

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, July 10

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon bleu hot dish, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Legion at Clark Tourney

Jr. Teeners hosts Watertown 13U, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Softball: U8G hosts Mellette, 6 p.m. (DH)

T-Ball G&B Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

## Friday, July 11

Senior Menu: Chicken strips au gratin, mixed vegetables, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Legion at Clark Tourney

VFW Class B U12 State Baseball Tourney in Groton



## Saturday, July 12

Legion at Clark Tourney

VFW Class B U12 State Baseball Tourney n Groton

## Sunday, July 13

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.

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.

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.

Amateurs at Clark, 4 p.m.

VFW Class B U12 State Baseball Tourney n Groton Summer Fest/Car Show, 9 a.m., City Park

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

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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.**

## Ruidoso Flash Floods

At least three people have died after historic flash flooding in the mountain town of Ruidoso, southern New Mexico. Two and a half inches of rainfall triggered a runoff in the Rio Ruidoso river Tuesday, causing waters to rise roughly 20 feet—the highest spike since 1978. At one river gauge, waters rose 19 feet in less than an hour. Vehicles and at least one entire home were swept away. At least 85 people were rescued.

Wildfires last year near the river—including the South Fork and Salt fires—may have contributed to the flooding. Fires reduce the vegetation and roots holding soil in place; they can cause the soil to become unstable and more susceptible to flash floods. The floods this week come amid the North American monsoon season, impacting the US Southwest from July to early- or mid-September.

Separately, the death toll from central Texas floods has risen to 120 people. Over 170 people are believed to be missing.

## Most Valuable Company

Chipmaking giant Nvidia became the first company to surpass \$4T in market value yesterday. Shares rose 2.8% after opening to reach an intraday all-time high of \$164 each, powered by growing investment in artificial intelligence.

Nvidia was founded in 1993 with a focus on developing graphics processing units, primarily for the video game market. Unlike central processing units in a typical computer, GPUs are built to parallel process specific tasks.

With tech giants like Microsoft, Amazon, and Alphabet reliant on Nvidia's high-powered chips to power their AI systems, the company's valuation has skyrocketed in recent years—from under \$600B valuation two years ago to the world's most valuable company today. The California-based company commands close to 90% of the semiconductor market, far outpacing competitors like Advanced Micro Devices and Cerebras Systems.

## Formula 1 Exec Ousted

Red Bull Racing fired Christian Horner yesterday as team principal and CEO. Horner, who has led the decorated Formula 1 team since its 2005 debut, will be replaced by Laurent Mekies, the principal of sister team Racing Bulls.

Red Bull provided no reason for the ouster, but it comes over a year after Horner was accused of inappropriate behavior toward a female colleague, including sending sexually suggestive messages. He denied and was later cleared internally of the allegations, but the scandal created strain, with star racer Max Verstappen's father openly criticizing Horner. His firing follows the exits of key leaders like car designer Adrian Newey and a disappointing midseason standing. Typically a top-three team, Red Bull currently sits in fourth place.

While F1 remains most popular in Europe, its US fan base has grown 10% since last year. The league, worth over \$25B, largely credits the rise to investments in US-based races and media, including a Netflix docuseries and feature film starring Brad Pitt.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

President Donald Trump to attend Sunday's FIFA Club World Cup final between Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain.

Brazil national soccer coach Carlo Ancelotti gets one-year prison sentence in Spain for failure to pay taxes.

"Ne Zha 2," Chinese animated film that made \$2.2B at global box office, sets Aug. 22 release date for English-language version, which will include Michelle Yeoh as part of the voice cast.

Max officially reverts its name back to HBO Max just two years after initial switch.

"Big Bang Theory" spinoff series confirmed for HBO Max.

## Science & Technology

Researchers isolate the oldest proteins ever analyzed, recovered from the enamel of an extinct rhino species at least 18 million years old.

New study estimates 27 million tons of nanoplastics—plastic particles smaller than the width of spider silk—exist in the North Atlantic Ocean; results raise concerns over the penetration of such particles into marine food chains.

Significant weight loss triggers mechanisms in cells to begin recycling harmful lipids and the removal of senescent, or no longer dividing, cells; study is the most detailed to date on how weight loss impacts fat tissue.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.6%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq +1.0%).

President Donald Trump sends letters detailing new import tariffs to at least seven more countries.

Federal Reserve's meeting minutes from June show officials divided over tariff-driven inflation and number of interest rate cuts.

X CEO Linda Yaccarino steps down after over two years in the role; shake-up comes after Elon Musk merged X with Grok chatbot maker xAI in March.

Retailers log \$7.9B in online sales in first 24 hours of Amazon's four-day Prime Day event, up 9.9% year over year.

Pharmaceutical giant Merck to buy UK-based Verona Pharma for roughly \$10B; acquisition is Merck's largest since its nearly \$11B purchase of Prometheus Biosciences in 2023.

## Politics & World Affairs

US Justice Department sues the California Department of Education for allowing transgender athletes to compete in school sports; alleges the state is violating antidiscrimination laws.

President Donald Trump hosts five African leaders through Friday, with a focus on the continent's economic potential.

The US resumes sending some weapons to Ukraine after pausing deliveries earlier this month.

Russia launches record attack on Ukraine, per Ukrainian officials.

European Court of Human Rights rules Russia violated international humanitarian law in Ukraine, shot down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in 2014.

French police raid the headquarters of the far-right National Rally party as part of a probe into whether the party broke campaign finance laws.

Seoul repatriates six North Koreans who accidentally drifted into South Korean waters, the first such return under South Korean President Lee Jae-myung.

## Bats Show Up In Groton Legion Post 39 Win Against Lisbon Post 7

By GameChanger Media

Bats were blistered as Groton Legion Post 39 took down Lisbon Post 7 13-9 on Wednesday at Groton. Groton Legion Post 39 collected 13 hits, while Lisbon Post 7 had 11.

Both teams had their chances in the game, but eventually Groton Legion Post 39 took the lead thanks to a double in the sixth inning.

Lisbon Post 7 opened the scoring in the first after Eli Lyons doubled, scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 captured the lead, 4-1, in the bottom of the first after Korbin Kucker homered to left field, Nick Morris was struck by a pitch, Braxton Imrie walked, and Karsten Fliehs hit a sacrifice fly, each scoring one run.

Lisbon Post 7 jumped back into the lead in the top of the fifth inning after Cameron Cordero hit a sacrifice fly, and Camden Rondestvedt singled to center field, each scoring one run.

Groton Legion Post 39 captured the lead, 7-5, in the bottom of the fifth when Brevin Fliehs doubled, scoring two runs, and Carter Simon hit a sacrifice fly, scoring one run.

Lisbon Post 7 jumped into the lead in the top of the sixth when Jordyn Bittner singled, scoring one run, and an error scored two runs.

Groton Legion Post 39 flipped the game on its head in the bottom of the sixth, scoring six runs on seven hits to take the lead, 13-8. The biggest blow in the inning was a double by Kucker that drove in two.

Kucker earned the win for Groton Legion Post 39. The righty surrendered seven hits and five runs over five innings, striking out three and walking six. Greyson Lions took the loss for Lisbon Post 7. The starting pitcher went six innings, giving up 13 runs on 13 hits, striking out one and walking three. TC Schuster appeared in relief for Groton Legion Post 39.

Groton Legion Post 39 amassed 13 hits in the game. Fliehs and Kucker were tough to handle back-to-back in the lineup, as each drove in three runs for Groton Legion Post 39. Morris and Simon each collected multiple hits for Groton Legion Post 39.

Lisbon Post 7 amassed 11 hits in the game. Bittner went 4-for-4 at the plate to lead Lisbon Post 7 in hits. Lyons collected two hits for Lisbon Post 7 in five at bats. Lisbon Post 7 had a strong eye at the plate, tallying seven walks for the game. Jaydin Howard and Lincoln Adair led the team with two free passes each. Lisbon Post 7 didn't commit a single error in the field. Elliot Welter had the most chances in the field with six.

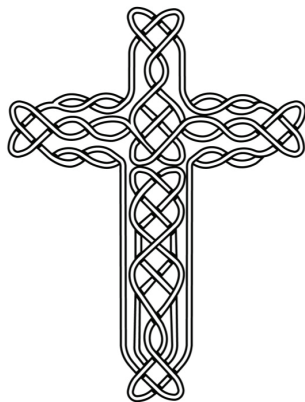
Groton Legion Post 39 will travel to Clark Rotary Tournament for their next game on Thursday.



## Golden Threads

“Take my instruction instead of silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold; for wisdom is better than jewels.

Proverbs 8:10-11



designed by freepik.com

### Ladies Luncheon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

By Bethesda Women of the ELCA

Silent Auction opens at 10:30

Guest Speaker: Melinda Eikamp,  
“Weaving Threads of our Heritage”

Luncheon at Noon

Tickets: \$15.00

**Deadline to purchase tickets is Friday, July 11**

Kay Espeland 605-492-3507

Jane Goehring 605-290-1420

Or contact any WELCA member



## Groton Legion Post 39 Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats

By GameChanger Media

Groton Legion Post 39 have been playing well lately, going 8-2 in their last 10 games. They'll put that strong play to the test when they take on Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats on today at Clark at 10 a.m. Groton will then play Devils Lake Storm at 2 p.m. today.

### Last Time Out:

Groton Legion Post 39 topped Lisbon Post 7 13-9 at Groton. Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats fell to Post 1 14-1 at Colton.

### Player Highlight:

Taylor Diegel hits and pitches for Groton Legion Post 39. Diegel primarily plays center field on the field. Diegel has driven in a run in the past three games. The center fielder has hit 5-12 and driven in four runs during the streak. Diegel will look to extend a 5-game hitting streak. The center fielder has hit 0.444 during the streak. Diegel has an on-base percentage of 0.515 this season thanks in part to a 0.415 average and 16 walks. Diegel has induced 13 groundballs on 31 balls in play this season.

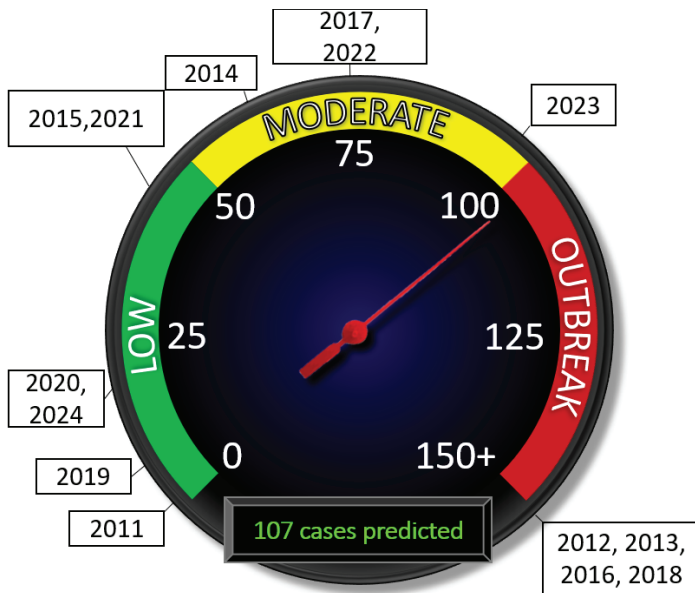
### About Groton Legion Post 39:

Groton Legion Post 39 has played well lately, going 8-2 in their last 10 games. They have a 19-5 record overall. Brevin Fliehs's 1.299 OPS leads Groton Legion Post 39. The shortstop has a 0.525 OBP and a 0.774 slugging percentage this season. Nick Morris leads Groton Legion Post 39 with 28 and two-thirds innings pitched. The starting pitcher has a 1.47 ERA this season. Karsten Fliehs leads Groton Legion Post 39 with 159 total fielding chances this season. Fliehs's primary position is catcher.

### About Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats:

Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats has an 8-7 record this season. Alex Wingen's 1.207 OPS leads Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats. The right-handed hitter has a 0.644 OBP and a 0.562 slugging percentage this season. Carter Sorenson leads Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats with 22 and one-third innings pitched. The lefty has a 3.76 ERA this season. Mason Hemme leads Colton Legion Post 206 Yard Goats with 103 total fielding chances this season. Hemme's primary position is catcher.

## South Dakota Mosquito



SD WNV (as of July 9):

No human cases reported.  
1 human viremic blood donor (Brown)  
3 counties with positive mosquito pools (Brown, Lincoln, Minnehaha)

US WNV (as of July 1): 24 cases (AL, AR, AZ, CA, GA, LA, MS, ND, NE, OK, SC, TN, TX, VA)

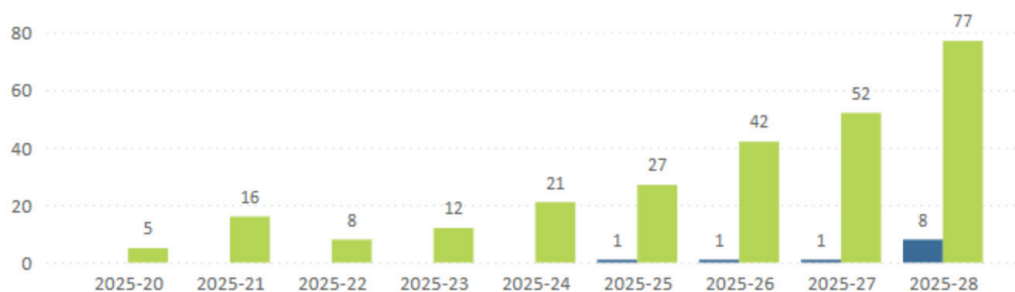
WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2025, South Dakota (as of July 9)

Mosquito Surveillance Summary for 2025

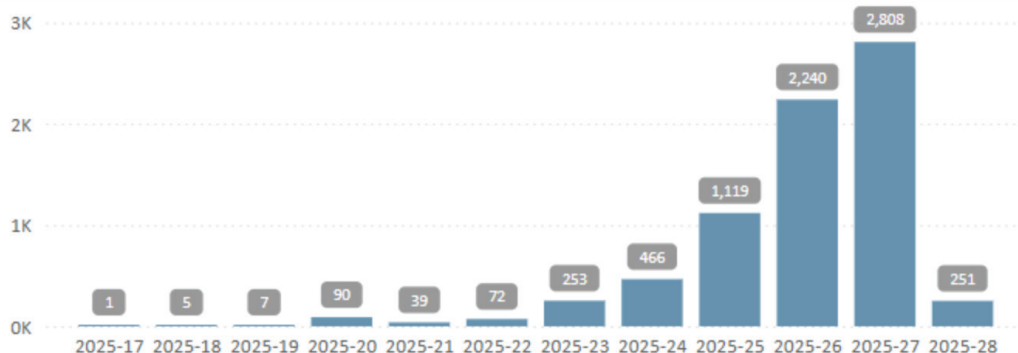
Total sites collecting mosquitoes: 47  
Total mosquito pools tested: 271  
% positivity: 4.06%

Number of Mosquito Pools Tested by MMWR Week and Status

Test Status: ● Positive ● Negative



Culex Mosquitoes Collected by MMWR Week





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### State lawmaker files statement of candidacy to run for U.S. House

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR - JULY 9, 2025 5:27 PM

A Republican state legislator from Madison filed his statement of candidacy Wednesday to run for South Dakota's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Casey Crabtree is the second Republican to take a formal step toward running, after Attorney General Marty Jackley. Current Republican U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson is running for governor next year.

Crabtree, 42, who currently serves in the state Senate, submitted paperwork to the Federal Election Commission. He did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but did share his interest in a statement issued last week.

"I'm thankful for Dusty's work in Congress supporting South Dakota and Trump's America First agenda," he said at the time. "South Dakota has had giants like John Thune, Kristi Noem, and Dusty Johnson represent us in the U.S. House, and those are big shoes to fill. My family and I have received a lot of encouragement across the state to consider a bid for this open seat. I am strongly considering this opportunity and we will look at this as a family through prayer and serious conversations."

Jackley announced his campaign last month, the same day Johnson publicly scheduled his announcement for governor. Jackley has since filed with the Federal Election Commission.

Crabtree works as an economic development director for Heartland Energy in Madison, and served as state Senate majority leader during the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions.

The Republican primary election is in June 2026, with the statewide general election to follow in November 2026.

Besides Crabtree and Jackley, James Bialota, who describes himself as a small business owner and real estate investor, has said on Facebook that he plans to run as a Republican for the U.S. House.

A Democrat named Scott Schlagel has also filed paperwork with the Federal Election Commission to run for the House seat.

*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.*

### After new prison vote, Corrections leader says penitentiary should 'never have another inmate in it'

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 9, 2025 5:02 PM

SIoux FALLS — South Dakota Department of Corrections Secretary Kellie Wasko said Wednesday she's buoyed by a vote from the state's prison task force endorsing a \$650 million, 1,500-bed men's prison in Sioux Falls.

Whatever happens with a new prison, she said, the 144-year-old penitentiary it's meant to replace should "never have another inmate in it."

Speaking after a penitentiary tour for members of the media, Wasko said she's hopeful the state can meet its correctional needs for the recommended dollar amount.

The \$650 million price point is about \$75 million less than the state's prison construction manager and prison design consultant said would be necessary to build 1,500 beds.



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Wasko said she's "optimistic" that the job can be done for less, but acknowledged "we are going to have to make some design changes."

"We need this facility, and we want this facility, so we're going to work to get to that \$650 million budget," Wasko said, while adding "we can't slack" on safety features.

The Project Prison Reset task force made its recommendation Tuesday. Gov. Larry Rhoden created the group in February, after lawmakers failed to endorse a 1,500-bed, \$825 million prison in Lincoln County. The task force's missions were to decide if South Dakota needs a prison or prisons, then to decide how large and where to build.

The group will present its suggestions to the Legislature during a special session. Rhoden opted to push back the initial July date of that session, but has yet to pick a new date.

The state already has \$566 million set aside in an incarceration construction fund, including about \$50 million earmarked for a women's prison in Rapid City, which is currently under construction.

Should lawmakers approve a prison on one of two undeveloped industrial sites in northeastern Sioux Falls, Wasko said the state penitentiary could make a great museum, or perhaps a training center for law enforcement tactical teams. She called herself "an architecture geek of prisons" who wouldn't want to see the building demolished. Parts of the complex are made of Sioux quartzite, similar to other historic buildings in downtown Sioux Falls.

"I just like seeing these big, beautiful prisons that were built back then," she said. "I just don't like seeing people housed in them."

*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.*

## COMMENTARY

### In 'Little House' books and life, the plow followed the rain

**New book examines Laura Ingalls Wilder novels for lessons about the world around us**

**by Barbara Boustead**

The following excerpt is from the new book "Wilder Weather," which is available from the South Dakota Historical Society Press.

As railroads extended into Dakota Territory from the late 1870s to mid-1880s and the Homestead Act provided land, the settler population surged in a period dubbed the "Great Dakota Boom." The population increased across Dakota Territory from just over 98,000 in 1880 to 348,600 in 1890. Economic fortunes were tied closely to the success of agriculture and ranching, from the growing stages using the Homestead Act plots of land to the shipment of goods via the railroad network. Little did the settlers know how good they had it, how flush with rain they were. Homesteaders had unknowingly arrived on the Plains during a relatively wet (or "pluvial") period. Rain had not followed the plow; the plow had followed the rain. Homesteaders plowed up the prairie and planted crops with the mistaken impression that enough rain would continue to fall to support the acreage they tilled.

Then the pendulum swung, passing right through the "normal" middle-of-the-road rainfall and far into the dry side. To the homesteaders, the lack of rain must have felt as jarring as shifting from fifth gear to first in an old pickup truck. They were new to the Dakota climate still, not yet aware of how wide the swings could be between wet periods and dry. The skies and soils dried out just as the newly married Wilders began their farming years in the mid- to late 1880s, adding layers of difficulty from the very beginning of their years together. Laura had promised Almanzo just three years to give farming a try, and the drought sunk in its teeth by the end of their third year of marriage in 1888.

As in the 1870s during Wilder's Plum Creek days, a La Niña pattern established itself in the distant equatorial Pacific Ocean in the late 1880s through the late 1890s, dominating global weather patterns for nearly a decade. Recall that in the United States, La Niña patterns favor dry conditions in the southern

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Great Plains, often spreading northward into the central Great Plains when La Niña continues for multiple years. La Niña conditions occurred in 1886-1887, 1889-1890, and 1892-1895. The La Niñas of the 1890s were stronger and more consecutive than those of the 1870s, which can strengthen the downstream impacts. While not the only contributing factor, the persistent La Niña-like pattern was a significant driver of the dry weather patterns affecting wide swaths of the central United States.

