of reserve soldiers to carry out the plan. Israel says the plan will be gradual and will not be implemented until after Trump wraps up his visit to the region later this month.

Any escalation of fighting would likely drive up the death toll. And with Israel already controlling some

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 61 of 74

50% of Gaza, increasing its hold on the territory, for an indefinite amount of time, could open up the potential for a military occupation, which would raise questions about how Israel plans to have the territory governed, especially at a time when it is considering how to implement Trump's vision to take over Gaza.

The Israeli offensive has so far 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.

Israel blames Hamas for the death toll, saying it operates from civilian infrastructure, including schools.

Strikes target crowds in Gaza City

Wednesday's strikes included two attacks on a crowded market area in Gaza City, health officials said.

Footage posted online reportedly showed the aftermath with men found dead, including one still seated in a chair inside a Thai restaurant used by locals as a gathering spot, and several children lying motionless on the ground, covered in blood.

Journalist Yahya Sobeih, who freelanced for several local outlets, was among those killed, according to Gaza's media office. He had recently shared a photo on Instagram of his newborn daughter.

Victims of the blasts, some with severe injuries, were taken to nearby Al-Shifa Hospital, Gaza health ministry spokesperson Zaher al-Wahidi told The Associated Press.

Another local journalist, Nour Abdu, was killed while covering an attack early Wednesday morning at a school turned shelter in Gaza City, the media office said. That strike killed 16 people, according to officials at Al-Ahli Hospital, while strikes in other areas killed at least 16 others.

And an attack Tuesday night on a school sheltering hundreds of displaced Palestinians killed 27 people, officials from the Al-Aqsa Hospital said, including nine women and three children. The school has been struck repeatedly since the war began.

In Bureij, an urban refugee camp, paramedics and rescuers rushed to pull people out of a blaze after a large column of smoke and fires pierced the dark skies above the school shelter.

Trump jars Israelis with remark on hostage figures

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

Trump on Wednesday said his administration will soon have more to say on a plan for Gaza — which may include a new push for a ceasefire between Hamas and Israel, the release of hostages and an influx of aid to Palestinians.

"You'll be knowing probably in the next 24 hours," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

He had stunned many in Israel a day earlier when he declared that only 21 of the 59 hostages remaining in Gaza are still alive. Israel previously insisted the figure stands at 24, although an Israeli official said there was "serious concern" for the lives of three captives. The official said there has been no sign of life from those three, whom the official did not identify. He said that until proven otherwise, the three are considered to be alive. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive details related to the war, said the families of the captives were updated on those developments.

The Hostages and Missing Families Forum, a group representing the families of the captives, demanded from Israel's government that if there is "new information being kept from us, give it to us immediately." It also called for Netanyahu to halt the war in Gaza until all hostages are returned. "This is the most urgent and important national mission," it said on a post on X.

Since Israel ended a ceasefire with the Hamas militant group in mid-March, it has unleashed fierce strikes on Gaza that have killed hundreds and captured swaths of territory. 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 19 months of war.

World Central Kitchen, the food charity, said it had run out of supplies after serving 130 million meals in Gaza over 18 months and could no longer offer bread or meals at most of its centers. The group, in social media posts, urged Israel to allow loaded trucks it has waiting at the border to enter Gaza.

Key interlocutors Qatar and Egypt said Wednesday that mediation efforts were "ongoing and consistent." But Israel and Hamas remain far apart on how they see the war ending. Israel says it won't end the war until Hamas' governing and military capabilities are dismantled, something it has failed to do in 19 months.

of war.

Hamas says it is prepared to release all of the hostages for an end to the war and a long-term truce with Israel.

The US-Houthi deal does not appear to cover Israel

Against the backdrop of the plans to intensify the campaign in Gaza, fighting has also escalated between Israel and Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

The Houthis fired a ballistic missile earlier this week that landed on the grounds of Israel's main international airport. Israel responded with a series of airstrikes over two days, whose targets included the airport in Yemen's capital, Sanaa.

The Houthis have been striking Israel and targets in a main Red Sea shipping route since the war began in solidarity with the Palestinians. On Tuesday, Trump said the U.S. would halt a nearly two-monthlong campaign against the Houthis in Yemen, after the rebel group agreed not to target U.S. ships.

Israel does not appear to be covered by the U.S.-Houthi agreement.

The Israeli official said the deal came as a surprise to Israel and that it was concerned by it because of what it meant for the continuation of hostilities between it and the Houthis.

Vance says Russia was 'asking for too much' in its initial Ukraine peace offer

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President JD Vance said Wednesday that Russia was "asking for too much" in its initial peace offer as the United States looks to bring about an end to the war in Ukraine.

The vice president, speaking at a Washington meeting hosted by the Munich Security Conference, did not elaborate on Moscow's terms, but said he was not pessimistic about the possibility of a peace deal. That is a more sanguine assessment than President Donald Trump's recent skepticism that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants to end the war that began in February 2022 when Russia invaded.

"I wouldn't say that the Russians are uninterested in bringing this thing to a resolution," Vance said. "What I would say is right now: the Russians are asking for a certain set of requirements, a certain set of concessions in order to end the conflict. We think they're asking for too much," he said.

Trump, when asked later Wednesday about the vice president's comments, told reporters at the White House, "Well, it's possible that's right."

He seemed to imply that Vance had details that he did not have because he was preoccupied with other matters.

"We are getting to a point where some decisions are going to have to be made. I'm not happy about it," Trump said of the peace effort.

