

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 1 of 64

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- City Council Story](#)
- [5- Groton Legion Post 39 Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Clark/Willow Lake Legion](#)
- [6- South Dakota State announces spring 2025 graduation list](#)
- [6- Dacotah Bank Ad](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: SD senator's deal sparing tribes helps advance bill stripping funds from NPR, PBS, foreign aid](#)
- [9- SD SearchLight: Legislative committee finalizes benefit cut for needy families](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: Senate panel endorses billions for B-21s and millions for South Dakota construction, Rounds says](#)
- [11- SD SearchLight: Amid a war of words, Native Americans continue to lack legislative attention](#)
- [12- Weather Pages](#)
- [16- Daily Devotional](#)
- [17- Subscription Form](#)
- [18- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [19- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [20- News from the Associated Press](#)



Wednesday, July 16

Senior Menu: Chicken tetrazzine, green beans, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

Legion hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m.

Jr. Legion hosts Clark, 7:30 p.m.

Softball: U8B hosts Webster 6 p.m. (DH); U8G hosts Webster, 6 p.m. (DH)

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

ProAm Golf Tourney at Olive Grove

Thursday, July 17

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with black beans, fruit, breadstick.

Jr. Legion hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Jr. Teeners at Redfield, 5:30 p.m. (DH)

Friday, July 18

Senior Menu: Ham salad sandwich, tomato spoon salad, acini de pepe salad, cookie.

State U10 at Webster

Saturday, July 19

Jr. Legion at Clear Lake, 3 p.m.

Jr. Teeners at Clear Lake, 1 p.m.

State U10 at Webster

U10 and U12 Softball Tourney in Groton

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 2 of 64

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.

Trinity Test Anniversary

Today marks 80 years since the world's first nuclear bomb detonated in New Mexico. On July 16, 1945, at 5:29 am in the Jornada del Muerto desert, a 21-kiloton explosion lit the sky, thundered, and created a mushroom cloud 38,000 feet high.

The Trinity Test, supposedly named by physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer in reference to a 17th-century Holy Sonnet, represented the culmination of the Manhattan Project during World War II. Scientists, engineers, and military personnel spent three years racing to develop atomic weapons before Nazi Germany in the top-secret mission spanning major sites in three states.

Weeks after the test, the US dropped similar atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing over 100,000 people instantly and eventually ending the war in the Pacific. Tens of thousands more died from the long-term effects of radiation, including rare cancers.

In related news, this month, residents near the Trinity Test became eligible for up to \$100K in federal reparations for health problems caused by radioactive fallout.

Northeast Flooding

Flash flooding in New York and New Jersey killed at least two people late Monday when their car was swept into a stream. The heavy rain—between 3 and 6.5 inches in northern New Jersey and over 2 inches in 30 minutes in New York City—flooded parts of the city's subway system and left cars stranded.

New York City's subway service resumed yesterday, but officials warn that severe weather events are testing the region's aging infrastructure. A report this year from the American Society of Civil Engineers rated US transit and stormwater systems a D, below the C grade for US infrastructure overall. New York's subway system is especially vulnerable. More than a century old, it carries roughly 4 million passengers daily. This week, rainfall caused the city's sewage system to back up, requiring subway workers to pump out 15 million gallons of water.

The US witnessed 27 weather events last year, costing at least \$1B.

Emmy Nominations

The nominees for the 77th Primetime Emmy Awards were announced yesterday, with Apple TV+'s "Severance" leading the field with 27 nominations for its second season. HBO Max's "The Penguin" garnered 24 nods, followed closely by "The White Lotus" and "The Studio," with 23 nominations each. Streaming platforms continued their dominance, with HBO Max receiving 142 overall nominations—the most ever for the network—while Netflix earned 120.

In the acting categories, "Severance" received lead drama nominations for stars Adam Scott and Britt Lower, along with multiple supporting acting nods. "The Studio" picked up comedy acting nominations for Seth Rogen, Kathryn Hahn, Catherine O'Hara, and Ike Barinholtz, along with recognition for writing and directing. Four of the six nominees for guest actor in a comedy series were recognized for playing themselves, with Martin Scorsese and Ron Howard receiving their first-ever acting Emmy nominations.

The ceremony, hosted by comedian Nate Bargatze, airs Sept. 14 on CBS and Paramount+.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 3 of 64

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Ozzy Osbourne's final performance with Black Sabbath raises a record-breaking \$190M for charity. Unreleased Beyoncé music and concert footage stolen during Cowboy Carter tour stop in Atlanta. Fauja Singh, Indian-born runner who broke a record by completing a marathon at age 100, dies at age 114 after being hit by a car. David Kaff, actor and musician best known for starring role in "This Is Spinal Tap," dies at age 79. Portland's WNBA expansion franchise adopts "Fire" nickname, previously used by the city's prior WNBA team that folded in 2002; the new Portland Fire will begin playing in 2026.

