

Groton Daily Independent

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Friday, June 6

Senior Menu: Cold turkey sub, lettuce/cheese/tomato, macaroni salad, five cup salad.

Saturday, June 7

Day of Play at Groton Baseball Complex

Amateurs host Northville, 7 p.m.

Legion hosts W.I.N., 5 p.m.

Jr. Teeners hosts W.I.N., 1 p.m.

U12 ALL hosts Britton, 1 p.m. (DH); U10 ALL hosts Webster, 11 a.m. (DH); U8 ALL hosts Britton, 9 a.m. (DH)

Softball in Groton: U8B vs. Britton, 9 a.m.; U8G vs. Britton, 10 a.m.; U10B vs. U10G DH, 11 a.m.; U12/U14 Intersquad Scrimmage DH, 1 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



Sunday, June 8

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

Emmanuel Lutheran worship with communion, 9 a.m.

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

Amateurs host Faulkton, 4 p.m.

Legion at Chamberlain, 1 p.m. (DH)

U12 ALL at Sisseton Tournament

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.

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1440

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

Musk-Trump Clash

Elon Musk publicly broke with President Donald Trump yesterday. The rupture—largely chronicled in interviews, on Musk's X platform, and on Trump's Truth Social—ends a monthslong alliance between two of the world's most powerful men.

The clash comes one week after Musk left the Department of Government Efficiency, which boasts \$180B in taxpayer savings (not all savings are itemized). Musk has since been critical of Trump's signature tax bill, projected to add \$2.4T to the national debt through 2034. Musk floated creating a third political party yesterday. Trump threatened to cut government subsidies and contracts for Musk's businesses, sending Tesla shares down as much as 14%. The two also exchanged personal attacks, with Musk suggesting links between Trump and late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

Musk began publicly supporting Trump in July, donating nearly \$240M to a pro-Trump PAC and giving \$1M per day to swing state voters.

Japanese Moonshot

Japanese space company ispace's Resilience appeared to fail to land on the moon yesterday, potentially its second failure to soft-land a vehicle in two years. The lander neared its planned destination of Mare Frigoris, or the Sea of Cold, a relatively flat region at the top of the moon; however, mission controllers were unable to establish contact at the time of landing and believe the lander crashed onto the moon's surface.

The lander was launched in January by SpaceX alongside a spacecraft from Texas-based Firefly Aerospace, whose successful moon landing in March was the first by a private company in history. Ispace sought to deploy a small, 11-pound rover named Tenacious to harvest lunar dirt and analyze it for future use. The mission also aimed to deploy several scientific and commercial payloads, including a food experiment module and artist Mikael Genberg's 3-inch "Moonhouse" art project.

Moon landings have seen a resurgence since 2013, after a 37-year hiatus.

Supreme Court Decisions

The US Supreme Court yesterday made it easier for employees from majority groups, such as white or heterosexual workers, to bring so-called reverse discrimination claims.

Justices unanimously sided with Marlean Ames, a straight woman who says she was denied a promotion at the Ohio Department of Youth Services and later demoted due to her sexual orientation. The court tossed a lower court rule requiring plaintiffs to show "background circumstances" suggesting bias, and affirmed all Title VII claims must be judged by the same legal standards, regardless of group status.

Separately, the court unanimously dismissed a lawsuit by the Mexican government seeking billions from US gunmakers over cartel violence, citing a federal law shielding gun manufacturers from liability. In another decision, justices ruled Wisconsin violated the First Amendment when it denied a Catholic Charities chapter a tax exemption on grounds it was insufficiently religious.

Other rulings expected this term include cases on birthright citizenship, transgender rights, and multiple discrimination challenges.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Four-time MVP Aaron Rodgers will reportedly sign with the Pittsburgh Steelers after two seasons with the New York Jets.

The 157th Belmont Stakes, the third leg of horse racing's Triple Crown, set for tomorrow (7 pm ET, Fox).

The 78th Tony Awards are Sunday (8 pm, CBS) with actress Cynthia Erivo hosting; see preview and predictions for every category.

Olympic and World Cup athletes from 12 affected countries will be exempt from recently announced US travel ban.

Science & Technology

Amazon reportedly testing AI-powered humanoid robots to deliver packages; company is said to be training prototypes in an indoor San Francisco facility.

Researchers discover method to identify HIV concealed within white blood cells; breakthrough may lead to treatments to clear the body of hidden HIV reservoirs.

Probiotic treatment discovered capable of slowing the spread of stony coral tissue loss disease, which has spread off the Florida coast since 2014.

Average May measurements of atmospheric CO2 surpass 430 parts per million for the first time on record.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -0.5%, Dow -0.3%, Nasdaq -0.8%).

Crypto firm Circle closes up 167% in NYSE debut, raising nearly \$1.1B.

European Central Bank cuts interest rates to 2%, widening gap with Federal Reserve's key rate, currently between range of 4.25% to 4.5%.

Boeing agrees to pay \$1.1B to avoid federal prosecution for the deaths of 346 people related to two separate 737 Max crashes in 2018 and 2019.

Procter & Gamble to cut 15% of its non-manufacturing workforce, or roughly 7,000 jobs, as part of broader two-year restructuring program.

Restaurant chain Hooters abruptly closes over 30 locations.

Politics & World Affairs

Suspect in attack on Boulder, Colorado, marchers supportive of Israeli hostages charged with 118 state criminal counts.

Israel says it recovered the bodies of two hostages in a special operation.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers arrest more than 2,000 people Tuesday and Wednesday, with Tuesday arrests marking a single-day record.

The US and China agree to revive trade talks after call between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping.



**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.

Fewer eyes on the sky: NWS forecast reductions raise concerns in South Dakota

By Emily DeCock

South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota's three National Weather Service (NWS) forecast offices are short of staff and sending up fewer weather balloons that gather important data in response to federal budget cuts and a hiring freeze, as tornado and thunderstorm season ramps up.

The NWS, part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), has 122 Weather Forecast Offices (WFOs) throughout the United States. Forecasting offices around the country are feeling the effects of federal cuts and hiring freezes, according to The Associated Press.

South Dakota's three WFOs in Aberdeen, Rapid City and Sioux Falls cover 90 counties in five states.

Fifty-five of the WFOs nationwide have a job vacancy rate of more than 20%, according to the AP data, which was accurate as of March. Vacancy rates of 20% or higher constitute "critical understaffing" according to the AP. The South Dakota offices are among those with open positions that aren't being filled.

- The Rapid City WFO vacancy rate was highest in the state, at 41.7% of positions open. The Rapid City office covers 16 counties in South Dakota and three counties in Wyoming.

- The Sioux Falls vacancy rate was 21%, which is around the current national average for WFOs. The Sioux Falls office covers 43 counties in South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska.

- Aberdeen's office had a 13% vacancy rate, a relatively low number compared to national averages. The Aberdeen WFO covers 26 counties in South Dakota and two counties in Minnesota.

South Dakota state climatologist Laura Edwards said the federal hiring freeze is one of the contributing factors to South Dakota WFO's understaffing – and offices in the Northern Great Plains states are hit disproportionately hard.

"It's those offices that are already hard to staff in Wyoming, rural Nebraska, South Dakota," Edwards said. "Those areas often struggle to hire staff to start with, and then you compound ... the hiring freeze with all the DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) cuts. And the offices that are already understaffed just get hit many more times."

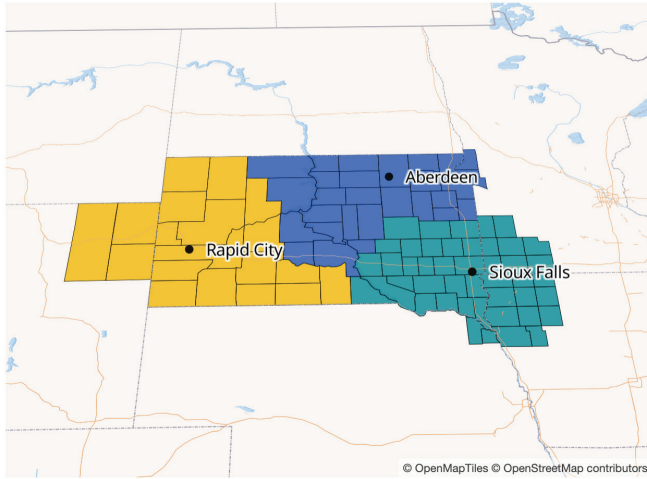
Some U.S. offices have started to close overnight to combat understaffing, while others have decreased the number of weather balloons they're releasing, including at the Rapid City and Aberdeen offices.



A National Weather Service staff member launches a weather balloon in Dav- enport, Iowa, in 2005. (Photo: NOAA via Wikimedia

Commons)

National Weather Service coverage areas



"In those overnight hours, you can still see severe weather in the summer seasons," Edwards said. "So I think our best hope, crossing fingers for South Dakota, is that we don't have a lot of severe weather this year due to the low staffing levels that they have."

All three WFOs referred calls for comment to the national office, which provided News Watch with a statement:

"The National Weather Service continues to meet its core mission of providing life-saving forecasts, warnings and decision-support services to the public, our partners and stakeholders," said Kim Doster, communications director for NOAA. "In the near term, NWS has updated the service level standards for its weather forecast offices to manage impacts due to shifting personnel resources."

"These revised standards reflect the transformation and prioritization of mission-essential operations, while supporting the balance of the operational workload for its workforce. NWS continues to ensure a continuity of service for mission-critical functions."

NWS launching fewer weather balloons

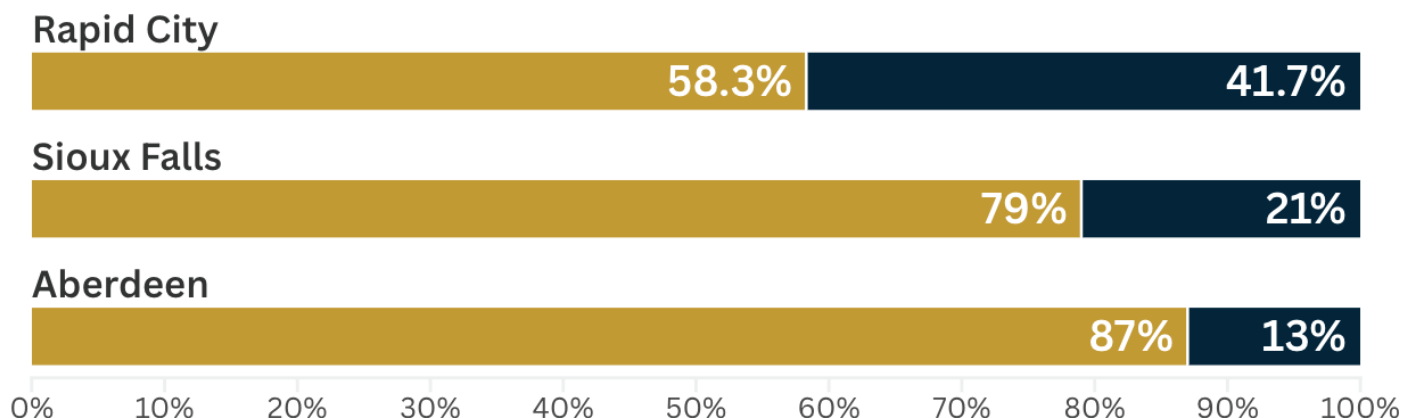
One way offices have responded to fewer staff is by reducing the release of weather balloons. Weather balloons are typically deployed twice daily at the same time by WFOs across the country. The data collected from weather balloons are the basis for starting forecasts, Edwards said.

"I think the real issue that we're all keyed in on with the weather balloon data is that the missing data now

Vacancy rates of South Dakota weather forecast offices



■ % of positions open ■ % of positions filled



Source: [Associated Press](#) • Graphic: Emily DeCock / South Dakota News Watch

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is all kind of in the same part of the country," said Russ Schumacher, Colorado state climatologist and professor of atmospheric science at Colorado State University.

"There's this hole over the Great Plains and into the Rocky Mountains where there used to be a lot of weather balloon data and now there isn't."

The Rapid City WFO suspended the regular release of weather balloons in March, according to a March 20 public information statement from the National Weather Service. Another statement released that day announced that the Aberdeen office was among six U.S. offices reducing weather balloon flights to once daily.

Severe weather season could provide more challenges

One area of concern for Edwards is losing coordination ability. The warning coordination meteorologist at the forecast offices is tasked with providing information to county emergency coordinators, schools and the general public when there are risks for severe weather.

The earliest tornado in South Dakota history happened this year in February, the only recorded twister in the state so far this year.

And several towns have been either leveled or heavily damaged in the past few decades by severe tornadoes.

Recent tornadoes killed more than 20 people in the Southeast. Kentucky was hit particularly hard.

"The (storm) in Kentucky was a very significant, big tornado system, or a group of tornadoes," Edwards said. "And so I don't know how much you can attribute to the staffing losses at the forecast offices. But in the North Central (Great Plains) region here, there's a lot of offices that are really hurting for staff."

AI's potential

Could artificial intelligence applications fill in the forecasting gaps?

AI and machine learning are evolving rapidly in the weather prediction field, according to Schumacher. The big question is, 'What's the correct balance of responsibilities for human forecasters versus automated systems,?' he said.

Human forecasters don't spend much time creating numerical weather prediction models, such as predicting the high temperatures for the 10-day forecast, Schumacher said.

"There's a lot of potential and a lot of new things coming down the line to improve forecasts there," he said.

However, AI systems can't put forecasts in context, he said.

"Like any federal agency, sure, there could be some efficiencies. But I don't know at this point, anyway, that we can fully go away from humans in the forecast offices," Schumacher said. "I think that's a little bit too risky right now."

Edwards also affirmed the need for that human element.

"The weather service has a unique perspective where they collect a lot of data from their observers and they have a really good handle on what's going on precipitation-wise and all that for their specific region. And so, we try to do our best to fill in the gaps and try to understand what's going on there in every county of the state. But without all those eyes and ears out there, it's a little different," she said.

The Associated Press contributed to this story that was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Emily DeCock is a student at South Dakota State University in Brookings. She received the 2025 Jeffrey B. Nelson Investigative Journalism Endowed Internship and Chuck Raasch and Sandy Johnson Scholarship from the SDSU Foundation. Contact Emily: emily.decock@sdnewswatch.org.



A National Guardsman walks down a street in Spencer surrounded by the devastation of the May 30, 1998, tornado. (Argus Leader File Photo)

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Groton Chamber of Commerce

June 4th, 2025

Noon at City Hall

- Members present: Katelyn Nehlich, Douglas Heinrich, Ashley Bentz, April Abeln and Karyn Babcock
 - Minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Heinrich and seconded by Nehlich. All members present voted aye.
 - The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$23,482.36 in addition to the \$5,000 CD. The bucks account balance is about \$3,000. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Babcock. All members present voted aye.
 - Thank you notes were received from the children for sponsoring their Yelduz Shrine circus tickets as well as money for a Hwy 12 electronic sign greeting.
 - A prior email motion was made by Nehlich and seconded by Heinrich to do a full-page ad for \$100 in this year's Olive Grove football fundraiser. All members present via email voted aye.
 - Our 2025 shirt contest has been announced on Facebook. Designs are due by June 15th, and the winner will be announced by July 2nd
 - The winner of the POET Grant has not yet been determined.
 - Motion by Abeln and seconded by Babcock to post a selfie contest for 605 day. The winner will receive SD promo gear. All members present voted aye.
 - Babcock offered to deliver the new rack card holders to local businesses.
 - Discussion was held on the upcoming Hwy 12 electronic sign contracts.
 - Motion by Heinrich and seconded by Abeln to purchase shirts for active board members. Shirts will be purchased from Geffdog. Abeln will email out options. All members present voted aye. Shirts were last purchased in 2023.
 - Upcoming advertising will be done in the Aberdeen Magazine and the SD Magazine. Abeln and Heinrich met with our new Dakota Broadcasting representative, Brian Dolan.
 - Motion by Abeln and seconded by Heinrich to donate \$400 to the Groton Lions Club for their Summer Fest event. All members present voted aye.
 - New business welcomes for Hydrate Haven and BEddy Cookies will be held June 16th at 5pm at City Hall.
 - Discussion was held on providing the City of Groton with our financial statements for their first meeting in October.
 - Discussion was held on upcoming Main Street events and businesses.
 - Next Meeting: July 2nd, 12pm at City Hall
- Upcoming events
- o 06/07/2025 Day of Play- Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation
 - o 06/13/2025 SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 12pm Shotgun Start
 - o 06/21/2025 Fireman's Triathlon 8am-11pm
 - o 06/21/2025 U8 Youth Baseball Tourney
 - o 06/23/2025 Community Blood Drive at the Community Center 12-6pm
 - o 06/23/2025 Women's 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove Golf Course 9am Registration 10am Shotgun Start
 - o 06/28/2025 U10 Youth Baseball Tourney
 - o 06/29/2025 U12 Youth Baseball Tourney
 - o 07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - o 07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar 11am-1pm Groton Legion
 - o 07/11-13/2025 VFW Class B U12 State Baseball Tournament
 - o 07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-3pm

Northern State University's President's, Dean's and Academic Recognition Lists for Spring 2025

ABERDEEN, S.D. – Northern State University is proud to recognize the outstanding academic achievements of students for the spring 2025 semester. The university is pleased to announce the students who have earned a place on the President's List, Dean's List and Academic Recognition List.

The President's List honors full-time undergraduate students who have achieved a perfect 4.00 GPA for the semester. This distinction reflects a commitment to academic excellence and dedication to their studies.

The Dean's List recognizes full-time undergraduate students who have attained a GPA of 3.50 to 3.99 during the semester. This reflects their dedication and sustained effort in achieving high academic standards.

Part-time undergraduate students earning a place on the Academic Recognition List have achieved a system honor-point average of 3.50 or higher for the semester. Eligibility requires completion of at least 12 credit hours prior to the current semester at one or more South Dakota Regental institutions. This honor demonstrates their sustained commitment to academic success.

Northern State University congratulates these students on their accomplishments and wishes them continued success in their academic pursuits. Their hard work and dedication exemplify the university's values of excellence and perseverance.

PRESIDENT'S LIST

Jackson Bahr (Houghton, SD)
Alexandria Cutler (Claremont, SD)
Alyssa Fordham (Groton, SD)
Emma Grandpre (Conde, SD)
Abigail Hinman (Groton, SD)
Ava Kramer (Groton, SD)
Avery Miles (Turton, SD)
Audrey Reineke (Westport, SD)
Cole Simon (Groton, SD)
Chloe Voss (Andover, MN)
Laney Widener (Langford, SD)
Eh Tha You Wilkie (Groton, SD)

DEAN'S LIST

Stephen Achen (Frederick, SD)
Kaylin Anderson (Bristol, SD)
Katelyn Beckler (Bath, SD)
Anna Bisbee (Columbia, SD)
Madisen Bjerke (Groton, SD)
Cady Hawley (Bath, SD)
Logan Hinman (Groton, SD)
Aspen Johnson (Groton, SD)
Katelyn Mehlhaff (Westport, SD)
Lydia Meier (Groton, SD)
Lydia Nordquist (Andover, MN)
Emily Richie (Bristol, SD)
Anthony Schinkel (Groton, SD)
Nicholas Schwab (Andover, SD)
Veronica Scott (Bath, SD)
Cadance Tullis (Groton, SD)
Cali Vandervorst (Claremont, SD)
Avery West (Langford, SD)

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION LIST

Courtney Hostetter (Warner, SD)
Alyssa Keough (Claremont, SD)

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Clint Jacobson Jr. had the perfect timing in getting this photo. The fish that Elle Jacobson caught jumped out of her hands and Clint got the shot with the fish in mid air.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Black Hills beaver trapping moratorium advances as population tumbles

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JUNE 5, 2025 4:26 PM

Citing a population decline and degraded habitat, South Dakota officials have advanced a plan to halt beaver trapping in the Black Hills for two years.

The plan will block trapping during the 2025 and 2026 seasons in the Black Hills Fire Protection District. Trapping would remain open in the rest of the state. The state legislature's Rules Review Committee will need to approve the moratorium.

In 2012, biologists saw 60 food caches — piles of woody vegetation built by beavers for winter — in the Black Hills. By 2023, they recorded only 16. Beavers occupied 52% of Black Hills watersheds in 2012, but just 23% in 2023.

Beavers once numbered in the thousands in the Black Hills and the millions nationwide, but their numbers began to decline with the onset of fur trapping by European settlers. Officials said habitat loss, not modern trapping, is to blame for current population declines. But they also said they don't want trapping to contribute to the problem.

"The limiting factor is habitat degradation," said John Kanta, section chief with the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Only one beaver trapping was reported in the Black Hills last season.

Without beaver dams, faster-flowing water cuts stream channels too deep for beavers to work with. Cattle also trample streambanks, leaving fewer willow and aspen for beavers to feed on.