Vance did not repeat any of the criticisms of Volodymyr Zelenskyy that Vance had aired during an Oval Office blowup in February with the Ukrainian leader, and he made a point of saying the U.S. appreciated Ukraine's willingness to have a 30-day ceasefire. But the Republican vice president, citing Russia's unwillingness on that point, said the U.S. would like to move past that and have the Russian and Ukrainian leaders sit down directly to negotiate a long-term settlement that would end the fighting.

"What the Russians have said is, 'A 30-day ceasefire is not in our strategic interests.' So we've tried to move beyond the obsession with the 30-day ceasefire and more on the, what would a long-term settlement look like," Vance said.

Vance's talk at the conference event followed his appearance at the organization's February summit in Germany, where he ruffled feathers for his comments that free speech is "in retreat" across Europe. Vance addressed that Wednesday and said his comments applied to the U.S. under Democratic President Joe Biden's administration, just as they did to Europe.

"It's not 'Europe bad, America good.' It's that I think that both Europe and the United States, we got a little bit off track, and I encourage us all to get back on track together," he said.

On the Middle East, Vance did not shed light on the timing of planned talks between the U.S. and Iran

over Iran's nuclear program. He said the Trump administration felt the inspection and enforcement provisions in the 2015 Iran nuclear deal negotiated under Democratic President Barack Obama were "incredibly weak" and "allowed Iran to sort of stay on this glide path toward a nuclear weapon if they flip the switch and press go."

"We think that there is a deal here that would reintegrate Iran into the global economy, that would be really good for the Iranian people, but would result in the complete cessation of any chance that they can get a nuclear weapon. And that's what we're negotiating toward," Vance said.

House GOP backing off some Medicaid cuts as report shows millions of people would lose health care

By LISA MASCARO and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans appear to be backing off some, but not all, of the steep reductions to the Medicaid program as part of their big tax breaks bill, as they run into resistance from more centrist GOP lawmakers opposed to ending nearly-free health care coverage for their constituents back home.

This is as a new report out Wednesday from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated that millions of Americans would lose Medicaid coverage under the various proposals being circulated by Republicans as cost-saving measures. House Republicans are scrounging to come up with as much as \$1.5 trillion in cuts across federal government health, food stamp and other programs, to offset the revenue lost for some \$4.5 trillion in tax breaks.

"Under each of those options, Medicaid enrollment would decrease and the number of people without health insurance would increase," the CBO report said.

The findings touched off fresh uncertainty over House Speaker Mike Johnson's ability to pass what President Donald Trump calls his "big, beautiful bill" by a self-made Memorial Day deadline.

Lawmakers are increasingly uneasy, particularly amid growing economic anxiety over Trump's own policies, including the trade war that is sparking risks of higher prices, empty shelves and job losses in communities nationwide. Central to the package is the GOP priority of extending tax breaks, first enacted in 2017, that are expiring later this year. But they want to impose program cuts elsewhere to help pay for them and limit the continued climb in the nation's debt and deficits.

Johnson has been huddling privately all week in the speaker's office at the Capitol with groups of Republicans, particularly the more moderate GOP lawmakers in some of the most contested seats in the nation, who are warning off steep cuts that would slash through their districts.

Democrats, who had requested the CBO report, pounced on the findings.

"This non-partisan Congressional Budget Office analysis confirms what we've been saying all along: Republicans' Medicaid proposals result in millions of people losing their health care," said Rep. Frank Pallone, D-N.J., who sought the review with Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.

House Republican lawmakers exiting a meeting late Tuesday evening indicated that Johnson and the GOP leadership were walking away from some of the most debated Medicaid changes to the federal matching fund rates provided to the states.

Rep. Jeff Van Drew, R-N.J., said those Medicaid changes "are dead."

Republican Rep. Nick LaLota of New York, reminded that Trump himself has said he would oppose Medicaid cuts. Instead, he said the growing consensus within the Republican ranks is to focus the Medicaid cuts on other provisions.

Among the other ideas, LaLota said, are imposing work requirements for those receiving Medicaid coverage, requiring recipients to verify their eligibility twice a year instead of just once and ensuring no immigrants who are in the U.S. without legal standing are receiving aid.

But the more conservative Republicans, including members of the House Freedom Caucus, are insisting on steeper cuts as they fight to prevent skyrocketing deficits from the tax breaks.

Medicaid is a joint program run by states and the federal government, covering 71 million adults.

Republicans are considering a menu of options to cut federal spending on the program, including reducing the share that the federal government pays for enrollees health care — in some cases it is as much as 90%.

They are also considering and setting a cap on how much the federal government spends on each person enrolled in Medicaid, though that idea also appears to be losing support among lawmakers.

While those changes would bring in billions of dollars in cost savings, they would also result in roughly 10 million people losing Medicaid coverage, the CBO said.

They appear to be off the table.

But other proposed Medicaid changes are still in the mix for Republicans, including imposing new limits on a state's tax on health care providers that generate larger payments from the federal government. That would bring in billions in savings, but could also result in some 8 million people losing coverage, the report said.

Appeals court orders ICE to return detained Turkish Tufts University student to Vermont

By KATHY McCORMACK Associated Press

A federal appeals court on Wednesday upheld a judge's order to bring a Turkish Tufts University student from a Louisiana immigration detention center back to New England for hearings to determine whether her rights were violated and if she should be released.

Denying a government request for a delay, the three-judge panel of the New York-based 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Rumeysa Ozturk after hearing arguments at a hearing Tuesday. Ozturk has been in Louisiana for over six weeks following an op-ed she co-wrote last year that criticized the school's response to Israel's war in Gaza.