Science & Technology

AI startup Anthropic launches Claude for Financial Services; platform uses the company's flagship AI model to analyze market trends from a wide range of sources. Google to invest \$25B in AI data centers and infrastructure, including a 20-year, \$3B contract to purchase Pennsylvania hydropower. Researchers 3D print biomaterial that mimics living lung tissue; advancement could allow development and testing of treatments for lung diseases without requiring living patients. Geologists link a meteor impact to a landslide in the Grand Canyon that created a dam and lake along the Colorado River roughly 56,000 years ago.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.4%, Dow -1.0%, Nasdaq +0.2%); Nasdaq hits record, lifted by Nvidia (+4.0%), which plans to resume AI chip sales to China. Nvidia 101 (1440 Topics) | MP Materials, operator of the only US rare earths mine, inks \$500M deal with Apple; MP Materials shares close up 20%. US consumer price index rose 2.7% year over year in June from 2.4% in May, while core inflation—excluding food and energy—rose 2.9% year over year; both figures are in line with estimates. Cryptocurrency regulation bills fail to clear procedural hurdles in Congress. Former OpenAI CTO Mira Murati officially closes \$2B seed round for her generative AI startup, Thinking Machines Lab, in what is one of the largest first funding rounds in history; deal values startup at \$12B.

Politics & World Affairs

Republicans vote to avoid Democratic-proposed amendment requiring floor vote on the release of government files related to deceased sex offender Jeffrey Epstein. Justice Department said last week there was no evidence of a client list; read the two-page memo. Federal grand jury indicts man accused of fatally shooting Minnesota state Rep. Melissa Hortman (D) and her husband. Men convicted of cutting down England's Sycamore Gap tree are sentenced to four years and three months in prison. Canadian wildfire smoke triggers air quality alerts in the Upper Midwest, including Chicago; Toronto air quality ranks among the worst in the world this week.

Groton council holds off on awarding concession stand bid, proposed development project

by Elizabeth Varin

The Groton City Council held off on awarding bids for a new baseball park concession stand until the first meeting in August.

Due to the potential conflict of interest, Councilman Brian Bahr, who had submitted a bid for a portion of the project, was unable to vote on that specific part. As a result, the council lacked a quorum to proceed with a decision.

Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich read bids submitted for different parts of the project that includes a new concession stand/bathroom at the baseball park. Two bids were received for concrete and building work.

Ringneck Construction submitted a bid totaling \$90,601 for concrete work and labor to build the structure with a five-year warranty. The bid did not include material costs for the building but did include the concrete.

Blocker Construction also submitted a bid for the concrete and building labor, totaling \$75,004.

S&S Lumber submitted material costs for the building that totaled \$54,822, though some items may be removed based on the contractors awarded the bids.

Locke Electric submitted a \$12,000 bid for electrical work. Allied Climate Professionals submitted four bids for different portions of the project including the walk-in cooler, plumbing, in-floor heat and mini split HVAC system. All four bids totaled \$61,739.

Bahr Spray Foam submitted a bid for the insulation in four parts. For three recommended options, Bahr's bid added up to \$13,272, though the bid specified that if all three options were chosen, Bahr would donate his labor, dropping the price by \$3,644.

A decision on the bids was tabled to August 5 as two council members were not present.

In addition to the concession stand discussion, other topics discussed included updates to the city maps and a potential state transportation project.

Ken Hier with IMEG Corp. discussed work needed to be able to update city maps and put them into Geographic Information System, a computer system that captures, stores, analyzes and manages geographic data. Initially, Hier said it might only cost between \$3,000 to \$3,500 to update the city water map. However, if the city wants to convert the maps to GIS, it will be more work than he anticipated as the previous versions of the maps would have to be reconfigured for the program.

April Buller, project manager with IMEG Corp., offered to come back and go through different aspects of the GIS program to give city officials a better idea as to what the program can offer.

Hier also brought up a couple other engineering issues facing the city.

He showed the council preliminary plans that the state Department of Transportation is looking at that would require the city to replace a gravity sewer system.

"There's nothing cast in stone," he said. "It's pretty preliminary."

However, he added, it is something to keep in mind as a possible large expense coming up within the next few years.

Hier also updated the council on costs for roadwork to replace some gravel roads on the west side of town. The low-end cost could be somewhere in the \$750,000 range, but a full replacement of the roadway as well as excavating the whole street could cost close to \$1 million.

Another significant agenda item was a request to commit a piece of property to the Groton Development Corporation for an indoor play area. The property sits south of the Community Center and northwest of the jail. After some discussion, the council chose to table the decision, awaiting further input before making a commitment.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 5 of 64

Groton Legion Post 39 Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Clark/Willow Lake Legion

by GameChanger Media

Groton Legion Post 39 have been playing well lately, going 7-3 in their last 10 games. They'll put that strong play to the test when they play C/WL Legion on Wednesday at Groton, 5:30 p.m. The Jr. Legion team will play at 7:30 p.m.