A closed trapping season will help protect the beavers that are being reintroduced, officials say. Game, Fish and Parks is working with the U.S. Forest Service and volunteer groups to restore habitat through tree planting and manmade dams, and nuisance beavers from urban areas are being relocated to the improved habitats.

"It's a wonderful step," said Hans Stephenson, owner of Dakota Angler & Outfitter in Rapid City and a volunteer for the restoration efforts.

Beaver dams raise the water table, slow water flow, and create habitat that supports everything from aquatic insects to the brown and rainbow trout favored by anglers, Stephenson said.

Alex Solem, senior wildlife biologist with Game, Fish and Parks, emphasized the broader ecological role beavers play.

"Any time there's beaver around, usually, it signals a really healthy ecosystem," Solem said.

If more Black Hills streams had beaver dams, he said, floodplain soils would hold more water, support grazing, mitigate flooding and lessen the dangers of drought and wildfires.

In addition to the moratorium, officials adopted a new threshold-based framework to guide future deci-



A beaver at Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge in Wisconsin. (Larry Palmer/USFWS)

sions. Under that framework, trapping season would reopen if beaver occupancy in monitored watersheds rose above 80%, Occupancy between 50% and 79% would open the door to resident-only, private-land trapping. Levels below 50%, like now, would trigger automatic closure.

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

State Library secures full federal funding, will resume interlibrary loan deliveries

BY: JOHN HULT - JUNE 5, 2025 10:00 AM

The South Dakota State Library has secured the second half of its federal funding, which will allow for the resumption of interlibrary loan deliveries over the summer.

The library relies on the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) for about half of its annual funding.

The money helps pay for things like interlibrary loans, professional development for librarians across South Dakota, summer reading program support and public access to paid educational databases.

Access to that funding was called into question twice over the last six months. First, Former Gov. Kristi Noem released a budget plan that slashed state funding for the library to a level too low to meet the federal match necessary to secure IMLS funding.

State lawmakers returned enough money to the library in their final budget in March to maintain access to the grants, but an executive order to gut IMLS from President Trump threw the South Dakota State Library's future into question again.

Money for the grants is congressionally appropriated, but advocates worried that IMLS staff cuts caused by the Trump order would make it impossible for the federal agency to process grant applications.

In the face of that uncertainty, the State Library announced a suspension of the courier service that delivers books from library to library through interlibrary loans. Without a courier service, local libraries would've needed to mail materials ordered through interlibrary loan.

State Librarian George Seamon got good news in late spring. He told the South Dakota Library Board of a notice from IMLS on the state's federal grant on April 24.

It was to be the board's last meeting. Lawmakers dissolved the citizen-led advisory group and cut three positions from the State Library as part of the compromise deal to save it. Seamon told the board during the April meeting that the departing employees had new jobs.

He also said the state had received half its IMLS money, and that securing the other half was contingent on answers to some follow-up questions from IMLS on how the dollars would be spent.

Nancy Van Der Weide, spokeswoman for the state Department of Education, confirmed this week that the remainder of federal funding has now been secured. The state library is an arm of the state Department of Education.

The interlibrary loan courier service will resume June 1, she wrote in an email to South Dakota Searchlight.

The future of funding on the federal side beyond this year is unclear, however. Congress appropriates



(Johner Images via Getty Images)

IMLS funding in periodic increments, most recently in 2018. Congress faces a choice of whether to re-up IMLS funding beyond 2025.

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.

Rhoden creates disaster preparedness task force as Trump cuts FEMA

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JUNE 5, 2025 8:12 AM

Republican South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden signed an executive order this week to plan for future disasters as the Trump administration works to shift the responsibility for disaster relief to state and local entities.

"We pray that the most challenging circumstances will never arise, but we are preparing so that South Dakota can face such situations with determination, resilience, and grit," Rhoden said in a press release.

President Trump has called the Federal Emergency Management Agency a "disaster" and suggested it might "go away." FEMA is led by Homeland Security Secretary and former South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem.

Trump signed an executive order in March titled "Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness," which says "federal policy must rightly recognize that preparedness is most effectively owned and managed at the State, local, and even individual levels."

The Trump order also instructs federal agencies to reevaluate grants, contracts, and technical assistance funding programs. FEMA has since ended the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program. The 2021 program aimed to direct \$1 billion in funding toward infrastructure projects to help communities across the U.S. "reduce their hazard risk" as they "build capability and capacity." According to a tally of federal cuts compiled and updated weekly by the governor's office, \$8.9 million in South Dakota projects were set to benefit from BRIC grants.

Critics say the shift in disaster relief responsibilities and funding from the federal government to state and local governments will leave poorer, rural states unprepared and unable to respond.

Rhoden says the task force will "support" the Trump administration's executive order.

Rhoden dubbed the group the Governor's Resilience and Infrastructure Task Force, or GRIT. He said the task force will serve as an advisory body to "develop policy recommendations, assess risks and vulnerabilities, and support long-term planning and investment in critical infrastructure systems across our state."

The task force will be chaired by Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen. Adjutant General Mark Morrell of the South Dakota National Guard will serve as vice chair. Venhuizen said the task force is more than a response to President Trump ending programs and planning to shift responsibilities to states. He said the concept of the task force has been under consideration since last year.

Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public af-



South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden speaks to the media during a press conference on March 13, 2025, at the Capitol in Pierre. (Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

fairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

Trump opens investigation into Biden autopen use

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JUNE 5, 2025 1:21 PM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump late Wednesday ordered the White House legal counsel and U.S. attorney general to investigate when Biden administration staff used an autopen to sign the former president's name on official documents, alleging that Biden might not have known or approved of their actions.

The inquiry represents an escalation in Trump's animosity toward and legal action against former President Joe Biden, who vehemently denies the allegations that he didn't know what executive orders or pardons were signed during his term.

Trump has repeatedly suggested that Biden wasn't fully cognizant during the end of his administration. Similar concerns were reported on by dozens of news organizations following Biden's answers and behavior during a debate in June 2024.

Biden's apparent confusion during some of the debate raised alarm bells among fellow Democrats and eventually led him to withdraw from his reelection campaign, later endorsing then-Vice President Kamala Harris.

Trump's memorandum alleges "Biden's aides abused the power of Presidential signatures through the use of an autopen to conceal Biden's cognitive decline and assert Article II authority.

"This conspiracy marks one of the most dangerous and concerning scandals in American history. The American public was purposefully shielded from discovering who wielded the executive power, all while Biden's signature was deployed across thousands of documents to effect radical policy shifts."

The memo stated that if Biden staff used an autopen, a mechanical device that mimics a person's signature, "to conceal this incapacity, while taking radical executive actions all in his name, that would constitute an unconstitutional wielding of the power of the Presidency, a circumstance that would have implications for the legality and validity of numerous executive actions undertaken in Biden's name."

Trump said Thursday during an appearance in the Oval Office that he hadn't discovered any evidence that Biden aides violated the law.

"No, but I've uncovered the human mind," Trump said. "I was in a debate with the human mind and I didn't think he knew what the hell he was doing. So it's one of those things, one of those problems. We can't ever allow that to happen to our country."

Biden released a written statement rejecting the claims Trump laid out in the memo, arguing the investigation "is nothing more than a distraction by Donald Trump and Congressional Republicans who are working to push disastrous legislation that would cut essential programs like Medicaid and raise costs on American families, all to pay for tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy and big corporations."

"Let me be clear: I made the decisions during my presidency. I made the decisions about the pardons,



Then-President Joe Biden gives a pen to Bette Marafino, president of the Connecticut Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans, after he signed the Social Security Fairness Act during an event in the East Room of the White House on Jan. 5, 2025. (Photo by Kent Nishimura/

Getty Images)

executive orders, legislation, and proclamations,” Biden wrote. “Any suggestion that I didn’t is ridiculous and false.”

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.

Judge orders Trump to facilitate due process for migrants removed under wartime law

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JUNE 5, 2025 11:08 AM

WASHINGTON — A federal judge in the District of Columbia on Wednesday ordered the Trump administration to allow Venezuelan men removed under an 18th-century wartime law and sent to a notorious prison in El Salvador to have their cases heard in court, though he conceded the logistics of the order would be challenging to sort out.

In a 69-page order, Judge James Boasberg partially granted an injunction to require 137 Venezuelans be given due process. He ruled that they had no chance to challenge their removal under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, or the accusation that they are members of the Tren de Aragua gang.

The Trump administration will have until June 11 to put forth a plan for the men removed under the wartime law and sent to the mega-prison known as Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, or CECOT, to be afforded their due process rights.

“The Government has violated the CECOT Class’s vested right to due process, an infringement that risks inflicting irreparable harm for which the public interest requires a remedy,” Boasberg said. “The question — simply asked but not so simply answered — thus becomes what relief they must obtain for that violation.”

Boasberg said that the Trump administration “plainly deprived these individuals of their right to seek habeas relief before their summary removal from the United States — a right that need not itself be vindicated through a habeas petition.”

He said that even if President Donald Trump lawfully invoked the Alien Enemies Act and if those subject to the proclamation are members of the Tren de Aragua gang, they must be given a chance to contest the charges.

“This is the critical point —there is simply no way to know for sure, as the CECOT Plaintiffs never had any opportunity to challenge the Government’s say-so.”

“Defendants instead spirited away planeloads of people before any such challenge could be made,” Boasberg continued. “And now, significant evidence has come to light indicating that many of those currently entombed in CECOT have no connection to the gang and thus languish in a foreign prison on flimsy, even frivolous, accusations.”



Minister of Justice and Public Security Héctor Villatoro, right, accompanies Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem during a tour of the Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, or CECOT, on March 26, 2025. (Photo by Alex

Brandon-Pool/Getty Images)

Order doesn’t require return

The American Civil Liberties Union, which brought the case, sought to require the Venezuelans be brought back to the U.S. from El Salvador to challenge their removals. But Boasberg rejected that argument.

Boasberg determined that even though there is a financial agreement between the U.S. and El Salvador to detain the men, they are in the custody of the Salvadoran government.

"While it is a close question, the current record does not support Plaintiffs' assertion that they are in the constructive custody of the United States," Boasberg said.

"Even crediting the public statements characterizing the arrangement as outsourcing the U.S. prison system and acknowledging the President's unofficial assertion of his power to request a release, such comments cannot overcome a sworn declaration from a knowledgeable government official attesting that the CECOT Class's ongoing detention is a question of Salvadoran law."

Department of Justice attorneys have used the same reasoning in a separate case to resist the return of the wrongful deportation of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, despite a U.S. Supreme Court order to "facilitate" the Maryland man's return to the U.S.

ACLU will be allowed to have input to determine how due process can be afforded to the men at CECOT, Boasberg wrote.

Wednesday's order is the latest in a months-long dispute between the Trump administration and Boasberg after three planes landed in El Salvador and roughly 300 men were sent to CECOT in mid-March, despite the judge's temporary restraining order against using the Alien Enemies Act.

Boasberg found probable cause to hold Trump officials in contempt for violating his temporary restraining order that ordered the deportation planes carrying men removed under the Alien Enemies Act to be returned to the U.S. over concerns they did not receive due process.

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

Federal health agency says emergency abortion care guidance doesn't reflect administration policy

BY: KELCIE MOSELEY-MORRIS - JUNE 5, 2025 10:57 AM

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has rescinded guidance issued in July 2022 that emphasized hospitals are responsible for providing emergency abortion care despite state bans, saying it does not reflect the Trump administration's policy.

The Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) is a federal law requiring hospitals that accept Medicare funding to provide stabilizing treatment to anyone who comes to an emergency room seeking care. After the Dobbs decision in June 2022 that allowed states to regulate abortion access and more than a dozen states implemented total abortion bans, the Health and Human Services Department under former Democratic President Joe Biden's administration issued guidance reinforcing hospitals' obligations to patients under EMTALA, regardless of state policy. Abortion is a form of stabilizing care in certain situations, such as when a pregnant patient's water breaks prematurely



Federal health officials rescinded guidance Tuesday issued by former President Joe Biden's administration that said Medicare-funded hospitals must provide life-saving abortion care, regardless of state bans.

(Photo by Otto Kitsinger/ Idaho Capital Sun)

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and the fetus is not yet viable.

"(Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services) will continue to enforce EMTALA, which protects all individuals who present to a hospital emergency department seeking examination or treatment, including for identified emergency medical conditions that place the health of a pregnant woman or her unborn child in serious jeopardy," the Tuesday announcement said. "CMS will work to rectify any perceived legal confusion and instability created by the former administration's actions."

The statement did not elaborate further on what that will mean in cases where the EMTALA mandate conflicts with state abortion bans. In court, Idaho's attorneys arguing on behalf of the state have said EMTALA never requires an abortion to be performed as part of stabilizing care — an argument also made by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito when the court heard Idaho's case last year. The justices sent the case back to the circuit court for further consideration, but the Trump administration dropped the Biden-era lawsuit against Idaho in early March.

Abortion-rights advocacy organizations said the move sends a clear message that the administration is siding with anti-abortion foes.

"Stripping away federal guidance affirming what the law requires will put lives at risk," said Fatima Goss Graves, president and CEO of the National Women's Law Center, in a statement. "To be clear: this action doesn't change hospitals' legal obligations, but it does add to the fear, confusion, and dangerous delays patients and providers have faced since the fall of *Roe v. Wade*."

Doctors in places like Idaho, where the Biden administration sued over the state's near-total abortion ban as it relates to EMTALA, have said the ban is what created confusion. Court injunctions have been in place off and on through litigation over the past three years, and when it wasn't in place for a four-month period in 2024, staff at the state's largest hospital airlifted six patients to other states because there was uncertainty about whether they could be prosecuted under the state law. Patients can also file complaints under the EMTALA law, and if the hospital is found to be in violation, it could lose its status and funding as a Medicare provider.

St. Luke's, the state's largest hospital system, filed a new lawsuit as the plaintiff in January, anticipating that the Trump Department of Justice would drop it. The federal judge in that case issued a new injunction protecting St. Luke's doctors from prosecution under the state ban, but other Idaho doctors outside of that health system are not protected by it.

The federal health agency also rescinded a letter written by Biden's former HHS secretary, Xavier Becerra, that told U.S. health care providers the federal statute protected their clinical judgment and the actions they take to provide stabilizing treatment, regardless of the state where they practice.

There have been several lawsuits over EMTALA since 2022 besides in Idaho, including one in Tennessee filed in January by the Catholic Medical Association that specifically challenged the July 2022 guidance. The Association said the Biden-era memo and accompanying letter were issued without conducting proper administrative procedure, and alleged that it violated the religious freedom of doctors.

On Tuesday, when DHHS rescinded the guidance, the Association dropped the lawsuit.

Regina Davis Moss, president and CEO of a reproductive health and sexuality advocacy organization called In Our Own Voice, is a former HHS employee and longtime advocate for better reproductive health outcomes for Black women and girls and nonbinary people. Moss said Black women are already two to three times more likely to die during pregnancy than white women, and this policy change on EMTALA will only serve to make those statistics worse.

"We're changing the whole scope and spirit of why we had to have EMTALA in the first place," Moss said. "It's leading to delays in care, and it's putting pregnant people's lives at risk."

Kelcie Moseley-Morris is an award-winning journalist who has covered many topics across Idaho since 2011. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Idaho and a master's degree in public administration from Boise State University. Moseley-Morris started her journalism career at the Moscow-Pullman Daily News, followed by the Lewiston Tribune and the Idaho Press.

Federal appeals court upholds order blocking Education Department closure

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - JUNE 5, 2025 10:50 AM

WASHINGTON — A federal appeals court late Wednesday upheld a lower court's order requiring the U.S. Education Department to reinstate more than 1,300 fired employees and blocking an executive order to dismantle the department and a directive to transfer some services to other federal agencies.

The ruling from a three-judge panel in the United States Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit marks a setback for President Donald Trump's education policy agenda that includes transferring the federal student loan portfolio and special education services out of the Education Department on the way to closing the department entirely.

The panel kept in place a preliminary injunction issued by a district court in Massachusetts requiring the administration to reverse course at least while a case challenging its education policies is ongoing.

"What is at stake in this case, the District Court found, was whether a nearly half-century-old cabinet department would be permitted to carry out its statutorily assigned functions or prevented from doing so by a mass termination of employees aimed at implementing the effective closure of that department," 1st Circuit Chief Judge David J. Barron wrote in the panel's opinion.

"Given the extensive findings made by the District Court and the absence of any contrary evidence having been submitted by the appellants, we conclude that the appellants' stay motion does not warrant our interfering with the ordinary course of appellate adjudication in the face of what the record indicates would be the apparent consequences of our doing so," Barron wrote.

The Trump administration had immediately challenged an order in May from U.S. District Judge Myong J. Joun of Massachusetts.

Joun granted a preliminary injunction in a consolidated case stemming from a pair of lawsuits from a coalition of labor and advocacy groups and a slew of Democratic attorneys general.

One of the lawsuits comes from a coalition of Democratic attorneys general in Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington state and Wisconsin.

The other lawsuit was brought by the American Federation of Teachers, its Massachusetts chapter, AF-SCME Council 93, the American Association of University Professors, the Service Employees International Union and two school districts in Massachusetts.

The Education Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment Wednesday.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.



The Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building pictured on Nov. 25, 2024. (Photo by Shauneen

Miranda/States Newsroom)

Trump issues travel ban on 12 countries

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA - JUNE 5, 2025 10:31 AM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump issued a long-awaited “travel ban” late Wednesday to bar entry of nationals from a dozen countries and partially restrict entry for nationals from a smaller set of countries.

Countries that will have a full ban are Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.

Countries with partial bans are Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela.

The proclamation goes into effect Monday.

Wednesday’s proclamation is a modified version of the travel ban from the president’s first term that barred entrance to nationals from predominantly Muslim countries. Federal courts struck down several versions of the travel ban until the Supreme Court upheld it in 2018. Former president Joe Biden repealed the travel ban when he came into office in 2021.

Wednesday’s proclamation allows for some exceptions, including visas that were issued to people from those countries before Wednesday, those who have been granted asylum by the U.S. or have a refugee status and lawful permanent residents.

The president’s proclamation cited national security concerns, but gave little detail on the reasoning that led to selecting the countries.

“Publicly disclosing additional details on which I relied in making these determinations, however, would cause serious damage to the national security of the United States, and many such details are classified,” according to the proclamation.

The Trump administration has moved to end temporary legal status such as humanitarian protections for nationals that hail from some of the countries on the ban list: Afghanistan, Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. Immigration advocates have challenged those moves to end those legal protections in federal courts across the country.

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



President Donald Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office of the White House on Jan. 20, 2025. (Photo by Anna Moneymaker/

Getty Images)

U.S. House Democrats grill Education Secretary McMahon on proposed cuts, anti-diversity measures

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - JUNE 5, 2025 10:00 AM

WASHINGTON — Education Secretary Linda McMahon took heat from Democrats on the U.S. House Committee on Education and Workforce on Wednesday over the Trump administration’s initiatives to dramatically overhaul the federal role in education and eliminate the Education Department.

Lawmakers took aim at President Donald Trump’s fiscal 2026 budget request — which includes \$12 billion in spending cuts — as well as efforts to dismantle the agency and threats to yank funds for schools that use race-conscious practices across aspects of student life.

A department summary said the cut “reflects an agency that is responsibly winding down.”

Chair Tim Walberg, a Michigan Republican, praised McMahon’s efforts.

“We believe in reducing bureaucracy, trusting our educators, trusting our state and local leaders and trust-

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ing the innovators who are pushing against the barriers thrown up by the bureaucracy," he said. "And above all, we trust our parents — this is our vision, and thankfully, we finally have an administration in place that shares this vision."

But Rep. Bobby Scott, ranking member of the panel, blasted the department's priorities, including the budget proposal, which he said "would make it more difficult for students to enroll in and afford a college education by proposing reductions in funding to need-based grants such as Pell and work study."

"At the end of the day, it is the students of this nation who will suffer under this budget proposal," the Virginia Democrat said. "Students from low-income families and students with disabilities, English learners, international students and students of color will face more hurdles accessing equal educational opportunity."

The budget calls for eliminating key programs administered by the Education Department for disadvantaged and low-income students, including Federal TRIO Programs and the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, or GEAR UP.

The budget request also proposes a \$60 million increase to expand the number of charter schools in the country and lowering nearly \$1,700 from the maximum amount a student can receive annually through the Pell Grant — a government subsidy that helps low-income students pay for college.

A federal judge in Massachusetts in May dealt the administration a major setback to its education agenda, ordering the agency to reinstate the more than 1,300 employees gutted during a reduction in force effort, blocking the department from carrying out Trump's order to close the department and barring the department from transferring the student loan portfolio and special education services to other federal agencies while the case challenging those policies is ongoing.

A federal appeals court on Wednesday upheld the trial judge's order.

DEI lesson plans

Democrats on Wednesday took aim at the administration's efforts against diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI, programs. The administration had sought to bar schools from using DEI practices across aspects of student life to continue to receive federal funding, an effort that multiple federal judges have blocked.