The court ordered Ozturk to be transferred to ICE custody in Vermont no later than May 14.

Immigration court proceedings for Ozturk, initiated in Louisiana, are being conducted separately and Ozturk can participate remotely, the court said.

A district court judge in Vermont had ordered that the 30-year-old doctoral student be brought to the state for hearings to determine whether she was illegally detained. Ozturk's lawyers say her detention violates her constitutional rights, including free speech and due process.

The original deadline was May 1. A hearing on her motion to be released on bail was scheduled in Burlington for Friday, followed by another hearing on May 22.

The Justice Department, which appealed that ruling, said that the immigration court in Louisiana has jurisdiction over Ozturk's case. The appeals court paused the transfer order last week as it considered an emergency motion filed by the government. But on Wednesday, the court did not agree to the request for a longer delay.

The appeals court disagreed that the Vermont court was the wrong place to handle Ozturk's plea for release. It also said the government didn't show "irreparable injury." It said Ozturk's interest in participating in person in the Vermont hearings outweighs administrative and logistical costs to the government.

"The government asserts that it would face difficulties in arranging for Ozturk to appear for her immigration proceedings in Louisiana remotely. But the government has not disputed that it is legally and practically possible for Ozturk to attend removal proceedings remotely," it said.

A message seeking comment was emailed to the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency.

Immigration officials surrounded Ozturk as she walked along a street in a Boston suburb March 25 and drove her to New Hampshire and Vermont before putting her on a plane to a detention center in Basile, Louisiana. Her student visa had been revoked several days earlier, but she was not informed of that, her lawyers said.

Ozturk's lawyers first filed a petition on her behalf in Massachusetts, but they did not know where she was and were unable to speak to her until more than 24 hours after she was detained. A Massachusetts judge later transferred the case to Vermont.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 65 of 74

"The government now argues that this transfer was improper. The government is wrong," the appeals court wrote.

Ozturk was one of four students who wrote an op-ed in the campus newspaper, The Tufts Daily, last year criticizing the university's response to student activists demanding that Tufts "acknowledge the Palestinian genocide," disclose its investments and divest from companies with ties to Israel.

A State Department memo said Ozturk's visa was revoked following an assessment that her actions "may undermine U.S. foreign policy by creating a hostile environment for Jewish students and indicating support for a designated terrorist organization" including co-authoring an op-ed that found common cause with an organization that was later temporarily banned from campus."

A Department of Homeland Security spokesperson said in March, without providing evidence, that investigations found that Ozturk engaged in activities in support of Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist group.

"No one should be arrested and locked up for their political views," Esha Bhandari, one of Ozturk's attorneys, said in a statement. "Every day that Rumeysa Ozturk remains in detention is a day too long. We're grateful the court refused the government's attempt to keep her isolated from her community and her legal counsel as she pursues her case for release."

India fires missiles on Pakistan. Islamabad calls it an 'act of war'

By MUNIR AHMED, SHEIKH SAALIQ, RIAZAT BUTT, RAJESH ROY and AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan said Wednesday it will avenge those killed by India's missile strikes that New Delhi called retaliation for last month's massacre of Indian tourists in India-controlled Kashmir. Pakistan called the strikes an act of war and claimed it downed several Indian fighter jets.

The missiles killed 31 people, including women and children, in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and the country's Punjab province, Pakistan's military said. The strikes targeted at least nine sites "where terrorist attacks against India have been planned," India's Defense Ministry said. Two mosques were hit.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said his country would avenge the dead but gave no details, fanning fears of all-out conflict between the nuclear-armed rivals. Already, it's their worst confrontation since 2019, when they came close to war.

A heavy exchange of fire continued to follow the missile strikes, and officials in each country confirmed people killed. Sharif commended the armed forces for shooting down five Indian jets, which he said were hit after they fired their missiles but while still in Indian airspace.

There was no comment from India, but three planes fell onto villages in India-controlled territory, according to police and residents.

Tensions have soared between the neighbors since the April attack in which gunmen killed 26 people, mostly Indian tourists. Some survivors told Indian media that gunmen in some cases singled out Hindu men and shot them at close range.

India accuses Pakistan of being behind the attack, which was claimed by a militant group calling itself Kashmir Resistance. India has said the group is linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a disbanded Pakistani militant group that New Delhi long accused of being backed by Pakistan.

Islamabad denies involvement.

India and Pakistan have fought two of their three wars over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which is split between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

In the wake of the massacre, the rivals have expelled each other's diplomats and nationals, closed their borders and shuttered airspace. India has also suspended a critical water-sharing treaty with Pakistan.

The risk of war

"Pakistan has every right to give a robust response to this act of war imposed by India, and a strong response is indeed being given," the prime minister said, and later accused India of acting out of arrogance.

The country's National Security Committee said Pakistan reserves the right to respond "in self-defense, at a time, place and manner of its choosing."

The statement said the strikes were carried out "on the false pretext of the presence of imaginary

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 66 of 74

terrorist camps" and said they killed civilians. The prime minister said he had attended the funeral of a 7-year-old boy.

South Asia analyst Michael Kugelman said the strikes were some of the highest-intensity ones from India on its rival in years and that Pakistan's response would "surely pack a punch as well."

"These are two strong militaries that, even with nuclear weapons as a deterrent, are not afraid to deploy sizeable levels of conventional military force against each other," Kugelman said. "The escalation risks are real."

In 2019, the countries came close to war after a Kashmiri insurgent rammed an explosive-laden car into a bus carrying Indian soldiers, killing 40. India responded with airstrikes.