In Huron, South Dakota, the driest summer on record (stretching back to 1881) remains the summer of 1894. The summer of 1893 ranks as eleventh driest and 1889 as seventeenth driest. In Huron, the dryness of the late 1880s through the mid-1890s was just about as profound as the 1930s "Dust Bowl" years. The temperatures for all three of those years (1889, 1893, and 1894) were above average, too, compared to an 1881-1910 average. In fact, the summertime average temperature in 1894 was the warmest on record until 1921, on level with the Dust Bowl years of the 1930s, and still ranks well above normal even including the warmer recent decades in the full record. Put a different way, the heat of the late 1880s to mid-1890s was roughly a once-in-a-generation event at the time, though it has become more of an every-other-year occasion in our modern climate.

The dry summers of the late 1880s into the 1890s were too much to take for many would-be farmers, and the settlers who were still so new to the land abandoned it in droves. The bust years peaked in the early to mid-1890s as relentless drought conditions caused crop failures year after year. Combined with factors such as lack of federal and state support for government relief for the farmers and a broader economic depression in the United States, drought was key to ending the boom of population expansion in the Dakotas. Emigration from the Dakotas in the early 1890s caused a net loss in population from 348,600 in 1890 to 331,000 by 1895.

The Wilders and their young daughter, Rose, were one of the families driven from their homestead by drought. Leaving De Smet in 1890, they moved in with Almanzo Wilder's parents in Spring Valley, Minnesota, for a year to find respite, and then to Westville, Florida, in search of opportunity. Disappointed there, the family returned to De Smet in 1892. They lived in town as Laura worked as a seamstress and Almanzo worked varying jobs, saving money so the family could resettle for good. The Wilders made no attempt to farm when they returned to De Smet, paralleling the Ingalls family experience of Wilder's childhood, in which they lived in town and did not farm when they returned to Walnut Grove after their unsuccessful year in Burr Oak, Iowa.

Charmed by a pamphlet advertising life in the Ozarks, the Wilder family made the decision to move to Missouri in 1894, at the climax of the drought. In an introduction to her mother's published travel journal, *On the Way Home*, Rose Wilder Lane later penned the conditions she had observed when they departed De Smet for good: "For seven years there had been too little rain. The prairies were dust. Day after day, summer after summer, the scorching winds blew the dust and the sun was brassy in a yellow sky. Crop after crop failed. Again and again the barren land had to be mortgaged, for taxes and food and next year's seed. The agony of hope ended when there was no harvest and no more credit, no money to pay interest and taxes; the banker took the land. Then the bank failed."

*Dr. Barbara Boustead is a meteorologist and climatologist as well as a Laura Ingalls Wilder scholar. Born in Michigan, Boustead lives in Nebraska with her family and frequently travels across the Plains and Midwest looking for storms, history, natural beauty and sporting events. (Photo courtesy of Megan Michael Photography)*

## US Education Department to revive student loan interest for borrowers in SAVE program

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA - JULY 9, 2025 4:13 PM

WASHINGTON — Interest accrual on the debt of nearly 7.7 million student loan borrowers enrolled in the Saving on a Valuable Education plan will resume Aug. 1, the U.S. Education Department said Wednesday. The Biden-era income-driven repayment plan better known as SAVE saw legal challenges from several

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GOP-led states beginning in 2024, creating uncertainty for borrowers who were placed in an interest-free forbearance amid that legal limbo.

The SAVE plan, created in 2023, aimed to provide lower monthly loan payments for borrowers and forgive remaining debt after a certain period of time.

In February, a federal appeals court upheld a lower court injunction that blocked the SAVE plan from going into effect. The department said Wednesday that it's instructing its federal student loan servicers to start charging interest Aug. 1 to comply with court orders.

When the SAVE plan forbearance ends, "borrowers will be responsible for making monthly payments that include any accrued interest as well as their principal amounts," the department said in a written announcement.

"For years, the Biden Administration used so-called 'loan forgiveness' promises to win votes, but federal courts repeatedly ruled that those actions were unlawful," Education Secretary Linda McMahon said in a statement alongside the announcement.

"Congress designed these programs to ensure that borrowers repay their loans, yet the Biden Administration tried to illegally force taxpayers to foot the bill instead," she added.

McMahon said her department is urging borrowers under the SAVE plan to "quickly transition to a legally compliant repayment plan."

"Borrowers in SAVE cannot access important loan benefits and cannot make progress toward loan discharge programs authorized by Congress," she said.

## 'Unnecessary interest charges'

Mike Pierce, executive director of the Student Borrower Protection Center, blasted the department's decision in a statement Wednesday.

"Instead of fixing the broken student loan system, Secretary McMahon is choosing to drown millions of people in unnecessary interest charges and blaming unrelated court cases for her own mismanagement," he said.

"Every day, we hear from borrowers waiting on hold with their servicer for hours, begging the government to let them out of this forbearance, and help them get back on track — instead, McMahon is choosing to jack up the cost of their student debt without giving them a way out."

The agency has taken heat for its sweeping actions in the months since President Donald Trump took office as he and his administration look to dismantle the department.

The department is also mired in a legal challenge over some of its most significant efforts so far, including laying off more than 1,300 employees earlier this year as part of a reduction in force effort, an executive order calling on McMahon to facilitate the closure of her own agency and Trump's proposal to transfer some services to other federal agencies. These actions have been temporarily halted in court.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump signed a massive tax and spending cut bill into law last week, part of which forces any borrower under the SAVE plan to opt in to a different repayment plan by July 1, 2028, or be automatically placed in a new, income-based repayment plan.

*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.*

## US Senate panel approves Trump pick to head Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JULY 9, 2025 11:24 AM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's candidate to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advanced out of a Senate committee Wednesday following a party-line vote, moving her one step closer to confirmation.

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Susan Monarez's nomination now goes to the floor, where she will likely secure the backing needed to officially take on the role of CDC director after garnering support from Republicans across the political spectrum during the committee's 12-11 vote.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., will be in charge of scheduling that vote, though if it isn't held during the next few weeks, Monarez will have to wait until after the chamber's August recess.

Chairman Bill Cassidy, R-La., said during the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee's markup he believes Monarez is a strong candidate for CDC director and that he hopes she will help get the nation's ongoing measles outbreak under control.

"The United States needs a CDC director who makes decisions rooted in science, a leader who will reform the agency and work to restore public trust in health institutions," Cassidy said. "With decades of proven experience as a public health official, Dr. Monarez is ready to take on this challenge."

## **Sanders criticizes Monarez on vaccine safety**

Every Republican senator on the committee, including Maine's Susan Collins and Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, voted to advance Monarez's nomination.

Vermont independent Sen. Bernie Sanders, ranking member on the panel, opposed Monarez's advancement along with the Democrats on the committee.

Sanders argued that during Monarez's time as acting director of the CDC, she didn't do enough to counter Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy Jr., especially on the safety of vaccines.

"Today, the United States is reporting the highest number of measles cases in 33 years," Sanders said. "In my view, we need a CDC director who will defend science, protect public health and repudiate Secretary Kennedy's dangerous conspiracy theories about safe and effective vaccines that have saved, over the years, millions of lives."

## **Second CDC choice from Trump**

Monarez testified before the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee in June, a standard part of the confirmation process.

Trump originally selected former Florida U.S. Rep. Dave Weldon to run the Atlanta-based CDC shortly after he secured election to the Oval Office in November. But the White House pulled Weldon's nomination in March, after it appeared he couldn't secure the votes needed for confirmation.

Later that month, Trump announced his plans to nominate Monarez in a social media post.

"Dr. Monarez brings decades of experience championing Innovation, Transparency, and strong Public Health Systems," Trump wrote. "She has a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin, and PostDoctoral training in Microbiology and Immunology at Stanford University School of Medicine."

"As an incredible mother and dedicated public servant, Dr. Monarez understands the importance of protecting our children, our communities, and our future. Americans have lost confidence in the CDC due to political bias and disastrous mismanagement. Dr. Monarez will work closely with our GREAT Secretary of Health and Human Services, Robert Kennedy Jr. Together, they will prioritize Accountability, High Standards, and Disease Prevention to finally address the Chronic Disease Epidemic and, MAKE AMERICA HEALTHY AGAIN!"

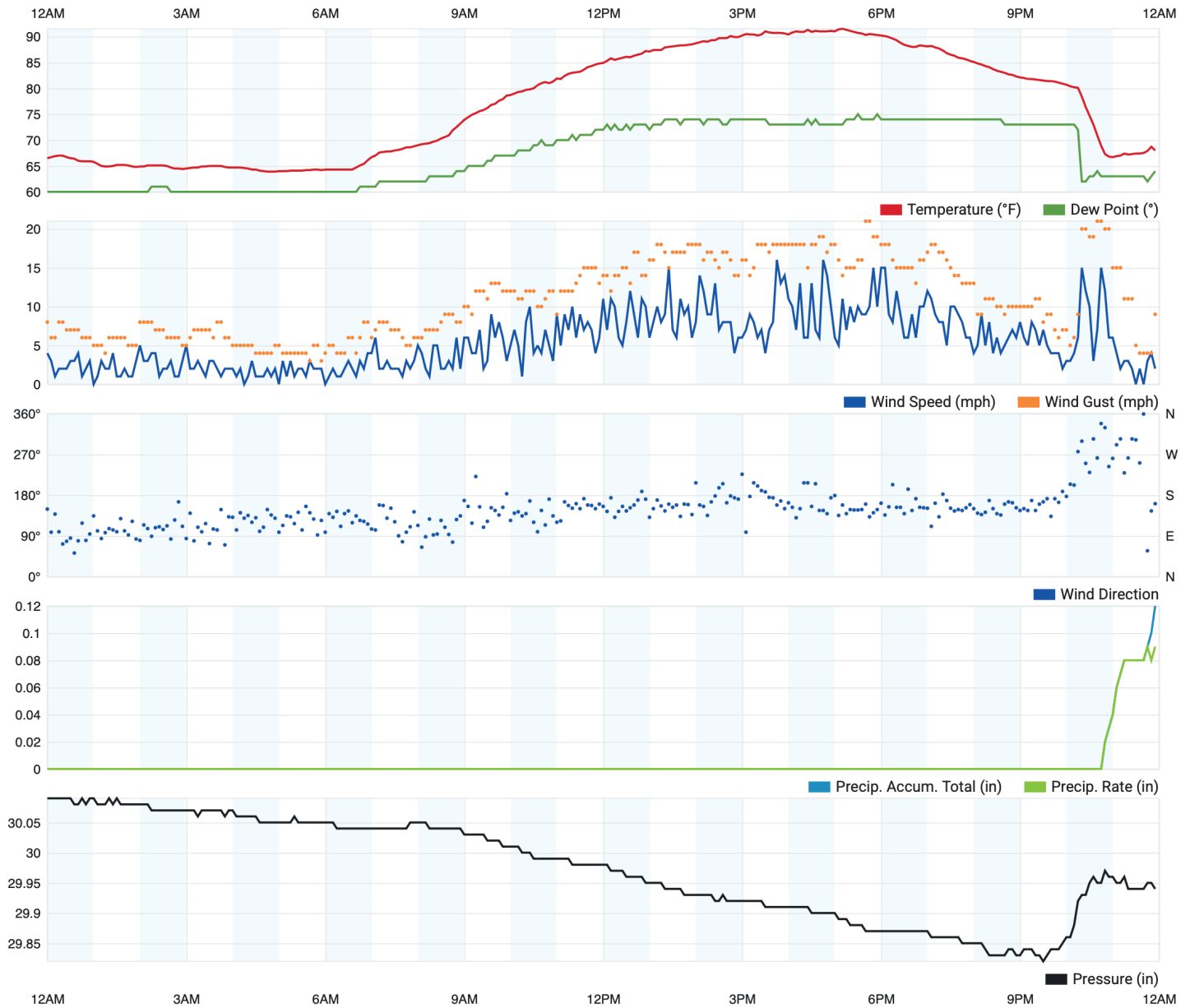
*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 9, 2025





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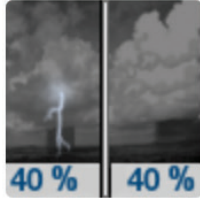
Today



High: 91 °F

Hot

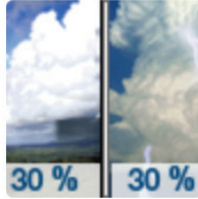
Tonight



Low: 66 °F

Chance  
T-storms then  
Chance  
Showers

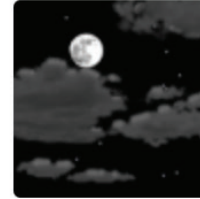
Friday



High: 83 °F

Chance  
Showers then  
Chance  
T-storms

Friday Night



Low: 56 °F

Partly Cloudy

Saturday



High: 82 °F

Sunny

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

### HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:  
Scattered Severe Storms  
Possible

### TIMING

**This afternoon into  
the evening**

### PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING  
WIND



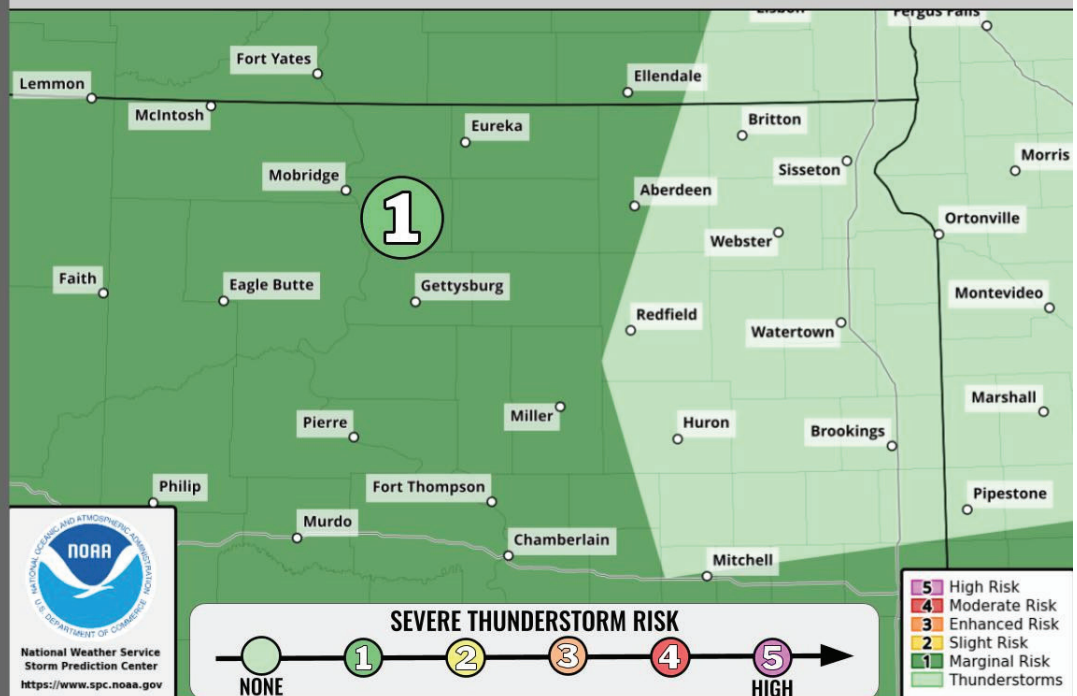
LARGE HAIL

### SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY  
RAINFALL

## Marginal Risk For Severe Storms This Afternoon into the Evening



There is a Marginal risk (level 1 of 5) for isolated to scattered severe storms west of the James River this afternoon into the evening. The main threats will be large hail and strong wind gusts.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 92 °F at 5:09 PM**

**High Heat Index: 103 °F at 3:30 PM**

**Low Temp: 64 °F at 4:49 AM**

**Wind: 22 mph at 5:37 PM**

**Precip: : 0.16**

Day length: 15 hours, 30 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 114 in 1936

Record Low: 42 in 1945

Average High: 85

Average Low: 60

Average Precip in July.: 1.15

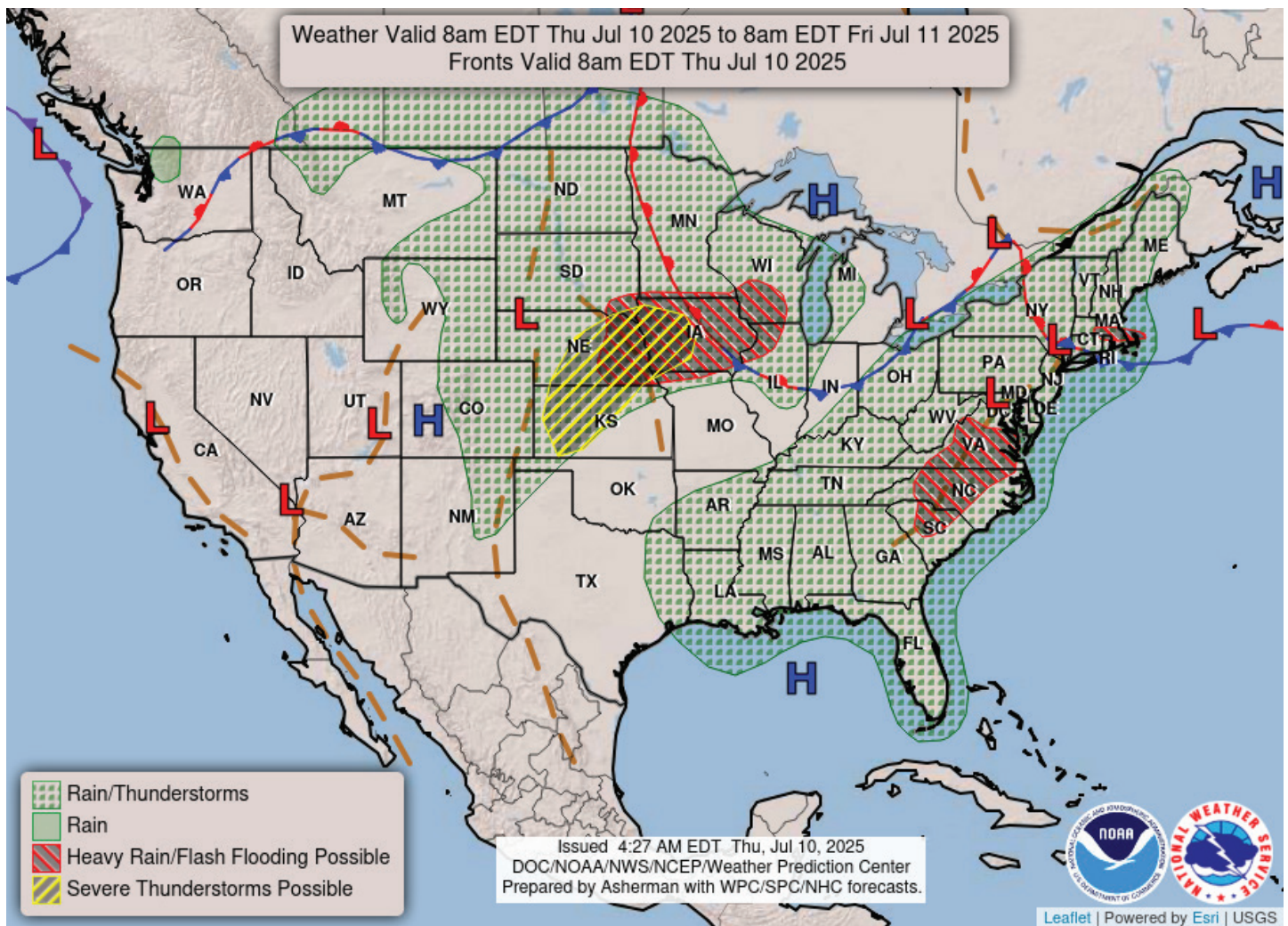
Precip to date in July: 1.87

Average Precip to date: 12.16

Precip Year to Date: 11.99

Sunset Tonight: 9:22:53 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:53:43 am



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## Today in Weather History

July 10, 1998: Flash flooding occurred from Keldron, in Corson County, and areas south, during the late afternoon and evening as a result of up to seven inches of rain that had fallen from slow-moving thunderstorms. Willow Creek and several small tributaries went out of their banks causing the inundation of low areas and county roads. Many county roads were damaged with one farmer losing several pigs and cows as a result of the flooding.