Rep. Summer Lee of Pennsylvania said the Trump administration "has undoubtedly revived the culture of racism we haven't seen since the Jim Crow era," adding that "they've made it clear that open attacks on Black and brown and other marginalized communities is not just tolerated, but it's encouraged."

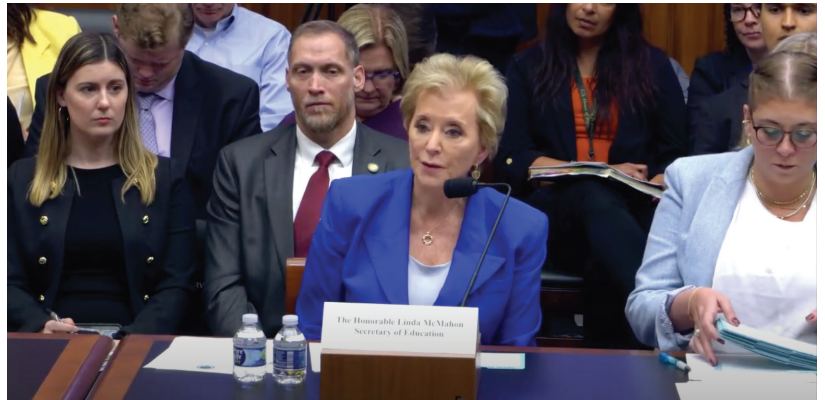
Asked by Lee whether a lesson plan on the Tulsa race massacre would be considered "illegal DEI," McMahon replied: "I'd have to get back to you on that."

Lee then asked McMahon whether she knew what the Tulsa race massacre was, to which the secretary said: "I'd like to look into it more and get back to you on it."

McMahon was similarly noncommittal on a question about assigning school desegregation icon Ruby Bridges' autobiography.

State flexibility

The budget proposal also calls for consolidating 18 grant programs for K-12 education and replacing them with a single formula grant program, which the administration says will give states spending flexibility.



U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon testifies before the U.S. House Education and Workforce Committee on Wednesday, June 4, 2025. (Screenshot from committee livestream)

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Democrats at Wednesday's hearing blasted the administration's push to return education "back to the states," noting that some states have poor records on education.

Rep. Yassamin Ansari said the education system is "absolutely failing" many students in the United States. The main cause of that, the Arizona Democrat said, was that many states have "woefully underfunded" their public education systems and not, as the administration has claimed, due to "too much" federal oversight or DEI policies.

When asked by Ansari what risk McMahon weighed for public schools and universities if federal education funding is gutted or devolved to the states, the secretary said "federal education wouldn't necessarily be gutted" and that "there would be more money to go to the states without the bureaucracy of the Department of Education."

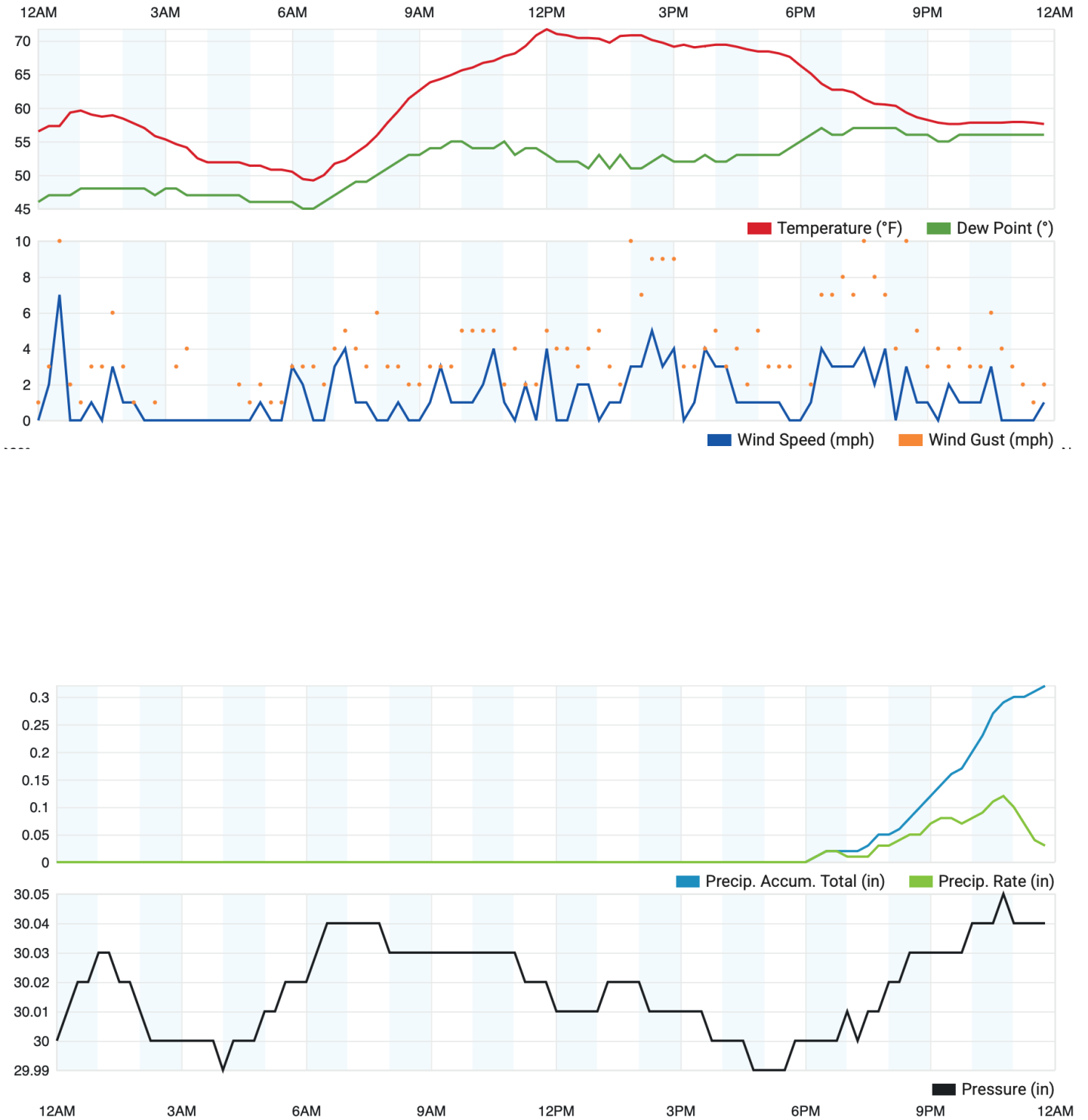
Ansari rejected that claim, noting that some states, including hers, have an "abysmal track record of managing education." She pointed to Arizona's low rankings on public education, teacher salaries, test scores and the highest student-to-teacher ratio in the country.

Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

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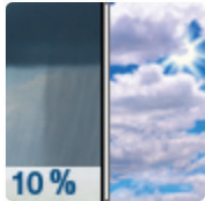
Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Friday



High: 71 °F

Slight Chance
Showers and
Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Cloudy

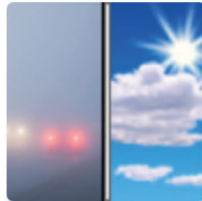
Friday Night



Low: 51 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Patchy
Fog

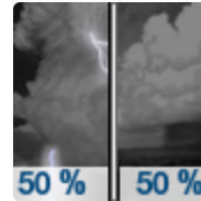
Saturday



High: 80 °F

Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Sunny

Saturday Night



Low: 49 °F

Chance
T-storms then
Chance
Showers

Sunday



High: 70 °F

Mostly Sunny
and Breezy

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated severe storms
possible

TIMING

Saturday afternoon
into the evening

PRIMARY THREATS



SMALL HAIL

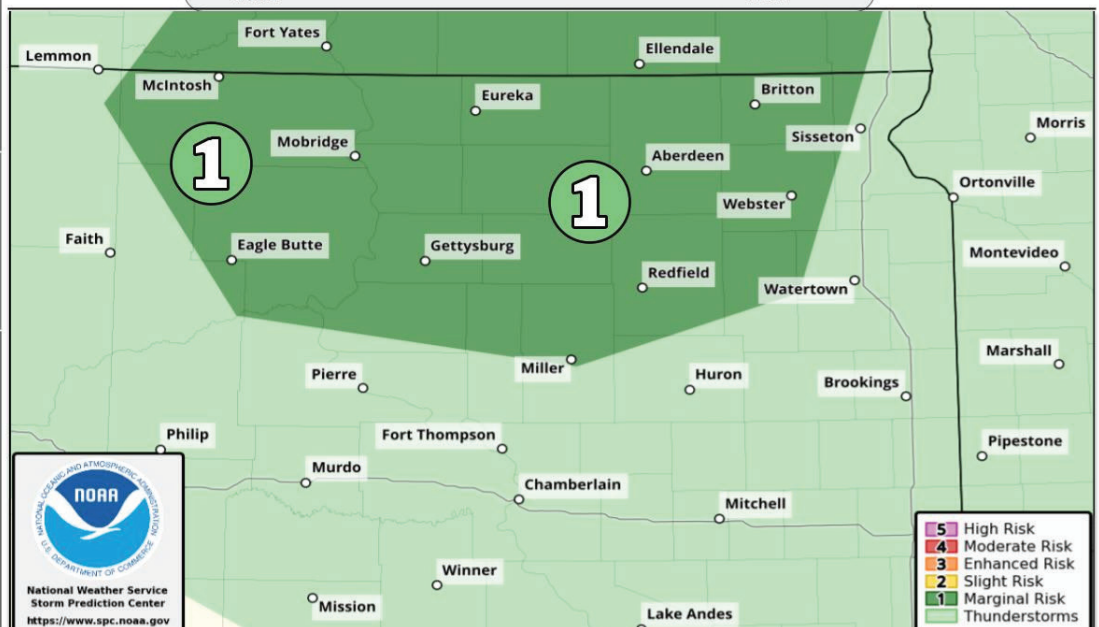
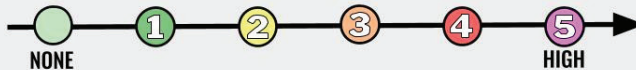


DAMAGING WIND

Get your up to date
forecast at [weather.gov/abr](https://www.weather.gov/abr)

SEVERE STORMS Saturday Afternoon & Evening

SEVERE THUNDERSTORM RISK



A Marginal Risk (Level 1 of 5) of severe weather is in place for Saturday afternoon and evening. Damaging winds and small hail are the primary threats across parts of north central and northeastern South Dakota.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 72 °F at 11:58 AM

Low Temp: 49 °F at 6:18 AM

Wind: 11 mph at 7:17 PM

Precip: : 0.36

Day length: 15 hours, 36 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 99 in 1950

Record Low: 30 in 1897

Average High: 78

Average Low: 53

Average Precip in June.: 0.66

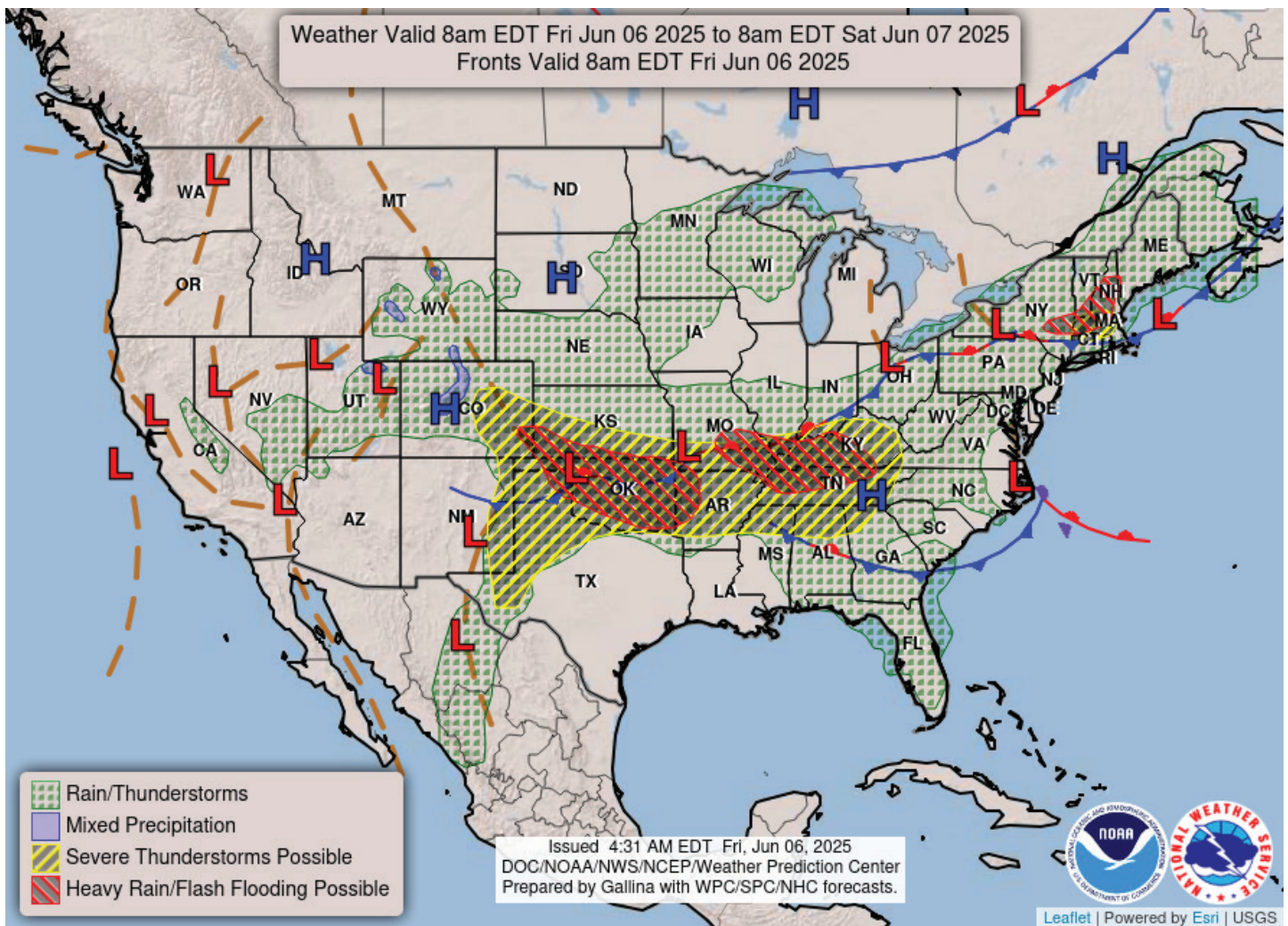
Precip to date in June: 0.36

Average Precip to date: 7.71

Precip Year to Date: 6.41

Sunset Tonight: 9:19:29 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:42:35 am



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Today in Weather History

June 6th, 1895: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 6 miles west of Summit, passing 3 miles northwest of Summit. Buildings on eight farms were damaged.

June 6-7th, 1897: Light to heavy frost, and in some localities, killing frost occurred on the 6th and 7th. These cold temperatures, late season frost in May, and wet conditions hampered the planting season. Luckily, growing conditions changed toward the middle and end of the month. Some low temperatures on the 6th include 26 degrees in Castlewood and Watertown, 29 in Mellette, 30 in Aberdeen and Milbank, and 32 in Highmore. Some low temperatures on the 7th include 24 degrees in Castlewood, 25 in Watertown, and 30 in Milbank.

June 6th, 1999: Heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches caused flash flooding on a creek feeding into the Grand River. At a ranch southwest of Bullhead, a bunkhouse wall was moved off the foundation by a wall of water coming down the creek. A machine shop was washed away with several equipment and many tools. Some tools and equipment were found more than a mile down the creek. A pump house and a grain bin were also destroyed. A pickup was washed down the stream, and a propane tank near home was rolled over. A colt was picked up by the water but managed to escape. The powerful water flow took out several dead trees and washed them downstream. Finally, the flash flood washed out a road and a culvert.

1816 - The temperature reached 92 degrees at Salem MA during an early heat wave, but then plunged 49 degrees in 24 hours to commence the famous year without a summer . (David Ludlum)

1894 - One of the greatest floods in U.S. history occurred as the Willamette River overflowed to inundate half of the business district of Portland OR. (David Ludlum)

1975 - A tornado, reportedly spinning backwards (spinning clockwise), was sighted near Alva, OK. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - Severe thunderstorms with large hail and winds to 100 mph caused one million dollars damage around Norfolk, VA. A forty-two foot fishing boat capsized near the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel drowning 13 of the 27 persons on board. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in southern California produced one inch hail at Mount Pinos, and marble size hail at Palmdale. Thunderstorms in southeastern Arizona produced heavy rain leaving some washes under four feet of water. Six cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the upper 90s. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Seventeen cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 104 degrees. Thunderstorms in Florida produced wind gusts to 65 mph which damaged two mobile homes northwest of Melbourne injuring six people. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing during the late morning hours produced severe weather through the afternoon and night. Thunderstorms spawned 13 tornadoes, and there were 154 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A strong (F-3) tornado injured six persons at Lorenzo, TX, and thunderstorm winds gusting to 100 mph killed one person at Glasscock City, TX. Softball size hail was reported at Lipscomb and Glen Cove TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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It is fascinating to walk through any community or mall—or even down a city street—and notice the vast number of football jerseys that people of all ages and sexes wear.

The names and numbers of their “heroes” vary as much as the sizes and shapes of the persons wearing the jersey.

And, the dollar amount of this way of “identifying” with an athlete is growing. In 2015, four years ago, the total amount of money spent on sports clothing was more than six billion dollars.

Sadly, many of those names and numbers represent felons, drug addicts, wife or child abusers, murderers, and violent criminals.

Yet, their names and numbers are held in high esteem—even worshiped—because of their accomplishments in their area of sports.

Walk through a mall or down any street and count the number of individuals wearing a T-shirt that has the name of Jesus or Paul or Stephen or Jeremiah written across the front or back.

Only now and then will a T-shirt appear with some reference to something Christian on it. Sadly, too, its message is usually unclear or confusing to the non-believer.

Solomon talked about “heroes” who “walked” Godly lives: “Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to a godly life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.”

What a timely, challenging verse to identify the criteria for a hero.

People look for, want, and even need heroes.

Where can we find “heroes for Christ?” Hopefully, in His disciples. “By their fruits you will be able to identify them.”

Prayer: Lord, we can’t hide who we are or what we believe or our values. May our lives represent You well. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Today’s Scripture: “Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to a godly life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.” Proverbs 10:17

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.03.25

16 24 29 36 45 13

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$223,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 35 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.04.25

1 6 26 41 51 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$37,400,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 50 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.05.25

1 14 19 28 41 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 5 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.04.25

4 12 16 22 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$21,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 5 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.04.25

13 33 35 36 56 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 34 Mins 57 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.04.25

5 17 23 35 45 24

Power Play: 10x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$44,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 34 Mins 58 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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Upcoming Groton Events

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

News from the **AP** Associated Press

World shares are mixed ahead of Friday's US jobs report

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — World shares were mixed Friday ahead of an update on the U.S. job market that will offer insights into how the economy is faring.

The future for the S&P 500 gained 0.4% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.5%.

Germany's DAX lost 0.3% to 24,258.74, while the CAC 40 in Paris edged 0.1% lower, to 7,785.19. Britain's FTSE 100 edged 0.2% higher to 8,825.82.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index rose 0.5% to 37,741.61, while the Kospi in South Korea jumped 1.5% to 2,812.05.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.2% to 23,859.52 and the Shanghai Composite index edged less than 0.1% higher, to 3,385.36.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.3% to 8,515.70.

India's Sensex gained 0.8% after the Reserve Bank cut its key interest rate by a half a percentage point to 5.50%.

On Thursday, the S&P 500 fell 0.5% for its first drop in four days. After sprinting through May and rallying within a couple good days' worth of gains of its all-time high, the index at the center of many 401(k) accounts has lost momentum.

The Dow dropped 0.3%, and the Nasdaq composite sank 0.8%.

The U.S. Labor Department is due to report how many more jobs U.S. employers created than destroyed during May. The expectation on Wall Street is for a slowdown in hiring from April.

A resilient job market has been one of the linchpins that's propped up the U.S. economy, and the worry is that all the uncertainty created by President Donald Trump's on-and-off tariffs could push businesses to freeze their hiring.

A report on Thursday said more U.S. workers applied for unemployment benefits last week than economists expected. The number remains relatively low compared with history, but it still hit its highest level in eight months.

The data came as Procter & Gamble, the giant behind such brands as Pampers diapers and Cascade dish detergent, said it will cut up to 7,000 jobs over the next two years. Its stock fell 1.9%.

The day's heaviest weight on the market was Tesla, which tumbled 14.3%. It's lost nearly 30% of its value so far this year as CEO Elon Musk's relationship with Trump sours amid a disagreement over the president's signature bill of tax cuts and spending. In after-hours trading Tesla gained 0.8%.