U.S. President Donald Trump called the escalating conflict "so terrible" and urged both sides to stop the violence.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for maximum restraint because the world cannot "afford a military confrontation" between India and Pakistan, according to spokesperson Stephane Dujarric.

Neighboring China also called for calm. Beijing is the largest investor in Pakistan by far and has multiple border disputes with India, including one in the northeastern part of the Kashmir region.

Several Indian states held civil defense drills Wednesday to train civilians and security personnel to respond in case of attack. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi postponed his upcoming trip to Norway, Croatia and the Netherlands.

Scenes of panic and destruction

The missile strikes hit six locations and the dead included women and children, said Pakistan's military spokesperson, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Sharif.

Officials said another 57 people were injured, and five more people were killed in Pakistan during exchanges of fire later in the day along the Line of Control, which divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan.

Sharif late Wednesday said the exchanges of fire continued.

In Muzaffarabad, the main city of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, resident Abdul Sammad said he heard several explosions as blasts ripped through houses. He saw people running in panic, and authorities immediately cut power to the area.

"We were afraid the next missile might hit our house," said Mohammad Ashraf, another resident.

Indian jets damaged infrastructure at a dam in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, according to Sharif, the military spokesman, calling it a violation of international norms.

The strikes also hit close to at least two sites previously tied to militant groups that have since been banned, according to Pakistan.

One hit Subhan Mosque in Punjab's Bahawalpur city, killing 13 people, according to Zohaib Ahmed, a doctor at a nearby hospital.

The mosque is near a seminary that was once the central office of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a militant group outlawed in 2002. Officials say the group has had no operational presence at the site since then.

Another missile hit a mosque in Muridke in Punjab, damaging it. A building located nearby served as the headquarters of Lashkar-e-Taiba until 2013, when Pakistan banned the militant group and arrested its founder.

India's Defense Ministry called the strikes "focused, measured and non-escalatory in nature," adding that "no Pakistan military facilities have been targeted."

Indian politicians from various political parties praised the operation, which was named "Sindoor," a Hindi word for the vermilion powder worn by married Hindu women on their foreheads and hair. It was a reference to the women whose husbands were killed in front of them in the Kashmir attack.

Planes fall on villages

Indian police and medics said 12 civilians were killed and at least 40 wounded by Pakistani shelling in Poonch district near the highly militarized de facto border. At least 10 civilians were also injured in Kashmir's Uri sector, police said.

Shortly after India's strikes, aircraft fell in three villages: two in India-controlled Kashmir, a third in India's own Punjab state.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 67 of 74

Debris from one plane was scattered across one village, including in a school and a mosque compound, according to police and residents.

"There was a huge fire in the sky. Then we heard several blasts also," said Mohammed Yousuf Dar, a resident of Wuyan village in India-controlled Kashmir.

Another aircraft fell in an open field in Bhardha Kalan village. Resident Sachin Kumar said he heard massive blasts and saw a huge ball of fire. He said he and several others rushed to the scene, where they saw Indian soldiers carry away the pilots.

A third aircraft crashed in a field in Punjab, a police officer told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Lawmakers seek to rein in citizen ballot initiatives with new requirements for petitions

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

Citizen activists supporting a public vote on important issues could have to brush up on their reading, writing and arithmetic if they want to get their initiatives on next year's ballot in some states.

A new Arkansas law will bar initiative ballot titles written above an eighth-grade reading level. And canvassers will have to verify that petition signers have either read the ballot title or had it read aloud to them.

In South Dakota, sponsors will need to make sure their petition titles appears in 14-point type on the front page and 16-point font on the back, where people typically sign.

And in Florida, volunteers will have to register with the state if they gather more than 25 petition signatures from outside their family or risk facing felony charges punishable by up to five years in prison.

Across about dozen states, roughly 40 bills restricting or revamping the citizen initiative process have passed at least one legislative chamber this year, according to a review by The Associated Press. Many already have been signed into law.

Some advocates for the initiative process are alarmed by the trend.

"Globally, as there's movements to expand direct democracy, in the United States it's contracting," said Dane Waters, chair of the Initiative and Referendum Institute at the University of Southern California, who has advised ballot campaigns in over 20 nations.

Most of the new restrictions come from Republican lawmakers in states where petitions have been used to place abortion rights, marijuana legalization and other progressive initiatives on the ballot. GOP lawmakers contend their measures are shielding state constitutions from outside interests.

"This is not a bill to restrict. It is a bill to protect — to make sure that our constitutional system is one of integrity, and that it's free of fraud," said state Sen. Jennifer Bradley of Florida, where the new initiative requirements already have been challenged in court.

A right in some states, but not others

About half the U.S. states allow people to bypass their legislatures by gathering signatures to place proposed laws or constitutional amendments on the ballot.

Since Oregon voters first used the process in 1904, a total of 2,744 citizen initiatives have appeared on statewide ballots, with 42% winning approval, according to the Initiative and Referendum Institute.

But the process has long caused tension between voters and their elected representatives.

Lawmakers often perceive the initiative process as "an assault on their power and authority, and they want to limit it," Waters said. "They view it, in my opinion, as a nuisance — a gnat that keeps bothering them."

Restrictions on petition canvassers

Because initiative petitions require thousands of signatures to qualify for the ballot, groups sponsoring them often pay people to solicit signatures outside shopping centers and public places. Some states now prohibit payments based on the number of signatures gathered.

States also are trying to restrict who can circulate petitions. A new Arkansas law requires paid petition canvassers to live in the state. And a new Montana law will make petition circulators wear badges display-

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 68 of 74

ing their name and home state.