1887: A dam breaks in Zug, Switzerland, killing 70 people in their homes and destroying a large section of the town.

1911: The mercury hit 105 degrees at North Bridgton, Maine the hottest reading of record for Maine. North Bridgton also reached 105 degrees on the 4th of July in 1911.

1913: The mercury hit 134 degrees at Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, California, the hottest reading of record for the World. Sandstorm conditions accompanied the heat. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the World Meteorological Organization.

1926: At the Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey, lightning struck one of the explosives storage structures during a thunderstorm and started a fire. As a result, several million pounds of explosives detonated over a period of 2–3 days. This explosion not only structural devastation, 187 of 200 buildings destroyed but military and civilian casualties as well. Close to one hundred are injured as explosion spreads havoc within a radius of 15 miles in New Jersey. Otto Dowling was in charge at the time and received a Distinguished Service Cross for his handling of the situation.

1936 - Afternoon highs of 112 degrees at Martinsburg, WV, 109 degrees at Cumberland, MD, and Frederick, MD, 110 degrees at Runyon, NJ, and 111 degrees at Phoenixville, PA, established all-time record highs for those four states. It was the hottest day of record for the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. (The Weather Channel)

1979 - The temperature at El Paso, TX, hit 112 degrees, an all-time record for that location. The next day was 110 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - The temperature in downtown Kansas City, MO, hit 109 degrees, following a sultry overnight low of 89 degrees. The daily low of 89 degrees was the warmest of record for Kansas City, and overall it was the hottest July day of record. It was the seventh of a record seventeen consecutive days of 100 degree heat, and the mean temperature for the month of 90.2 degrees was also an all-time record for Kansas City.

1987 - An early morning thunderstorm in Minnesota produced wind gusts to 91 mph at Waseca. Later that day, thunderstorms in South Dakota produced wind gusts to 81 mph at Ipswitch, and baseball size hail near Hayes and Capa. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms brought welcome rains to parts of the central U.S., but produced severe weather along the New England coast, in the Great Lakes Region, in North Carolina, and in the Southern Plateau Region. Strong thunderstorm winds gusting to 80 mph at Bullfrog, UT, sank three boats on Lake Powell. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Severe thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes in the northeastern U.S. A powerful (F-4) tornado struck Hamden CT and New Haven, CT, causing 100 million dollars damage at Hamden, and another 20 million dollars damage around New Haven. Forty persons were injured in the tornado. Seventy persons were injured in a tornado which traveled from Watertown, CT, to Waterbury, CT, and another powerful (F-4) tornado touched down near Ames NY injuring twenty persons along its 43.5 mile track. It was the strongest tornado of record for eastern New York State. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Hurricane Dennis landed near Pensacola, Florida as a category 3 storm. Maximum sustained winds at the time of landfall were near 120 mph. There were nine hurricane-related fatalities in the U.S. and preliminary estimates of insured losses ranged from \$1 to \$1.5 billion.



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A few feet from my desk is a closet used for storage. In that closet are boxes and boxes of information that at one time was very costly. Today, not so much. The boxes are made of ordinary cardboard, and if someone opens the door and looks at them, there would be no reason to open them. Other than curiosity, they appear to have no value.

Unless someone knows their contents, they are like the Bible. Unless there is a desire to look inside and find out what it contains, it is useless.

Most people are more likely to turn on a television or look at videos online, but if we stop, open the word, and accept its contents, life takes on an entirely new meaning and direction.

"My son," begins Solomon, "if you accept my words and store up my commands... you will understand what is right and just and fair, and it will lead you to every good path, for wisdom will enter your heart."

The Proverbs contain clear and concise guidance for those who want to choose between right and wrong. God has planted some degree of morality in everyone's heart because we were made in His image.

But only the Word of God spells out in exact words what is right and just and fair. Every law or rule or policy that has ever been written is an extension of what we find in His Word—but only His Word is capable of penetrating our hearts.

When we allow His Word to do its work, we are changed from the inside out and become a new creation.

*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: 07.08.25

4 6 38 44 62 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$80,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 55 Mins  
9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.09.25

2 10 27 30 50 5

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,700,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 10  
Mins 9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.09.25

9 17 38 43 47 3

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 25 Mins 10  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.09.25

13 24 26 28 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$52,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 25  
Mins 9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.09.25

24 40 51 52 61 17

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 54  
Mins 9 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.09.25

5 9 25 28 69 5

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$234,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 54  
Mins 9 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  
09/6-7/25 Fly in/Drive in at Groton Municipal Airport  
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  
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.  
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **UN says if US funding for HIV programs is not replaced, millions more will die by 2029**

By MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — Years of American-led investment into AIDS programs has reduced the number of people killed by the disease to the lowest levels seen in more than three decades, and provided life-saving medicines for some of the world's most vulnerable.

But in the last six months, the sudden withdrawal of U.S. money has caused a "systemic shock," U.N. officials warned, adding that if the funding isn't replaced, it could lead to more than 4 million AIDS-related deaths and 6 million more HIV infections by 2029.

"The current wave of funding losses has already destabilized supply chains, led to the closure of health facilities, left thousands of health clinics without staff, set back prevention programs, disrupted HIV testing efforts and forced many community organizations to reduce or halt their HIV activities," UNAIDS said in a report released Thursday.

UNAIDS also said that it feared other major donors might also scale back their support, reversing decades of progress against AIDS worldwide — and that the strong multilateral cooperation is in jeopardy because of wars, geopolitical shifts and climate change.

The \$4 billion that the United States pledged for the global HIV response for 2025 disappeared virtually overnight in January when U.S. President Donald Trump ordered that all foreign aid be suspended and later moved to shutter the U.S. AID agency.

Andrew Hill, an HIV expert at the University of Liverpool who is not connected to the United Nations, said that while Trump is entitled to spend U.S. money as he sees fit, "any responsible government would have given advance warning so countries could plan," instead of stranding patients in Africa when clinics were closed overnight.

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, was launched in 2003 by U.S. President George W. Bush, the biggest-ever commitment by any country focused on a single disease.

UNAIDS called the program a "lifeline" for countries with high HIV rates, and said that it supported testing for 84.1 million people, treatment for 20.6 million, among other initiatives. According to data from Nigeria, PEPFAR also funded 99.9% of the country's budget for medicines taken to prevent HIV.

In 2024, there were about 630,000 AIDS-related deaths worldwide, per a UNAIDS estimate — the figure has remained about the same since 2022 after peaking at about 2 million deaths in 2004.

Even before the U.S. funding cuts, progress against curbing HIV was uneven. UNAIDS said that half of all new infections are in sub-Saharan Africa and that more than 50% of all people who need treatment but aren't getting it are in Africa and Asia.

Tom Ellman, of the charity Doctors Without Borders, said that while some poorer countries were now moving to fund more of their own HIV programs, it would be impossible to fill the gap left by the U.S.

"There's nothing we can do that will protect these countries from the sudden, vicious withdrawal of support from the U.S.," said Ellman, director of Doctors Without Borders' South Africa Medical Unit. "Within months of losing treatment, people will start to get very sick and we risk seeing a massive rise in infection and death."

Experts also fear another loss: data. The U.S. paid for most HIV surveillance in African countries, including hospital, patient and electronic records, all of which has now abruptly ceased, according to Dr. Chris Beyrer, director of the Global Health Institute at Duke University.

"Without reliable data about how HIV is spreading, it will be incredibly hard to stop it," he said.

The uncertainty comes as a twice-yearly injectable could end HIV, as studies published last year showed that the drug from pharmaceutical maker Gilead was 100% effective in preventing the virus.

Last month, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the drug, called Sunleca — a move that

should have been a "threshold moment" for stopping the AIDS epidemic, said Peter Maybarduk of the advocacy group Public Citizen.

But activists like Maybarduk said Gilead's pricing will put it out of reach of many countries that need it. Gilead has agreed to sell generic versions of the drug in 120 poor countries with high HIV rates but has excluded nearly all of Latin America, where rates are far lower but increasing.

"We could be ending AIDS," Maybarduk said. "Instead, the U.S. is abandoning the fight."

## Bangladesh tribunal indicts ousted Prime Minister Hasina over deaths of protesters

By JULHAS ALAM Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — A special tribunal indicted Bangladesh's ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday by accepting charges of crimes against humanity filed against her in connection with a mass uprising in which hundreds of students were killed last year.

A three-member panel, headed by Justice Golam Mortuza Mozumder, indicted Hasina, former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and former police chief Chowdhury Abdullah Al-Mamun on five charges. Hasina and Khan are being tried in absentia.

The tribunal opened the trial June 5 and asked Hasina to appear. Authorities published newspaper advertisements asking Hasina, who has been in exile in India, and Khan to appear before the tribunal.

Hasina has been in exile since Aug. 5. Bangladesh's interim government, headed by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus, sent a formal request to India for Hasina's extradition but India has not responded. Khan is possibly also in India.

Al-Mamun was arrested and was in the dock Thursday while the judges indicted them. Al-Mamun pleaded guilty and told the tribunal that he would make a statement in favor of the prosecution at a later stage.

The prosecution offered a leaked audio of Hasina and other documents as evidence to the tribunal.

Amir Hossain, a lawyer appointed by the state for Hasina and Khan, appeared at Thursday's hearing and filed a petition to drop their names from the case but the tribunal rejected the plea.

The tribunal later fixed Aug. 3 for the opening statement by the prosecution and Aug. 4 for recording witness statements.

Hasina and her Awami League party previously criticized the tribunal and its prosecution team for connections to political parties, especially the Jamaat-e-Islami party.

Filing five charges, the prosecution argued Hasina was directly responsible for ordering all state forces, her Awami League party and its associates to carry out actions leading to mass killings, injuries, targeted violence against women and children, the incineration of bodies and denial of medical treatment to the wounded.

The charges describe Hasina as the "mastermind, conductor, and superior commander" of the atrocities.

The interim government already has banned the Awami League party and amended relevant laws to allow the trial of the former ruling party for its role during the uprising.

In February, the U.N. human rights office estimated up to 1,400 people may have been killed in Bangladesh over three weeks of crackdowns on the student-led protests against Hasina and two weeks after her fall on Aug. 5.

Earlier this month the tribunal sentenced Hasina to six months in jail after she was found in contempt of court for allegedly claiming she had a license to kill at least 227 people. The sentence was the first in any case against Hasina since she fled to India.

The contempt case stemmed from a leaked audio recording of a supposed phone conversation between Hasina and a leader of the student wing of her political party. A person alleged to be Hasina is heard on the audio saying: "There are 227 cases against me, so I now have a license to kill 227 people."

The tribunal was established by Hasina in 2009 to investigate and try crimes involving Bangladesh's independence war against Pakistan in 1971. The tribunal under Hasina tried politicians, mostly from the Jamaat-e-Islami party, for their actions during the nine-month war.

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Aided by India, Bangladesh gained independence from Pakistan under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hasina's father and the country's first leader.

## World shares mostly gain after big tech rally on Wall Street

By TERESA CERJOJANO Associated Press

Global shares mostly gained on Thursday after a rally in U.S. tech stocks lifted the Nasdaq to an all-time high and helped Wall Street claw back most of its losses from earlier in the week.

In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 rose 1.1% to 8,963. Germany's DAX edged up 0.2% to 24,593.55, while in Paris, the CAC 40 climbed 0.7% to 7,930.19.

S&P 500 futures shed 0.1% while the Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 0.2%.

In Asia, South Korea's Kospi climbed 1.6% to finish at 3,183.23 after the Bank of Korea kept its benchmark interest rate unchanged and as semiconductor shares rose following Nvidia's overnight rally on Wall Street.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 0.4 %, closing at 39,646.36, weighed down by selling of exporters' shares amid the yen's appreciation, which cuts profits from exports, and dampened sentiment because of the lack of progress in the Japan-U.S. tariff talks.

The Hang Seng in Hong Kong added 0.7% to 24,057.09. The Shanghai Composite index rose 0.5% to 3,509.68. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 climbed 0.6% to 8,589.20.

On Wall Street on Wednesday, the S&P 500 rose 0.6% for its first gain this week. The benchmark index remains near the record it set last week after a better-than-expected U.S. jobs report.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.5%. The Nasdaq composite, which is heavily weighted with technology stocks, closed 0.9% higher. The gain was good enough to nudge the index past the record high it set last Thursday.

Nvidia rose 1.8% and became the first public company to exceed \$4 trillion in value after its share price briefly topped \$164 each in the early going. Shares in the AI boom poster child were going for around \$14 per share at the start of 2023.

The tech rally came as Wall Street continued to weigh the latest developments in President Donald Trump's renewed push this week to use threats of higher tariffs on goods imported into the U.S. in hopes of securing new trade agreements with countries around the globe, with the window for negotiations extended to Aug. 1.

In other dealings on Thursday, benchmark U.S. crude lost 40 cents to \$67.98 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, shed 32 cents to \$69.87 per barrel.

The dollar slightly recovered against the Japanese currency, trading at 146.34 yen, up from 146.26 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1728 from \$1.1723.

## Russia blasts Kyiv with another missile and drone barrage, killing at least 2

By VASILISA STEPANENKO and HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia pounded Ukraine's capital with another major missile and drone attack overnight into Thursday, killing at least two people and causing fires across Kyiv a day after the heaviest drone attack so far in the more than three-year war, Ukrainian officials said.

In another tense and sleepless night for Kyiv residents, with many of them dashing in the dark with children and blankets to the protection of subway stations, at least 16 people were wounded, according to Tymur Tkachenko, head of the Kyiv Regional Administration.

The night was punctuated with the chilling whine of approaching drones that slammed into residential areas, exploded and sent balls of orange flames into the dark during the 10-hour barrage. Russia fired 397 Shahed and decoy drones as well as cruise and ballistic missiles at Kyiv and five other regions, authorities said.

"This is a clear escalation of Russian terror: hundreds of Shahed drones every night, constant missile



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strikes, massive attacks on Ukrainian cities," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a Telegram post.

Russia aims to sap Ukrainian morale

Russia has recently sought to overwhelm Ukraine's air defenses with major attacks that include increasing numbers of decoy drones. The previous night, it fired more than 700 attack and decoy drones, topping previous nightly barrages for the third time in two weeks.

"The continued increase in the size of strike packages is likely intended to support Russian efforts to degrade Ukrainian morale in the face of constant Russian aggression," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said late Wednesday.

In tandem with the bombardments, Russia's army has started a new drive to break through parts of the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where short-handed Ukrainian forces are under heavy strain at what could prove to be a pivotal period of the war.

"At present, the rate of Russian advance is accelerating and Russia's summer offensive is likely to put the armed forces of Ukraine under intense pressure," Jack Watling, a senior research fellow at military think tank RUSI, wrote in an assessment published Wednesday.

The pressure has caused alarm among Ukrainian officials, who are uncertain about continuing vital military aid from the United States and U.S. President Donald Trump's policy toward Russia.

"Partners need to be faster with investments in weapons production and technology development," Zelenskyy said Thursday. "We need to be faster with sanctions and put pressure on Russia so that it feels the consequences of its terror."

Some Ukrainians lose almost everything

In Kyiv, Karyna Holf, 23, was in the living room near the window when she heard a whistling sound from the incoming weapon. Moments later, little was left of the room but debris.

"After such a shock, when you know from your own experience what it's like to lose everything," she said. "I don't even know what comes next. All I have now is a backpack, a phone, a winter coat — that's it. This is my whole life now."

Holf said she was grateful to have her parents to turn to, but added, "There are people who have no one at all."

One Kyiv subway station worker said more than 1,000 people, including 70 children, took refuge there. One of them was 32-year-old Kyiv resident Alina Kalyna.

"The drone attacks a year ago were one thing, and now they're a completely different thing. We're exhausted," she said. "I sleep poorly, I recover poorly, in fact I no longer recover, I am just somehow on a reserve of energy, of which I have a little left, I just somehow live and exist," Kalyna said.

5,000 drones produced a month

The drone barrages are unlikely to let up. Russia is now producing more and better drones, including some using artificial intelligence technology, according to the Atlantic Council. Its factories are producing more than 5,000 drones a month, the Washington-based think tank said this week.

"For the first few years of the war following (Russia's) 2022 invasion, Ukraine's dynamic tech sector and vibrant startup culture helped keep the country a step ahead of Russia despite the Kremlin's far greater resources," the Atlantic Council said of the countries' drone development. "In recent months, however, it has become increasingly apparent that the initiative has passed to Moscow."

Ukraine urgently needs more interceptor drones to take down Russia's Shaheds as well as Patriot missile systems to counter Russian missiles.

The U.S. has resumed deliveries of certain weapons, including 155 mm munitions and precision-guided rockets known as GMLRS, two U.S. officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity so that they could provide details that hadn't been announced publicly. It's unclear exactly when the weapons started moving.

## What to know as Yemen's Houthi rebels launch new, more violent attacks on ships in the Red Sea

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — In just days, Yemen's Houthi rebels have begun a new, more violent campaign of attacks targeting ships in the Red Sea, sinking two of them and killing some of their crew.

The assaults represent the latest chapter of the rebels' campaign against shipping over the Israel-Hamas war. They also come as Yemen's nearly decadelong war drags on in the Arab world's poorest country, without any sign of stopping.

Here's what to know about the Houthis, Yemen and their ongoing attacks.

Rebels involved in years of fighting

The Houthis are members of Islam's minority Shiite Zaydi sect, which ruled Yemen for 1,000 years until 1962. They battled Yemen's central government for years before sweeping down from their northern stronghold in Yemen and seizing the capital, Sanaa, in 2014. That launched a grinding war still technically being waged in the country today. A Saudi-led coalition intervened in 2015 to try to restore Yemen's exiled, internationally recognized government to power.

Years of bloody, inconclusive fighting against the Saudi-led coalition settled into a stalemated proxy war between Saudi Arabia and Iran, causing widespread hunger and misery in Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country. The war has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians, and created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters, killing tens of thousands more.

A ceasefire that technically ended in October 2022 is still largely being honored. Saudi Arabia and the rebels have done some prisoner swaps, and a Houthi delegation was invited to high-level peace talks in Riyadh in September 2023 as part of a wider détente the kingdom has reached with Iran. While they reported "positive results," there is still no permanent peace.

Houthis supported by Tehran while raising own profile

Iran long has backed the Houthis. Tehran routinely denies arming the rebels, despite physical evidence, numerous seizures and experts tying the weapons back to Iran. That's likely because Tehran wants to avoid sanctions for violating a United Nations arms embargo on the Houthis.

The Houthis now form the strongest group within Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance." Others like Lebanon's Hezbollah and the Palestinian militant group Hamas have been decimated by Israel after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack by Hamas that sparked Israel's war of attrition in the Gaza Strip.

Iran also is reeling after Israel launched a 12-day war against the country and the U.S. struck Iranian nuclear sites.

The Houthis also have seen their regional profile raise as they have attacked Israel, as many in the Arab world remain incensed by the suffering Palestinians in the Gaza Strip face.

Houthis attack ships over Israel-Hamas war

The Houthis have been launching missile and drone attacks against commercial and military ships in the region in what the group's leadership has described as an effort to end Israel's offensive against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Between November 2023 and December 2024, the Houthis targeted more than 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two and killing four sailors. Their campaign has greatly reduced the flow of trade through the Red Sea corridor, which typically sees \$1 trillion of goods move through it annually.

The last Houthi attack, targeting U.S. warships escorting commercial ships, happened in early December. A ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war began in January and held until March. The U.S. then launched a broad assault against the rebels that ended weeks later when Trump said the rebels pledged to stop attacking ships.

Since then, the Houthis have continued occasional missile attacks targeting Israel, but they hadn't attacked ships until this past weekend. Shipping through the Red Sea, while still lower than normal, had increased in recent weeks.

New attacks raise level of violence and complexity

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The attacks on the two ships, the Magic Seas and the Eternity C, represent a new level of violence being employed by the Houthis.

Experts have referred to the assaults as being complex in nature, involving armed rebels first racing out to the vessels in the Red Sea, firing small arms and rocket-propelled grenades. They then have used anti-ship missiles and both aerial and sea drones loaded with explosives to attack the ships.