Hopes that Trump will lower his tariffs after reaching trade deals with other countries have been among the main reasons the S&P 500 has rallied back so furiously since dropping roughly 20% from its record two months ago. It's now back within 3.3% of its all-time high.

Trump boosted such hopes Thursday after saying he had "a very good phone call" with China's leader, Xi Jinping, about trade and that "their respective teams will be meeting shortly at a location to be determined."

China's assessment of the call, as reported in state media, was less enthusiastic.

Still, it's an easing of tensions after the world's two largest economies had earlier accused each other of violating the agreement that had paused their stiff tariffs against each other, which threatened to drag the economy into a recession.

Markets took the latest signs of detente with Beijing coolly, given that nothing is assured in Trump's on-and-off rollout of tariffs.

Among Wall Street's winners was MongoDB, which jumped 12.8% after the database company likewise delivered a stronger profit than analysts expected.

Circle Internet Group, the U.S.-based issuer of one of the most popular cryptocurrencies, surged 168.5% in its first day of trading on the New York Stock Exchange.

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The yield on the 10-year Treasury held steady at 4.38%, up from 4.37% late Wednesday after tumbling from 4.46% the day before.

Yields dropped so sharply on Wednesday as expectations built that the Federal Reserve will need to cut interest rates later this year to prop up an economy potentially weakened by tariffs.

In other dealings early Friday, U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 34 cents to \$63.03 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, fell 28 cents to \$65.06 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar rose to 143.90 Japanese yen from 143.49 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1424 from \$1.1448.

A Russian missile and drone attack across Ukraine kills 4 in the capital Kyiv

By HANNA ARHIROVA and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A nighttime missile and drone attack on Ukraine killed at least four people and injured 20 others in Kyiv, city mayor Vitali Klitschko said Friday, as Russia targeted at least six regions across the country with 407 drones and 44 missiles in one of its largest coordinated attacks of the three-year war.

Ukrainian air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said the barrage included ballistic and cruise missiles, as well as a mix of strike drones and decoys. Ukrainian forces said they shot down about 30 of the cruise missiles and up to 200 of the drones.

Ukrainian cities have come under regular bombardment since Russia invaded its neighbor in February 2022. The attacks have killed more than 12,000 civilians, according to the United Nations.

The war has continued unabated even as a U.S.-led diplomatic push for a settlement has brought two rounds of direct peace talks between delegations from Russia and Ukraine. The negotiations delivered no significant breakthroughs, however, and the sides remain far apart on their terms for an end to the fighting.

Ukraine has offered an unconditional 30-day ceasefire and a meeting between President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian leader Vladimir Putin to break the deadlock. But the Kremlin has effectively rejected a truce and hasn't budged from its demands.

Putin said in a phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump earlier this week that he would respond to Ukraine's daring long-range attack on Russian air bases on Sunday.

The nighttime attack came hours after Trump said it might be better to let Ukraine and Russia "fight for a while" before pulling them apart and pursuing peace, in comments that were a remarkable detour from Trump's often-stated appeals to stop the war.

Russia also reports drone attacks

In Russia, air defenses shot down 10 Ukrainian drones heading toward the capital early Friday, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin said. Flights at Moscow airports were temporarily suspended during the night as a precaution.

Ukrainian drones also targeted three other regions of Russia, authorities said, damaging apartment buildings and industrial plants. Three people were injured, officials said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that air defenses downed 174 Ukrainian drones over 13 regions early Friday. It added that three Ukrainian Neptune missiles were also shot down over the Black Sea.

Also, a locomotive derailed early Friday in the Belgorod region after the track was blown up, Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Russia has recently accused Ukraine of sabotaging the rail network.

Ukrainian air defenses are strained

In Kyiv, multiple explosions were heard for hours in the capital, Kyiv, where falling debris sparked fires across several districts as air defense systems attempted to intercept incoming targets, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of the Kyiv City Administration.

"Our air defense crews are doing everything possible. But we must protect one another — stay safe," Tkachenko wrote on Telegram, urging people to seek shelter.

Fourteen-year-old Kyiv resident Vitalina Vasylenko sheltered in a parking garage with her 6-year-old sister and their mother after an explosion blew one of their windows off its hinges.

"I heard a buzzing sound, then my dad ran to me and covered me with his hand, then there was a very

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loud explosion," she said. "My whole life flashed before my eyes, I already thought that was it. I started having a panic attack ... I'm shocked that I'm alive."

Ukraine's human rights chief, Dmytro Lubinets, called for a strong international response to Russia's latest overnight attack, saying the assault violated basic human rights. "Russia is acting like a terrorist, systematically targeting civilian infrastructure," Lubinets wrote on Telegram. "The world must respond clearly and take concrete steps, including condemning the aggressor's actions."

3 emergency responders are killed in Kyiv attack

Authorities reported damage in several districts in Kyiv, and rescue workers responded at multiple locations.

Ukraine's Interior Ministry said three emergency workers were killed in Kyiv while responding to the aftermath of Russian strikes. "They were working under fire to help people," the ministry said in a statement.

In Solomyanskyi district, a fire broke out on the 11th floor of a 16-story residential building. Emergency services evacuated three people from the apartment. Another fire broke out in a metal warehouse.

Tkachenko said the metro tracks between two stations in Kyiv were damaged in the attack, but no fire or injuries occurred.

More than 2,000 households in Kyiv's eastern bank remained without electricity Friday following the overnight Russian attack, the Kyiv City Administration said.

The number of people injured in a Russian attack on the western city of Ternopil early Friday rose to 10, including five emergency workers, regional governor Viacheslav Nehoda said. The strike damaged industrial and infrastructure facilities, left parts of the city without electricity, and disrupted water supplies.

Three people were injured in Ukraine's central Poltava region following a Russian attack there that damaged administrative buildings, warehouses and a cafe, regional head Volodymyr Kohut said. Fires caused by the strike have been extinguished, and debris also fell on a private home.

Russian forces also struck the Khmelnytskyi region overnight, damaging a private residential building, outbuildings, a fence, and several vehicles, regional governor Serhii Tiurn said.

Meanwhile, air defense forces shot down three Russian missiles over the western Lviv region overnight, the regional head Maksym Kozytskyi said.

In northern Chernihiv region, a Shahed drone exploded near an apartment building, shattering windows and doors, according to regional military administration chief Dmytro Bryzhynskyi. He added that explosions from ballistic missiles were recorded on the outskirts of the city.

North Korea says it has raised a capsized destroyer upright as it continues repair

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday it had righted a capsized destroyer and moored it at a pier in the northeastern port of Chongjin as it continues to repair the new warship leader Kim Jong Un has described as a significant asset for his nuclear-armed military.

The report by North Korean state media aligned with South Korean military assessments and recent commercial satellite images.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said experts will closely examine the ship's hull before beginning the next phase of restoration, which will take place at a dry dock at the neighboring port of Rajin and is expected to last seven to 10 days.

Satellite images taken Thursday by Planet Labs PBC analyzed by The Associated Press showed the stricken destroyer upright and floating. It wasn't immediately clear from the image just how much damage had been done to the vessel, which had been in the water for days after the failed launch. However, the ship did not appear to be noticeably listing, meaning Pyongyang is likely able to send it onward to the other port to inspect the vessel's electronics.

Jo Chun Ryong, a senior official from the ruling Workers' Party, told the agency that the "perfect restoration of the destroyer will be completed without fail" before a major party congress in late June, a deadline

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set by Kim.

Outside experts say it remains unclear how severely the 5,000-ton-class destroyer was damaged during a botched launching ceremony in late May, which triggered a furious response from Kim, who called the failure a "criminal act caused by absolute carelessness, irresponsibility, and unscientific empiricism."

North Korean law enforcement authorities have detained at least four officials over the incident, including the vice director of the Workers' Party's munitions industry department, according to state media. The North's main military committee said those responsible would be held accountable for their "unpardonable criminal act."

Lee Sung Joon, spokesperson for South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Thursday that the South's military assesses that the North Koreans righted the ship earlier this week and are likely conducting drainage operations while examining the damage.

"The nature and duration of the repair process will vary, depending on internal repairs, additional work or whether the incident affected the keel," Lee said, referring to the ship's structural backbone. "This could also affect how the ship is used going forward."

The damaged warship was North Korea's second known destroyer and seen as a crucial asset toward Kim's goal of modernizing its naval forces. It was in the same class as the country's first destroyer unveiled in April, which experts assessed as the North's largest and most advanced warship to date. Kim lavishly praised that ship, which was launched in the western port of Nampo, saying it advances his goal of expanding the military's operations range and nuclear strike capabilities.

State media described that ship as designed to handle various weapons systems, including anti-air and anti-ship weapons as well as nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles. Kim also supervised test-firings of missiles from the destroyer afterward, and state media said the ship was expected to enter active duty early next year.

While North Korea's naval forces are widely seen as far inferior to those of its rivals, analysts say a destroyer equipped with modern missile and radar systems could still boost the North's offensive and defensive capabilities.

South Korean officials and experts say the North's destroyer was likely built with Russian assistance as the two countries' military cooperation have intensified amid Russian President Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine. Kim's government has supplied Russia with thousands of troops and large shipments of military equipment, including artillery and ballistic missiles, to support its warfighting. Washington and Seoul have expressed concern that, in return, Kim may seek Russian technology transfers that could enhance the threat posed by his nuclear-armed military.

Kim met with Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu in Pyongyang on Wednesday in the latest sign of the countries' deepening ties.

Kim has framed his arms buildup as a response to perceived threats from the United States and South Korea, which have been expanded joint military exercises in reaction to the North's advancing nuclear program. Kim says the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine would be his next big step in strengthening the North Korean navy.

NBA Finals: Haliburton caps huge rally with winning jumper as Pacers stun Thunder 111-110 in Game 1

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Tyrese Haliburton and the never-say-die Indiana Pacers pulled off yet another last-second comeback, this time on the NBA's biggest stage.

Haliburton's 21-foot jumper with 0.3 seconds left gave Indiana its first and only lead of the game, and the Pacers stunned the Oklahoma City Thunder 111-110 on Thursday night in Game 1 of the NBA Finals after a comeback for the ages.

"Man, basketball's fun," Haliburton said. "Winning is fun."

Especially like this.

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The Pacers turned the ball over 25 times, trailed by 15 points in the fourth quarter against a team with the best home record in the NBA and had no answers for Shai Gilgeous-Alexander — the NBA MVP who led all scorers with 38 points.

But they had the league's new Mr. Big Shot, who has now had one of these moments in every series the Pacers have played in these playoffs.

— April 29, Indiana trailed Milwaukee 118-111 with 34.6 seconds left in overtime. Haliburton scored with 1.4 seconds remaining and the Pacers won 119-118.

— May 6, Indiana trailed Cleveland 119-112 with 48 seconds left and won 120-119. Haliburton got the game-winner with 1.1 seconds to play.

— May 21, Indiana trailed New York 121-112 with 51.1 seconds left in regulation. Haliburton sent it to overtime on a jumper with no time on the clock; Indiana won 138-135.

Now, this.

"We've had lots of experience in these kinds of games," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said.

The Pacers were down by 15 with 9:42 left, their rally the biggest in the fourth quarter of a finals game since Dallas also came from 15 down to beat Miami on June 2, 2011.

Carlisle coached those Mavericks. And, well, here he is again.

"That's a really good team," Oklahoma City coach Mark Daigneault said. "Credit them for not only tonight but their run. They've had so many games like that that have seemed improbable. And they just play with a great spirit and they keep coming. They keep playing."

Pascal Siakam led the Pacers with 19 points. Obi Toppin scored 17, Myles Turner had 15, and Haliburton and Andrew Nembhard each had 14.

Jalen Williams had 17 and Lu Dort scored 15 for Oklahoma City, which was 36-1 at home with 15-point leads this season.

Game 2 is at Oklahoma City on Sunday night.

Oklahoma City led by 15 early in the fourth when Carlisle called time and subbed out all five players, seeking a spark. It worked. The Pacers outscored the Thunder 15-4 over the next 3:26 — getting within 98-94 on a 3 by Turner with 6:16 left.

They weren't done. And in the final second, they found a way. Again.

"We had control of the game for the most part," Gilgeous-Alexander said. "Now, it's a 48-minute game. And they teach you that lesson more than anyone else in the league — the hard way."

Aaron Rodgers ends months-long dance with Steelers by agreeing to a 1-year deal

By WILL GRAVES AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Aaron Rodgers and Mike Tomlin are taking their long-simmering bromance to the next level.

The four-time NFL MVP ended months of "Will he? Or won't he?" speculation by agreeing to a one-year deal with the Pittsburgh Steelers, pending the 41-year-old passing a physical. Financial terms of the deal were not announced.

The Steelers and Rodgers had been circling each other for months. Rodgers even visited the team's facility in late March, driving in undercover in a nondescript sedan wearing a hat and sunglasses.

While there were plenty of nice words from both sides in the aftermath, Rodgers didn't rush to put pen to paper, telling "The Pat McAfee Show" in April that his attention was focused on helping people in his inner circle who were "battling some difficult stuff" and that he didn't want to decide until he knew he could fully commit.

With mandatory minicamp coming next week, Rodgers apparently finds himself in a place where he can give the Steelers his full attention.

Rodgers joins a team that has been stuck in a transitional period at quarterback since Ben Roethlisberger

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retired after the 2021 season. Either Rodgers or Mason Rudolph — who returned to Pittsburgh on a two-year deal in March — will likely be Pittsburgh's fifth Week 1 quarterback in five seasons.

The Steelers have stayed competitive, up to a point anyway, amid the constant churn at the most important position on the field. Pittsburgh has reached the playoffs four times in the last five seasons, only to be quickly escorted out of the postseason in lopsided fashion each time.

Justin Fields and Russell Wilson — who combined to lead the Steelers to a 10-7 record and a playoff berth last season — ended up in New York. Fields will replace Rodgers with the Jets after agreeing to a two-year deal. Wilson is heading to the Giants on a one-year contract.

Those deals left Rodgers and the Steelers without any other reasonable options. Both sides have their reasons for consummating what is essentially a marriage of convenience.

Rodgers hopes to author a happier ending to his Hall of Fame career after two eventful, if underwhelming, seasons with the Jets. While Rodgers is hardly a long-term solution in Pittsburgh, he is the best option left after the Steelers chose not to use one of their higher picks in April's draft on a quarterback, instead taking a late-round flyer on former Ohio State star Will Howard.

The union brings Rodgers and Tomlin — the longest-tenured head coach in major professional North American sports — together after years of what is the football equivalent of flirting.

They've long held each other in high esteem and have enjoyed a handful of memorable on-field interactions that went viral. Last fall, they playfully nodded at each other as a sign of respect after Tomlin was forced to burn a timeout when Rodgers tried a quick snap that would have ended with the Steelers being penalized for having too many men on the field.

Pittsburgh is hoping Rodgers has enough left physically to go with a football IQ that remains elite. He was solid if not spectacular last season in New York, throwing for 28 touchdowns against 11 interceptions.

Yet his play on the field often took a back seat to the drama off it as the Jets cycled through coaches and limped to a 5-12 record, with Rodgers spending much of his time in New York defending comments he made on platforms like "The Pat McAfee Show."

The Steelers are no strangers to drama. If there's been one constant since the team's last Super Bowl appearance — a loss to Rodgers and the Green Bay Packers in February 2011 — it's the ability to employ talented, if mercurial players.

The list runs the gamut, from Roethlisberger to Antonio Brown to Le'Veon Bell to JuJu Smith-Schuster to George Pickens, traded to Dallas last month.

Pittsburgh has retooled a bit in the offseason, including acquiring two-time Pro Bowl wide receiver DK Metcalf from Seattle. The Steelers quickly signed him to a new five-year deal to bring some stability (and hopefully maturity) to a wide receiver room that's lacked both.

The one thing Pittsburgh hadn't done was do the same at the most important position on the field. Tomlin and team president Art Rooney II both kept the door open for Fields and Wilson to return, only to stand by idly when Fields bolted for the Jets and make no serious attempt to retain Wilson.

While the Steelers did bring back Rudolph, a season removed from leading them on an improbable run to the playoffs, he is considered a backup.

The field of experienced players available eventually winnowed down to Rodgers.

His arrival is a stopgap, one that Pittsburgh hopes will keep it competitive until a long-term solution arrives, most likely in the 2026 draft. Until then, Rodgers and the Steelers will try to make the best of a marriage of convenience of their own making.

Harvard files legal challenge over Trump's ban on foreign students.

Overseas, admitted students wait

By ANNIE MA, AMANUEL BIRHANE and FU TING Associated Press

Winning admission to Harvard University fulfilled a longtime goal for Yonas Nuguse, a student in Ethiopia who endured a war in the country's Tigray region, internet and phone shutdowns, and the COVID-19 pandemic — all of which made it impossible to finish high school on time.

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Now, it's unclear if he will make it this fall to the Ivy League campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He and other admitted students around the world are anxiously tracking the school's feud with the Trump administration, which is seeking to keep it from enrolling international students.

On Thursday, Harvard challenged President Donald Trump's latest move to bar foreign students from entering the U.S. to attend the college, calling it illegal retaliation for Harvard's rejection of White House demands. In an amended lawsuit filed Thursday, Harvard said the president was attempting an end-run around a previous court order.

A few hours later, U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs issued a temporary restraining order against Trump's Wednesday proclamation, saying Harvard had demonstrated "it will sustain immediate and irreparable injury before there is an opportunity to hear from all parties."

Last month, a federal judge blocked the Department of Homeland Security from revoking Harvard's certification to host foreign students.

Admission to Harvard, then months of uncertainty

Increasingly, the nation's oldest and best-known university has attracted some of the brightest minds from around the world, with international students accounting for one-quarter of its enrollment. As Harvard's fight with the administration plays out, foreign students can only wait to find out if they'll be able to attend the school at all. Some are weighing other options.

For Nuguse, 21, the war in Ethiopia forced schools to close in many parts of the province. After schooling resumed, he then took a gap year to study and save money to pay for his TOEFL English proficiency test in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

"The war affected me a great deal and when I found out the news that I was accepted to Harvard, I was ecstatic. I knew it was a proud moment for my family, teachers, mentors and friends, who were instrumental in my achievement," he said.

The following months have been filled with uncertainty. On Wednesday, Trump signed a directive seeking to block U.S. entry for Harvard's international students, which would block thousands who are scheduled to come to the campus in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for summer and fall terms.

Harvard's court challenge a day later attacked Trump's legal justification for the action — a federal law allowing him to block a "class of aliens" deemed detrimental to the nation's interests. Targeting only those who are coming to the U.S. to study at Harvard doesn't qualify as a "class of aliens," Harvard said in its filing.

"The President's actions thus are not undertaken to protect the 'interests of the United States,' but instead to pursue a government vendetta against Harvard," the university wrote.

In the meantime, Harvard is making contingency plans so students and visiting scholars can continue their work at the university, President Alan Garber said in a message to the campus and alumni.

"Each of us is part of a truly global university community," Garber said Thursday. "We know that the benefits of bringing talented people together from around the world are unique and irreplaceable."

Crackdown on international students affects interest in the US

The standoff with Harvard comes as the administration has been tightening scrutiny of student visas nationwide. Thousands of students around the country abruptly lost permission to be in the U.S. this spring before the administration reversed itself, and Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced last week the U.S. would "aggressively revoke" visas for students from China.

While many admitted students say they're waiting to find out if they can come to the U.S., prospective students still in high school are starting to look elsewhere, said Mike Henniger, CEO of Illume Student Advisory Services.

"It is one blow after another," said Henniger, who works with colleges in the U.S., Canada and Europe to recruit international students. "At this point, international student interest in the U.S. has basically dropped to nil."

The future of Harvard's roughly 7,000 international students has been hanging in the balance since the Department of Homeland Security first moved to block its foreign enrollment on May 22.

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For many, the twists and turns have been exhausting. Jing, a 23-year-old master's student, is currently completing an internship in China this summer, and unsure if he can reenter the U.S. for the fall semester.

"It is tiring, we all feel numb now. Trump just makes big news headlines once every few days since he got back to the White House," said Jing, who agreed to speak under his family name out of concern about retaliation from the Trump administration.

Jing said he is going to watch and see what happens for now, in case the move against international students is a negotiating tactic that does not stick.

The possibility that Trump could block foreign enrollment at other colleges only raises the uncertainty for students planning to pursue their education overseas, said Craig Riggs, who has been working in international education for about 30 years and is the editor of ICEF Monitor. He said he urges families to consult carefully with advisers and not to overreact to the day's headlines.

"The rules under which students would make this huge decision to devote years of their lives and quite a bit of money to studying at Harvard have been shown to change quite quickly," Riggs said.