The new Florida law expanding registration requirements for petition circulators also requires them to undergo state training and bars canvassers who are noncitizens, nonresidents or have been convicted of felony offenses without their voting rights restored.

More requirements for petition signers

In addition to providing their name, address and birth date, people signing initiative petitions in Florida also will have to provide either their Florida driver's license, state identification card or the last four digits of their Social Security number.

That information is not required in other states, said Kelly Hall, executive director of the Fairness Project, a progressive group that has backed dozens of ballot initiatives in states. Hall said people concerned about privacy might hesitate to sign petitions.

"I work in ballot measures, and I deeply support many of the things that folks have tried to put on the ballot in Florida," Hall said, "and I don't know if I could bring myself to do that – that's a very prohibitive requirement."

Making the fine print larger

Many states already prescribe a particular format for initiative petitions. South Dakota's new mandate for specific font sizes was prompted by allegations that some people got duped into signing a petition for abortion rights last year, said sponsoring state Sen. Amber Hulse, a Republican.

Printing the ballot title in large type "might make it harder for some issues to get on the ballot if people know what they're signing. But that's actually a good thing," Hulse said.

More power for elected officials

Before they can collect signatures, petition sponsors must get approval from state officials. New measures in several states give those officials greater authority.

New Arkansas laws allow the attorney general to reject initiatives written above an eighth-grade reading level or which conflict with the U.S. Constitution or federal law. Utah's lieutenant governor, who already can reject unconstitutional petitions, now also will be able to turn away petitions that are unlikely to provide adequate funding for their proposed laws.

A new Missouri law gives greater power to the secretary of state, instead of judges, to rewrite ballot summaries struck down as being insufficient or unfair.

A higher threshold for voter approval

Most states require only a majority vote to amend their constitutions, though Colorado requires 55% approval and Florida 60%.

Republican-led legislatures in North Dakota and South Dakota approved measures this year proposing a 60% public vote to approve future constitutional amendments, and Utah lawmakers backed a 60% threshold for tax measures. All three propositions still must go before voters, where they will need only a majority to pass.

Voters rejected similar proposals in Ohio, Arkansas and South Dakota in recent years, but they approved a 60% threshold for tax measures in Arizona.

Lawmakers contend the move has merit.

"Raising the threshold can help protect the constitution from being manipulated by special interest groups or out-of-state activists," North Dakota House Majority Leader Mike Lefor said earlier this year.

Trump plans to announce that the US will call the Persian Gulf the Arabian Gulf, officials say

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump plans to announce while on his trip to Saudi Arabia next week that the United States will now refer to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf or the Gulf of Arabia, according to two U.S. officials.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 69 of 74

Arab nations have pushed for a change to the geographic name of the body of water off the southern coast of Iran, while Iran has maintained its historic ties to the gulf.

The two U.S. officials spoke with The Associated Press on Tuesday on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter. The White House and National Security Council did not immediately respond to messages seeking comment.

The Persian Gulf has been widely known by that name since the 16th century, although usage of "Gulf of Arabia" and "Arabian Gulf" is dominant in many countries in the Middle East. The government of Iran — formerly Persia — threatened to sue Google in 2012 over the company's decision not to label the body of water at all on its maps.

On Google Maps in the U.S., the body of water appears as Persian Gulf (Arabian Gulf). Apple Maps only says the Persian Gulf.

The U.S. military for years has unilaterally referred to the Persian Gulf as the Arabian Gulf in statements and images it releases.

The name of the body of water has become an emotive issue for Iranians who embrace their country's long history as the Persian Empire. A spat developed in 2017 during Trump's first term when he used the name Arabian Gulf for the waterway. Iran's president at the time, Hassan Rouhani, suggested Trump needed to "study geography."

"Everyone knew Trump's friendship was for sale to the highest bidder. We now know that his geography is, too," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote online at the time.

On Wednesday, Iran's current foreign minister also weighed in, saying that names of Mideast waterways do "not imply ownership by any particular nation, but rather reflects a shared respect for the collective heritage of humanity."

"Politically motivated attempts to alter the historically established name of the Persian Gulf are indicative of hostile intent toward Iran and its people, and are firmly condemned," Abbas Araghchi wrote on the social platform X.

"Any short-sighted step in this connection will have no validity or legal or geographical effect, it will only bring the wrath of all Iranians from all walks of life and political persuasion in Iran, the U.S. and across the world."

Trump can change the name for official U.S. purposes, but he can't dictate what the rest of the world calls it.

The International Hydrographic Organization — of which the United States is a member — works to ensure all the world's seas, oceans and navigable waters are surveyed and charted uniformly, and also names some of them. There are instances where countries refer to the same body of water or landmark by different names in their own documentation.

In addition to Saudi Arabia, Trump is also set to visit Doha, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates, which also lie on the body of water. Originally planned as Trump's first trip overseas since he took office on Jan. 20, it comes as Trump has tried to draw closer to the Gulf countries as he seeks their financial investment in the U.S. and support in regional conflicts, including resolving the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza and limiting Iran's advancing nuclear program.

The U.S. president also has significant financial ties to the countries through his personal businesses, over which he has retained ownership from the Oval Office.

The move comes several months after Trump said the U.S. would refer to the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America.

The Associated Press sued the Trump administration earlier this year after the White House barred its journalists from covering most events because of the organization's decision not to follow the president's executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico as the "Gulf of America" within the United States.

U.S. District Judge Trevor N. McFadden, an appointee of President Donald Trump, ruled last month that the First Amendment protects the AP from government retaliation over its word choice and ordered the outlet's access to be reinstated.