This coordinated attack sank two vessels in just a matter of days, doubling the number of ships they have sunk. There also is a growing fear the attack on the Eternity C may have been the rebels' deadliest at sea as crew members remain missing.

The attacks also signal that Israeli and American airstrikes have not stripped the rebels of their ability to launch attacks.

Commercial ships have few defense options

For the Houthis, attacking commercial ships remains far easier than targeting warships as those vessels don't have air defense systems. Instead, some carry a few armed guards able to shoot at attackers or approaching drones. Downing a drone remains difficult and shooting down a missile is impossible with their weaponry.

Armed guards also typically are more trained for dealing with piracy and will spray fire hoses at approaching small boats or ring a bridge with cyclone wire to stop attackers from climbing aboard. The Houthis, however, have experience doing helicopter-borne assaults and likely could overwhelm a private security detail, which often is just a three-member team aboard a commercial vessel.

Resumed attacks have international and domestic motives

To hear it from the Houthis, the new attack campaign "represents a qualitative shift in the course of the open battle in support of Gaza." Their SABA news agency said Israel commits "daily massacres against civilians in Gaza and relies on sea lanes to finance its aggression and maintain its siege."

"This stance, which is not content with condemnation or statements, is also advancing with direct military action, in a clear effort to support the Palestinians on various fronts," the rebels said.

However, the rebels stopped their attacks in late December as Israel and Hamas reached a ceasefire. The Houthis formally suspended their attacks, though they said ships or companies calling on Israeli ports would remain possible targets.

The rebels also may have reconstituted their forces following the grinding American airstrikes that targeted them. They have not acknowledged their materiel losses from the attacks, though the U.S. has said it dropped more than 2,000 munitions on more than 1,000 targets.

There likely is an international and domestic consideration, as well. Abroad, a new possible ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war — as well as the future of talks between the U.S. and Iran over Tehran's battered nuclear program — remain in the balance. The Houthis in the past have been a cudgel used by Tehran, though experts debate just how much influence Tehran wields in picking targets for the rebels.

At home, the Houthis have faced growing discontent over their rule as Yemen's economy is in tatters and they have waged a campaign of detaining of U.N. officials and aid workers. Resuming their attacks can provide the Houthis something to show those at home to bolster their control.

## Burkina Faso's only eye doctor for children sees the trauma of both play and conflict

By ELIA BORRAS Associated Press

BOBO-DIOULASSO, Burkina Faso (AP) — Isaka Diallo was playing with friends when a stone struck his left eye. For two weeks, his parents searched hospitals in western Burkina Faso for an eye doctor. The village clinic only prescribed painkillers. Other health workers did not know what to do.

When they eventually found Dr. Claudette Yaméogo, Burkina Faso's only pediatric ophthalmologist, the injury had become too difficult to treat.

"The trauma has become severe," Yaméogo said of Diallo's condition as she attended to him recently at the Sanou Sourou University Hospital in the city of Bobo-Dioulasso. "Cases like (Diallo's) must be treated

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within the first six hours, but I'm seeing him two weeks later, and it's already too late."

It is a common problem in the country of about 23 million people, which has just 70 ophthalmologists. Yaméogo, who started her practice late last year, said the work is daunting and often requires her to visit — at no cost — families who cannot afford care or cannot make their way to the hospital where she works.

While there is limited data available on eye defects in children in Burkina Faso or in Africa at large, an estimated 450 million children globally have a sight problem that needs treatment, according to the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness.

Late intervention can significantly alter a child's future, the organization said, with many such cases in less developed countries.

In Burkina Faso, an estimated 70% of the population lives in rural areas. And yet ophthalmologists are concentrated in the capital, Ouagadougou, and other main cities, making them unreachable for many.

While more than 2,000 ophthalmology procedures were performed in Burkina Faso's western Hauts-Bassins region in 2024, only 52 of those were carried out in its more rural areas, according to the Ministry of Health. Most procedures were done in the area of Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso's second city.

Not many people are aware of Yaméogo's work. Even when they are, traveling to reach her often requires days of planning and financial saving.

In a further challenge to accessing care, Diallo's family is among the 2 million people displaced by violence as extremist groups seize parts of the country.

To visit Yaméogo's hospital from the village where they are sheltering, they had to travel about 40 kilometers (21 miles) on a motorcycle to Bobo-Dioulasso, spending 7,500 francs (\$13) on transport, a high price for a small-scale farming family.

At least 70% of the trauma cases in children treated at the hospital come from rural areas where the risk of exposure — from conflict or from play — is higher, Yaméogo said.

Examining and treating a child is a delicate practice that requires a lot of time, something many families can't afford. Many must return home to earn money for the treatment.

As she treated Diallo, Yaméogo noticed that the boy associated a drawing of an apple with a pepper, making her wonder: Is it that he can't see it, or that he doesn't know what an apple is? The fruit doesn't grow in the region where he lives.

"There's no fixed time for examining children," she said. "You need a lot of patience."

Yameogo's work has had a "very positive impact on training future pediatricians and on the quality of ophthalmology services," said Jean Diallo, president of the Burkinabè Society of Ophthalmology.

"A child's eye is not the same as that of an adult, which is why we need specialists to treat problems early so the child can develop properly," Diallo said.

He cited retinoblastoma, a retinal cancer mostly affecting young children, and congenital cataracts, eye diseases that can be cured if diagnosed early. Pediatricians won't necessarily detect them.

During another consultation, Yaméogo told the family of 5-year-old Fatao Traoré that he would need cornea surgery as a result of an injury sustained while playing with a stick.

"Sometimes I feel a pinch in my heart," Yaméogo said as she examined the boy after they arrived from their farm on the outskirts of Bobo-Dioulasso. "His iris has detached from his cornea, so he needs to be hospitalized."

The father, looking overwhelmed, sighed, unsure of where the money for the child's surgery would come. On paper, Burkina Faso's government covers the cost of medications and care for children under 5, but often no drugs are available in hospitals, meaning families must buy them elsewhere.

A surgery like the one for Traoré can cost 100,000 CFA (\$179), several months' income for the family.



## **South Korean court approves new arrest of former President Yoon Suk Yeol over martial law decree**

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean court early Thursday approved the new arrest of former President Yoon Suk Yeol on charges related to his brief imposition of martial law in December, accepting a special prosecutor's claim that he poses a risk of destroying evidence.

The arrest warrant issued by the Seoul Central District Court sent Yoon back to a detention center near the capital, four months after his release in March, when the same court overturned his January arrest and allowed him to stand trial for rebellion without being held in custody.

His criminal case is being handled by a team of investigators under special prosecutor Cho Eun-suk who are pursuing additional charges over Yoon's authoritarian push, including obstructing official duties, abuse of power and falsifying official documents.

Cho's team questioned him twice before submitting a request for his arrest warrant to the court on Sunday.

Yoon's lawyers had described the arrest request as excessive and unsubstantiated. They didn't immediately react to the court's decision to approve the arrest of Yoon, who was formally removed from office in April after the Constitutional Court upheld his impeachment.

Yoon didn't respond to questions by reporters after arriving at the court on Wednesday afternoon for a hearing to review the special prosecutor's request. After the hearing lasting about seven hours, Yoon was taken to the detention center to await the court's decision.

Yoon's new arrest could mark the beginning of an extended period in custody, potentially lasting months or longer. Yoon can be initially detained at the center for up to 20 days, while the special prosecutor will aim to indict him on additional charges.

If Yoon is indicted on new charges, that could keep him under arrest for up to six months until an initial court ruling. If that court convicts him and issues a prison term, Yoon would serve that sentence as the case possibly moves up to higher courts.

Park Ji-young, a senior investigator on Cho's team, said they plan to question Yoon again Friday. Yoon was absent from a Thursday hearing at the Seoul court over his earlier indictment on rebellion charges, and his lawyers offered no immediate explanation for his absence.

The former conservative leader described his martial law imposition on Dec. 3 as a necessary step to quash his "anti-state" liberal opponents, accusing them of using their legislative majority to obstruct his agenda. But Yoon's decree lasted only hours, after a quorum of lawmakers broke through a blockade of heavily armed soldiers at the National Assembly and voted to lift the measure.

Yoon was impeached by lawmakers Dec. 14 and indicted Jan. 26 by public prosecutors who accused him of masterminding an attempted rebellion, describing his power grab as an illegal attempt to seize the legislature and election offices and detain political opponents.

The charges are punishable by the death penalty or life imprisonment.

Yoon also faces accusations of enforcing martial law without following required legal procedure, such as deliberation by a formal Cabinet meeting, and of unlawfully deploying the presidential security forces like a private army to block an initial attempt by law enforcement to detain him at his residence in early January.

His liberal rival and current President Lee Jae Myung, who won the June snap election to replace him, last month approved legislation to launch sweeping special investigations into Yoon's martial law debacle and other criminal allegations involving his wife and administration.

## **Trump tariffs goods from Brazil at 50%, citing 'witch hunt' trial against country's former president**

By JOSH BOAK and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump singled out Brazil for import taxes of 50% on Wednesday for its treatment of its former president, Jair Bolsonaro, showing that personal grudges rather than simple



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economics are a driving force in the U.S. leader's use of tariffs.

Trump avoided his standard form letter with Brazil, specifically tying his tariffs to the trial of Bolsonaro, who is charged with trying to overturn his 2022 election loss. Trump has described Bolsonaro as a friend and hosted the former Brazilian president at his Mar-a-Lago resort when both were in power in 2020.

"This Trial should not be taking place," Trump wrote in the letter posted on Truth Social. "It is a Witch Hunt that should end IMMEDIATELY!"

There is a sense of kinship as Trump was indicted in 2023 for his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. The U.S. president addressed his tariff letter to Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who bested Bolsonaro in 2022.

Lula responded in a forceful statement that said Trump's tariffs would trigger the country's economic reciprocity law, which allows trade, investment and intellectual property agreements to be suspended against countries that harm Brazil's competitiveness.

He noted that the U.S. has had a trade surplus of more than \$410 billion with Brazil over the past 15 years.

"Brazil is a sovereign country with independent institutions that will not accept being taken for granted by anyone," Lula said.

Bolsonaro testified before the country's Supreme Court in June over the alleged plot to remain in power after his 2022 election loss. Judges will hear from 26 other defendants in the coming months, and legal analysts say a decision could come as early as September. The country's electoral authorities have already barred Bolsonaro from running for office until 2030.

The former president did not comment about Trump's tariff decision on his social media channels, but wrote that he is being politically persecuted.

In his statement, Lula defended the country's legal system, saying the "proceedings against those who planned the coup d'état is a competence of the Brazilian judiciary and is not subject to interference or threats that harm the independence of national institutions."

For Trump, the tariffs are personal

Trump also objected to Brazil's Supreme Court fining of social media companies, saying the temporary blocking last year amounted to "SECRET and UNLAWFUL Censorship Orders." Trump said he is launching an investigation as a result under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which applies to countries with trade practices that are deemed unfair to U.S. companies.

Among the companies the Supreme Court fined was X, which was not mentioned specifically in Trump's letter. X is owned by Elon Musk, Trump's multibillionaire backer in the 2024 election whose time leading Trump's Department of Government Efficiency recently ended and led to a public feud over the U.S. president's deficit-increasing budget plan. Trump also owns a social media company, Truth Social.

"In Brazil, freedom of speech is not mistaken by aggression or violent behavior," Lula said in his statement. "To operate in our country, every company, local or foreign, must be subjected to Brazilian legislation."

Brazilian lawmakers allied with Lula blamed Bolsonaro and two of his sons, congressman Eduardo Bolsonaro and Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, for Trump's tariff action. Sen. Lindbergh Farias, the whip of Lula's Workers' Party in the Senate, said on social media that the Bolsonaros "must be very happy to harm Brazil, our economy and our jobs."

The Brazil letter was a reminder that politics and personal relations with Trump matter just as much as any economic fundamentals. And while Trump has said the high tariff rates he's setting are based on trade imbalances, it was unclear by his Wednesday actions how the countries being targeted would help to reindustrialize America.

The tariffs starting Aug. 1 would be a dramatic increase from the 10% rate that Trump levied on Brazil as part of his April 2 "Liberation Day" announcement. In addition to oil, Brazil sells orange juice, coffee, iron and steel to the U.S., among other products. The U.S. ran a \$6.8 billion trade surplus with Brazil last year, according to the Census Bureau.

Trump initially announced his broad tariffs by declaring an economic emergency, arguing under a 1977 law that the U.S. was at risk because of persistent trade imbalances. But that rationale becomes prob-

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lematic in this particular case, as Trump is linking his tariffs to the Bolsonaro trial and the U.S. exports more to Brazil than it imports.

Trump also targeted smaller trade partners

Trump also sent letters Wednesday to the leaders of seven other nations. None of them — the Philippines, Brunei, Moldova, Algeria, Libya, Iraq and Sri Lanka — is a major industrial rival to the United States.

Most economic analyses say the tariffs will worsen inflationary pressures and subtract from economic growth, but Trump has used the taxes as a way to assert the diplomatic and financial power of the U.S. on both rivals and allies. His administration is promising that the taxes on imports will lower trade imbalances, offset some of the cost of the tax cuts he signed into law on Friday and cause factory jobs to return to the United States.

Trump, during a White House meeting with African leaders, talked up trade as a diplomatic tool. Trade, he said, “seems to be a foundation” for him to settle disputes between India and Pakistan, as well as Kosovo and Serbia.

“You guys are going to fight, we’re not going to trade,” Trump said. “And we seem to be quite successful in doing that.”

Trump said the tariff rates in his letters were based on “common sense” and trade imbalances, even though the Brazil letter indicated otherwise. Trump suggested he had not thought of penalizing the countries whose leaders were meeting with him in the Oval Office — Liberia, Senegal, Gabon, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau — as “these are friends of mine now.”

Countries are not complaining about the rates outlined in his letters, he said, even though those tariffs have been generally close to the ones announced April 2 that rattled financial markets. The S&P 500 stock index rose Wednesday.

“We really haven’t had too many complaints because I’m keeping them at a very low number, very conservative as you would say,” Trump said.

Tariff uncertainty returns with Trump’s letters

Officials for the European Union, a major trade partner and source of Trump’s ire on trade, said Tuesday that they are not expecting to receive a letter from Trump listing tariff rates. The Republican president started the process of announcing tariff rates on Monday by hitting two major U.S. trading partners, Japan and South Korea, with import taxes of 25%.

According to Trump’s Wednesday letters, imports from Libya, Iraq, Algeria and Sri Lanka would be taxed at 30%, those from Moldova and Brunei at 25% and those from the Philippines at 20%. The tariffs would start Aug. 1.

The Philippine government’s reaction has been relatively tame. Its ambassador in Washington, Jose Manuel Romualdez, said the country will seek new negotiations with the U.S. to lower the 20% tariff.

The Census Bureau reported that last year the U.S. ran a trade imbalance on goods of \$1.4 billion with Algeria, \$5.9 billion with Iraq, \$900 million with Libya, \$4.9 billion with the Philippines, \$2.6 billion with Sri Lanka, \$111 million with Brunei and \$85 million with Moldova. The imbalance represents the difference between what the U.S. exported to those countries and what it imported.

Taken together, the trade imbalances with those seven countries are essentially a rounding error in a U.S. economy with a gross domestic product of \$30 trillion.

The letters were posted on Truth Social after the expiration of a 90-day negotiating period with a baseline levy of 10%. Trump is giving countries more time to negotiate with his Aug. 1 deadline, but he has insisted there will be no extensions for the countries that receive letters.

The president threatened additional tariffs on any country that attempts to retaliate.

## New Mexico village rebuilds all over again after record-breaking flash flood kills 3

By MORGAN LEE, SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN and ROBERTO E. ROSALES Associated Press

RUIDOSO, N.M. (AP) — The mountain village of Ruidoso returned to the grim rituals of rebuilding after

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flash flooding and a deadly natural disaster, just one year after wildfire and intense flooding reshaped the popular vacation getaway and its surroundings.

Broken tree limbs, twisted metal, crumpled cars and muddy debris remained as crews worked to clear roads and culverts in the wake of Tuesday's flash flood that killed three people — including two children — and significantly damaged as many as 50 homes, with one home carried away entirely.

Tracy Haragan, a Ruidoso native on the verge of retirement, watched from his home as a surging river carried away the contents of nine nearby residences.

"You watched everything they owned, everything they had — everything went down," he said. "It is such a great town, it just takes a tail-whipping every once in a while. ... We always survive."

An intense bout of monsoon rains set the disaster in motion Tuesday. Water rushed from the surrounding mountainside, overwhelming the Rio Ruidoso and taking with it a man and two children from an RV park along the river. The bodies were found downstream during search and rescue efforts.

The children — a 4-year-old girl and a 7-year-old boy — had been camping with their parents when they were swept away. The father and mother were being treated for injuries at a hospital in Texas, according to officials at Fort Bliss, where the father is stationed.

Mayor Lynn Crawford said hearts are broken over the lives lost and stomachs are in knots as residents begin to take stock of the damage.

Rebuilding — again

A popular summer retreat, Ruidoso is no stranger to tragedy. It has spent a year rebuilding following destructive wildfires last summer and the flooding that followed.

Rebuilding again in Ruidoso will be hard, if not impossible, said Riverside RV Park owner Barbara Arthur.

Arthur says her guests scrambled up a nearby slope when the river started coursing through the site Tuesday afternoon. She also lost her home in flood.

It was the sixth time the river rose in the last several weeks and by far the worst, she said. And Tuesday's rainfall was more than could be absorbed by the hillsides and canyons within a wildfire burn scar.

Setting records

The floodwaters of the Rio Ruidoso rose more than 20 feet (6 meters) on Tuesday to set a new record high-water mark, said National Weather Service meteorologist Todd Shoemake in Albuquerque. That eclipsed the previously recorded high in July 2024 by nearly 5 feet (1.5 meters).

About 3.5 inches (8.9 centimeters) of rain fell over the South Fork burn scar in just an hour and a half, Crawford said. As little as a quarter of an inch (about 6 millimeters) of rain over a burn scar can cause flooding.

"They were probably already getting some runoff from upstream before it even actually started raining on top of the wildfire burn scar," Shoemake said. "It really was just kind of a terrible coincidence of events that led to that."

He likened the intense rainfall to a 100-year storm, which has a 1% chance of happening in any given year.

Cleanup begins

Emergency crews completed dozens of swift water rescues before the water receded Tuesday. Two National Guard teams and several local crews already were in the area when the flooding began, said Danielle Silva of the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham requested a presidential disaster declaration, tallying more than \$50 million in emergency response expenditures, including water rescues, and damage to public infrastructure, including toppled bridges and washed out roadways. The estimate includes flood damage at Ruidoso and beyond from monsoon rainstorms since late June.

Ruidoso has also recently requested \$100 million in federal aid to convert flood-prone private land to public property after successive years of violent flooding laid bare the dangers of an expanded floodplain.

The floods at Ruidoso came just days after flash floods in Texas killed more than 100 people and left more than 160 people missing.

Bracing for more

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Local officials said the village, as the flood hit, was still in the process of replacing outdoor warning sirens destroyed in last year's wildfire and reassessing risks along the local flood plain.

Crawford reiterated Wednesday that Ruidoso will continue to be in the crosshairs with each monsoon, as there's still work to do to recover from the wildfire. The rainy season begins in June and runs through September.

The river, meanwhile, is running thick with sediment that can settle and raise future water levels.

The village's tourism-based economy also has been thrown into turmoil again. With floodwaters running through Ruidoso Downs, one of the horse track's signature races that was scheduled to start Friday has been derailed.

The mayor said people are anxious as the monsoon is sure to bring more rain throughout the summer.

"Yesterday was a good lesson — you know, that Mother Nature is a much bigger, powerful force than we are," he said Wednesday. "And that we can do a lot of things to protect ourselves and to try to help direct and whatever, but we cannot control."

## Hundreds gather at high school stadium to honor the many lost to Texas deadly floods

By NADIA LATHAN, SEAN MURPHY, and HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

KERRVILLE, Texas (AP) — Several hundred people gathered for a worship ceremony at a high school stadium in Texas on Wednesday evening to remember the at least 120 people who died in the catastrophic flash floods over the July Fourth holiday, as well the many still missing.

"Our communities were struck with tragedy literally in the darkness," Wyatt Wentrcek, a local youth minister, told the crowd in the bleachers of Tivy Antler Stadium in Kerrville. "Middle of the night."