An aspiring economist, Nuguse was the only student accepted to Harvard this year from Kalamino Special High School, which caters to gifted students from underprivileged backgrounds from across Tigray.

After receiving acceptances also to Columbia University and Amherst College, Nuguse chose Harvard, which he had long dreamed of attending. He said he hopes it will work out to attend Harvard.

Nuguse was granted a visa to study at Harvard, and he worries it might be too late to reverse his decision and attend another university anyway. He received an email from Harvard last week, telling him to proceed with his registration and highlighting a judge's order in Harvard's favor in the dispute over foreign enrollment.

"I hope the situation is temporary and I can enroll on time to go on and realize my dream far from reality in Ethiopia," he said.

Private lunar lander from Japan crashes into moon in failed mission

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

A private lunar lander from Japan crashed while attempting a touchdown Friday, the latest casualty in the commercial rush to the moon.

The Tokyo-based company ispace declared the mission a failure several hours after communication was lost with the lander. Flight controllers scrambled to gain contact, but were met with only silence and said they were concluding the mission.

Communications ceased less than two minutes before the spacecraft's scheduled landing on the moon with a mini rover. Until then, the descent from lunar orbit seemed to be going well.

CEO and founder Takeshi Hakamada apologized to everyone who contributed to the mission, the second lunar strikeout for ispace.

Two years ago, the company's first moonshot ended in a crash landing, giving rise to the name "Resilience" for its successor lander. Resilience carried a rover with a shovel to gather lunar dirt as well as a Swedish artist's toy-size red house for placement on the moon's dusty surface.

Company officials said it was too soon to know whether the same problem doomed both missions.

"This is the second time that we were not able to land. So we really have to take it very seriously," Hakamada told reporters. He stressed that the company would press ahead with more lunar missions.

A preliminary analysis indicates the laser system for measuring the altitude did not work as planned, and the lander descended too fast, officials said. "Based on these circumstances, it is currently assumed that the lander likely performed a hard landing on the lunar surface," the company said in a written statement.

Long the province of governments, the moon became a target of private outfits in 2019, with more flops than wins along the way.

Launched in January from Florida on a long, roundabout journey, Resilience entered lunar orbit last month. It shared a SpaceX ride with Firefly Aerospace's Blue Ghost, which reached the moon faster and

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became the first private entity to successfully land there in March.

Another U.S. company, Intuitive Machines, arrived at the moon a few days after Firefly. But the tall, spindly lander face-planted in a crater near the moon's south pole and was declared dead within hours.

Resilience was targeting the top of the moon, a less treacherous place than the shadowy bottom. The ispace team chose a flat area with few boulders in Mare Frigoris or Sea of Cold, a long and narrow region full of craters and ancient lava flows that stretches across the near side's northern tier.

Plans had called for the 7.5-foot (2.3-meter) Resilience to beam back pictures within hours and for the lander to lower the piggybacking rover onto the lunar surface this weekend.

Made of carbon fiber-reinforced plastic with four wheels, ispace's European-built rover — named Tenaacious — sported a high-definition camera to scout out the area and a shovel to scoop up some lunar dirt for NASA.

The rover, weighing just 11 pounds (5 kilograms), was going to stick close to the lander, going in circles at a speed of less than one inch (a couple centimeters) per second. It was capable of venturing up to two-thirds of a mile (1 kilometer) from the lander and should be operational throughout the two-week mission, the period of daylight.

Besides science and tech experiments, there was an artistic touch.

The rover held a tiny, Swedish-style red cottage with white trim and a green door, dubbed the Moon-house by creator Mikael Genberg, for placement on the lunar surface.

Minutes before the attempted landing, Hakamada assured everyone that ispace had learned from its first failed mission. "Engineers did everything they possibly could" to ensure success this time, he said.

He considered the latest moonshot "merely a steppingstone" to its bigger lander launching by 2027 with NASA involvement.

Ispace, like other businesses, does not have "infinite funds" and cannot afford repeated failures, Jeremy Fix, chief engineer for ispace's U.S. subsidiary, said at a conference last month.

While not divulging the cost of the current mission, company officials said it's less than the first one which exceeded \$100 million.

Two other U.S. companies are aiming for moon landings by year's end: Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin and Astrobotic Technology. Astrobotic's first lunar lander missed the moon altogether in 2024 and came crashing back through Earth's atmosphere.

For decades, governments competed to get to the moon. Only five countries have pulled off successful robotic lunar landings: Russia, the U.S., China, India and Japan. Of those, only the U.S. has landed people on the moon: 12 NASA astronauts from 1969 through 1972.

NASA expects to send four astronauts around the moon next year. That would be followed a year or more later by the first lunar landing by a crew in more than a half-century, with SpaceX's Starship providing the lift from lunar orbit all the way down to the surface. China also has moon landing plans for its own astronauts by 2030.

Man accused of yelling 'Free Palestine' and firebombing demonstrators charged with attempted murder

By COLLEEN SLEVIN and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — A man accused of yelling "Free Palestine" and throwing Molotov cocktails at demonstrators calling for the release of Israeli hostages in Gaza was charged with 118 counts including attempted murder in a Colorado court Thursday.

Mohamed Sabry Soliman, 45, who has been jailed since his arrest following Sunday's attack, was advised of the charges during a hearing in Boulder, where he appeared in person. Investigators say Soliman, who posed as a gardener, planned it for a year.

The 118 counts include attempt to commit murder, assault in the first and third degrees, use of explosive or incendiary devices and animal cruelty. He has also been charged with a hate crime in federal court and

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is jailed on a \$10 million cash bond.

Soliman's attorney, Kathryn Herold, waived a formal reading of the charges Thursday. A preliminary hearing has been set for July 15 to determine whether the state has enough evidence to move forward.

"The charges reflect the evidence that we have regarding this horrific attack that took place and the seriousness of it," Michael Dougherty, the Boulder County district attorney, said at a news conference after the hearing.

The attempted murder charges alone could result in Soliman being sentenced to as many as 672 years if convicted, Dougherty said.

Authorities have said 15 people and a dog were victims of the attack. Not all were physically injured, and some are considered victims for the legal case because they were in the area and could potentially have been hurt. The dog was among the injured, Dougherty said.

Soliman is accused of trying to kill 14 people and faces two attempted murder charges for each.

Soliman had intended to kill all of the roughly 20 participants the weekly demonstration at the popular Pearl Street pedestrian mall, but he threw just two of his 18 Molotov cocktails while yelling "Free Palestine," police said.

Soliman did not carry out his full plan "because he got scared and had never hurt anyone before," police wrote in an affidavit.

Officers responded and took Soliman into custody about five minutes after the 911 call, Police Chief Stephen Redfearn said at the news conference.

According to an FBI affidavit, Soliman told police he was driven by a desire "to kill all Zionist people" — a reference to the movement to establish and protect a Jewish state in Israel. Authorities said he expressed no remorse.

Boulder County officials said in a statement that the victims included eight women and seven men ranging in age from 25 to 88.

The attack unsettled the community just a week before the Boulder Jewish Festival. Redfearn said there will be enhanced security for that event, including SWAT teams, drones and likely plainclothes officers.

Defendant's family investigated

Soliman told authorities he acted alone and did not inform his wife and five children, who have not been charged in the attack but were taken into custody Tuesday by immigration officials. The following day a judge granted a request to block their deportation.

Attorneys for the family had sued over their detention, writing in their complaint that "It is patently unlawful to punish individuals for the crimes of their relatives."

Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin called the plaintiff's claims "absurd" and "an attempt to delay justice." She said the entire family was living in the U.S. illegally.

When asked whether Soliman's family was under investigation, Dougherty, the district attorney, did not give a clear answer and said the investigation was ongoing.

Soliman's wife, Hayam El Gamal, a 17-year-old daughter, two minor sons and two minor daughters were being held at an immigration detention center in Texas, said Eric Lee, an attorney representing the family. El Gamal said she was "shocked" to learn of his arrest, according to the lawsuit.

The family's immigration status

Before moving to Colorado Springs three years ago, Soliman spent 17 years in Kuwait, according to court documents.

He arrived in the U.S. in August 2022 on a tourist visa that expired in February 2023, McLaughlin said in a post on the social platform X. She said he filed for asylum in September 2022 and was granted a work authorization in March 2023, but that has also expired.

Hundreds of thousands of people overstay their visas each year in the United States, according to Department of Homeland Security reports.

Soliman's wife is an Egyptian national, according to her lawsuit. She is a network engineer and has a pending EB-2 visa, which is available to professionals with advanced degrees, the suit said. She and her children all are listed as dependents on Soliman's asylum application.

A vigil for the victims

Hundreds of people squeezed into the Jewish Community Center in Boulder for a vigil Wednesday evening that featured prayer, singing and emotional testimony from a victim and witnesses of the the attack.

Rachelle Halpern, who was part of the demonstration Sunday, recalled thinking it was strange to see a man with a canister looking like he was going to spray pesticide on the grass. Then she heard a crash and screams and saw flames around her feet.

"A woman stood one foot behind me, engulfed in flames from head to toe, lying on the ground with her husband," Halpern said. "People immediately, three or four men immediately rushed to her to smother the flames."

Her description prompted murmurs from the audience. One woman's head dropped into her hands.

"I heard a loud noise, and the back of my legs burning, and don't remember those next few moments," one victim, who did not want to be identified and spoke off camera, said over the event's speakers. "Even as I was watching it unfold before my eyes, even then, it didn't seem real."

Netanyahu says Israel has 'activated' some Palestinian clans opposed to Hamas

By JULIA FRANKEL, SAMY MAGDY and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel has "activated" some clans of Palestinians in Gaza that are opposed to Hamas, though it was not immediately clear what role they would play.

His comments on social media were the first public acknowledgment of Israel's backing of armed Palestinian groups within Gaza, based around powerful clans or extended families.

Such clans often wield some control in corners of Gaza, and some have had clashes or tensions with Hamas in the past. Palestinians and aid workers have accused clans of carrying out criminal attacks and stealing aid from trucks. Several clans have issued public statements rejecting cooperation with the Israelis or denouncing looting.

An Israeli official said that one group that Netanyahu was referring to was the so-called Popular Forces, led by Yasser Abu Shabab, a local clan leader in Gaza's southernmost city, Rafah. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

In recent weeks, the Abu Shabab group announced online that its fighters were helping protect shipments to the new, Israeli-backed food distribution centers run by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation in the Rafah area. But some Palestinians say the group has also been involved in attacking and looting aid convoys.

Netanyahu did not specify what support Israel was giving to the clans, or what specifically their role would be. His announcement came hours after a political opponent criticized him for arming unofficial groups of Palestinians in Gaza.

In a video posted to his X account, Netanyahu said the government made the move on the advice of "security officials," in order to save lives of Israeli soldiers.

Though it was known in southern Gaza throughout the war, the Abu Shabab group emerged publicly the past month, posting pictures of its armed members, with helmets, flak jackets and automatic weapons. It declared itself a "nationalist force" protecting aid.

The Abu Shabab family renounced Yasser over his connections with the Israeli military in a recent statement, saying he and anyone who joined his group "are no longer linked" to the family.

The group's media office said in response to emailed questions from the Associated Press that it operates in Israeli military-controlled areas for a "purely humanitarian" reason.

It described its ties with the Israel military as "humanitarian communication to facilitate the introduction of aid and ensure that it is not intercepted."

"We are not proxies for anyone," it said. "We have not received any military or logistical support from any foreign party."

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It said it has "secured the surroundings" of GHF centers in Rafah but was not involved in distribution of food.

It rejected accusations that the group had looted aid, calling them "exaggerations" and part of a "smear campaign." But it also said, "our popular forces led by Yasser Abu Shabab only took the minimum amount of food and water necessary to secure their elements in the field," without elaborating how, and from whom, they took the aid.

Abu Shabab and around 100 fighters have been active in eastern parts of Rafah and Khan Younis, areas under Israeli military control, according to Nahed Sheheiber, head of the private transportation union in Gaza that provides trucks and drivers for aid groups. He said they used to attack aid trucks driving on a military-designated route leading from the Kerem Shalom crossing with Israel, the main entry point for aid.

"Our trucks were attacked many times by the Abu Shabab gang and the occupation forces stood idle. They did nothing," Sheheiber said, referring to the Israeli military,

"The one who has looted aid is now the one who protects aid," he said sarcastically.

An aid worker in Gaza said humanitarian groups tried last year to negotiate with Abu Shabab and other influential families to end their looting of convoys. Though they agreed, they soon reverted to hijacking trucks, the aid worker said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

The aid worker said he saw Abu Shabab's men operating in Israeli-controlled areas near the military-held Morag Corridor in southern Gaza in late May. They were wearing new uniforms and carried what appeared to be new weapons, he said.

Jonathan Whittall, head of the U.N. humanitarian office OCHA for the occupied Palestinian territory, said Thursday that "criminal gangs operating under the watch of Israeli forces near Kerem Shalom would systematically attack and loot aid convoys. These gangs have by far been the biggest cause of aid loss in Gaza."

The war between Israel and Hamas erupted on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-linked militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage.

Israel responded with an offensive that has decimated Gaza, displaced nearly all of its 2.3 million people and caused a humanitarian crisis that has left the territory on the brink of famine.

Gaza's Health Ministry says over 54,000 Palestinians have been killed, more than half of them women and children. The ministry, which is led by medical professionals but reports to the Hamas-run government, does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally.

Hamas is still holding 56 hostages. Around a third are believed to be alive, though many fear they are in grave danger the longer the war goes on.

A Massachusetts student arrested by ICE on his way to volleyball practice has been released

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

CHELMSFORD, Mass. (AP) — A Massachusetts high school student who was arrested by immigration agents on his way to volleyball practice has been released from custody after a judge granted him bond Thursday.

Marcelo Gomes da Silva, 18, who came to the U.S. from Brazil at age 7, was detained by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents Saturday. Authorities have said the agents were looking for the Milford High School teenager's father, who owns the car Gomes da Silva was driving at the time and had parked in a friend's driveway.

Speaking with members of the media outside the detention center shortly after his release on \$2,000 bond, Gomes da Silva described "humiliating" conditions and said his faith helped him through his six days of detention.

On his wrist, he wore a bracelet made from the thin sheet of metallic blanket he was given to sleep on the cement floor.

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"I'll always remember this place," he said. "I'll always remember how it was."

His lawyer, Robin Nice, told reporters after the hearing in Chelmsford that his arrest "shouldn't have happened in the first place. This is all a waste."

"We disrupted a kid's life. We just disrupted a community's life," Nice said. "These kids should be celebrating graduation and prom, I assume? They should be doing kid stuff, and it is a travesty and a waste of our judicial process to have to go through this."

She said Gomes da Silva was confined to a room holding 25 to 35 men, many twice his age, most of the time he was detained, with no windows, time outside, privacy to use the restroom or permission to shower. Nice said that at one point Gomes da Silva, who is active in his local church, asked for a Bible and was denied.

Gomes da Silva, who said his father taught him to "put other people first," said many of the men imprisoned with him didn't speak English and didn't understand why they were there. He had to inform some of them they were being deported, and then watched them break down in tears.

"I told every single inmate down there: When I'm out, if I'm the only one who was able to leave that place, I lost," he said. "I want to do whatever I can to get them as much help as possible. If they have to be deported, so be it. But in the right way, in the right conditions. Because no one down there is treated good."

He said some days, he was given only crackers to eat, which he shared with cellmates. His first stop after being released was for McDonald's chicken nuggets and french fries.

Not ICE's target, but detained anyway

U.S. Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said earlier this week ICE officers were targeting a "known public safety threat" and Gomes da Silva's father "has a habit of reckless driving at speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour through residential areas."

"While ICE officers never intended to apprehend Gomes da Silva, he was found to be in the United States illegally and subject to removal proceedings, so officers made the arrest," she said in a statement.

Acting ICE Director Todd Lyons said Monday that "like any local law enforcement officer, if you encounter someone that has a warrant or ... he's here illegally, we will take action on it."

Upon his release, Gomes da Silva pushed back on ICE's characterizations of his father: "Everything I got was from my dad. He's a good person. He never did anything wrong."

When he was able to call his parents during his detainment, Gomes da Silva said his father sobbed and told him the family was scared to leave the house.

Gomes da Silva initially entered the country on a visitor visa and was later issued a student visa that has since lapsed, Nice said. He told reporters he didn't know his immigration status until he was arrested.

He said an officer asked him, "Do you know why you were arrested?" He said no.

"I told her, ma'am, I was 7 years old. I don't know nothing about that stuff," he recalled. "I don't understand how it works."

Nice described him as deeply rooted in his community and a dedicated member of both the school marching band and a band at his church.

The immigration judge set a placeholder hearing date for a couple of weeks from Thursday, but it might take place months from that, Nice said.

"We're optimistic that he'll have a future in the United States," she said.

A shaken community

"I love my son. We need Marcelo back home. It's no family without him," João Paulo Gomes Pereira said in a video released Wednesday. "We love America. Please, bring my son back."

The video showed the family in the teen's bedroom. Gomes da Silva's sister describes enjoying watching movies with her brother and the food he cooks for her: "I miss everything about him."

Students at Milford High staged a walkout Monday to protest his detainment. Other supporters packed the stands of the high school gymnasium Tuesday night, when the volleyball team dedicated a match to their missing teammate.

Amani Jack, a recent Milford High graduate, said her classmate's absence loomed large over the graduation ceremony, where he was supposed to play in the band. She said if she had a chance to speak with the president, she'd ask him to "put yourself in our shoes."

"He did say he was going to deport criminals," she said. "Marcelo is not a criminal. He's a student. I really want him to take a step in our shoes, witnessing this. Try and understand how we feel. We're just trying to graduate high school."

Veronica Hernandez, a family advocate from Medford who said she works in a largely Hispanic community where ICE has had an active presence, said cases like Gomes da Silva's show immigration enforcement is serious about taking "anybody" without legal status, not just those accused of crimes.

"I think seeing that something so simple as a child driving themselves and their friends to volleyball practice at risk struck a chord," she said.

How the Trump administration's move will affect Harvard's international students

By ANNIE MA AP Education Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The efforts by President Donald Trump's administration to prevent Harvard University from enrolling international students have struck at the core of the Ivy League school's identity and unsettled current and prospective students around the world.

Last month, the government told Harvard's thousands of current foreign students that they must transfer to other schools or they will lose their legal permission to be in the U.S. A federal court in Boston last week blocked the Department of Homeland Security from barring international students at Harvard.

On Wednesday, Trump signed a proclamation invoking a different legal authority to keep Harvard's international students from entering the United States.

Trump has targeted Harvard's international enrollment as his administration presses the nation's oldest and wealthiest university to adopt a series of policy and governance changes, which the university has rebuffed.

Harvard decried the latest order as retaliation and said it violates the school's First Amendment rights. "Harvard will continue to protect its international students," the university said Wednesday in a statement.

Harvard enrolls about 7,000 international students, most of them in graduate programs. Those students have been scrambling to figure out their next steps.

How does Trump's latest move differ from the first effort to block Harvard's international enrollment?

In May, the Trump administration tried to ban foreign students at Harvard, citing the Department of Homeland Security's authority to oversee which colleges are part of the Student Exchange and Visitor Program. The program allows colleges to issue documents that foreign students need to study in the United States. In a lawsuit, Harvard said the administration violated the government's own regulations for withdrawing a school's certification. A judge put the administration's ban on hold.

On Wednesday, Trump tried a different approach. In a proclamation, he invoked a law that gives the president the ability to block foreigners from entering the country if their presence would be "detrimental to the interests of the United States."

At the center of Trump's pressure campaign against Harvard are his assertions that the school, which he has called a hotbed of liberalism, has tolerated anti-Jewish harassment — especially during pro-Palestinian protests. In the directive Wednesday, he said Harvard is not a suitable destination for foreign students. Harvard President Alan Garber has said the university has made changes to combat antisemitism and will not submit to the administration's demands for further changes at Harvard over fears of retaliation.

"I've never seen anything like it. I've never seen a president take a specific action against a higher education institution like this," said Sarah Spreitzer, vice president and chief of staff for government relations for the American Council on Education. "The legality of these actions is certainly in question as well."

How is Harvard responding to Trump's latest ban?

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In an amended legal challenge filed Thursday, Harvard called the president's action an end-run around the previous court order.

The filing attacks Trump's legal justification for the action — a federal law allowing him to block a "class of aliens" deemed detrimental to the nation's interests. Targeting only those who are coming to the U.S. to study at Harvard doesn't qualify as a "class of aliens," Harvard said in its filing.

"The President's actions thus are not undertaken to protect the 'interests of the United States,' but instead to pursue a government vendetta against Harvard," the university wrote.

The new filing asks the same federal judge in Boston to block Trump's latest action, too.

What percentage of Harvard's student body is affected?

Harvard sponsors more than 7,000 people on a combination of F-1 and J-1 visas, which are issued to students and to foreigners visiting the U.S. on exchange programs such as fellowships. Across all the schools that make up the university, about 26% of the student body is from outside the U.S.