Moderna study shows immune response in older adults for a combo flu and COVID-19 shot

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

A combination shot for flu and COVID-19 using messenger RNA generated antibodies in a study, but U.S. government regulators want to see data on whether the new vaccine protects people from getting sick.

Researchers from vaccine-maker Moderna reported in a study published Wednesday that the new combo shot generated a stronger immune response against COVID-19 and most strains of flu than existing standalone shots in people 50 and older. Side effects were injection site pain, fatigue and headaches. Moderna previously reported a summary of the results from the company-sponsored trial in 8,000 people.

The mRNA technology is used in approved COVID-19 and RSV shots, but has not yet been approved for a flu shot. Moderna believes mRNA could speed up production of flu shots compared with traditional processes that use chicken eggs or giant vats of cells. A combo shot also might improve vaccination rates, the researchers wrote in the study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

Dr. Greg Poland, who studies vaccine response at Mayo Clinic and was not involved in the new study, said he's not convinced that a combo shot would be popular. And while flu comes in seasonal waves, COVID-19 has been spreading throughout the year, Poland said, posing challenges for how to time the shots to keep protection strong.

He'd also like to see data on how well the new shot protected people from infection and hospitalization.

The findings are based on measuring antibodies in participants' blood after 29 days, an indication of short-term disease protection.

Last week, Moderna pushed its target date for the vaccine's approval to 2026 after the Food and Drug Administration requested a more direct measure: how much the shot lowered the risk of disease.

"I agree in this case with FDA that efficacy data are important to see," Poland said.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has cast doubt on the safety of mRNA vaccines, but Moderna President Stephen Hoge told investors in an earnings call last week that talks with the FDA were productive and "business as usual."

Also last week, Novavax said the FDA was asking the company to run a new clinical trial of its protein-based COVID-19 vaccine after the agency grants full approval, sowing uncertainty about other vaccine updates.

The Met Gala is over, but dandyism isn't. Here's how to dress like a dandy in everyday life

By GARY GERARD HAMILTON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Henry Adams had reached a fashion crossroads by the early 1970s: As bell bottoms and afros became the trend and the look of film figures like John Shaft and "Super Fly" became style prototypes, the teenager felt unrepresented.

But a previous trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, for its "Harlem On My Mind" exhibit, had already begun to lay down his fashion foundation.

"When I saw those photographs of elegant Harlemites promenading up and down Seventh Avenue and Lenox Avenue ... the raccoon coats and fox coats, and spangled gowns, and bowler hats ... I thought, 'Oh! There is another way for me to be authentically Black,'" recalled the New York-based cultural and architectural historian, now 69, of the fashionable splendor.

The style Adams would embrace had a name: dandyism. And dandyism was at the heart of Monday's Met Gala, where many of the world's most famous and influential tastemakers donned their luxury best to kick off the Met's "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style" exhibit. But Black dandyism isn't limited to expensive couture — it's displayed daily.

"It's everywhere in the Black community, the notion of what a dandy is," explained Adams, who was

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 71 of 74

photographed for the "Superfine" catalog. "The ingeniousness and ingenuity and creativity of Black people, so far as fashion was concerned, it's always been with us."

As the menswear-focused exhibit — the Costume Institute's first to exclusively display Black designers — opens to the public Saturday, here are tips from dandies on embracing the style in everyday life.

Tip 1: Start with confidence

Dandies say the key to a distinctive look first begins on the inside.

"Fashion's a sense of personality. Two guys can go to the same store and get the same outfit and look totally different," said Guy Wood, 62, the stylish co-owner of Harlem Haberdashery. Inspired by family members and dapper Harlem neighbors, he developed a knack for style early. "It's confidence ... you walk in the room, and all the heads turn."

Michael Andrew, a 42-year-old Atlanta-based style consultant, first delved into dandyism after being inspired by Fonzworth Bentley, most recognized as Sean "Diddy" Combs' often-photographed assistant and umbrella holder in the early 2000s. Bentley's colorful outfits and tailored outfits separated himself from the hip-hop era's prevalent baggy look.

"A lot of guys think that being a dandy is about being over the top," said Andrew, who was photographed for Rose Callahan's 2013 book "I Am Dandy: The Return of the Elegant Gentleman." "For me, dandyism is the highest form of taste with self-expression."

Tip 2: Opt for the statement pieces

The foundation of dandyism rests upon tenets such as bold colors and fine tailoring, but there's no singular way to achieve the look. Each dandy creates their own unique style, often centered on specific elements. For Wood, who refers to crafting looks as making gumbo, it starts with suits.

"Wearing a suit, you just feel important," said Wood, who often pairs them with brogue shoes of various bright colors. "We love well-tailored."

James McFarland, an 80-year-old master tailor, says a dandy's affinity for tailoring is easy to understand: "It's very simple: we're a visual world. When you wear something that's fine tailored and it's fitting you well, people look at that."

Known as "Gentleman Jim," McFarland was tutored by Orie Walls, the go-to Harlem-based tailor of the 1960s. McFarland says they crafted suits for nearly every famous Black male celebrity of the time, from Duke Ellington to Jackie Robinson to Muhammad Ali — as well as some of the era's most infamous characters, like gangsters Frank Lucas and Bumpy Johnson. He says wearing a suit "makes you feel better. You ever heard the term styling and profiling?"

While Adams, the historian, is drawn to bow ties, buck shoes and straw hats, Andrew says the beauty of dandyism is making it your own.