During a series of prayers for the victims and the more than 160 people still believed to be missing in hard-hit Kerr County, which includes Kerrville, people in the crowd clutched one another and brushed away tears.

Many attendees wore blue shirts with the school's slogan, "Tivy Fight Never Die," or green ribbons for Camp Mystic, the century-old all-girls Christian summer camp in Kerr County where at least 27 campers and counselors died. Officials said five campers and one counselor have still not been found.

Ricky Pruitt, with the Kerrville Church of Christ, told the crowd that they gathered intentionally at a place where they had celebrated victories and experienced losses on the field.

"Tonight is very different than all of those nights," he said.

The event was held as search crews and volunteers continued to scour miles along the Guadalupe River for the people still missing.

In air boats, helicopters and on horseback, crews looked in trees and mounds below their feet, while search dogs sniffed for any sign of buried bodies. With almost no hope of finding anyone alive, searchers said they were focused on bringing the families of the missing people some closure.

The floods are now the deadliest from inland flooding in the U.S. since 1976, when Colorado's Big Thompson Canyon flooded, killing 144 people, said Bob Henson, a meteorologist with Yale Climate Connections.

Officials have been seeking more information about those who were in the Hill Country, a popular tourist destination, during the holiday weekend but did not register at a camp or a hotel and may have been in the area without many people knowing, Gov. Greg Abbott has said.

Public officials in the area have come under repeated criticism amid questions about the timeline of what happened and why widespread warnings were not sounded and more preparations were not made.

Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha has said those questions will be answered, but the focus now is on recovering victims.

The governor called on state lawmakers to approve new flood warning systems and strengthen emergency communications in flood prone areas throughout the state when the Legislature meets in a special session that Abbott had already called to address other issues starting July 21. Abbott also called on lawmakers to provide financial relief for response and recovery efforts from the storms.



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"We must ensure better preparation for such events in the future," Abbott said in a statement.

Local leaders have talked for years about the need for a flood warning system, but concerns about costs and noise led to missed opportunities to put up sirens.

President Donald Trump has pledged to provide whatever relief Texas needs to recover, and is planning to visit the state Friday.

Polls taken before the floods show Americans largely believe the federal government should play a major role in preparing for and responding to natural disasters.

Catastrophic flooding is a growing worry. On Tuesday, a deluge in New Mexico triggered flash floods that killed three people.

Although it's difficult to attribute a single weather event to climate change, experts say a warming atmosphere and oceans make these type of storms more likely.

After the ceremony in Kerrville on Wednesday, children and families mingled on the field, and some students formed prayer circles. Licensed counselors and therapists were also on hand to meet with people.

Andrew Brown, who was at the vigil to honor a Tivy High School soccer coach who died in the flooding, said he believes a warning system with a siren would be helpful.

"I'm sure there are things that could have been different, and I'm sure there will be going forward," he said.

David Garza said he drove an hour and a half to the stadium to provide support for loved ones affected by the floods.

"I'm from here, and I was here in the '78 flood and the '87 flood," Garza said. "I just wanted to be a part of this."

## New Hampshire judge to hear arguments on class action against Trump's birthright citizenship order

By HOLLY RAMER and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A federal judge in New Hampshire will hear arguments Thursday on whether to certify a class-action lawsuit that would include every baby affected by President Donald Trump's restrictions on birthright citizenship.

The lawsuit, filed on behalf of a pregnant woman, two parents and their infants, is among numerous cases challenging Trump's January order denying citizenship to those born to parents living in the U.S. illegally or temporarily. Represented by the American Civil Liberties Union and others, the plaintiffs are seeking to have their case certified as a class action and to block implementation of the order while litigation continues.

"Tens of thousands of babies and their parents may be exposed to the order's myriad harms in just weeks and need an injunction now," lawyers for the plaintiffs wrote in court documents filed Tuesday.

At issue is the Constitution's 14th Amendment, which states: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States." The Trump administration says the phrase "subject to the jurisdiction thereof" means the U.S. can deny citizenship to babies born to women in the country illegally, ending what has been seen as an intrinsic part of U.S. law for more than a century.

"Prior misimpressions of the citizenship clause have created a perverse incentive for illegal immigration that has negatively impacted this country's sovereignty, national security, and economic stability," government lawyers wrote in the New Hampshire case. "The Constitution does not harbor a windfall clause granting American citizenship to ... the children of those who have circumvented (or outright defied) federal immigration laws."

Legal battles continue in multiple states

Several federal judges have issued nationwide injunctions stopping Trump's order from taking effect, but the U.S. Supreme Court limited those injunctions in a June 27 ruling that gave lower courts 30 days

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to act. With that time frame in mind, opponents of the change quickly returned to court to try to block it.

New Jersey and the more than dozen states joining its case in Massachusetts federal court have asked the judge to determine if the nationwide injunction in their case could still apply under the high court's ruling. The judge has scheduled a hearing for July 18.

"Everybody knows there's a 30-day clock, so our hope is that we get an answer prior to the end of the 30-day clock," New Jersey Attorney General Matt Platkin told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

In a Washington state case before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, the judges have asked the parties to write briefs explaining the effect of the Supreme Court's ruling. Washington and the other states in that lawsuit have asked the appeals court to return the case to the lower court judge.

As in New Hampshire, the plaintiff in a Maryland seeks to organize a class-action lawsuit that includes every person who would be affected by the order. The judge set a Wednesday deadline for written legal arguments as she considers the request for another nationwide injunction from CASA, a nonprofit immigrant rights organization.

Ama Frimpong, legal director at CASA, said the group has been stressing to its members and clients that it is not time to panic.

"No one has to move states right this instant," she said. "There's different avenues through which we are all fighting, again, to make sure that this executive order never actually sees the light of day."

New Hampshire plaintiffs include parents, babies

The New Hampshire plaintiffs, referred to only by pseudonyms, include a woman from Honduras who has a pending asylum application and is due to give birth to her fourth child in October. She told the court the family came to the U.S. after being targeted by gangs.

"I do not want my child to live in fear and hiding. I do not want my child to be a target for immigration enforcement," she wrote. "I fear our family could be at risk of separation."

Another plaintiff, a man from Brazil, has lived with his wife in Florida for five years. Their first child was born in March, and they are in the process of applying for lawful permanent status based on family ties — his wife's father is a U.S. citizen.

"My baby has the right to citizenship and a future in the United States," he wrote.

## Ship attacked by Yemen's Houthi rebels sinks in the Red Sea, 6 of 25 aboard rescued

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A Liberian-flagged cargo ship attacked by Yemen's Houthi rebels sank Wednesday in the Red Sea, and a European naval force in the Mideast said only six of the 25 people who were on board have been rescued.

The attack on the Eternity C, which also killed at least three of the crew, represents the most serious assault carried out by the Houthis in the crucial maritime trade route where \$1 trillion in cargo once passed through annually.

From November 2023 to December 2024, the Houthis targeted more than 100 ships with missiles and drones in a campaign the rebels describe as supporting Palestinians in the Gaza Strip during the Israel-Hamas war. The Iranian-backed rebels stopped their attacks during a brief ceasefire in the war. They later became the target of an intense weeklong campaign of airstrikes ordered by U.S. President Donald Trump.

The attack on the Eternity C, as well as the sinking of the bulk carrier Magic Seas in another attack Sunday, raise new questions about the Red Sea's safety as ships had slowly begun returning to its waters. Meanwhile, a new possible ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war — as well as the future of talks between the U.S. and Iran over Tehran's battered nuclear program — remain in the balance.

"We are now with grave concern seeing an escalation in the Red Sea with attacks on two commercial ships earlier this week by Ansar Allah, resulting in civilian loss of life and casualties as well as the potential for environmental damage," warned United Nations special envoy Hans Grundberg, using another name

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for the rebels.

6 of 25 on board have been rescued

A statement from the European Union naval mission in the Red Sea said the crew of the ship included 22 sailors, among them 21 Filipinos and one Russian, as well as a three-member security team. Those rescued were five Filipinos and one Indian.

Three people also were killed during the hourslong attack on the ship, the EU force said, and their nationalities were not immediately known.

The armed rebels had attacked the ship with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms, later using two drones and two drone boats carrying bombs to strike the vessel, the EU force said. The Eternity C sank at 7:50 a.m. Wednesday, it added.

The ship, flagged out of Liberia but owned by a Greek firm, likely had been targeted like the Magic Seas over its firm doing business with Israel. Neither vessel apparently requested an escort from the EU force.

The U.S. military has two aircraft carriers in the Mideast, the USS Nimitz and the USS Carl Vinson, but both likely are in the Arabian Sea, far from the site of the attacks. There are two American destroyers believed to be operating in the Red Sea. However, the ships attacked had no U.S. ties and a ceasefire between the Houthis and America announced after the bombing campaign earlier this year still appears to be holding.

Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a Houthi military spokesman, claimed the attack in a prerecorded message Wednesday night as the EU force acknowledged it was still searching for those onboard with private industry rescuers.

The Houthis later released footage of them launching missiles at the Eternity C. The bridge appeared heavily damaged by the attack and oil leaked from the vessel. The ship took on water from holes along its waterline before sinking beneath the waves, the rebels chanting: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam."

The Houthis released a similar video after their attack on the tanker Sounion in August 2024 and on Tuesday from their attack on the Magic Seas.

Attacks draw condemnation and support for sailors

In the Philippines, Migrant Workers Secretary Hans Cacdac said he has been leading an effort to reach out to the families of the missing Filipino sailors to update them on the search and rescue efforts.

"It's human nature that one should be terribly worried and distraught about the situation," Cacdac told The Associated Press by telephone. "It's our role in government to be there for them in their utmost hour of need to ensure that not just government services but throughout this hand-holding process, we will provide the necessary support."

The attacks on the ships drew international condemnation.

"These attacks demonstrate the ongoing threat that Iran-backed Houthi rebels pose to freedom of navigation and to regional economic and maritime security," U.S. State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said. "The United States has been clear: We will continue to take necessary action to protect freedom of navigation and commercial shipping from Houthi terrorist attacks."

The EU force earlier said one of the wounded crew lost his leg.

Grundberg, the U.N. envoy, also decried the targeting of civilian infrastructure after Israel bombed three Houthi-controlled ports in Yemen over the weekend and hit a power station.

"Yemen must not be drawn deeper into regional crises that threaten to unravel the already extremely fragile situation in the country," he warned during an address to the Security Council.

Satellite photos show damage from an Israeli strike

Satellite images analyzed by The Associated Press showed new damage at Yemen's rebel-controlled port at Hodeida after it was targeted by the Israeli airstrikes. The images from Planet Labs PBC showed new portions of the pier at the port torn away by Israeli bombing, likely to affect the unloading of cargo there.

In conducting the strikes, Israel said the Houthis used the port to smuggle military equipment into the country, a growing worry of analysts and Yemen watchers in recent years. Hodeida is the main entry point for food and other humanitarian aid for millions of Yemenis.

Jamal Amer, a Houthi official, reportedly said Wednesday that shipments continue to arrive “smoothly” to Hodeida. In comments published by the Houthis’ al-Masirah satellite channel, Amer also said that damage at the port “directly affects civilians and is a disgrace to the United Nations, which is complicit in these crimes through its suspicious silence.”

Yemen’s war began when the Houthis seized Sanaa in 2014. A Saudi-led coalition backing Yemen’s exiled government considered trying to retake Hodeida by force in 2018, but ultimately decided against it as international criticism and worries about the port being destroyed grew.

## Trump administration resumes sending some weapons to Ukraine after Pentagon pause

By TARA COPP Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has resumed sending some weapons to Ukraine, a week after the Pentagon had directed that some deliveries be paused, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The weapons heading into Ukraine include 155 mm munitions and precision-guided rockets known as GMLRS, two officials told The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity to provide details that had not been announced publicly. It’s unclear exactly when the weapons started moving.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth directed the pause on some shipments last week to allow the Pentagon to assess its weapons stockpiles, in a move that caught the White House by surprise.

A White House official speaking Wednesday on the condition of anonymity said there was never a “pause” in shipments, but a review to ensure U.S. military support aligns with its defense strategy. The official said the Pentagon never announced a pause.

In a press briefing with reporters last week, though, Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell said he could not “go into detail about what weapons were paused and when and what we’re providing and when. Ultimately, the president and the secretary will make those decisions about what happens with those weapon systems.”

The pause affected Patriot missiles, the precision-guided GMLRS, Hellfire missiles, Howitzer rounds and more, taking not only Ukrainian officials and other allies by surprise but also U.S. lawmakers and other parts of the Trump administration, including the State Department.

It was not clear if a pause on Patriot missiles would hold. The \$4 million munition is in high demand and was key to defending a major U.S. air base in Qatar last month as Iran launched a ballistic missile attack in response to the U.S. targeting its nuclear facilities.

President Donald Trump announced Monday that the U.S. would continue to deliver defensive weapons to Ukraine. He has sidestepped questions about who ordered the pause in exchanges with reporters this week.

“I would know if a decision is made. I will know,” Trump said Wednesday. “I will be the first to know. In fact, most likely I’d give the order, but I haven’t done that yet.”

Asked a day earlier who ordered the pause, he said: “I don’t know. Why don’t you tell me?”

Trump has privately expressed frustration with Pentagon officials for announcing the pause — a move that he felt wasn’t properly coordinated with the White House, according to three people familiar with the matter.

The Pentagon has denied that Hegseth acted without consulting the president, saying: “Secretary Hegseth provided a framework for the President to evaluate military aid shipments and assess existing stockpiles. This effort was coordinated across government.”

It comes as Russia has fired escalating air attacks on Ukraine, with a barrage that the largest number of drones fired in a single night in the three-year-old war, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday.

Trump has become increasingly frustrated with Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying he wasn’t happy with him.

“Putin is not, he’s not treating human beings right,” Trump said during a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, explaining the pause’s reversal. “It’s killing too many people. So we’re sending some defensive weapons to



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Ukraine, and I've approved that."

The 155 mm artillery rounds have become some of the most used munitions of the war. Each round is about 2 feet (60 centimeters) long, weighs about 100 pounds (45 kilograms) and is 155 mm, or 6.1 inches, in diameter. They are used in Howitzer systems, which are towed large guns identified by the range of the angle of fire that their barrels can be set to.

Howitzer fires can strike targets up to 15 to 20 miles (24 to 32 kilometers) away, depending on what type of round and firing system is used, which makes them highly valued by ground forces to take out enemy targets from a protected distance.

The U.S. has provided more than 3 million 155 mm rounds to Ukraine since Russia invaded its neighbor in February 2022. It has sent more than \$67 billion in overall weapons and military assistance to Ukraine in that period.

## **Fabián Ruiz scores 2 goals and PSG routs Real Madrid 4-0 to reach Club World Cup final**

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Fabián Ruiz scored twice as Paris Saint-Germain built a three-goal lead in the first 24 minutes and routed Real Madrid 4-0 on Wednesday, advancing to the Club World Cup final against Chelsea.

Ruiz scored in the sixth minute and Ousmane Dembélé in the ninth following glaring mistakes by defenders Raúl Asencio and Antonio Rüdiger, and Ruiz made it 3-0 to cap a counter. Gonçalo Ramos added a goal in the 87th.

Coming off its first European title, PSG plays for the championship on Sunday.

Real fared no better than Inter Milan, overrun by PSG 5-0 in the Champions League final. The 15-time European champion looked sluggish after traveling to Florida for training between games, and PSG had 76.5% possession in the first half.

A crowd of 77,542 was at MetLife Stadium on a scorching day with a temperature of 91 degrees Fahrenheit (33 Celsius) at kickoff and humidity that made it feel like 101 (38).

Real's Kylian Mbappé was not a threat in his first game against his former team.

Luka Modrić entered in the 64th in likely his last match for Madrid, his team since 2012. Éder Militão came in at the same time in his first game since tearing his right ACL on Nov. 9.

PSG surged ahead after Lucas Beraldo's cross was mis-hit by Raúl Asencio, Thibaut Courtois tipped the ball from Dembélé and Ruiz slammed it into the empty net.

Dembélé then took possession about 40 yards out after a Rüdiger mis-hit, dribbled and slotted past Courtois.

PSG went the length of the field to make it 3-0. Hakimi exchanged passes with Dembélé, then crossed for Ruiz, who maintained control despite Federico Valverde's challenge and scored from 8 yards for his third goal of the tournament.

Key moment

Madrid's defense was missing Dean Huijsen, who got a red card Saturday against Borussia Dortmund, and Trent Alexander-Arnold, who had right leg muscle discomfort.

Takeaways

Paris Saint-Germain has earned \$88,435,000 to \$113,815,000 for reaching the final, the amount depending on a participation fee.

They said it

"We're truly happy to be in another final. Now we have to enjoy it because we're doing something historic. It's very difficult to reach every final this season, and now we're one step away." — Ruiz.

"It's a painful defeat. We were not up to standard today." — Madrid coach Xabi Alonso through an interpreter.

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## Flash flooding that killed 3 leaves New Mexico village heartbroken, anxious as cleanup begins

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN, MORGAN LEE and ROBERTO E. ROSALES Associated Press

RUIDOSO, N.M. (AP) — Broken tree limbs, twisted metal, crumpled cars and muddy debris remained Wednesday as crews worked to clear roads and culverts in the wake of a flash flood that descended upon the New Mexico mountain community of Ruidoso, killing three people and damaging dozens of homes.

An intense bout of monsoon rains set the disaster in motion Tuesday. Water rushed from the surrounding mountainside, overwhelming the Rio Ruidoso and taking with it a man and two children from an RV park along the river. The bodies were found downstream during search and rescue efforts.

The children — a 4-year-old girl and a 7-year-old boy — had been camping with their parents when they were swept away. The father and mother were being treated for injuries sustained in the flooding at a hospital in Texas, according to officials at Fort Bliss, where the father is stationed.

Mayor Lynn Crawford said hearts are broken over the lives lost and stomachs are in knots as residents begin to take stock of the damage.

A popular summer retreat, Ruidoso is no stranger to tragedy. It has spent a year rebuilding following destructive wildfires last summer and the flooding that followed.

Tuesday's rainfall was more than could be absorbed by the hillsides and canyons within the burn scar.

At the Riverside RV Park, owner Barbara Arthur and her guests scrambled up a nearby slope when the river started coursing through the site Tuesday afternoon. It was the sixth time the river rose in the last several weeks and by far the worst, she said.

Arthur's house was destroyed along with a nearby rental house she owns, and the water floated three trailers in the RV park. It was more destruction than she suffered from flooding last year, and possibly more than she can recover from, she said.

"We're just trying to recover from last year and man here we go again," she said. "It's going to be a long road, and I have no doubt that, you know, everybody's going to pull together and get it done. But I may not be one of them."

### Setting records

Officials urged residents to seek higher ground as the Rio Ruidoso rose to more than 20 feet (6 meters), according to preliminary data recorded by a U.S. Geological Survey gauge. That was nearly 5 feet (1.52 meters) more than the previous high the year before.

The National Weather Service issued flood warnings throughout Tuesday, with an upgraded emergency notification coming at 2:47 p.m. Most of the precipitation fell sometime between about 2:30 and 4 p.m.

"We received three and a half inches of rain on the South Fork burn scar in about a 90-minute period. That water came directly into our community and impacted the community head on," Mayor Crawford said during a news conference.

As little as a quarter of an inch of rain over a burn scar can cause flooding.

"So they were probably already getting some runoff from upstream before it even actually started raining on top of the wildfire burn scar," said Todd Shoemake, a meteorologist for the weather service in Albuquerque. "It really was just kind of a terrible coincidence of events that led to that."

The amount of rainfall wasn't necessarily historical, Shoemake said, but he likened it to a 100-year storm, or having a 1% chance of happening in any given year.

### Cleanup begins

Emergency crews completed dozens of swift water rescues before the water receded Tuesday. Two National Guard teams and several local crews already were in the area when the flooding began, said Danielle Silva of the New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Several roads remained closed Wednesday and the mayor said it would take time to restore utilities in some neighborhoods. The floodwaters fractured village water lines, infiltrated the sewer system and significantly damaged as many as 50 homes, with one home carried away entirely.

Along the river, pieces of metal were wrapped around trees while broken branches were wedged against

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homes and twisted among the Ponderosa pines that were still standing along the banks. The river — just a trickle compared to the day before — was thick with sediment.