But some schools and programs, by nature of their subject matter, have significantly more international students. At the Harvard Kennedy School, which covers public policy and public administration, 49% of students are on F-1 visas. In the business school, one-third of students come from abroad. And within the law school, 94% of the students in the master's program in comparative law are international students.

Will admitted students be able to enroll at Harvard in the fall?

While the initial effort to block international enrollment has been put on hold, the new order would keep new Harvard students from entering the country unless the government changes course.

For foreign students already at Harvard, Secretary of State Marco Rubio will determine if visas should be revoked, Trump wrote.

Has the government ever done this before?

The government can and does remove colleges from the Student Exchange and Visitor Program, making them ineligible to host foreign students on their campus. However, it's usually for administrative reasons outlined in law, such as failing to maintain accreditation, lacking proper facilities for classes, failing to employ qualified professional personnel — even failing to "operate as a bona fide institution of learning." Other colleges are removed when they close.

How else has the Trump administration targeted Harvard?

Harvard's battle with the Trump administration dates to early April. The storied institution became the first elite college to refuse to comply with the government's demands to limit pro-Palestinian protests and eliminate diversity, equity and inclusion policies. That kicked off a series of escalating actions against Harvard. Various federal agencies, including DHS and the National Institutes of Health, have cut their grant funding to Harvard, significantly impacting research projects conducted by faculty. Harvard has sued the administration, seeking to end the grant freeze.

The administration first threatened to revoke Harvard's ability to host international students back in April. Trump also has said Harvard should lose its tax-exempt status. Doing so would strike at the school's ability to fundraise, as wealthy donors often give to tax-exempt institutions to lower their own tax burdens.

Does Harvard give scholarships to international students?

Harvard awards need-based financial aid to students across its multiple schools. Unlike merit-based scholarships, which are awarded based on achievements or academic records, need-based aid is given to students depending on their ability to pay for tuition.

Admissions to the undergraduate college is need-blind, including for international students, which means that a student's ability to pay full tuition is not considered during the application process. Unlike the majority of U.S. colleges and universities, international students do not disproportionately pay full tuition to attend.

In a post last month on Truth Social, Trump criticized Harvard for enrolling a significant percentage of international students.

"Why isn't Harvard saying that almost 31% of their students are from FOREIGN LANDS, and yet those countries, some not at all friendly to the United States, pay NOTHING toward their student's education, nor do they ever intend to," he wrote. "Nobody told us that!"

Most governments do not pay for their students to study abroad. With the exception of some government-

funded scholarship programs, most international students pay their own tuition, receive need-based aid or earn merit scholarships from external organizations. Harvard is among a handful of wealthier universities that do offer financial aid to foreign students.

Trump and Musk's relationship flames out just as intensely and publicly as it started

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump and Elon Musk's alliance took off like one of SpaceX's rockets. It was supercharged and soared high. And then it blew up.

The spectacular flameout Thursday peaked as Trump threatened to cut Musk's government contracts and Musk claimed that Trump's administration hasn't released all the records related to sex abuser Jeffrey Epstein because Trump is mentioned in them.

The tech entrepreneur even shared a post on social media calling for Trump's impeachment and skewered the president's signature tariffs, predicting a recession this year.

The messy blow-up between the president of the United States and the world's richest man played out on their respective social media platforms after Trump was asked during a White House meeting with Germany's new leader about Musk's criticism of his spending bill.

Trump had largely remained silent as Musk stewed over the last few days on his social media platform X, condemning the president's so-called "Big Beautiful Bill." But Trump clapped back Thursday in the Oval Office, saying he was "very disappointed in Musk."

Musk responded on social media in real time. Trump, who was supposed to be spending Thursday discussing an end to the Russia-Ukraine war with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, ratcheted up the stakes when he turned to his own social media network, Truth Social, and threatened to use the U.S. government to hurt Musk's bottom line by going after contracts held by his internet company Starlink and rocket company SpaceX.

"The easiest way to save money in our Budget, Billions and Billions of Dollars, is to terminate Elon's Governmental Subsidies and Contracts," Trump wrote on his social media network.

"Go ahead, make my day," Musk quickly replied on X.

Hours later, Musk announced SpaceX would begin decommissioning the spacecraft it used to carry astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station for NASA.

Musk also said, without offering evidence of how he might know the information, that Trump was "in the Epstein files. That is the real reason they have not been made public. Have a nice day, DJT!"

The deepening rift unfurled much like their relationship started — rapidly, intensely and very publicly. And it quickly hit Musk financially.

After Trump started criticizing Musk, shares of his electric vehicle company Tesla plunged more than 14%, knocking about \$150 billion off Tesla's market valuation. Musk lost about \$20 billion on his personal holding of Tesla.

Politicians and their donor patrons rarely see eye to eye. But the magnitude of Musk's support for Trump, spending at least \$250 million backing his campaign, and the scope of free rein the president gave him to slash and delve into the government with the Department of Government Efficiency is eclipsed only by the speed of their falling-out.

Musk offered up an especially stinging insult to a president sensitive about his standing among voters: "Without me, Trump would have lost the election," Musk retorted. "Such ingratitude," Musk added in a follow-up post.

Musk first announced his support for Trump shortly after the then-candidate was nearly assassinated on stage at a Pennsylvania rally last July. News of Musk's political action committee in support of Trump's election came days later.

Musk soon became a close adviser and frequent companion, memorably leaping in the air behind Trump on stage at a rally in October. Once Trump was elected, the tech billionaire stood behind him as he took

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the oath of office, flew on Air Force One for weekend stays at Mar-a-Lago, slept in the Lincoln Bedroom and joined Cabinet meetings wearing a MAGA hat — sometimes more than one.

Three months ago, Trump purchased a red Tesla from Musk as a public show of support for his business as it faced blowback.

Musk bid farewell to Trump last week in a somewhat somber news conference in the Oval Office, where he sported a black eye that he said came from his young son but that seemed to be a metaphor for his messy time in government service.

Trump, who rarely misses an opportunity to zing his critics on appearance, brought it up Thursday.

"I said, 'Do you want a little makeup? We'll get you a little makeup.' Which is interesting," Trump said.

The Republican president's comments came as Musk has griped for days on social media about Trump's spending bill, warning that it will increase the federal deficit. Musk has called the bill a "disgusting abomination."

"He hasn't said bad about me personally, but I'm sure that will be next," Trump said Thursday in the Oval Office, presaging the rest of his day. "But I'm very disappointed in Elon. I've helped Elon a lot."

Observers had long wondered if the friendship between the two brash billionaires known for lobbing insults online would combust in dramatic fashion. It did, in less than a year.

White House aides were closely following the drama playing out on dueling platforms Thursday with bemusement, sharing the latest twists and turns from the feud between their boss and former co-worker, as well as the social media reaction and memes. Officials in the extremely online administration privately expressed the belief that like the other digital scuffles that have defined Trump's political career, this would also work out in his favor.

Trump said Thursday in the Oval Office that he and Musk had had a great relationship but mused: "I don't know if we will anymore."

He said some people who leave his administration "miss it so badly" and "actually become hostile."

"It's sort of Trump derangement syndrome, I guess they call it," he said.

He brushed aside the billionaire's efforts to get him elected last year, including a \$1 million-a-day voter sweepstakes in Pennsylvania. The surge of cash Musk showed he was willing to spend seemed to set him up as a highly coveted ally for Republicans going forward, but his split with Trump, the party's leader, raises questions about whether they or any others will see such a campaign windfall in the future.

Trump said Musk "only developed a problem" with the bill because it rolls back tax credits for electric vehicles.

"False," Musk fired back on his social media platform as the president continued speaking. "This bill was never shown to me even once and was passed in the dead of night so fast that almost no one in Congress could even read it!"

In another post, he said Trump could keep the spending cuts but "ditch the MOUNTAIN of DISGUSTING PORK in the bill."

Besides Musk being "disturbed" by the electric vehicle tax credits, Trump said another point of contention was Musk's promotion of Jared Isaacman to run NASA. Trump withdrew Isaacman's nomination over the weekend and on Thursday called him "totally a Democrat."

Musk continued slinging his responses on social media. He shared some posts Trump made over a decade ago criticizing Republicans for their spending, musings made when he, too, was just a billionaire lobbing his thoughts on social media.

"Where is the man who wrote these words?" Musk wrote. "Was he replaced by a body double!?"

On the White House grounds Thursday afternoon, Trump's red Tesla still sat in a parking lot.

In the Sean 'Diddy' Combs trial, an ex-girlfriend testifies about abuse and control

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs' recent ex-girlfriend described enduring drug-fueled sex marathons until the hip-hop titan's arrest in September as the key witness began testimony Thursday soon after the judge threatened to expel Combs from the courtroom for "nodding vigorously" at jurors during a sharp cross-examination of another witness.

The woman, using the pseudonym "Jane," is among several witnesses at Combs sex trafficking trial who accuse him of violence, including his former girlfriend, R&B singer Casandra "Cassie" Ventura.

Cassie testified in the trial's first week that Combs assaulted her repeatedly and forced her into "hundreds" of encounters with male sex workers called "freak-offs" while Combs watched, directed and sometimes filmed.

Combs, 55, has pleaded not guilty to running his business empire as a racketeering enterprise that enabled and concealed the abuse of women over two decades. If convicted, he faces 15 years to life.

Jane said she repeatedly told Combs, in person and in writing, that she didn't want to have sex with other men. But Combs, who paid her rent and controlled other parts of her life, kept pressuring her and she felt "obligated," she said.

Jane spoke barely above a whisper to an attentive jury. Several jurors leaned forward as she testified, while Combs mostly stared at her, but she never appeared to look back.

Jane's relationship with Diddy turns sour

A single mother, Jane said she got to know Combs during a "girls' trip" to Miami in 2020 with a friend who was dating him. Jane said she dated him from 2021 to 2024, in what began as a loving and passionate relationship. Jane said she went by the nickname "Bert" while the Bad Boy Records founder was "Ernie."

However, she grew emotional — lowering her head and wiping tears — as she explained how the relationship changed in May 2021, when Combs began sharing his sexual fantasies involving her with other men and role-playing. She agreed to go along, thinking it was a one-time event sometime in the future that would make him happy.

Within hours, she said, she was in a Miami hotel room watching Combs' assistants set up for a group sex encounter.

"That night really opened a Pandora's box for our relationship," Jane said. "It set the tone for our relationship going forward. ... It was a door that I was unable to shut."

Jane said she was exhilarated after leaving that first hotel room encounter, but came to regret it.

From then on, she said, 90% of the time she had sex during her relationship with Combs, it was with other men while he watched. Asked if she wanted to have sex with other men, Jane softly said, "No... just Sean."

Jane's description of "hotel nights" closely paralleled Cassie's earlier testimony. Both described trying to rush through the encounters just to get them over with. Jane said the encounters sometimes lasted over 24 hours.

The judge has taken steps to protect Jane's anonymity, including warning observers not to describe or sketch her in a way that would reveal her identity. The Associated Press does not identify people who say they're victims of sexual abuse unless they choose to make their names public, as Cassie has done.

Judge threatens to kick Diddy out of court

Before Jane testified, while jurors were at lunch, Judge Arun Subramanian said he saw Combs energetically nodding at the jury twice while his lawyers cross-examined a prior witness. The judge warned that any further attempts to engage with jurors could get Combs ejected from the courtroom.

"There should be no efforts whatsoever to have an interaction with this jury," Subramanian told Combs' lawyers.

Combs seemed relaxed and smiled broadly afterward, possibly reacting to his attorney's withering cross-examination. He has been active in his defense throughout the trial, regularly writing notes and consulting

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with his legal team.

Cassie's friend is grilled about being dangled off a balcony

The judge said Combs was nodding during the cross-examination of Bryana "Bana" Bongolan, a friend of Cassie and a graphic designer who is suing Combs.

Bongolan testified Wednesday that in 2016, Combs held her over the edge of a balcony at a Los Angeles high-rise for 10 to 15 seconds, an episode she said traumatized her and left her with lasting night terrors.

On Thursday, defense attorney Nicole Westmoreland challenged Bongolan's credibility, suggesting she lied or exaggerated. The lawyer noted Combs was on tour for much of September 2016, including East Coast shows around the time cellphone metadata shows Bongolan photographed her injuries.

"You agree that one person can't be in two places at the same time," Westmoreland asked.

"In like theory, yeah. It's hard to answer that one," Bongolan replied. Later, Bongolan said she did not recall the exact date, but she had no doubt the balcony episode occurred.

She also acknowledged smoking marijuana with Combs not long after, and attending one of his concerts and a private party roughly a week later.

"You weren't too fearful enough to not go to Mr. Combs' event, were you?" Westmoreland asked.

"I always had a feeling inside, but yes, I went," Bongolan said.

Trump says it may be better to let Ukraine, Russia 'fight for a while' as Merz blames Putin for war

By SEUNG MIN KIM, KIRSTEN GRIESHABER and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday that it might be better to let Ukraine and Russia "fight for a while" before pulling them apart and pursuing peace, even as Germany's new chancellor appealed to him as the "key person in the world" who could halt the bloodshed by pressuring Vladimir Putin.

In an Oval Office meeting with Chancellor Friedrich Merz, the U.S. president likened the war in Ukraine — which Russia invaded in February 2022 — to a fight between two children who hate each other. Trump said that with children, "sometimes you're better off letting them fight for a while and then pulling them apart," adding that he relayed the analogy to Putin in a call this week.

"I said, 'President, maybe you're going to have to keep fighting and suffering a lot,' because both sides are suffering before you pull them apart, before they're able to be pulled apart," Trump said. "You see in hockey, you see it in sports. The referees let them go for a couple of seconds, let them go for a little while before you pull them apart."

The comments were a remarkable detour from Trump's often-stated appeals to stop the violence in Ukraine — and he again denounced the bloodshed Thursday even as he floated the possibility that the two countries should continue the war for a time. Merz carefully sidestepped Trump's assertions and emphasized that the U.S. and Germany both agree on "how terrible this war is," while making sure to lay blame squarely on Putin for the violence and make the point that Germany was siding with Ukraine.

"We are both looking for ways to stop it very soon," Merz said in the Oval Office. "I told the president before we came in that he is the key person in the world who can really do that now by putting pressure on Russia."

Thursday's meeting was the first time the two leaders sat down in person, and Merz left the public portion unscathed as he successfully avoided the kind of made-for-TV confrontation in the Oval Office that befell other world leaders such as Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Cyril Ramaphosa, the president of South Africa. Trump and Merz began by exchanging pleasantries — Merz gave Trump a gold-framed birth certificate of the U.S. president's grandfather Friedrich Trump, who emigrated to America from Kallstadt, Germany, and Trump called the chancellor a "very good man to deal with."

"He's difficult, I would say? Can I say that? It's a positive. You wouldn't want me to say you're easy, right?" Trump said, gently ribbing Merz. "He's a very great representative of Germany."

Merz told German reporters after the White House meeting that he had invited Trump to visit Germany, "his home country," and added that the two leaders "get along well on the personal level."

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Trump and Merz had previously spoken several times by phone since Merz took office on May 6. German officials say the two leaders have started to build a "decent" relationship. Merz avoided the antagonism that defined Trump's relationship with one of his predecessors, Angela Merkel, in the Republican president's first term.

Merz emphasizes Ukraine support

The 69-year-old Merz — who came to office with an extensive business background — is a conservative former rival of Merkel's who took over her party after she retired from politics.

Merz has thrown himself into diplomacy on Ukraine, traveling to Kyiv with fellow European leaders days after taking office and receiving Zelenskyy in Berlin last week. He has thanked Trump for his support for an unconditional ceasefire while rejecting the idea of "dictated peace" or the "subjugation" of Ukraine and advocating for more sanctions against Russia.

On Thursday, Trump also kept the threat of sanctions on the table — but for both Russia and Ukraine. He said he has not looked at bipartisan Senate legislation that would impose harsh economic punishments on Moscow, but said of sanctions efforts that "they would be guided by me," rather than Capitol Hill.

"When I see the moment where it's not going to stop ... we'll be very, very tough," Trump said. "And it could be on both countries, to be honest. It takes two to tango."

For Merz's part, he used Friday's anniversary of D-Day — when Allied forces launched an assault that began the liberation of Europe from German occupation — to appeal to Trump to help lead the ending of another violent war on the continent.

Merz noted that June 6, 1944, began the liberation of Germany from a Nazi dictator and that "American is again in a very strong position to do something on this war and ending this war."

"That was not a pleasant day for you?" Trump interjected to the German leader when he referenced D-Day.

At home, Merz's government is intensifying a drive that his immediate predecessor, Olaf Scholz, began to bolster the German military after Russia invaded Ukraine. In Trump's first term, Berlin was a target of his ire for failing to meet the current NATO target of spending 2% of gross domestic product on defense, and Trump is now demanding at least 5% from allies.

Ahead of Thursday's meeting, a White House official said the administration planned to stress to Germany that it should increase its defense spending and that the upcoming NATO summit in The Netherlands was a good opportunity to commit to Trump's 5% pledge. But during an exchange with reporters, Trump praised Berlin: "I know that you're spending more money on defense now and quite a bit more money. That's a positive thing."

Scholz set up a 100 billion euro (\$115 billion) special fund to modernize Germany's armed forces — called the Bundeswehr — which had suffered from years of neglect. Germany has met the 2% target thanks to the fund, but it will be used up in 2027. Merz has endorsed a plan for all allies to aim to spend 3.5% of GDP on their defense budgets by 2032, plus an extra 1.5% on potentially defense-related things like infrastructure.

Tariff trouble

Another top priority for Merz is to get Germany's economy, Europe's biggest, moving again after it shrank the past two years. He wants to make it a "locomotive of growth," but Trump's tariff threats are a potential obstacle for a country whose exports have been a key strength. At present, the economy is forecast to stagnate in 2025.

Germany exported \$160 billion worth of goods to the U.S. last year, according to the Census Bureau. That was about \$85 billion more than what the U.S. sent to Germany, a trade deficit that Trump wants to erase.

"Germany is one of the very big investors in America," Merz told German reporters Thursday morning ahead of his visit with Trump. "Only a few countries invest more than Germany in the USA. We are in third place in terms of foreign direct investment."

The U.S. president has specifically gone after the German auto sector, which includes major brands such as Audi, BMW, Mercedes Benz, Porsche and Volkswagen. Americans bought \$36 billion worth of

cars, trucks and auto parts from Germany last year, while the Germans purchased \$10.2 billion worth of vehicles and parts from the U.S. Trump's 25% tariff on autos and parts is specifically designed to increase the cost of German-made automobiles.

There's only so much Merz can achieve on his view that tariffs "benefit no one and damage everyone" while in Washington, as trade negotiations are a matter for the European Union's executive commission. Trump hinted at that Thursday, saying the trade situation will mostly depend on the negotiations with the 27-country bloc.

"We'll end up hopefully with a trade deal," Trump said. "Or we'll do something. We'll do the tariffs."

Trump recently delayed a planned 50% tariff on goods coming from the European Union, which would have otherwise gone into effect this month.

Trump banned citizens of 12 countries from entering the US. Here's what to know

By MONIKA PRONCZUK Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — President Donald Trump has banned citizens of 12 countries from entering the United States and restricted access for those from seven others, citing national security concerns in resurrecting and expanding a hallmark policy from his first term that will mostly affect people from Africa and the Middle East.

The ban announced Wednesday applies to citizens of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Chad, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. The heightened restrictions apply to people from Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan and Venezuela who are outside the U.S. and don't hold a valid visa.

The policy takes effect Monday at 12:01 a.m. and does not have an end date.

Here's what to know about the new rules:

How Trump justified the ban

Since returning to the White House, Trump has launched an unprecedented campaign of immigration enforcement that has pushed the limits of executive power and clashed with federal judges trying to restrain him.

The travel ban stems from a Jan. 20 executive order Trump issued requiring the Department of State, Department of Homeland Security and the Director of National Intelligence to compile a report on "hostile attitudes" toward the U.S.

The aim is to "protect its citizens from aliens who intend to commit terrorist attacks, threaten our national security, espouse hateful ideology, or otherwise exploit the immigration laws for malevolent purposes," the administration said.

In a video posted on social media, Trump tied the new ban to a terrorist attack Sunday in Boulder, Colorado, saying it underscored the dangers posed by some visitors who overstay visas. The man charged in the attack is from Egypt, a country that is not on Trump's restricted list. U.S. officials say he overstayed a tourist visa.