"Texture is the must-have when you start talking about dandyism — textures and patterns. The great point here is that dandies always have their thing. And so, for me, hats are my thing," Andrew said, adding that small accessories, like stylish wool or cashmere socks and pocket squares, can easily elevate a look. "Now, it's starting to become glasses. ... Every dandy has the opportunity to utilize something."

Tip 3: Creativity is worth more than cash

Wood says creativity is essential to becoming a dandy — not a high income.

"That's a cheat code," said Wood. "It is being creative ... most of us don't have a lot of money. You might go in your mom's closet and (think), 'Oh, that scarf is fly.' You tie it around your neck and lay it over your shoulder. You just can't be scared."

Adams says while style and inspiration can go hand-in-hand, individuality should always be paramount.

"People should find their truth and aspire to look like themselves," he said, noting he shops at a variety of stores, from the high-end Brooks Brothers to off-price and discount stores like Marshalls and K&G Fashion. "Part of the thing that made me rebel against looking like 'Super Fly' or 'Shaft' is I didn't want to look like everybody else."

Jacques Agboby, a designer whose clothes are featured in the Met exhibit, agrees.

"There are people who would really just think it's about the suit that you're wearing and the top hat ...

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 72 of 74

but for me, and I think that's what this exhibition does really fondly, is really putting together a group of amazing clothing that really redefines what dandyism is," he said. For the Togo-born designer, "taking up space is a sort of open-ended thing in a way," whether it's achieved through colors, silhouettes or fabric choices.

Tip 4: Avoid the crisis of casualness

A general consensus among dandies is that society has embraced casualness, shunning the well-dressed looks of the past.

McFarland, the tailor, says his profession isn't as admired or used in U.S. as it was years ago. He teaches fine tailoring as he has for decades, and is planning to start a podcast to discuss the craft and his adventures styling celebrities of his era.

"When I grew up, I wanted to look like the people in the neighborhood," he said, explaining his mother couldn't afford the clothes he wanted, leading him to tailoring. "Everybody, male and female, was dressed up."

Andrew hopes that same stylish spirit of yesteryear can make a resurgence, believing appearance and pride work together.

"I would challenge or would encourage all of us, especially as Black people, to remember our history, to remember that we used to throw on our Sunday's best," he said. "We wanted to show up as the best versions of ourselves."

The "Superfine: Tailoring Black Style" exhibit, which will run through October, is sure to introduce visitors to the most elevated forms of Black dandyism. But for Wood and fellow daily dandies, it's just business as usual.

"The fact that the Met realizes that is a beautiful thing," he said with a sly smile. "But we've been doing this forever and we really not paying attention to it. We just do it because we love it."

Those devoted to bullfighting in Mexico feel recent bans harm a sacred tradition

By MARÍA TERESA HERNÁNDEZ Associated Press

AGUASCALIENTES, Mexico (AP) — Mexican matador Diego Silveti performs a ritual ahead of each bullfight.

In each hotel room where he dresses in the garment that may bring him glory or death, he sets up an altar where he leaves his wedding band and prays before heading to the arena.

"By leaving my ring behind, I'm telling God: Here's everything I am as a father, a husband, a son and a brother," Silveti said. "I commit to what I was born to be — a bullfighter."

He last encountered a bull in late April in Aguascalientes, a state in central Mexico where bullfighting is considered a cultural heritage. Weeks before, though, Mexico City lawmakers banned violent bullfighting in the nation's capital.

While matadors there are still allowed to fight bulls, piercing their muscles with laces or running a sword through their body is prohibited under that ban.

Animal rights advocates celebrated the ruling and Environment Secretary Julia Álvarez said the lawmakers made history. But matadors like Silveti, as well as fans and cattle breeders, contend this long-time Spanish tradition bears a profound significance that would be undermined if bulls can't be killed in the arena.

"What they propose goes against the essence and the rituals of bullfighting," Silveti said. "It's a veiled prohibition that opposes the ways in which it has been done since its origins."

Bullfighting in Mexico traces its roots to Spain

The European conquerors of Mesoamerican territories in the 16th century brought along Catholicism and cultural practices that are now intertwined with Indigenous customs.

Researcher and bullfighting fan Antonio Rivera lives in Yucatán, a southeastern state where bullfights reflect ancient Mayan traditions.

"In local celebrations, the roots of bullfighting are sacrificial rites," Rivera said. "Ancient cultures believed

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 73 of 74

the gods requested sacrifices and blood fertilizes the earth.”

Every year, the Yucatán peninsula celebrates about 2,000 events featuring bulls, he said.

In 2021, Yucatán’s Congress declared bullfighting part of its cultural heritage. It was a way to keep the ancestral memory alive, the official declaration said, and a way to honor its people’s identity.

“When I see a bull, I feel an immense devotion,” Rivera said. “It’s a mirror of myself. It’s like looking at a living museum containing all the rituals from our collective memory.”

Like father, like son

Instead of soccer balls, Silveti grew up playing with “muletas” and “capotes” — the brightly colored capes matadors use to channel the bull’s charge.

His father was one of Mexico’s most beloved and renowned bullfighters. Until his death in 2003, fans called him “King David” and many remember him fondly when his son is in the ring.

“No one asked us where we wanted to be born,” Silveti said. “The love towards the bull and the feast of bullfighting has been my life and my ancestors’ life.”

His grandfather and his father before him were also matadors. Silveti emphasizes that his sons — now ages 6 and 2 — will decide their profession, but he would proudly support them if they followed in his footsteps.

Neither the boys nor his wife watch him at the bullring, but Silveti conveys his passion in other ways. His family often visit ranches where bulls are breed. Occasionally, with his sons in his arms, Silveti bullfights baby cows.