Shelters were open Wednesday and food banks doled out provisions, as village officials encouraged people to call an emergency line if their loved ones or neighbors were missing or affected by the flood.

The floods came just days after flash floods in Texas killed more than 100 people and left more than 160 people missing.

Bracing for more

Local officials said the village, as the flood hit, was still in the process of replacing outdoor warning sirens that were destroyed last year by wildfire and reassessing risks along the local flood plain in cooperation with federal authorities.

Mayor Crawford reiterated Wednesday that Ruidoso will continue to be in the crosshairs with each monsoon, as there's still work to do to recover from the wildfire. The rainy season begins in June and runs through September.

Over the last year, hazardous trees have been removed, erosion control barriers have been built, and mulching and seeding projects have been done to reduce flood risks and help the watershed recover.

The mayor said some of that helped save homes on Tuesday, but other spots still are vulnerable. Ruidoso Emergency Manager Eric Quellar said emergency crews also were rushing to clear debris, including dislodged houses, that might make any renewed flooding worse.

New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham has requested a presidential disaster declaration, tallying more than \$50 million in emergency response expenditures, including water rescues, and damage to public infrastructure as bridges and roadways have been washed out. The estimate includes flood damage at Ruidoso and beyond from monsoon rainstorms since late June.

The village's tourism-based economy also has been thrown into turmoil again. With floodwaters running through Ruidoso Downs, one of the horse track's signature races that was scheduled to start Friday has been derailed.

The mayor said people are anxious as the monsoon is sure to bring more rain throughout the summer.

"Yesterday was a good lesson — you know that Mother Nature is a much bigger powerful force than we are," he said. "And that we can do a lot of things to protect ourselves and to try to help direct and whatever, but we cannot control."

## Harrowing stories of rescue emerge from Texas floods as crews search for over 160 reported missing

By SEAN MURPHY, NADIA LATHAN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

HUNT, Texas (AP) — In the frantic hours after a wall of water engulfed camps and homes in Texas, a police officer who was trapped himself spotted dozens of people stranded on roofs and waded out to bring them to safety, a fellow officer said Wednesday.

Another off-duty officer tied a garden hose around his waist so he could reach two people clinging to a tree above swirling floodwaters, Kerrville officer Jonathan Lamb said, describing another harrowing rescue.

"This tragedy, as horrific as it is, could have been so much worse," Lamb told a news conference, crediting first responders and volunteers with saving lives and knocking on doors to evacuate residents during the flash floods on the July Fourth holiday.

More than 160 people still are believed to be missing, and at least 118 have died in the floods that laid waste to the Hill Country region of Texas. The large number of missing people suggests that the full extent of the catastrophe is still unclear five days after the disaster.

The floods are now the deadliest from inland flooding in the U.S. since 1976, when Colorado's Big Thompson Canyon flooded, killing 144 people, said Bob Henson, a meteorologist with Yale Climate Connections.

Crews used backhoes and their bare hands Wednesday to dig through piles of debris that stretched for miles along the Guadalupe River in the search of missing people.

"We will not stop until every missing person is accounted for," Gov. Greg Abbott said Tuesday. "Know

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this also: There very likely could be more added to that list.”

Officials face backlash for lack of preparations and warnings

Public officials in the area have come under repeated criticism amid questions about the timeline of what happened and why widespread warnings were not sounded and more preparations were not made.

“Those questions are going to be answered,” Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha said. “I believe those questions need to be answered, to the families of the loved ones, to the public.”

But he said the priority for now is recovering victims. “We’re not running. We’re not going to hide from anything,” the sheriff said.

The governor called on state lawmakers to approve new flood warning systems and strengthen emergency communications in flood prone areas throughout the state when the Legislature meets in a special session that Abbott had already called to address other issues starting July 21. Abbott also called on lawmakers to provide financial relief for response and recovery efforts from the storms.

“We must ensure better preparation for such events in the future,” Abbott said in a statement.

Local leaders have talked for years about the need for a flood warning system, but concerns about costs and noise led to missed opportunities to put up sirens.

Raymond Howard, a city council member in Ingram, said it was “unfathomable” that county officials did not act.

“This is lives. This is families,” he said. “This is heartbreaking.”

Number of missing has soared

A day earlier, the governor announced that about 160 people have been reported missing in Kerr County, where searchers already have found more than 90 bodies.

Officials have been seeking more information about those who were in the Hill Country, a popular tourist destination, during the holiday weekend but did not register at a camp or a hotel and may have been in the area without many people knowing, Abbott said.

The riverbanks and hills of Kerr County are filled with vacation cabins, youth camps and campgrounds, including Camp Mystic, the century-old all-girls Christian summer camp where at least 27 campers and counselors died. Officials said five campers and one counselor have still not been found.

Just two days before the flooding, Texas inspectors signed off on the camp’s emergency planning. But five years of inspection reports released to The Associated Press did not provide any details about how campers would be evacuated.

Challenging search for the dead

With almost no hope of finding anyone alive, search crews and volunteers say they are focused on bringing the families of the missing some closure.

Crews fanned out in air boats, helicopters and on horseback. They used excavators and their hands, going through layer by layer, with search dogs sniffing for any sign of buried bodies.

They looked in trees and in the mounds below their feet. They searched inside crumpled pickup trucks and cars, painting them with a large X, much like those marked on homes after a hurricane.

More than 2,000 volunteers have offered to lend a hand in Kerr County alone, the sheriff said.

How long the search will continue was impossible to predict given the number of people unaccounted for and the miles to cover.

Shannon Ament wore knee-high rubber boots and black gloves as she rummaged through debris in front of her rental property in Kerr County. A high school soccer coach is one of the many people she knows who are still missing.

“We need support. I’m not going to say thoughts and prayers because I’m sick of that,” she said. “We don’t need to be blamed for who voted for who. This was a freak of nature — a freak event.”

Trump plans to survey damage Friday

President Donald Trump has pledged to provide whatever relief Texas needs to recover. He plans to visit the state Friday.

Polls taken before the floods show Americans largely believe the federal government should play a major



role in preparing for and responding to natural disasters.

Catastrophic flooding is a growing worry. On Tuesday, a deluge in New Mexico triggered flash floods that killed three people.

Although it's difficult to attribute a single weather event to climate change, experts say a warming atmosphere and oceans make these type of storms more likely.

## **The US is having its worst year for measles in more than three decades**

By DEVI SHASTRI AP Health Writer

The U.S. is having its worst year for measles spread in more than three decades, and the year is only half over.

The national case count reached 1,288 on Wednesday, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, though public health experts say the true figure may be higher.

The CDC's count is 14 more than 2019, when America almost lost its status of having eliminated the vaccine-preventable illness — something that could happen this year if the virus spreads without stopping for 12 months. But the U.S. is far from 1991, when there were 9,643 confirmed cases.

In a short statement, the federal government said that the CDC "continues to recommend (measles, mumps and rubella) vaccines as the best way to protect against measles." It also said it is "supporting community efforts" to tamp down ongoing outbreaks as requested.

Fourteen states have active outbreaks; four other states' outbreaks have ended. The largest outbreak started five months ago in undervaccinated communities in West Texas. Three people have died — two children in Texas and an adult in New Mexico — and dozens of people have been hospitalized across the U.S.

But there are signs that transmission is slowing, especially in Texas. Lubbock County's hospitals treated most of the sickest patients in the region, but the county hasn't seen a new case in 50 days, public health director Katherine Wells said.

"What concerned me early on in this outbreak was is it spreading to other parts of the United States, and that's definitely what's happening now," she said.

In 2000, the World Health Organization and CDC said measles had been eliminated from the U.S. The closer a disease gets to eradication, the harder it can seem to stamp it out, said Dr. Jonathan Temte, a family physician in Wisconsin who helped certify that distinction 25 years ago.

It's hard to see measles cases break records despite the widespread availability of a vaccine, he added. The measles, mumps and rubella vaccine is safe and is 97% effective at preventing measles after two doses.

"When we have tools that can be really helpful and see that they're discarded for no good reason, it's met with a little bit of melancholy on our part," Temte said of public health officials and primary care providers.

Wells said she is concerned about continuing vaccine hesitancy. A recent study found childhood vaccination rates against measles fell after the COVID-19 pandemic in nearly 80% of the more than 2,000 U.S. counties with available data, including in states that are battling outbreaks this year. And CDC data showed that only 92.7% of kindergarteners in the U.S. had the measles, mumps and rubella vaccine in the 2023-2024 school year, below the 95% needed to prevent outbreaks.

State and federal leaders have for years kept funding stagnant for local public health departments' vaccination programs that are tasked with reversing the trend. Wells said she talks with local public health leaders nationwide about how to prepare for an outbreak, but also says the system needs more investment.

"What we're seeing with measles is a little bit of a 'canary in a coal mine,'" said Lauren Gardner, leader of Johns Hopkins University's independent measles and COVID-19 tracking databases. "It's indicative of a problem that we know exists with vaccination attitudes in this county and just, I think, likely to get worse."

Currently, North America has three other major measles outbreaks: 2,966 cases in Chihuahua state, Mexico, 2,223 cases in Ontario, Canada and 1,246 in Alberta, Canada. The Ontario, Chihuahua and Texas outbreaks stem from large Mennonite communities in the regions. Mennonite churches do not formally discourage vaccination, though more conservative Mennonite communities historically have low vaccination

rates and a distrust of government.

In 2019, the CDC identified 22 outbreaks with the largest in two separate clusters in New York — 412 in New York state and 702 in New York City. These were linked because measles was spreading through close-knit Orthodox Jewish communities, the CDC said.

## **Philadelphia workers and city reach a deal to end strike that halted residential trash pickup**

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A union representing thousands of city workers in Philadelphia and the city have reached a deal to end a more than weeklong strike that halted residential curbside trash pickup and affected other services, officials said Wednesday.

Nearly 10,000 blue-collar employees from District Council 33 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees walked off the job July 1, seeking better pay and benefits after negotiations with the city failed.

The tentative agreement gives workers a 3% raise in each of the next three years, far from the union's quest for 5% annual pay hikes. Half of the members will get an additional 2% raise through an added level on the pay scale, Mayor Cherelle Parker said, and most members will qualify by the end of the contract.

Residential trash collection will resume Monday, according to Parker, who asked for "grace" as pools, libraries, recreation centers and other services get back to normal.

"This is a very significant investment in our employees while at the same time ensuring that we as a city are living by our means," Parker said at a news conference.

District Council 33 is the largest of four major unions representing city workers. Its membership includes 911 dispatchers, trash collectors, water department workers and many others. Police and firefighters weren't part of the strike.

Parker said that over her four-year term, DC33 workers will have received a total pay bump of 14%, including a 5% one-year hike she gave all four unions after taking office last year.

Many residents seemed to support boosting the pay of DC33 workers, even as trash piled up in neighborhoods. The union says they earn an average \$46,000 a year.

Union members must still ratify the agreement.

Rich Henkels, an actor who just moved into the city, called the settlement "disappointing."

"The announced raises do nothing for the workers and their families, as the increases will be less than the rate of inflation," said Henkels, 64.

The settlement was announced early on the ninth day of the strike, a period that included the Fourth of July holiday weekend. Some of the 60 drop-off centers that the city had designated for residential trash were overflowing. Most libraries and some pools across the city were closed, and recreation centers operated on reduced hours.

Last week, judges had sided with the city in ordering some critical employees back to work at the city's 911 centers, water department and airport.

"We did the best we could with the circumstances we had in front of us," union President Greg Boulware told reporters in brief remarks Wednesday morning.

## **Russia batters Ukraine with more than 700 drones, the largest barrage of the war, officials say**

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia fired more than 700 attack and decoy drones at Ukraine overnight, topping previous nightly barrages for the third time in two weeks as Moscow intensifies its aerial and ground assault in the three-year war, Ukrainian officials said Wednesday.

Russia has recently sought to overwhelm Ukraine's air defenses by launching major attacks that include

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increasing numbers of decoy drones. The most recent one appeared aimed at disrupting Ukraine's vital supply of Western weapons.

Lutsk, a city that's home to airfields used by the Ukrainian army, was the hardest hit, according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It lies near the border with Poland in western Ukraine, a region that is a crucial hub for receiving foreign military aid.

The attack comes at a time of increased uncertainty over the supply of crucial American weapons and as U.S.-led peace efforts have stalled. Zelenskyy said that the Kremlin was "making a point" with its barrage.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces took aim at Ukrainian air bases and that "all the designated targets have been hit." Meanwhile, Ukraine fired drones into Russia overnight, killing three people in the Kursk border region, including a 5-year-old boy, the local governor said.

The Russian attack, which included 728 drones and 13 missiles, had the largest number of drones fired in a single night in the war. On Friday, Russia fired 550 drones, less than a week after it launched 477, both the largest at the time, officials said.

Beyond Lutsk, 10 regions were struck. One person was killed in the Khmelnytskyi region, and two wounded in the Kyiv region, officials said.

Poland, a member of NATO, scrambled its fighter jets and put its armed forces on the highest level of alert in response to the attack, the Polish Armed Forces Operational Command wrote in an X post.

Russia's bigger army has also launched a new drive to punch through parts of the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, where short-handed Ukrainian forces are under heavy strain.

Trump says the US must send more weapons to Ukraine

U.S. President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he was "not happy" with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who hasn't budged from his ceasefire and peace demands since Trump took office in January and began to push for a settlement.

Trump said Monday that the U.S. would have to send more weapons to Ukraine, just days after Washington paused critical weapons deliveries to Kyiv.

On Wednesday, the U.S. resumed deliveries of certain weapons, including 155 mm munitions and precision-guided rockets known as GMLRS, two U.S. officials told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity so they could provide details that hadn't been announced publicly. It's unclear exactly when the weapons started moving.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Trump "has quite a tough style in terms of the phrasing he uses," adding that Moscow hopes to "continue our dialogue with Washington and our course aimed at repairing the badly damaged bilateral ties."

Zelenskyy, meanwhile, urged Ukraine's partners to impose stricter sanctions on Russian oil and those who help finance the Kremlin's war by buying it.

"Everyone who wants peace must act," Zelenskyy said. The Ukrainian leader met Pope Leo XIV on Wednesday during a visit to Italy ahead of an international conference on rebuilding Ukraine.

Both Russia and Ukraine look to build more drones

Ukraine's air defenses shot down 296 drones and seven missiles during the overnight attack, while 415 more drones were lost from radars or jammed, an air force statement said.

Ukrainian interceptor drones, developed to counter the Shahed ones fired by Russia, are increasingly effective, Zelenskyy said, adding that domestic production of anti-aircraft drones is being scaled up in partnership with some Western countries.

Western military analysts say Russia is also boosting its drone manufacturing and could soon be capable of launching 1,000 a night at Ukraine.

"Russia continues to expand its domestic drone production capacity amid the ever-growing role of tactical drones in front-line combat operations and Russia's increasingly large nightly long-range strike packages against Ukraine," the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said late Tuesday.

Ukraine has also built up its own offensive drone threat, reaching deep into Russia with some long-range strikes.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Wednesday that air defenses downed 86 Ukrainian drones over six Rus-

sian regions overnight, including the Moscow region.

Flights were temporarily suspended at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport and the international airport of Kaluga, south of Moscow.

The governor of Russia's Kursk border region, Alexander Khinshtein, said a Ukrainian drone attack on the region's capital city just before midnight killed three people and wounded seven others, including the 5-year-old boy who died on the way to a hospital.

Meanwhile, Europe's top human rights court ruled Wednesday that Russia had violated international law during the war in Ukraine, the first time an international court has found Moscow responsible for human rights abuses since the full-scale invasion in 2022.

The court also ruled Russia was behind the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17, the first time Moscow was named by an international court as being responsible for the 2014 tragedy that claimed 298 lives. Any decision is largely symbolic.

## **X CEO Linda Yaccarino resigns after two years at the helm of Elon Musk's social media platform**

By MATT O'BRIEN and BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writers

X CEO Linda Yaccarino said she's stepping down after two bumpy years running Elon Musk's social media platform.

Yaccarino posted a positive message Wednesday about her tenure at the company formerly known as Twitter and said "the best is yet to come as X enters a new chapter with" Musk's artificial intelligence company xAI, maker of the chatbot Grok. She did not say why she is leaving.

Musk responded to Yaccarino's announcement with his own 5-word statement on X: "Thank you for your contributions."

"The only thing that's surprising about Linda Yaccarino's resignation is that it didn't come sooner," said Forrester research director Mike Proulx. "It was clear from the start that she was being set up to fail by a limited scope as the company's chief executive."

In reality, Proulx added, Musk "is and always has been at the helm of X. And that made Linda X's CEO in title only, which is a very tough position to be in, especially for someone of Linda's talents."

Musk hired Yaccarino, a veteran ad executive, in May 2023 after buying Twitter for \$44 billion in late 2022 and cutting most of its staff. He said at the time that Yaccarino's role would be focused mainly on running the company's business operations, leaving him to focus on product design and new technology. Before announcing her hiring, Musk said whoever took over as the company's CEO "must like pain a lot."

In accepting the job, Yaccarino was taking on the challenge of getting big brands back to advertising on the social media platform after months of upheaval following Musk's takeover. She also had to work in a supporting role to Musk's outsized persona on and off of X as he loosened content moderation rules in the name of free speech and restored accounts previously banned by the social media platform.

"Being the CEO of X was always going to be a tough job, and Yaccarino lasted in the role longer than many expected. Faced with a mercurial owner who never fully stepped away from the helm and continued to use the platform as his personal megaphone, Yaccarino had to try to run the business while also regularly putting out fires," said Emarketer analyst Jasmine Enberg.

Yaccarino's future at X became unclear earlier this year after Musk merged the social media platform with his artificial intelligence company, xAI. And the advertising issues have not subsided. Since Musk's takeover, a number of companies had pulled back on ad spending — the platform's chief source of revenue — over concerns that Musk's thinning of content restrictions was enabling hateful and toxic speech to flourish.

Most recently, an update to Grok led to a flood of antisemitic commentary from the chatbot this week that included praise of Adolf Hitler.

"We are aware of recent posts made by Grok and are actively working to remove the inappropriate posts," the Grok account posted on X early Wednesday, without being more specific.

Some experts have tied Grok's behavior to Musk's deliberate efforts to mold Grok as an alternative to



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chatbots he considers too “woke,” such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT and Google’s Gemini. In late June, he invited X users to help train the chatbot on their commentary in a way that invited a flood of racist responses and conspiracy theories.

“Please reply to this post with divisive facts for @Grok training,” Musk said in the June 21 post. “By this I mean things that are politically incorrect, but nonetheless factually true.”

A similar instruction was later baked into Grok’s “prompts” that instruct it on how to respond, which told the chatbot to “not shy away from making claims which are politically incorrect, as long as they are well substantiated.” That part of the instructions was later deleted.

“To me, this has all the fingerprints of Elon’s involvement,” said Talia Ringer, a professor of computer science at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Yaccarino has not publicly commented on the latest hate speech controversy. She has, at times, ardently defended Musk’s approach, including in a lawsuit against liberal advocacy group Media Matters for America over a report that claimed leading advertisers’ posts on X were appearing alongside neo-Nazi and white nationalist content. The report led some advertisers to pause their activity on X.

A federal judge last year dismissed X’s lawsuit against another nonprofit, the Center for Countering Digital Hate, which has documented the increase in hate speech on the site since it was acquired by Musk.

X is also in an ongoing legal dispute with major advertisers — including CVS, Mars, Lego, Nestle, Shell and Tyson Foods — over what it has alleged was a “massive advertiser boycott” that deprived the company of billions of dollars in revenue and violated antitrust laws.

Enberg said that, “to a degree, Yaccarino accomplished what she was hired to do.” Emarketer expects X’s ad business to return to growth in 2025 after more than halving between 2022 and 2023 following Musk’s takeover.

But, she added, “the reasons for X’s ad recovery are complicated, and Yaccarino was unable to restore the platform’s reputation among advertisers.”

Analysts have said that some advertisers may have returned to X to avoid alienating Trump supporters during the height of Musk’s affiliation with the president and his base. Legal threats may have also played a part — whether from X or from the Federal Trade Commission, which is investigating Media Matters over its reporting that hateful content has increased on X since Musk took over, resulting in an advertiser exodus. Media Matters has in turn sued the FTC, claiming it seeks to punish protected speech.