Who is exempt from the ban

1. Green card holders
2. Dual citizens, including U.S. citizens who also have citizenship of one of the banned countries
3. Some athletes: athletes and their coaches traveling to the U.S. for the World Cup, Olympics or other major sporting event as determined by the U.S. secretary of state
4. Afghans who worked for the U.S. government or its allies in Afghanistan and are holders of Afghan special immigrant visas
5. Iranians belonging to an ethnic or religious minority who are fleeing prosecution
6. Certain foreign national employees of the U.S. government who have served abroad for at least 15 years, and their spouses and children
7. People who were granted asylum or admitted to the U.S. as refugees before the ban took effect

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8. People with U.S. family members who apply for visas in connection to their spouses, children or parents
9. Diplomats and foreign government officials on official visits
10. Those traveling to U.N. headquarters in New York solely on official U.N. business
11. Representatives of international organizations and NATO on official visits in the U.S.
12. Children adopted by U.S. citizens.

Which countries are affected

Trump said nationals of countries included in the ban pose "terrorism-related" and "public-safety" risks, as well as risks of overstaying their visas. He also said some of these countries had "deficient" screening and vetting or have historically refused to take back their citizens.

His findings rely extensively on an annual Homeland Security report about tourists, businesspeople and students who overstay U.S. visas and arrive by air or sea, singling out countries with high percentages of nationals who remain after their visas expired.

"We don't want them," Trump said.

The inclusion of Afghanistan angered some supporters who have worked to resettle its people. The ban makes exceptions for Afghans on special immigrant visas, who were generally the people who worked most closely with the U.S. government during the two-decade war there.

The list can be changed, the administration said in a document, if authorities in the designated countries make "material improvements" to their own rules and procedures. New countries can be added "as threats emerge around the world."

Reactions to Trump's order

Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro's government condemned the travel ban, characterizing it in a statement as a "stigmatization and criminalization campaign" against Venezuelans, who have been targeted by the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

Chad President Mahamat Deby Itno said his country would suspend visas for U.S. citizens in response to the ban.

Aid and refugee resettlement groups also denounced it.

"This policy is not about national security — it is about sowing division and vilifying communities that are seeking safety and opportunity in the United States," said Abby Maxman, president of Oxfam America.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations, the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organization, called the order "unnecessary, overbroad and ideologically motivated."

And the National Immigration Law Center said it was "outraged" and that the ban is "laced with unsubstantiated legal justifications."

"The impact of this new ban will be deeply racialized, as it will effectively bar hundreds of millions of Black and Brown people from entering the United States," the group said in a statement.

But reactions to the ban ran the gamut from anger to guarded relief and support.

In Haiti, radio stations received a flurry of calls Thursday from angry listeners, including many who said they were Haitians living in the U.S. and who accused Trump of being racist, noting that the people of many of the targeted countries are Black.

In Miami, restaurant owner Wilkinson Sejour said most of his employees and customers are from Haiti and that the ban will hurt his business in a "domino effect." He suggested that Haiti was targeted because most Haitians vote Democrat.

Jaylani Hussein, who heads CAIR's Minnesota chapter, said his compatriots in the Twin Cities' large Somali American community had been expecting Trump's order, but didn't know the details until its release.

"It's a lot better than maybe some of the worst fears of what we initially thought could come out. But it significantly impacts the Somali community, there's no way around it," he said.

William Lopez, a 75-year-old property investor who arrived from Cuba in 1967, supports the travel ban.

"These are people that come but don't want to work, they support the Cuban government, they support communism," Lopez said at a restaurant near Little Havana in Miami. "What the Trump administration is doing is perfectly good."

How the ban differs from 2017's

Early in Trump's first term, he issued an executive order banning travel to the U.S. by citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries, including Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

It was one of the most chaotic and confusing moments of his young presidency. Travelers from those nations were either barred from getting on flights to the U.S. or detained at U.S. airports after they landed. They included students and faculty, as well as businesspeople, tourists and people visiting friends and family.

The order, often referred to as the "Muslim ban" or the "travel ban," was retooled amid legal challenges until a version was upheld by the Supreme Court in 2018.

The ban affected various categories of travelers and immigrants from Iran, Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Libya, plus North Koreans and some Venezuelan government officials and their families.

Israel says it has recovered the bodies of 2 Israeli-American hostages from the Gaza Strip

By MELANIE LIDMAN, NATALIE MELZER and WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel has recovered the bodies of two Israeli-American hostages taken in Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack that ignited the war in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli strikes overnight and into Thursday meanwhile killed at least 22 people, including three local journalists who were in the courtyard of a hospital, according to health officials in the territory. The military said it targeted a militant in that strike.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the remains of Judith Weinstein and Gad Haggai were recovered and returned to Israel in a special operation by the army and the Shin Bet internal security agency.

"Together with all the citizens of Israel, my wife and I extend our heartfelt condolences to the dear families. Our hearts ache for the most terrible loss. May their memory be blessed," he said in a statement.

Kibbutz Nir Oz announced the deaths of Weinstein, 70, and Haggai, 72, both of whom had Israeli and U.S. citizenship, in December 2023. Weinstein was also a Canadian citizen.

The military said they were killed in the Oct. 7 attack and taken into Gaza by the Mujahideen Brigades, the small armed group that it said had also abducted and killed Shiri Bibas and her two small children. The army said it recovered the remains of Weinstein and Haggai overnight into Thursday from Gaza's southern city of Khan Younis.

A teacher who helped children and a chef who played jazz

The couple were taking an early morning walk near their home in Kibbutz Nir Oz on the morning of Oct. 7 when Hamas militants stormed across the border and rampaged through several army bases and farming communities.

In the early hours of the morning, Weinstein was able to call emergency services and let them know that both she and her husband had been shot and send a message to her family.

Weinstein was born in New York and taught English to children with special needs at Kibbutz Nir Oz, a small community near the Gaza border. The kibbutz said she also taught meditation techniques to children and teenagers who suffered from anxiety as a result of rocket fire from Gaza. Haggai was a retired chef and jazz musician.

"My beautiful parents have been freed. We have certainty," their daughter, Iris Haggai Liniado, wrote in a Facebook post. She thanked the Israeli military, the FBI and the Israeli and U.S. governments and called for the release of all the remaining hostages.

The couple were survived by two sons, two daughters and seven grandchildren, the kibbutz said.

Struggles continue to get aid to Palestinians

U.N. efforts to distribute aid suffered a blow Thursday when the Palestinian organization that provides trucks and drivers said it was suspending operations after gunmen attacked a convoy, killing a driver.

The Special Transport Association said the convoy of some 60 trucks was heading into Deir al-Balah in central Gaza Wednesday evening when gunmen attacked, killing one driver and wounding three others. The association said it was the latest in attacks on convoys "clearly aimed at obstructing" aid delivery,

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though it did not say who it believed was behind the attack.

Israel has accused Hamas of stealing aid and trying to block it from reaching Palestinians. Aid workers have said attacks on U.N. trucks appear to be by criminal gangs, some operating within sight of Israeli troops. The area where the association described the attack taking place lies on the edges of an Israeli military zone.

After blocking all food and aid from entering Gaza for more than two months, Israel began allowing a trickle of supplies to enter for the U.N. several weeks ago. But the U.N. says it has been unable to distribute much of the aid because of Israeli military restrictions on movements and because roads that the military designates for its trucks to use are unsafe and vulnerable to looters. The blockade pushed Gaza's population of more than 2 million to the brink of famine.

Meanwhile, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a mainly American private contractor, resumed food distribution at two centers near the southern city of Gaza on Thursday. It had halted all distribution the day before, saying it was discussing greater safety measures with the Israeli military.

Near daily shootings have erupted in the vicinity of the hubs, with Palestinians reporting Israeli troops opening fire. More than 80 people have been killed and hundreds wounded, according to Gaza hospital officials. The Israeli military has said it fired warning shots or at individuals approaching its troops in some instances.

GHF said Thursday it has distributed the equivalent of nearly 8.5 million meals since its centers began operating on May 26 — enough for one meal a day for just over a third of Gaza's population.

Strikes around Gaza kill 22

Two Israeli airstrikes in Gaza City on Thursday afternoon killed 9 people, including a child and a woman, according to health officials. Most were killed when the strike hit a busy street where people were gathered to buy bags of flour, said one witness, Abu Farah.

"We want to bring food to our children. We're not asking for anything more. We stopped demanding anything else other than food," he said.

At least 10 Palestinians were killed in Israeli strikes in Khan Younis overnight, according to Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies. It was not immediately clear if the strikes were related to the recovery mission.

In Gaza City, three local reporters were killed and six people were wounded in a strike on the courtyard of the al-Ahli Hospital, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It did not immediately identify the journalists or say which outlets they worked for.

The Israeli military said it struck an Islamic Jihad militant operating in the courtyard. The army says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas because it is embedded in populated areas.

Over 180 journalists and media workers have been killed since the start of the Israel-Hamas war, the vast majority of them in Gaza, according to the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists. Israel has said many of those killed in its strikes were militants posing as reporters.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack and abducted 251 hostages. They are still holding 56 hostages, around a third of them believed to be alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals. Israeli forces have rescued eight living hostages from Gaza and recovered dozens of bodies.

Israel's military campaign has killed more than 54,000 Palestinians, mostly women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many of the dead were civilians or combatants. The offensive has destroyed large parts of Gaza and displaced around 90% of its population of roughly 2 million Palestinians.

US hits International Criminal Court judges with sanctions over investigation into Israel

By MATTHEW LEE and MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is slapping sanctions on four judges at the International Criminal Court over the tribunal's investigation into alleged war crimes by Israel in its war against Hamas

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in Gaza and in the West Bank.

The State Department said Thursday that it would freeze any assets that the ICC judges, who come from Benin, Peru, Slovenia and Uganda, have in U.S. jurisdictions. The move is just the latest step that the administration has taken to punish the ICC and its officials for investigations undertaken against Israel and the United States.

"As ICC judges, these four individuals have actively engaged in the ICC's illegitimate and baseless actions targeting America or our close ally, Israel," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

"The ICC is politicized and falsely claims unfettered discretion to investigate, charge, and prosecute nationals of the United States and our allies," Rubio said. "This dangerous assertion and abuse of power infringes upon the sovereignty and national security of the United States and our allies, including Israel."

In February, The Hague-based court's chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, was placed on Washington's list of "Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons," barring him from doing business with Americans and placing restrictions on his entry into the U.S. Khan stepped aside last month pending an investigation into alleged sexual misconduct.

Within minutes of the administration's announcement, the court condemned its actions. "These measures are a clear attempt to undermine the independence of an international judicial institution," ICC spokesperson Fadi El Abdallah said in a statement.

New sanctions widen the targets

The new sanctions target ICC Judge Reine Alapini-Gansou, who is from the West African country of Benin and was part of the pre-trial chamber of judges who issued the arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last year. She also served on the bench that originally greenlit the investigation into alleged Israeli crimes in the Palestinian territories in 2021.

The 69-year-old was also part of the panel of judges who issued the arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2023. Last year, a court in Moscow issued a warrant for her arrest.

From Slovenia, Beti Hohler was elected as a judge in 2023. She previously worked in the prosecutor's office at the court, leading Israel to object to her participation in the proceedings involving Israeli officials. Hohler said in a statement last year that she had never worked on the Palestinian territories investigation during her eight years as a prosecutor.

Bouth Luz del Carmen Ibáñez Carranza, from Peru, and Solomy Balungi Bossa, from Uganda, are appeals judges at the ICC. Each woman has worked on cases involving Israel.

Neither the U.S. nor Israel is a member of and neither recognizes the legitimacy of the court, which has issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu for alleged war crimes over his military response in Gaza after the Hamas attack against Israel in October 2023. Israel strongly denies the allegations.

Trump has targeted the ICC before

During his first term in office, Trump targeted the ICC with sanctions, voicing displeasure with probes into Israel and complaints about alleged war crimes said to have been committed by U.S. troops in Afghanistan. Those sanctions were rescinded by President Joe Biden's administration in early 2021.

Rubio said the U.S. would continue to take action to protect its and Israel's interests at the court. "The United States will take whatever actions we deem necessary to protect our sovereignty, that of Israel, and any other U.S. ally from illegitimate actions by the ICC," he said.

Liz Evenson, international justice director at Human Rights Watch, said the Trump administration's sanctions "aim to deter the ICC from seeking accountability amid grave crimes committed in Israel and Palestine, and as Israeli atrocities mount in Gaza, including with U.S. complicity."

"U.S. sanctions on ICC judges are a flagrant attack on the rule of law at the same time as President Trump is working to undercut it at home," Evenson said in a statement. "Sanctions are meant to put a stop to human rights violations, not to punish those seeking justice for the worst crimes."

Supreme Court makes it easier to claim 'reverse discrimination' in employment, in a case from Ohio

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A unanimous Supreme Court made it easier Thursday to bring lawsuits over so-called reverse discrimination, siding with an Ohio woman who claims she didn't get a job and then was demoted because she is straight.

The justices' decision affects lawsuits in 20 states and the District of Columbia where, until now, courts had set a higher bar when members of a majority group, including those who are white and heterosexual, sue for discrimination under federal law.

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson wrote for the court that federal civil rights law draws no distinction between members of majority and minority groups.

"By establishing the same protections for every 'individual' — without regard to that individual's membership in a minority or majority group — Congress left no room for courts to impose special requirements on majority-group plaintiffs alone," Jackson wrote.

The court ruled in an appeal from Marlean Ames, who has worked for the Ohio Department of Youth Services for more than 20 years.

Though he joined Jackson's opinion, Justice Clarence Thomas noted in a separate opinion that some of the country's "largest and most prestigious employers have overtly discriminated against those they deem members of so-called majority groups."

Thomas, joined by Justice Neil Gorsuch, cited a brief filed by America First Legal, a conservative group founded by Trump aide Stephen Miller, to assert that "American employers have long been 'obsessed' with 'diversity, equity, and inclusion' initiatives and affirmative action plans."

Two years ago, the court's conservative majority outlawed consideration of race in university admissions. Since taking office in January, President Donald Trump has ordered an end to DEI policies in the federal government and has sought to end government support for DEI programs elsewhere. Some of the new administration's anti-DEI initiatives have been temporarily blocked in federal court.

Federal agencies have moved quickly to implement Trump's vision and shift priorities to reflect that mission, including rooting out discrimination against members of majority groups.

The head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, responsible for enforcing workplace anti-discrimination laws, has pivoted the agency to focus on eliminating "all forms" of race discrimination, including those stemming from DEI initiatives.

At the same time, Acting Chair Andrea Lucas has moved to deprioritize cases involving discrimination against transgender workers, saying she rejects the idea that "civil rights exist solely to remedy harms against certain groups."

Jackson's opinion makes no mention of DEI. Instead, she focused on Ames' contention that she was passed over for a promotion and then demoted because she is heterosexual. Both the job she sought and the one she had held were given to LGBTQ people.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 bars sex discrimination in the workplace. A trial court and the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against Ames.

The 6th circuit is among the courts that had required an additional requirement for people like Ames, showing "background circumstances" that might include that LGBTQ people made the decisions affecting Ames or statistical evidence of a pattern of discrimination against members of the majority group.

The appeals court noted that Ames didn't provide any such circumstances.

But Jackson wrote that "this additional 'background circumstances' requirement is not consistent with Title VII's text or our case law construing the statute."

French Open: No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka ends Swiatek's reign and meets No. 2 Coco Gauff for the trophy

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

PARIS (AP) — Flecks of rust-colored clay dotted Aryna Sabalenka's back and caked her white shoes as she ripped big shot after big shot against Iga Swiatek on Thursday, the thud of racket-on-string reverberating off the closed roof at the main stadium at Roland Garros.

So used to hearing — and believing — she was a fast-court specialist who couldn't succeed on the slower red clay used at Roland-Garros, the No. 1-ranked Sabalenka showed just how good she can be on the surface by ending Swiatek's 26-match unbeaten streak at the French Open and bid for a record fourth consecutive trophy with a 7-6 (1), 4-6, 6-0 win in Thursday's semifinals.

Now Sabalenka will try to win her fourth Grand Slam title — and first not on a hard court — when she takes on No. 2 Coco Gauff in Saturday's final. It will be the first title match in Paris between the Nos. 1 and 2 women since 2013 and just the second in the past 30 years.

"It's going to mean everything to me and my team, because I have to say that almost (my) whole life, I've been told (clay) is not my thing, and then I didn't have any confidence," Sabalenka said. "In the past — I don't know how many years — we've been able to develop my game so much, so I feel really comfortable on this surface and actually enjoy playing on clay."

Gauff, a 21-year-old American who was the runner-up in 2022 to Swiatek, reached her second French Open final by beating 361st-ranked French wild-card entry Lois Boisson 6-1, 6-2 in a far-less-interesting, far-less-competitive semifinal.

"My first final here, I was super nervous, and I kind of wrote myself off before the match even happened," said Gauff, who is 5-5 against Sabalenka and beat her for the 2023 U.S. Open title at age 19. "Obviously, here, I have a lot more confidence just from playing a Grand Slam final before and doing well in one."

Much to the chagrin of the 15,000 or so locals pulling for their countrywoman at Court Philippe-Chatrier, Gauff vs. Boisson wasn't much of a contest, as might be expected from their rankings and relative experience.

Then again, that didn't stop Boisson from eliminating both No. 3 Jessica Pegula and No. 6 Mirra Andrejeva en route to becoming the first woman since 1989 to get to the semifinals in her Grand Slam debut.

Loud as the crowd was, repeatedly singing Boisson's first name, Gauff's play spoke volumes, too, as she took 20 of the first 30 points for a 4-0 lead. That pattern held, and by the end, Gauff had claimed 34 of the 51 points that lasted at least five strokes.

Most remarkable about Sabalenka's win was the way she dominated in crunch time, racing through the last set.

"I mean, 6-love," she said. "What can I say? Couldn't be more perfect than that."

Swiatek's explanation?

"I lost my intensity a bit," she said. "Just couldn't push back."

This stat says it all: The third set included 12 unforced errors off Swiatek's racket, and zero off Sabalenka's.

This continues a rough stretch for Swiatek, a 24-year-old from Poland, who hasn't reached a final at any tournament since walking away with her third trophy in a row — and fifth Grand Slam title overall — from Paris 12 months ago. She recently slid to No. 5 in the rankings.

Her rut includes a loss in the semifinals at the 2024 Paris Olympics. Later last season, she was suspended for a month after testing positive for a banned substance; her explanation was accepted that the result was caused by a contaminated medicine.

Sabalenka is, unquestionably, as good as it gets in women's tennis right now.

"She didn't doubt," Swiatek said. "She just went for it."

Even though Sabalenka broke in the first game and soon led 4-1 — at which point Swiatek was glancing up at her coach, Wim Fissette, in the stands, hoping for some sort of insight that could change things — this was not one-way traffic. Swiatek ended up leading 5-4 in that set, but when they got to the tiebreaker, Sabalenka asserted herself.

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Did the same in the last set.

"It was a big match, and it felt like a final," said Sabalenka, who won the Australian Open twice and the U.S. Open once. "But I know that the job is not done yet."

Trump says after Xi call that US and China will resume trade talks

By CHRIS MEGERIAN, DIDI TANG and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday that his first call with Chinese leader Xi Jinping since returning to office was "very positive," announcing that the two countries will hold trade talks in hopes of breaking an impasse over tariffs and global supplies of rare earth minerals.

"Our respective teams will be meeting shortly at a location to be determined," Trump wrote on his social media platform after the call, which he said lasted an hour and a half.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer will represent the U.S. side in negotiations.

The Republican president, who returned to the White House for a second term in January, also said Xi "graciously" invited him and first lady Melania Trump to China, and Trump reciprocated with his own invitation for Xi to visit the United States.

The Chinese foreign ministry said Trump initiated the call between the leaders of the world's two biggest economies.

The ministry said in a statement that Xi asked Trump to "remove the negative measures" that the U.S. has taken against China. It also said that Trump said "the U.S. loves to have Chinese students coming to study in America," although his administration has vowed to revoke some of their visas.

Comparing the bilateral relationship to a ship, Xi told Trump that the two sides need to "take the helm and set the right course" and to "steer clear of the various disturbances and disruptions," according to the ministry statement.

Trump had declared one day earlier that it was difficult to reach a deal with Xi.

"I like President XI of China, always have, and always will, but he is VERY TOUGH, AND EXTREMELY HARD TO MAKE A DEAL WITH!!!" Trump posted Wednesday on his social media site.

Craig Singleton, senior director of China program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, said the phone call "simply paused escalation on trade" but "didn't resolve core tensions" in the bilateral relations.

With the White House still weighing more punitive measures, the current calm could be upended as Beijing also is prepared to fight back the moment Washington escalates, Singleton said. "We're likely one competitive action away from further confrontation," Singleton said.

In his note, Gabriel Wildau, managing director at the consultancy Teneo, wrote that the phone call "prevented derailment of trade talks but produced no clear breakthroughs on key issues."

Trade negotiations between the United States and China stalled shortly after a May 12 agreement between the two countries to reduce their tariff rates while talks played out. Behind the gridlock has been the continued competition for an economic edge.

The U.S. accuses China of not exporting critical minerals, and the Chinese government objects to America restricting its sale of advanced chips and its access to student visas for college and graduate students.