“My youngest loves it,” the matador said. “When he watches a bullfight, he plays with a napkin or a cloth and says ‘Olé!’ How is that possible?”

Each bullfight has its rituals

“The King” was no longer alive when Silveti became a professional bullfighter in Spain in 2011, but he senses his father’s presence constantly.

“I feel his spirit in my soul,” Silveti said. “On certain days, when I’m alone and focused, I try to speak to him and follow his example.”

As a child, Silveti never watched his father at the ring. He stayed home with his mother and brothers. With no social media at hand to monitor live updates, they asked God to protect him.

Many matadors, like Silveti, pray ahead of each bullfight. At the Aguascalientes plaza, the Rev. Ricardo Cuéllar blesses them.

“My job is to attend the religious needs of the bullfighting family,” Cuéllar said. “Not only matadors, but also aficionados, those selling food at the arena and the bullfighters’ assistants.”

According to Tauromaquia Mexicana, Mexico’s biggest bullfighting organization, more than 20,000 jobs depend on this tradition.

A take on bulls

One of the organizations opposed to violent bullfighting, Cultura sin Tortura, was pleased by the Mexico City measure and said it would continue its efforts elsewhere. Another half a dozen Mexican states have also imposed bans.

“We will keep advocating for the prohibition, given that no animal must be seen as entertainment,” the group said on social media.

Cattle breeders, meanwhile, say they view bulls not as sources of income but as fascinating creatures they spend years caring for. Manuel Sescosse, who owns a ranch, said that breeding this specific type of bull is as thrilling as bullfighting.

“They must look good at the arena,” Sescosse said. “Offensive but noble. They must charge and simultaneously spark a sensitivity driving the crowds to deep emotion.”

The perfect bull for a fight is 4 or 5 years old and weighs between 900-1,200 pounds.

According to Sescosse, each rainy season a bull is mated with 30 cows and their offspring are carefully monitored. Most receive a name. All are fed exclusively with grass and large areas are secured for them to exercise and grow strong. At the proper age, only a handful will be selected for bullfighting.

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, May 8, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 317 ~ 74 of 74

"You watch them since they are born and become calves and grow," Sescosse said. "That affection grows when they turn out good for a bullfight, leave a mark and are revered."

Long live Centinela

Not everyone attending bullfights is drawn to the sacred aspect, but some do find deeper purpose.

Daniel Salinas says matadors follow strict norms to demonstrate their appreciation toward the bull's life, even as they end it. "We celebrate death deriving from a rite in which a human being confronts a wild animal," he said.

At Aguascalientes, when his second bull died, Silveti caressed him and respectfully closed his eyes before stepping out of the arena.

"I'm aware the bull is offering me everything he has and I'm also willing to present him with my life," Silveti said. "I've been gored 13 times and I've taken those hits willingly because I do this for a bigger purpose."

It rarely happens, but when a bull has a unique, artistic connection with its matador, his life is spared. Instead of a sword, he gets a "banderilla" (a dart-like stick). Then he returns to his ranch and breeds a progeny that fans will revere.

Following Silveti's performance in Aguascalientes, Spanish matador Alejandro Talavante faced one of those bulls.

Centinela — pitch-black hide, four years old, 1,140 pounds — won the fans' hearts as Talavante's passes made him spin and dance. The matador aimed to kill more than once, but the crowd pleaded for him not to. And in the end, the judge indulged.

Centinela gave a final, vigorous run and vanished through the tunnel while thousands cheered. It was a day of glory for him as well.

Today in History: May 8

Allies celebrate Nazi surrender in World War II

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, May 8, the 128th day of 2025. There are 237 days left in the year.

On May 8, 1945, President Harry S. Truman announced in a radio address that Nazi Germany's forces had surrendered, stating that "the flags of freedom fly all over Europe" on V-E (Victory in Europe) Day.

In 1541, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto reached the Mississippi River, the first recorded European to do so.

In 1846, U.S. forces led by Gen. Zachary Taylor defeated Mexican forces near modern-day Brownsville, Texas, in the first major battle of the Mexican-American War.

In 1886, the first serving of Coca-Cola, which contained cocaine, was sold at a pharmacy in Atlanta, Georgia. (The drink became fully cocaine-free in 1929.)

In 1973, members of the American Indian Movement and the Oglala Lakota tribe, who had occupied the South Dakota hamlet of Wounded Knee for 10 weeks, surrendered to federal authorities.

In 1978, David R. Berkowitz pleaded guilty in a Brooklyn courtroom to murder, attempted murder and assault in connection with the "Son of Sam" shootings that claimed six lives and terrified New Yorkers. (Berkowitz was sentenced to six consecutive life prison terms.)

In 1984, the Soviet Union announced it would boycott the upcoming Summer Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

In 2020, U.S. unemployment surged to 14.7%, a level last seen when the country was in the throes of the Great Depression; the government reported that more than 20 million Americans had lost their jobs in April amid the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

Today's Birthdays: Biologist/TV presenter David Attenborough is 99. Poet Gary Snyder is 95. Singer Toni Tennille is 85. Pianist Keith Jarrett is 80. Singer Philip Bailey (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 74. Rock musician Chris Frantz (Talking Heads) is 74. Rock musician Alex Van Halen is 72. Football Hall of Fame coach Bill Cowher is 68. Football Hall of Famer Ronnie Lott is 66. Filmmaker Michel Gondry is 62. Actor Melissa Gilbert is 61. Singer Enrique Iglesias is 50. Musician Joe Bonamassa is 48. Actor Domhnall Gleeson is 42.