## AI kingpin Nvidia crowned as first public company with a \$4 trillion valuation

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Silicon Valley chipmaker Nvidia on Wednesday became the first publicly traded company to surpass a \$4 trillion market valuation, putting the latest exclamation point on the investor frenzy surrounding an artificial intelligence boom powered by its industry-leading processors.

Although Nvidia’s market value dipped back below \$4 trillion by the time the stock market closed, reaching the milestone highlighted the upheaval being unleashed by an AI craze that’s widely viewed as the biggest tectonic shift in technology since Apple co-founder Steve Jobs unveiled the first iPhone 18 years ago. Underscoring the changing of the guard, AI bellwether Nvidia is now worth \$900 billion more than Apple, which rode the iPhone’s success to become the first publicly traded company to valued at \$1 trillion, \$2 trillion and eventually, \$3 trillion.

Nvidia’s rise as come as Apple has struggled to deliver on its ambitions to infuse the iPhone and other products with more AI with an array of new features that included a more than year-old promise to smarten up its often bumbling virtual assistant Apple acknowledged last month that delivering on its AI vision is going to take until at least next year, leading some industry analysts to wonder if the company will have to acquire an AI start-up to regain momentum.

In the meantime, former Apple design guru Jony Ive has joined forces with OpenAI to work on a wearable AI device that could challenge the iPhone while Nvidia has been scrambling to meet the feverish demand

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for its specialized chips that power the energy-intensive data centers underlying artificial intelligence.

And tech giants Microsoft, Amazon, Google parent Alphabet and Facebook parent Meta Platforms are upping the AI ante too, collectively budgeting about \$325 billion for investments in the technology this year — with a significant amount of that money likely to flow into Nvidia's coffers.

The ravenous appetite for Nvidia's chips are the main reason that the company's stock price increased by 10-fold since early 2023, catapulting its market value from about \$400 billion to \$4 trillion. After exceeding \$4 trillion for the first time early Wednesday, Nvidia's shares backtracked below that threshold at their closing price of \$162.88.

But most analysts don't expect the price to stay below \$163 for long. In a sign of the pervasive optimism surrounding Nvidia, CFRA analyst Angelo Zino on Wednesday issued a research note predicting the stock will climb to \$196 within the next year to push the company's market value to \$4.8 trillion.

Nvidia's rapid rise also has anointed the company's founder and CEO Jensen Huang as "the godfather" of AI, whose dissertations about the technology's direction attract enraptured audiences. Huang's widening fame also has been accompanied by a fattening fortune, now estimated at \$142 billion.

It looked like Nvidia may have hit a road block in early April when President Donald Trump unveiled sweeping tariffs and triggered widespread selloff in the stock market that hit the tech sector especially hard. At its nadir, Nvidia's stock price slipped below \$87.

But Nvidia quickly bounced and in late May delivered another stellar quarter, highlighted by an \$18.8 billion profit, despite a \$4.5 billion hit to account for U.S. government restrictions on the sale of some of its chips to China.

The Santa Clara, California, company is scheduled to release its next quarterly report on Aug. 27.

## Gains for tech stocks push Nasdaq to another record

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

A rally in big tech stocks led the broader market to a higher close Wednesday, lifting the Nasdaq to an all-time high and helping Wall Street claw back most of its losses from earlier in the week.

The S&P 500 rose 0.6% for its first gain this week. The benchmark index remains near the record it set last week after a better-than-expected U.S. jobs report.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.5%. The Nasdaq composite, which is heavily weighted with technology stocks, closed 0.9% higher. The gain was good enough to nudge the index past the record high it set last Thursday.

Nvidia rose 1.8% and became the first public company to exceed \$4 trillion in value after its share price briefly topped \$164 each in the early going. Shares in the AI boom poster child were going for around \$14 per share at the start of 2023.

The tech rally came as Wall Street continued to weigh the latest developments in President Donald Trump's renewed push this week to use threats of higher tariffs on goods imported into the U.S. in hopes of securing new trade agreements with countries around the globe.

Wednesday was initially set as a deadline by Trump for countries to make deals with the U.S. or face heavy increases in tariffs. But with just two trade deals announced since April, one with the United Kingdom and one with Vietnam, the window for negotiations has been extended to Aug. 1.

This latest phase in the White House's trade war heightens the threat of potentially more severe tariffs that's been hanging over the global economy. Higher taxes on imported goods could hinder economic growth, if not increase recession risks.

On Tuesday, Trump said he would be announcing tariffs on pharmaceutical drugs at a "very, very high rate, like 200%." He also said he would sign an executive order placing a 50% tariff on copper imports, matching the rates charged on steel and aluminum.

Copper prices eased Wednesday after spiking a day earlier. Shares in mining company Freeport-McMoRan fell 1.5%.

Financial markets swooned from day-to-day for weeks after the White House rolled out its proposed

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tariff hikes in the spring. With the new batch of U.S. taxes on imports not set to kick in until next month, that gives Wall Street a breather just as the next corporate earnings season is set to begin.

"I think most people are tired of tariff news and they're starting to realize it just doesn't matter much," said Jay Hatfield, CEO of Infrastructure Capital Advisors. "We're pretty bullish about earnings. I think the rest of the market is too."

Wall Street analysts predict that companies in the S&P 500 will deliver a combined 5% annual growth in second-quarter earnings, according to FactSet. That would mark the lowest growth rate for the index since the fourth quarter of 2023.

Delta Air Lines kicks off earnings season on Thursday, with most analysts expecting the airline's second-quarter profit to decline from a year ago. Delta and other major U.S. carriers have trimmed their flight schedules and pulled their forecasts this year as consumers pull back on travel and other nonessential spending due to uncertainty about how Trump's tariffs will affect their budgets.

Gains in technology and communication services stocks outweighed declines in energy and other sectors Wednesday.

Microsoft rose 1.4%, Meta gained 1.7% and Google parent Alphabet added 1.3%.

Amazon rose 1.4% a day after the online retail giant kicked off Prime Day, extending it for the first time to four days.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 37.74 to 6,263.26. The Dow added 217.54 to 44,458.30, and the Nasdaq gained 192.87 to close at 20,611.34.

In bond market trading, the yield on the 10-year Treasury slid to 4.34% from 4.40% late Tuesday.

In overseas markets, stock indexes closed broadly higher in Europe after a mixed finish in Asia.

Outside of trade talks, some corporate news surfaced Wednesday after a typically quiet early summer stretch.

Pharmaceutical giant Merck is buying Verona Pharma, a U.K. company that focuses on respiratory diseases, in an approximately \$10 billion deal. If approved by Verona shareholders and U.K. officials, Merck will get access to Verona's chronic obstructive pulmonary disease medication Ohtuvayre. Verona shares jumped 20.6% on the news, while Merck shares rose 2.9%.

## Israeli strikes kill 40 in Gaza, with no sign of a breakthrough after Trump's talks with Netanyahu

By WAFAA SHURAF, KAREEM CHEHAYEB, and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli airstrikes killed at least 40 Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, including 10 members of a family sheltering in a tent, hospital officials said Wednesday. The strikes came as U.S. President Donald Trump pushed for a ceasefire that might end the war and free dozens of Israeli hostages.

Trump met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the second time in two days at the White House on Tuesday evening, but there was no sign of a breakthrough.

Netanyahu has vowed to continue the 21-month war until Hamas is destroyed, while the militant group has said it will only release the remaining hostages in return for a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

Nasser Hospital in the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis said the dead included 17 women and 10 children. The war has gutted Gaza's health system, with several hospitals taken out of service and leading physicians killed in Israeli strikes.

The Israeli military said it had struck more than 100 targets across Gaza over the past day, including militants, booby-trapped structures, weapons storage facilities, missile launchers and tunnels. Israel accuses Hamas of hiding weapons and fighters among civilians.

'I found all my children dead'

On Wednesday, crowds of people bid farewell to the 10 members of the Shaaban family killed in an Israeli strike while they were inside their tent in Khan Younis.

"I found all my children dead, and my daughters' three children dead," said Um Mohammad Shaaban, a

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nickname that means Mohammad Shaaban's mother. "It's supposed to be a safe area where we were." She said that strikes have intensified even as hope for a ceasefire has risen. "The hospital last night was jam-packed," she said.

As she wept over the bodies of her three grandchildren, others holding the bodies struggled to let go before they were sent to burial.

Palestinians are struggling to secure food and water

Palestinians are desperate for an end to the war that has killed tens of thousands, destroyed vast areas and displaced around 90% of the territory's population.

Aid groups say Israeli restrictions and the breakdown of law and order have made it extremely difficult to deliver humanitarian assistance, leading to widespread hunger and fears of famine.

In the sprawling coastal Muwasi area, where hundreds of thousands of people live in tents after being displaced from their homes, Abeer al-Najjar said she had struggled during the constant bombardments to get food and water for her family.

"I pray to God that there would be a pause, and not just a pause where they would lie to us," she said, referring to an earlier ceasefire that Israel ended in March. "We want a full ceasefire."

Her husband, Ali al-Najjar, said life has been especially tough in the summer, with little access to drinking water. "We hope this would be the end of our suffering and we can rebuild our country again," he said, before running through a crowd with two buckets to fill them from a water truck.

People chased the vehicle as it drove away to another location.

Amani Abu-Omar said the water truck comes every four days, not enough for her dehydrated children. She said the summer heat and harsh conditions have caused skin rashes.

"We had expected ceasefires on many occasions, but it was for nothing," she said.

The war started after Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 hostage. Most of the hostages have been released in earlier ceasefires. Israel's offensive in Gaza has killed more than 57,000 Palestinians, more than half of them women and children, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry, which is under Gaza's Hamas-run government, doesn't differentiate between civilians and combatants. The United Nations and other international organizations see its figures as the most reliable statistics on war casualties.

Trump says 'we're close' to a ceasefire and hostage deal

Netanyahu told reporters on Tuesday that he and Trump see "eye to eye" on the need to destroy Hamas and that coordination between Israel and the United States has never been better.

Later this week, Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, is expected to head to the Qatari capital of Doha to continue indirect negotiations with Hamas on the ceasefire proposal.

Witkoff and other senior administration officials met with Israeli Minister for Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer as well as Qatari officials at the White House on Tuesday to discuss sticking points in the talks, including Israel's desire to maintain a military presence in Gaza during a potential 60-day truce, according to a White House official who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Asked about the meeting, Trump did not confirm that "secret" talks had happened, but said if they did, he hoped the engagement "gets us to where we want to be."

"We want to have peace. We want to get the hostages back. And I think we're close to doing it," Trump added.

## Trump's trade blitz produces few deals but lots of uncertainty

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and his advisers promised a lightning round of global trade negotiations with dozens of countries back in April.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro predicted "90 deals in 90 days." Administration officials declared that other countries were desperate to make concessions to avoid the massive import taxes — tariffs — that



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Trump was threatening to plaster on their products starting July 9.

But the 90 days have come and gone. And the tally of trade deals stands at two – one with the United Kingdom and one with Vietnam. Trump has also announced the framework for a deal with China, the details of which remain fuzzy.

Trump has now extended the deadline for negotiations to Aug. 1 and tinkered with his threatened tariffs, leaving the global trading system pretty much where it stood three months ago — in a state of limbo as businesses delay decisions on investments, contracts and hiring because they don't know what the rules will be.

"It's a rerun, basically," said William Reinsch, a former U.S. trade official who's now an adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank. Trump and his team "don't have the deals they want. So they're piling on the threats."

The pattern has repeated itself enough times to earn Trump the label TACO — an acronym coined by The Financial Times' Robert Armstrong that stands for "Trump Always Chickens Out."

"This is classic Trump: Threaten, threaten more, but then extend the deadline," Reinsch said. "July 30 arrives, does he do it again if he still doesn't have the deals?" (Trump said Tuesday that there will be no more extensions.)

The deal drought represents a collision with reality.

Negotiating simultaneously with every country on earth was always an impossible task, as Trump himself belatedly admitted last month in an interview with the Fox News Channel. ("There's 200 countries," the president said. "You can't talk to all of them.") And many trading partners — such as Japan and the European Union — were always likely to balk at Trump's demands, at least without getting something in return.

"It's really, really hard to negotiate trade agreements," which usually takes several months even when it involves just one country or a small regional group, said Chad Bown, an economic adviser in the Obama White House and now senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "What the administration is doing is negotiating a bunch of these at the same time."

The drama began April 2 – "Liberation Day," Trump called it — when the tariff-loving president announced a so-called baseline 10% import tax on everybody and what he called "reciprocal" levies of up to 50% on countries with which the United States runs trade deficits.

The 10% baseline tariffs appear to be here to stay. Trump needs them to raise money to patch the hole his massive tax-cut bill is blasting into the federal budget deficit.

By themselves, the baseline tariffs represent a massive shift in American trade policy: Tariffs averaged around 2.5% when Trump returned to the White House and were even lower before he started raising them in his first term.

But the reciprocal tariffs are an even bigger deal.

In announcing them, Trump effectively blew up the rules governing world trade. For decades, the United States and most other countries abided by tariff rates set through a series of complex negotiations known as the Uruguay round. Countries could set their own tariffs – but under the "most favored nation" approach, they couldn't charge one country more than they charged another.

Now Trump is setting the tariff rates himself, creating "tailor-made trade plans for each and every country on this planet," in the words of White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

But investors have recoiled at the audacious plan, fearing that it will disrupt trade and damage the world economy. Trump's Liberation Day tariffs, for instance, set off a four-day rout in global financial markets. Trump blinked. Less than 13 hours after the reciprocal tariffs took effect April 9, he abruptly suspended them for 90 days, giving countries time to negotiate with his trade team.

Despite the Trump administration's expressions of confidence, the talks turned into a slog.

"Countries have their own politics, their own domestic politics," Reinsch said. "Trump structured this ideally so that all the concessions are made by the other guys and the only U.S. concession is: We don't impose the tariffs."

But countries like South Korea and Japan needed "to come back with something," he said. Their thinking:

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"We have to get some concessions out of the United States to make it look like this is a win-win agreement and not a we-fold-and-surrender agreement."

Japan, for example, wanted relief from another Trump tariff — 50% levies on steel and aluminum.

Countries may also be hesitant to reach a deal with the United States while the Trump administration conducts investigations that might result in new tariffs on a range of products, including pharmaceuticals and semiconductors.

Frustrated by the lack of progress, Trump on Monday sent letters to Japan, South Korea and 12 other countries, saying he'd hit them with tariffs Aug. 1 if they couldn't reach an agreement. The levies were close to what he'd announced on April 2; Japan's, for example, would be 25%, compared to the 24% unveiled April 2.

Trump did sign an agreement last month with the United Kingdom that, among other provisions, reduced U.S. tariffs on British automotive and aerospace products while opening the U.K. market for American beef and ethanol. But the pact kept the baseline tariff on British products mostly in place, underlining Trump's commitment to the 10% tax despite the United States running a trade surplus — not a deficit — with the U.K. for 19 straight years, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

On July 2, Trump announced a deal with Vietnam. The Vietnamese agreed to let U.S. products into the country duty free while accepting a 20% tax on their exports to the United States, Trump said, though details of the agreement have not been released.

The lopsided deal with Vietnam suggests that Trump can successfully use the tariff threat to bully concessions out of smaller economies.

"They just can't really negotiate in the same way that the (European Union) or Korea or Japan (or) Canada can negotiate with the United States," said Dan McCarthy, principal in McCarthy Consulting and a former official with the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative in the Biden administration. "A lot of (smaller) countries just want to get out of this and are willing to cut their losses."

But wrangling a deal with bigger trading partners is likely to remain tougher.

"The U.S. is gambling that these countries will ultimately be intimidated and fold," Reinsch said. "And the countries are gambling that the longer this stretches out, and the longer it goes without Trump producing any more deals, the more desperate he gets; and he lowers his standards.

"It's kind of a giant game of chicken."

## **Biden's former doctor refuses to answer questions in House Republican probe**

By MATT BROWN and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden's former White House physician refused on Wednesday to answer questions as part of the House Republican investigation into Biden's health in office.

Dr. Kevin O'Connor invoked his rights under the Fifth Amendment during a closed-door interview with the House Oversight Committee, his attorney and lawmakers said.

Republicans on the Oversight Committee subpoenaed O'Connor last month as part of a their sweeping investigation into Biden's health and his mental fitness as president. They claim some policies carried out during Biden's term through the use of the White House autopen may be illegitimate if it's proven the Democrat was mentally incapacitated for some of his term.

Biden has strongly denied that he was not in a right state of mind at any point while in office, calling the claims "ridiculous and false."

David Schertler, one of O'Connor's lawyers, said the doctor had "no choice" but to invoke his Fifth Amendment rights in testimony before the committee. Schertler cited both O'Connor's responsibilities to protect patient privacy as a doctor and the Justice Department's ongoing investigation into Biden's use of the autopen.

Rep. James Comer of Kentucky, the Oversight chair, said O'Connor's refusal to testify made it "clear there was a conspiracy."

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"The American people demand transparency, but Dr. O'Connor would rather conceal the truth," Comer said in a statement.

Witnesses routinely invoke their Fifth Amendment rights in testimony to Congress. Allies of President Donald Trump, for example, invoked their rights when refusing to testify to the committee that investigated the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol by a mob of his supporters.

Comer has sought testimony from nearly a dozen former Biden aides as he conducts his investigation, including former White House chiefs of staff Ron Klain and Jeff Zients; former senior advisers Mike Donilon and Anita Dunn; former deputy chief of staff Bruce Reed, former counselor to the president Steve Ricchetti, former deputy chief of staff Annie Tomasini and a former assistant to the president, Ashley Williams.

He has also issued a subpoena for Anthony Bernal, the former chief of staff to former first lady Jill Biden. Trump's White House has waived executive privilege, a right that protects many communications between the president and staff from Congress and the courts, for almost all of those senior staffers. That clears the way for those staffers to discuss their conversations with Biden while he was president.

Rep. Robert Garcia of California, the top Democrat on the Oversight panel, dismissed the Republican investigation as a waste of time.

"Oversight Republicans could be working to lower costs for American families and conducting oversight of President Trump's corruption, but instead are obsessed with the past," he said.

Comer has said his committee will release a report of all its findings after the probe is complete.

## European court finds Russia committed violations in Ukraine and was behind downing Flight MH17

By MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Europe's top human rights court delivered damning judgments Wednesday against Russia in four cases brought by Kyiv and the Netherlands accusing Moscow of atrocities in Ukraine dating back more than a decade.

Judges at the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Russia was responsible for widespread violations of international law — from shooting down Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in 2014, to the murder, torture, rape, destruction of civilian infrastructure and kidnapping of Ukrainian children after Moscow's full-scale invasion of 2022.

Reading the decisions in a packed courtroom in Strasbourg, Court President Mattias Guyomar said Russian forces breached international humanitarian law in Ukraine by carrying out attacks that "killed and wounded thousands of civilians and created fear and terror."

The Kremlin said it would ignore the largely symbolic judgment, but Ukraine hailed it as "historic and unprecedented," saying it was an "undeniable victory" for the embattled country.

The judges found the human rights abuses went beyond any military objective and that Russia used sexual violence as part of a strategy to break Ukrainian morale, the French judge said.

"The use of rape as a weapon of war was an act of extreme atrocity that amounted to torture," Guyomar said.

The 501-page judgment noted that Russia's refusal to participate in the proceedings also was a violation of European Convention of Human Rights, the treaty that underpins the court.

Asked about the judgment before the rulings were read, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "We won't abide by it, we consider it void."

Families of the victims of the Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 disaster saw the decision as an important milestone in their 11-year quest for justice.

Thomas Schansman, whose 18-year-old son, Quinn, was aboard the jetliner, told The Associated Press that the judgment makes clear who caused the disaster.

Russia "is responsible for killing my son," Schansman said.

The Boeing 777 flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was shot down on July 17, 2014, using a Russian-

made Buk missile fired from territory in eastern Ukraine controlled by separatist rebels loyal to Moscow. All 298 passengers and crew were killed, including 196 Dutch citizens.

The judges found that Russia's refusal to acknowledge its involvement in the Flight MH17 disaster also violated international law. Russia's failure to properly investigate "significantly aggravated the suffering" of the relatives and friends of the dead.

"Russia never took any opportunity to tell the truth," Schansman said.

In May, the U.N.'s aviation agency found Russia responsible for the disaster.