Trump has lowered his 145% tariffs on Chinese goods to 30% for 90 days to allow for talks. China also reduced its taxes on U.S. goods from 125% to 10%. The back and forth has caused sharp swings in global markets and threatens to hamper trade between the two countries.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent had suggested that only a conversation between Trump and Xi could resolve these differences so that talks could restart in earnest. The underlying tension between the two countries may still persist, though.

During the call, Xi said the Chinese side is sincere about negotiating and "at the same time has its principles," and the Chinese president said "the Chinese always honor and deliver what has been promised," according to the Chinese foreign ministry.

Even if negotiations resume, Trump wants to lessen America's reliance on Chinese factories and rein-

dustrialize the U.S., whereas China wants the ability to continue its push into technologies such as electric vehicles and artificial intelligence that could be crucial to securing its economic future.

The United States ran a trade imbalance of \$295 billion with China in 2024, according to the Census Bureau. While the Chinese government's focus on manufacturing has turned it into a major economic and geopolitical power, China has been muddling through a slowing economy after a real estate crisis and coronavirus pandemic lockdowns weakened consumer spending.

Trump and Xi last spoke in January, three days before Inauguration Day. The pair discussed trade then, as well as Trump's demands that China do more to prevent the synthetic opioid fentanyl from entering the United States.

Despite long expressing optimism about the prospects for a major deal, Trump became more pessimistic recently.

"The bad news is that China, perhaps not surprisingly to some, HAS TOTALLY VIOLATED ITS AGREEMENT WITH US," Trump posted last week. "So much for being Mr. NICE GUY!"

Fans around the world queue up in long lines for the highly anticipated Nintendo Switch 2 launch

By AYAKA MCGILL Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Throngs of gamers stood in long lines outside of stores hours before they opened Thursday from Tokyo to New York City in hopes of snaring a long-awaited Nintendo Switch 2 video game console.

Enthusiasts have been clamoring for an upgrade to Nintendo's eight-year-old predecessor for years. Nintendo, which is counting on the Switch 2 to boost sagging sales, has added new social features meant to lure players into online gaming.

The much anticipated Switch 2, being released around the world Thursday, is an upgrade to its eight-year-old predecessor with new social features meant to draw players into online gaming. Nintendo is counting on the Switch 2 to boost sagging sales.

In the U.S., a chaotic pre-order process in April left some fans frustrated after the consoles quickly sold out. People lined up early Thursday at stores in hopes of buying one.

"I'm just rolling the dice here," said Edgar Huo, who was in a line of about 25 outside of a Target in the Tribeca neighborhood of Manhattan, New York. Many of those waiting for the store to open had ordered online, but a few like Huo hoped for a chance at purchasing any extra inventory the store had.

In Japan, the new consoles were sold through a competitive lottery system that Nintendo said got about 2.2 million applications.

Outside the official draw, some retailers offered their own lotteries to pre-order the devices.

Koji Takahashi was among those who missed out on the official draw but he was selected in the second round of a lottery held by a major electronics retailer in Japan.

He was first in line waiting outside the store, arriving four hours ahead of its opening. He hoped to secure a limited supply of Nintendo accessories to buy along with his pre-ordered Switch 2.

"I feel very sorry for those who weren't successful in the lottery. But I also had tough time getting this far, so I hope they forgive me!" Takahashi said.

Nintendo of America President Doug Bowser told CBS Morning Plus today that the company is aware of the demand for its newest system and is working to get units into the hands of customers.

"We have a steady supply of manufacturing that will be coming in, and we believe we'll be able to meet that demand all the way through the summer, through Father's Day and then on into the holiday period also," Bowser said.

The new console comes with a larger and higher resolution screen than its predecessor, with improved processing power, offering smoother and more vivid graphics. Central to its updated system is a new "C" button on its controller, which will launch a "GameChat" feature that requires a subscription to Nintendo's Switch online service. It allows players to "communicate with friends and family while playing a game," and lets them share their game screen with others. A built-in microphone will also allow chatting with

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other gamers.

Nintendo has said it expects to sell 15 million Switch 2 consoles for the fiscal year through March 2026.

The company also rolled out new Switch 2 editions for two of its popular "Legend of Zelda" games. A Pokemon title and a Kirby game are also coming, as well as offerings from outside video game publishers.

The Switch 2's rollout arrives at an uncertain time for much of the gaming industry due to new tariffs implemented by U.S. President Donald Trump.

In the U.S., the Switch 2's baseline launch price is \$449.99 — significantly higher than the original Switch's \$299 price tag.

U.S. preorders for the Switch 2 were delayed for several weeks so the company could assess the potential impact of tariffs.

ECB cuts benchmark interest rate by quarter point as Trump tariffs threaten economy

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The European Central Bank cut its benchmark interest rate for an eighth time, aiming to support businesses and consumers with more affordable borrowing as U.S. President Donald Trump's trade war threatens to slow already tepid growth.

The bank's rate-setting council cut interest rates by a quarter of a point Thursday at the bank's skyscraper headquarters in Frankfurt. Analysts expected a cut, given the gloomier outlook for growth since Trump announced a slew of new tariffs April 2 and subsequently threatened to impose a crushing 50% tariff, or import tax, on European goods.

The bigger question remains how far the bank will go at subsequent meetings. Bank President Christine Lagarde indicated at a post-decision news conference that much depends on whether trade tensions with the U.S. can be resolved.

"A further escalation in global trade tensions and associated uncertainties could lower euro area growth by dampening exports and dragging down investment and consumption," Lagarde said. "By contrast, if trade and geopolitical tensions were resolved swiftly, this could lift sentiment and spur activity. A further increase in defense and infrastructure spending, together with productivity enhancing reforms, would also add to growth."

While the trade war and the uncertainty that goes with it is holding back growth, the ECB said the economy should get additional stimulus from higher government spending on defense and infrastructure. European governments are stepping up plans for defense purchases to counter Russia and its invasion of Ukraine. The spending boosts arrive amid concern that the U.S. is no longer a fully committed ally in support of Ukraine.

Given the level of uncertainty, Lagarde said, the bank was "not committing to a particular rate path" for future policy meetings.

Thursday's decision took the bank's benchmark rate to 2%, down from a peak of 4% in 2023-24.

Lagarde also addressed a journalist's question about a report in the Financial Times that she had discussed leaving her post before the end of her term to become head of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "I can very firmly tell you that I have always been, and am, fully determined to deliver on my mission, and I'm determined to complete my term," she said. "So I regret to tell you that you're not about to see the back of me." Lagarde's eight-year term ends October 31, 2027.

The bank raised rates to suppress an outbreak of inflation in 2021-23 that was triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and by the rebound from the pandemic. But as inflation fell, the bank shifted gears toward supporting growth by lowering rates. With inflation now down to 1.9%, below the bank's target of 2%, analysts say the bank has room to take rates even lower to support growth.

Trump announced a 20% tariff, or import tax, on goods from the European Union. He later threatened to raise the tariff to 50% after expressing dissatisfaction with the progress of trade talks with the EU's executive commission, which handles trade issues for the 27-member union. Trump and the EU's execu-

tive commission have agreed to suspend implementation and any retaliation by the EU until July 14 as negotiators seek to reach agreement.

Trump added more disruption this week by suddenly increasing a 25% tariff on steel imports to 50% for all countries except for the U.K.

The threat of even higher tariffs has raised fears that growth will underperform already modest forecasts. The EU's executive commission lowered its growth forecast for this year to 0.9% from 1.3% on the optimistic assumption that the 20% tariff rate can be negotiated down to no more than 10%.

What to know about the much-anticipated Nintendo Switch 2 on launch day

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Nintendo Switch 2 finally hit store shelves on Thursday, eight years after the initial release of Japanese video-game maker Nintendo's popular video game console.

Even with a hefty \$450 price tag, fans around the world, from Japan to the U.S., lined up outside stores to pick up pre-orders or have a chance to buy the device. The release ends months of anticipation that included pre-order hiccups and fears that tariffs would delay the release of the Switch 2.

Here's what to know about the release and where you can buy it.

What is the Nintendo Switch?

The Nintendo Switch's unique ability to switch from a handheld console to a traditional one helped make it a hit when it launched in 2017. The Nintendo Switch Lite, which was a handheld-only device released two years later, also became popular, especially during the pandemic. It helped usher in bestselling Nintendo games including "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild," "Mario Kart 8 Deluxe" and "Animal Crossing: New Horizons."

The Nintendo Switch 2 adds interactive chat and screenshare functions to connect gamers. It will also have a more vibrant display and a larger screen.

Nintendo has sold a total of 152 million Switches, just behind its best-selling Nintendo DS console which saw 154 million units move, according to the company. But demand has dwindled for the Switch, now in its eighth year after its debut. Nintendo hopes the new console will boost its declining sales.

How much is it and where do I buy it?

The base Switch 2 costs \$450 and a bundle with the new "Mario Kart World" included costs \$500. It can be found online and in-store at major retailers like Walmart, Target and Best Buy, as well as specialty retailers such as GameStop, but it is expected to be snapped up fast and widespread shortages are expected.

What were the hiccups in the rollout?

The on-again, off-again tariffs ordered by President Trump — which included goods from Japan — sparked fears Nintendo might have to delay the device. But the launch comes within the 90-day pause on most tariffs. U.S. preorders for the Switch 2 were delayed for several weeks so the company could assess the potential impact of tariffs.

When they started in April, high demand sparked a chaotic pre-order process. Scores of consumers trying to pre-order ran into delays or errors.

Shoppers took to social media to share long wait times and screenshots of error messages and carts that suddenly went empty. Nintendo acknowledged the "very high demand" at the time and said it was working hard to fulfill orders, but also urged people to try to buy the device without a pre-order on June 5.

What are Nintendo's expectations for the device?

Nintendo said it expects to sell 15 million Switch 2 consoles for the fiscal year through March 2026.

The company is hoping the device jump-starts its sagging sales. In May Nintendo reported a 43% decline in profit for the fiscal year through March but promised a turnaround.

Ukraine's drone attack on Russian air bases is a lesson for the West on its vulnerabilities

By EMMA BURROWS Associated Press

The targets were Russian warplanes, including strategic bombers and command-and-control aircraft, worth hundreds of millions of dollars. The weapons were Ukrainian drones, each costing under \$1,000 and launched from wooden containers carried on trucks.

"Operation Spiderweb," which Ukraine said destroyed or damaged over 40 aircraft parked near air bases across Russia on Sunday, wasn't just a blow to the Kremlin's prestige. It was also a wake-up call for the West to bolster its air defense systems against such hybrid tactics, military experts said.

Ukraine took advantage of inexpensive drone technology that has advanced rapidly in the last decade and combined it with outside-the-box thinking to score a morale-boosting win in the 3-year-old war that lately has turned in Moscow's favor.

How deeply the attack will impact Russian military operations is unclear. Although officials in Kyiv estimated it caused \$7 billion in damage, the Russian Foreign Ministry disputed that, and there have been no independent assessments. Moscow still has more aircraft to launch its bombs and cruise missiles against Ukraine.

Still, the operation showed what "modern war really looks like and why it's so important to stay ahead with technology," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Where the West is vulnerable

For Western governments, it's a warning that "the spectrum of threats they're going to have to take into consideration only gets broader," said Douglas Barrie, senior fellow for military aerospace at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London.

In the past decade, European countries have accused Russia of carrying out a sabotage campaign against the West, with targets ranging from defense executives and logistics companies to businesses linked to Ukraine. Unidentified drones have been seen in the past year flying near military bases in the U.S., the U.K and Germany, as well as above weapons factories in Norway.

High-value weapons and other technology at those sites are "big, juicy targets for both state and non-state actors," said Caitlin Lee, a drone warfare expert at RAND in Washington.

"The time is now" to invest in anti-drone defenses, she said.

Low-cost options to protect aircraft include using hardened shelters, dispersing the targets to different bases and camouflaging them or even building decoys.

U.S. President Donald Trump last month announced a \$175 billion "Golden Dome" program using space-based weapons to protect the country from long-range missiles.

Not mentioned were defenses against drones, which Lee said can be challenging because they fly low and slow, and on radar can look like birds. They also can be launched inside national borders, unlike a supersonic missile fired from abroad.

Drones "dramatically increase" the capacity by a hostile state or group for significant sabotage, said Fabian Hinz, a missile expert and research fellow at IISS.

"How many targets are there in a country? How well can you defend every single one of them against a threat like that?" he said.

Ukraine's resourceful, outside-the-box thinking

In "Operation Spiderweb," Ukraine said it smuggled the first-person view, or FPV, drones into Russia, where they were placed in the wooden containers and eventually driven by truck close to the airfields in the Irkutsk region in Siberia, the Murmansk region in the Arctic, and the Amur region in the Far East, as well as to two bases in western Russia.

Ukraine's Security Service, or SBU, said the drones had highly automated capabilities and were partly piloted by an operator and partly by using artificial intelligence, which flew them along a pre-planned route in the event the drones lost signal. Such AI technology almost certainly would have been unavailable to

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Ukraine five years ago.

SBU video showed drones swooping over and under Russian aircraft, some of which were covered by tires. Experts suggested the tires could have been used to confuse an automatic targeting system by breaking up the plane's silhouette or to offer primitive protection.

"The way in which the Ukrainians brought this together is creative and obviously caught the Russians completely off guard," Barrie said.

Satellite photos analyzed by The Associated Press showed seven destroyed bombers on the tarmac at Irkutsk's Belaya Air Base, a major installation for Russia's long-range bomber force. At least three Tu-95 four-engine turboprop bombers and four Tu-22M twin-engine supersonic bombers appear to be destroyed.

Since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, the outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian military has adopted a creative approach to warfare. Its forces deployed wooden decoys of expensive U.S. HIMARS air defense systems to draw Russia's missile fire, created anti-drone units that operate on pickup trucks, and repurposed captured weapons.

Experts compared Sunday's attack to Israel's operation last year in which pagars used by members of the militant group Hezbollah exploded almost simultaneously in Lebanon and Syria. Israel also has used small, exploding drones to attack targets in Lebanon and Iran.

The U.S. used Predator drones more than a decade ago to kill insurgents in Afghanistan from thousands of miles away. Developments in technology have made those capabilities available in smaller drones.

Hinz compared the state of drone warfare to that of the development of the tank, which made its debut in 1916 in World War I. Engineers sought to work out how to best integrate tanks into a working battlefield scenario — contemplating everything from a tiny vehicle to a giant one "with 18 turrets" before settling on the version used in World War II.

With drones, "we are in the phase of figuring that out, and things are changing so rapidly that what works today might not work tomorrow," he said.

How the attack affects Russian operations in Ukraine

The Tu-95 bombers hit by Ukraine are "effectively irreplaceable" because they're no longer in production, said Hinz, the IISS expert. Ukraine said it also hit an A-50 early warning and control aircraft, similar to the West's AWACS planes, that coordinate aerial attacks. Russia has even fewer of these.

"Whichever way you cut the cake for Russia, this requires expense," said Thomas Withington of the Royal United Services Institute in London. "You can see the billions of dollars mounting up,"

Russia must repair the damaged planes, better protect its remaining aircraft and improve its ability to disrupt such operations, he said. Experts also suggested the strikes could force Moscow to speed up its program to replace the Tu-95.

While underscoring Russian vulnerabilities, it's not clear if it will mean reduced airstrikes on Ukraine.

Russia has focused on trying to overwhelm Ukraine's air defenses with drones throughout the war, including the use of decoys without payloads. On some nights last month, Moscow launched over 300 drones.

"Even if Ukraine was able to damage a significant portion of the Russian bomber force, it's not entirely clear that the bomber force was playing a linchpin role in the war at this point," Lee said.

Ukrainian air force data analyzed by AP shows that from July 2024 through December 2024, Russia used Tu-22M3s and Tu-95s 14 times against Ukraine but used drones almost every night.

Sunday's operation might temporarily reduce Russia's ability to launch strategic missile attacks but it will probably find ways to compensate, Lee said.

Indonesia arrests foreign nationals in Bali on drugs charges that could carry the death penalty

By FIRDIA LISNAWATI and EDNA TARIGAN Associated Press

DENPASAR, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian authorities on the tourist island of Bali on Thursday announced the arrests of several foreign nationals, including an Australian, an Indian, and an American, on suspicion

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of possessing narcotics, charges that could carry the death penalty.

Customs officers at Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport arrested an Indian national with the initials H.V., who was carrying a duffel bag, in the customs and excise inspection area on May 29. The officers found narcotic-related items in his belongings, authorities said.

Following up on the interrogation of H.V., later that day, officers from the National Narcotics Agency of Bali Province arrested an Australian man with the initials P.R., who has been visiting Bali since 1988.

P.R. asked H.V. to bring the duffel bag from Los Angeles to Bali, said I Made Sinar Subawa, an official from the narcotics agency, at a news conference.

During a search at a house where he stayed, officers found some narcotics in the form of hashish, a cannabis concentrate product, that belonged to P.R. and had been purchased over the Telegram messaging app.

The hashish was shipped from Los Angeles and Philippines before finally received in Bali, Subawa said. Officers seized 191 grams (6.7 ounces) of hashish along with some candies consisting of tetrahydrocannabinol, and 488 grams (17.2 ounces) of marijuana.

Both P.R. and H.V. are now suspected of dealing in narcotics, based on the evidence that was found with them, Subawa said.

"P.R. is suspected of violating Indonesia's Narcotics Law which carries the death penalty, life imprisonment, or imprisonment for a minimum of four years and a maximum of 12 years," said Subawa.

Along with H.V. and P.R., the agency also arrested W.M., an American, on May 23 while he was collecting a package from a post office in Bali.

An officer opened the package carried by W.M. and found seven pieces of silver packaging containing a total of 99 orange amphetamine pills and secured one white Apple iPhone brand cellphone.

The agency, at a news conference in the city of Denpasar on Thursday presented the evidence, including marijuana and hashish, seized from the suspects.

All suspects will undergo legal proceedings in Indonesia, including trial and sentencing.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime says Indonesia is a major drug-smuggling hub despite having some of the strictest drug laws in the world, in part because international drug syndicates target its young population.

The Southeast Asian country has extremely strict drug laws, and convicted smugglers can face severe penalties, including the possibility of execution by firing squad.

On Tuesday, three British nationals accused of smuggling nearly a kilogram (over two pounds) of cocaine into Indonesia were charged Tuesday in a court on Bali, while on May 27, an Australian man was arrested on suspicion of smuggling cocaine. If convicted, any or all of them could face the death penalty.

About 530 people, including 96 foreigners, are on death row in Indonesia, mostly for drug-related crimes, latest figures from the Ministry of Immigration and Corrections show. Indonesia's last executions, of an Indonesian and three foreigners, were carried out in July 2016.

Today in History: June 6, Allies land in Normandy on D-Day

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, June 6, the 157th day of 2025. There are 208 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 6, 1944, during World War II, nearly 160,000 Allied troops landed in Normandy, France, on D-Day as they launched Operation Overlord to liberate German-occupied Western Europe. More than 4,400 Allied troops were killed on D-Day, including 2,501 Americans.

Also on this date:

In 1844, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) was founded in London.

In 1889, an industrial accident sparked a devastating fire in Seattle, Washington, destroying 120 acres of the city center, including the majority of the city's commercial district and waterfront.

In 1912, Novarupta, a volcano on the Alaska peninsula, began a three-day eruption, sending ash nearly

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19 miles (30 kilometers) high; it was the most powerful volcanic eruption of the 20th century and the largest ever recorded in North America.

In 1933, the first drive-in movie theater opened, in Camden, New Jersey.

In 1939, the first Little League Baseball game was played as Lundy Lumber defeated Lycoming Dairy 23-8 in Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

In 1966, civil rights activist James Meredith was shot and wounded by a sniper on the second day of Meredith's march from Memphis, Tennessee, to Jackson, Mississippi, which he began to raise awareness of ongoing racial oppression in the South. (Meredith would recover from his injuries and was able to rejoin the march, which had grown from a small group of supporters to 15,000 marchers, the day before the group arrived in Jackson.)

In 2015, American Pharoah became the first horse in 37 years to claim horse racing's Triple Crown, winning the Belmont Stakes by 5 ½ lengths.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Gary U.S. Bonds is 86. Civil rights activist Marian Wright Edelman is 86. Country musician Joe Stampley is 82. Olympic track & field gold medalist Tommie Smith is 81. Actor Robert Englund is 78. Folk singer Holly Near is 76. Sen. Sandra Bernhard is 70. Tennis Hall of Famer Bjorn Borg is 69. Comedian Colin Quinn is 66. Music producer Jimmy Jam is 66. Filmmaker Hirokazu Kore-eda is 63. Actor Jason Isaacs is 62. Actor Paul Giamatti is 58. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth is 45. Actor Aubrey Anderson-Emmons (TV: "Modern Family") is 18.