The separatist conflict that broke out in eastern Ukraine in 2014 killed about 14,000 people before Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022.

The ECHR is an important part of the Council of Europe, which is the continent's foremost human rights institution. The court's governing body expelled Moscow in 2022 in response to the all-out invasion. However, the court can still deal with cases against Russia dating from before its expulsion and, legally, the country is still obliged to participate in the proceedings.

The court will rule on financial compensation at a later date but Russia's departure leaves little hope that damages will ever be collected.

In 2023, the judges sided with Ukraine and the Netherlands in a challenge over jurisdiction, finding there was sufficient evidence to show that areas in eastern Ukraine controlled by separatist rebels were "under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation." That included providing weapons, and giving political and economic support.

Wednesday's rulings won't be the last from the EHCR dealing with the war. Kyiv has other cases pending against Russia and there are nearly 10,000 cases brought by individuals against the Kremlin.

The decisions in Strasbourg are separate from a criminal prosecution in the Netherlands in which two Russians and a Ukrainian rebel were convicted in absentia of multiple murders for their roles in the downing of Flight MH17.

In 2022, the United Nations' top court ordered Russia to stop military operations in Ukraine while a case is heard, a process that takes years. Russia has flouted the order by the International Court of Justice.

Last month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy formally approved plans to set up a new international court to prosecute senior Russian officials for the invasion.

## Senate committee advances Susan Monarez to be Trump's CDC director

By MIKE STOBBE and JONEL ALECCIA Associated Press

The U.S. Senate's health committee on Wednesday approved Susan Monarez to be President Donald Trump's director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, taking her one step closer to confirmation.

The committee voted 12-11 for advancing her nomination to the full Senate. The vote went along party lines, with Democrats in opposition.

Monarez, 50, is poised to become the first CDC director to pass through Senate confirmation following a 2023 law. She was named acting director in January and then tapped as the nominee in March after Trump abruptly withdrew his first choice, David Weldon.

She holds a doctorate in microbiology and immunology from the University of Wisconsin, and a postdoctoral researcher at Stanford University. Prior to the CDC, Monarez was largely known for her government roles in health technology and biosecurity.

The committee's action comes after months of turmoil with no leader at the helm of the Atlanta-based federal agency tasked with tracking diseases and responding to health threats.

The CDC has been hit by widespread staff cuts, resignations of key officials and heated controversy over longstanding CDC vaccine policies upended by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Last month, Monarez told senators that she values vaccines, public health interventions and rigorous



scientific evidence, but she largely dodged questions about whether those positions put her at odds with Kennedy, a longtime vaccine skeptic who has criticized and sought to dismantle some of the agency's previous protocols and decisions.

"Unfortunately, Dr. Monarez — who has served as Trump's acting CDC director — has done nothing to stand in the way" of Kennedy's actions, Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent, said Wednesday.

The CDC was created nearly 80 years ago to prevent the spread of malaria in the U.S. Its mission was later expanded, and it gradually became a global leader on infectious and chronic diseases and a go-to source of health information.

## **Trump appointees have ties to companies that stand to benefit from privatizing weather forecasts**

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick oversees the U.S. government's vast efforts to monitor and predict the weather.

The billionaire also ran a financial firm, which he recently left in the control of his adult sons, that stands to benefit if President Donald Trump's administration follows through on a decade-long Republican effort to privatize government weather forecasting.

Deadly flooding in Texas has drawn a spotlight to budget cuts and staff reductions at the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, agencies housed within the Commerce Department that provide the public with free climate and weather data that can be crucial during natural disasters.

What's drawn less attention is how the downsizing appears to be part of an effort to privatize the work of such agencies. In several instances, the companies poised to step into the void have deep ties to people tapped by Trump to run weather-related agencies.

Privatization would diminish a central role the federal government has played in weather forecasting since the 1800s, which experts say poses a particular harm for those who may not be able to afford commercial weather data.

The effort also reveals the difficulty wealthy members of Trump's Cabinet have in freeing themselves from conflicts, even if they have met the letter of federal ethics law.

"It's the most insidious aspect of this: Are we really talking about making weather products available only to those who can afford it?" said Rick Spinrad, who served as NOAA administrator under President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

The Commerce Department said in a statement that Lutnick has "fully complied with the terms of his ethics agreement with respect to divestiture and recusals and will continue to do so."

Trump nominees have ties to weather-related industries

Privatizing weather agencies has been an aim of Republicans. During Trump's first presidency, he signed a bill to utilize more private weather data. Project 2025, a proposed blueprint for Trump's second presidency that was co-authored by his budget director, calls for the NOAA to be broken up and for the weather service to "fully commercialize its forecasting operations."

Lutnick is not the only one Trump nominated for a key post with close relationships to companies involved in the gathering of weather data.

Trump's pick to lead the NOAA, Neil Jacobs, was chief atmospheric scientist for Panasonic Weather Solutions and is a proponent of privatization. The president's nominee for another top NOAA post, Taylor Jordan, is a lobbyist for weather-related clients.

Jordan and Jacobs "will follow the law and rely on the advice of the Department's ethics counsel in addressing matters involving former clients" if confirmed, the Commerce Department said in its statement.

Elon Musk, who spent more than \$250 million to help elect Trump, owns a controlling interest in SpaceX and its satellite subsidiary Starlink. Both are regulated by the NOAA's Office of Space Commerce, which

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lost about one-third of its staff in layoffs by the Department of Government Efficiency, which Musk created. SpaceX stands to gain through a new generation of private and federally funded weather satellites that would be carried into orbit on its rockets.

Though Musk departed Washington after a very public falling out with Trump, the DOGE staffers he hired and the cuts he pushed have largely remained in place.

Requests for comment sent to representatives for Musk received no response.

Lutnick ran Cantor Fitzgerald

Lutnick resigned as CEO of Cantor Fitzgerald upon taking office and began the task of divesting his interests.

His two 20-something sons took the reins of his financial empire. But Lutnick's most recent ethics filing stated he was still selling his holdings in the firm.

An ethics plan from February states Lutnick would request a waiver allowing him to participate in matters with a "direct and predictable effect" on his family's business. Securities and Exchange Commission filings, meanwhile, show Lutnick is keeping his stake in Cantor close, transferring them to a son.

Cantor spokesperson Erica Chase said Lutnick has had no involvement in running the company since his resignation.

"Cantor and its subsidiaries operate in heavily regulated industries, and maintain robust compliance programs to ensure compliance with all applicable laws," Chase said.

Federal officials are barred from making decisions that benefit the business holdings of themselves or their spouses, but that prohibition doesn't extend to their adult children, said Richard Painter, an ethics lawyer in Republican President George W. Bush's administration.

Cantor has interests in weather and climate. It owns a controlling interest in BGC Group, which operates a weather derivatives marketplace that essentially allows investors to bet on climate risk and where hurricanes will make landfall.

Lutnick also played a pivotal role in cultivating the satellite company Satellogic, which he helped take public and where he held a board seat. Cantor holds a roughly 13% stake in Satellogic, an emerging federal contractor that offers crisp images of natural disasters and weather events in real time.

The White House's 2026 spending plan proposes \$8 billion in cuts for future NOAA satellites, which capture imagery of the planet provided to the public. Satellogic stands to benefit if the government retreats from operating climate-monitoring satellites.

2 Trump nominees have ties to weather companies

Jacobs, Trump's pick to lead the NOAA, was scheduled to appear Wednesday before a Senate committee weighing his nomination.

Jacobs has long advocated for a greater role for the private sector in government weather forecasting. During a 2023 congressional hearing focused on the future of the NOAA, he expressed concerns about what happens to commercial data purchased by the government.

"They give it away to the rest of the planet for free," he testified.

He was a consultant at the time for Spire Global and Lynker, both of which have millions of dollars in weather data contracts with the NOAA, records show.

Jordan, Trump's pick for another top NOAA post, has similarly close relationships. His financial disclosure lists more than a dozen weather-related lobbying clients, including Spire, Lynker and AccuWeather.

Though his nomination is pending, records show he still represents weather companies and works at a Washington lobbying firm.

## Trump appointees have ties to companies that stand to benefit from privatizing weather forecasts

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick oversees the U.S. government's vast efforts to monitor and predict the weather.

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The billionaire also ran a financial firm, which he recently left in the control of his adult sons, that stands to benefit if President Donald Trump's administration follows through on a decade-long Republican effort to privatize government weather forecasting.

Deadly weekend flooding in central Texas has drawn a spotlight to budget cuts and staff reductions at the National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, two agencies housed within the Commerce Department that provide the public with free climate and weather data that can be crucial during natural disasters.

What's drawn less attention is how the downsizing appears to be part of an effort to privatize the work of such agencies. In several instances, the companies poised to step into the void have deep ties to people tapped by Trump to run weather-related agencies.

Privatization would diminish a central role the federal government has played in weather forecasting since the 1800s, which experts say poses a particular harm for those facing financial strain who may not be able to afford commercial weather data.

The effort also reveals the difficulty that uber wealthy members of Trump's Cabinet have in freeing themselves from conflicts, even if they have met the letter of federal ethics law.

"It's the most insidious aspect of this: Are we really talking about making weather products available only to those who can afford it?" said Rick Spinrad, who served as NOAA administrator under President Joe Biden, a Democrat. "Basically turning the weather service into a subscription streaming service? As a taxpayer, I don't want to be in the position of saying, 'I get a better weather forecast because I'm willing to pay for it.'"

The White House referred requests for comment to the Commerce Department, which said in a statement that Lutnick has "fully complied with the terms of his ethics agreement with respect to divestiture and recusals and will continue to do so."

Trump nominees have ties to weather-related industries

Privatizing weather agencies has long been an aim of Republicans. During Trump's first presidency, he signed a bill that utilized more private weather data. And Project 2025, a proposed blueprint for Trump's second presidency that was co-authored by his budget director, calls for the NOAA to be broken up and for the weather service to "fully commercialize its forecasting operations."

Lutnick is not the only one Trump nominated for a key post with close relationships to companies involved in the gathering of vital weather data.

Trump's pick to lead the NOAA, Neil Jacobs, was chief atmospheric scientist for Panasonic Weather Solutions and has been a vocal proponent of privatization. The president's nominee for another top NOAA post, Taylor Jordan, is a lobbyist with a roster of weather-related clients.

"If confirmed, Dr. Jacobs and Mr. Jordan will follow the law and rely on the advice of the Department's ethics counsel in addressing matters involving former clients," the Commerce Department said in its statement.

Elon Musk, the world's richest man, who spent more than \$250 million to help elect Trump, owns a controlling interest in SpaceX and its satellite subsidiary Starlink. Both are regulated by the NOAA's Office of Space Commerce, which lost about one-third of its staff in February layoffs facilitated by the Department of Government Efficiency, which Musk helped create.

SpaceX also stands to gain through a new generation of private and federally funded weather satellites that would be carried into orbit on its rockets.

Though Musk has now departed Washington and had a very public falling out with Trump, the DOGE staffers he hired and the cuts he pushed for have largely remained in place.

Emails seeking comment sent to a lawyer who has represented Musk, as well as to media contacts at his companies X and SpaceX, received no response.

While Musk is focusing on his companies, others with potential conflicts remain immersed in government work.

Lutnick ran Cantor Fitzgerald

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Lutnick resigned as CEO of Cantor Fitzgerald, an investing behemoth, upon taking office and began the arduous task of divesting his interests, as required by law.

His two 20-something sons were given the reins of his financial empire. Brandon Lutnick was named chairman of Cantor, while Kyle Lutnick was tapped to be executive vice chairman. But his most recent ethics filing from June 19 stated that he was still selling his holdings in the firm.

An ethics plan submitted in February states Lutnick would request a waiver allowing him to participate in matters that would have a "direct and predictable effect" on his family's business while he was still divesting. Securities and Exchange Commission filings, meanwhile, show Lutnick has agreements to transfer his shares in the Cantor companies and a family trust to his son Brandon.

The Department of Commerce referred questions about Lutnick's ties to Satellogic, a satellite company that offers natural disaster imagery, to his former firm.

Cantor spokesperson Erica Chase said that since Lutnick's resignation from the company, he has not made any decisions with respect to the company's investments or customer positions, or other operational matters.

"Cantor and its subsidiaries operate in heavily regulated industries, and maintain robust compliance programs to ensure compliance with all applicable laws," Chase said.

Federal officials are barred from making decisions that benefit the business holdings of themselves or their spouses, but that prohibition does not extend to assets held by their adult children, according to Richard Painter, who served as the chief White House ethics lawyer during Republican George W. Bush's administration.

Among its legion of disparate businesses, Cantor has interests in weather and climate. It owns a controlling interest in BGC Group, which operates a weather derivatives marketplace that essentially allows investors to bet on climate risk and where hurricanes will make landfall.

Lutnick also played a pivotal role in cultivating Satellogic. He helped raise the capital to take the company public and held a seat on its board until Trump nominated him. Cantor holds a roughly 13% stake in Satellogic, according to a March SEC filing.

The company now bills itself as an emerging federal contractor that can offer crisp images of natural disasters and weather events in real time, which in 2021 Lutnick said makes it "uniquely positioned to dominate the Earth Observation industry."

While Lutnick was still in charge of Cantor, it paid a \$6.75 million fine to the SEC after it was accused of making misleading statements to investors about Satellogic and another company. The White House's 2026 spending plan, developed by Trump's budget director and primary Project 2025 architect Russell Vought, proposes \$8 billion in cuts for future NOAA satellites, which capture imagery of the planet provided to the public.

Satellogic stands to benefit if the government retreats from operating climate-monitoring satellites.

2 Trump nominees have ties to weather companies

Jacobs, Trump's pick to lead the NOAA, led the same agency on an acting basis during Trump's first term. He is scheduled to appear Wednesday before a Senate committee weighing his nomination. Jacobs has long advocated for a greater role for the private sector in government weather forecasting. During a 2023 hearing focused on the future of the NOAA, he argued that the agency needed to be "relying more heavily on the commercial sector."

He also has expressed concerns about what happens to commercial data purchased by the government. "They give it away to the rest of the planet for free," he testified before Congress in 2023.

He was a consultant at the time for Spire Global and Lynker, both of which have millions of dollars in weather data contracts with the NOAA, according to records including his most recent financial disclosure.

Jordan, Trump's pick for another top NOAA post, has similarly close relationships. His financial disclosure lists more than a dozen weather-related lobbying clients, including Spire and Lynker. He also represented AccuWeather, a commercial forecast provider, before Congress and in meetings with the Commerce Department on "issues related to private sector weather forecast improvement," according to lobbying disclosures.

Though his nomination is pending before the Republican-controlled Senate, disclosure reports show he



still represents weather and space companies and is still listed as a principal employee at a Washington lobbying firm.

## Indian workers go on a daylong nationwide strike against Modi's economic reforms

By RAJESH ROY and PIYUSH NAGPAL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of workers across India went on a nationwide strike on Wednesday in opposition to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to privatize state-run companies and other economic reforms, partially disrupting public services and manufacturing.

A coalition of 10 major trade unions that represent laborers and several other groups that speak for farmers and rural workers called for the one-day industrial action, dubbing it Bharat Bandh, Hindi for "Shut Down India."

The strikes pose fresh challenges for Modi's efforts to attract foreign companies by easing labor laws to streamline business operations and boost productivity.

Unions that helped organize the strikes say that coal mining operations were halted in several states while some trains came to a grinding halt as protestors blocked the network, and that banks, insurance companies and supermarkets were disrupted.

An Associated Press photographer in the eastern city of Kolkata saw protestors walking in a rally at a local railway station, some shouting slogans against the government and burning an effigy of Modi. Another, in the financial capital Mumbai, witnessed bank employees shouting slogans against the privatization of state-run banks.

The Press Trust of India reported traffic in eastern India's Odisha state was halted in some areas, while in the southern state of Kerala, shops, offices and schools remained closed, with roads looking deserted.

In New Delhi, protesters carried placards demanding scrapping of the labor laws and chanted slogans like "Stop selling our railways" and "Don't infringe upon trade unions rights."

"You can be fired any day from work. Your labor has no value in this country and in this society," said Aishe Ghosh, a student activist.

Ghosh said a lot of migrant laborers and workers move from their villages to work elsewhere, and they are thrown out of jobs arbitrarily. "The government never realizes how much the workers have to suffer because of this," she said.

Maimoona Mollah, another protestor, said the government should work for the rights of workers and create more formal job opportunities than contractual.

Rajendra Pratholi, an activist from the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) that is associated with key trade unions, accused the government of snatching the benefits of workers on the pretext of reforms.

"Working hours of laborers, and the benefits they used to get in their jobs after years of struggle, all those benefits have been given away to the capitalists and industrialists by the government," Pratholi said, without elaborating.

The government hasn't formally commented on the strike. It usually dismisses assertions made by the unions.

The workers' demands include higher wages, halting privatization of state-run companies, withdrawal of new labor laws and filling vacancies in the government sector. The farmers' groups also want the government to increase the minimum purchase price for crops such as wheat and rice.

Modi's government has opened some sectors of the Indian economy to foreign direct investments and offered billions of dollars in financial incentives to attract local manufacturing. It has also aimed to bridge the budget deficit with a drive to privatize loss-making state-run companies and unveiled new labor laws that promise workers higher statutory minimum wages, social security and healthcare.

However, the trade unions aren't convinced and want the new laws to be scrapped.

"The government intends to suppress workers in the name of ease of doing business through labor reforms," said Amarjeet Kaur, general secretary of All India Trade Union Congress, a prominent union

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taking part in the strike.

Tapan Sen, general secretary of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions, or CITU, which is aligned with the communist party and a key trade union that is part of the group that called for the strike, said he got reports of protesting workers blocking several national highways and rail routes.

"Coal mining operations in most states have come to a halt. Services in banking, insurance, manufacturing and petroleum refineries are impacted too," said Sen.

A. Soundararajan, a prominent trade union leader in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, said the police detained around 30,000 protesting workers on Wednesday. Manufacturing activities at several companies have also been hit, he said.

## Today in History: July 10, the Battle of Britain begins in World War II

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 10, the 191st day of 2025. There are 174 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 10, 1940, during World War II, the Battle of Britain began as the German Luftwaffe launched attacks on southern England. (The Royal Air Force was ultimately victorious.)

Also on this date:

In 1509, theologian John Calvin, a key figure of the Protestant Reformation, was born in Noyon, Picardy, France.

In 1890, Wyoming was admitted as the 44th US state.

In 1925, jury selection began in Dayton, Tennessee, in the trial of John T. Scopes, charged with violating the law by teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution. (Scopes was convicted and fined, but the verdict was overturned on a technicality.)

In 1929, American paper currency was reduced in size as the government began issuing bills that were approximately 25 percent smaller.

In 1951, armistice talks aimed at ending the Korean War began at Kaesong.

In 1962, the first active communications satellite, Telstar 1, was launched by NASA.

In 1985, the Greenpeace protest ship Rainbow Warrior was sunk with explosives in Auckland, New Zealand, by French intelligence agents; one activist was killed.

In 1991, Boris N. Yeltsin took the oath of office as the first elected president of the Russian republic.

In 1991, President George H.W. Bush lifted U.S. economic sanctions against South Africa.

In 2002, the U.S. House approved a measure to allow airline pilots to carry guns in the cockpit to defend their planes against terrorists (President George W. Bush later signed the measure into law).

In 2015, South Carolina pulled the Confederate battle flag from its place of honor at the Statehouse after more than 50 years.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Mavis Staples is 86. Actor Robert Pine is 84. International Tennis Hall of Famer Virginia Wade is 80. Folk singer Arlo Guthrie is 78. Baseball Hall of Famer Andre Dawson is 71. Rock singer Neil Tennant (Pet Shop Boys) is 71. Banjo player Bela Fleck is 67. Actor Fiona Shaw is 67. Singer/actor Jacky Cheung is 64. Actor Alec Mapa is 60. Country singer Gary LeVox (leh-VOH') (Rascal Flatts) is 55. Actor Sofia Vergara is 53. Actor Adrian Grenier (grehn-YAY') is 49. Actor Chiwetel Ejiofor (CHOO'-ih-tehl EHJ'-ee-oh-for) is 48. Actor Thomas Ian Nicholas is 45. Singer/actor Jessica Simpson is 45. Actor Emily Skeegs is 35. Pop singer Perrie Edwards (Little Mix) is 32. Actor Isabela Merced is 24.