Last Time Out:

Groton Legion Post 39 defeated Post 9 13-10 at Milbank. C/WL Legion beat Hankinson-Lidgerwood 4-1.

Player Highlight:

Carter Simon hits and pitches for Groton Legion Post 39. Simon primarily plays first base on the field. Simon has driven in a run in the past five games. The first baseman has hit 8-17 and driven in seven runs during the streak. Simon will look to extend a 6-game hitting streak. The first baseman has hit 0.450 during the streak. Simon has hit for power this season with six home runs, one triple, and seven doubles among Simon's 27 hits. Simon has induced five groundballs on 12 balls in play this season.

About Groton Legion Post 39:

Groton Legion Post 39 has played well lately, going 7-3 in their last 10 games. They have a 21-7 record overall. Brevin Fliehs's 1.296 OPS leads Groton Legion Post 39. The left-handed hitter has a 0.518 OBP and a 0.779 slugging percentage this season. Nick Morris leads Groton Legion Post 39 with 33 and two-thirds innings pitched. The starting pitcher has a 2.29 ERA this season. Karsten Fliehs leads Groton Legion Post 39 with 169 total fielding chances this season. Fliehs's primary position is catcher.

About C/WL Legion:

C/WL Legion has played well lately, going 8-2 in their last 10 games. They have a 13-5 record overall. Ky Vandersnick's 1.221 OPS leads C/WL Legion. The catcher has a 0.633 OBP and a 0.588 slugging percentage this season. Cooper Pommer leads C/WL Legion with 26 innings pitched. The righty has a 1.08 ERA this season. Jakob Steen leads C/WL Legion with 86 total fielding chances this season. Jakob Steen's primary position is catcher.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 6 of 64

South Dakota State announces spring 2025 graduation list

BROOKINGS, S.D. (07/15/2025)-- The following students graduated after the spring 2025 semester at South Dakota State University. Nearly 1,500 students completed all requirements for a degree and/or certificate program.

Overall, students from 34 states and 28 nations graduated following the spring 2025 semester. Nearly 70 students received two or more degrees or certificates from a college.

Trey Gengerke of Groton (57445)

Sage Mortenson of Groton (57445)

KaSandra Pappas of Groton (57445)

GROTON COMMUNITY APPRECIATION MEAL

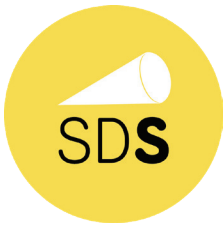


Walking Tacos!

TUES., JULY 22
11 AM - 2:00 PM
7 E. US Hwy 12 | Groton

DACOTAH BANK

MEMBER FDIC



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

SD senator's deal sparing tribes helps advance bill stripping funds from NPR, PBS, foreign aid

Rounds announces agreement and support for legislation hours before 51-50 vote

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT - JULY 15, 2025 9:08 PM

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate on Tuesday night moved one step closer to canceling \$9 billion in previously approved funding for several foreign aid programs and public broadcasting after GOP leaders addressed some objections.

Nearly all the chamber's Republicans voted to begin debate on the bill, though Maine's Susan Collins, Kentucky's Mitch McConnell and Alaska's Lisa Murkowski opposed the procedural step along with every Democrat.

The 51-50 vote marked a significant moment for President Donald Trump's rescissions request, which faced more headwinds in the Senate than in the House. Vice President JD Vance cast the tie-breaking vote.

Trump proposed doing away with \$1.1 billion for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting that lawmakers had approved for the next two fiscal years as well as \$8.3 billion from several foreign aid accounts.

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting provides funding to National Public Radio, the Public Broadcasting Service and local media stations throughout the country.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said before the vote that some of the progress stemmed from removing a spending cut for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, a global health program to combat HIV/AIDS launched by former President George W. Bush.

"There was a lot of interest among our members in doing something on the PEPFAR issue and that's reflected in the substitute," Thune said. "And we hope that if we can get this across the finish line in the Senate that the House would accept that one small modification."

South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, who had raised concerns about cutting funding for rural public broadcasting stations run by tribal communities, announced a few hours before the vote he'd reached an agreement with the White House.

"We wanted to make sure tribal broadcast services in South Dakota continued to operate which provide potentially lifesaving emergency alerts," Rounds wrote in a social media post. "We worked with the Trump administration to find Green New Deal money that could be reallocated to continue grants to tribal radio stations without interruption."

Rounds said during a brief interview that \$9.4 million will be transferred from an account within the Interior Department directly to 28 Native American radio stations in nine states.

"I had concerns specifically about the impact on these radio stations that are in rural areas with people that have basically very few other resources, and to me, they got caught in the crossfire on public broadcasting," Rounds said. "And so I just wanted to get it fixed and I was successful in getting it fixed."

White House budget director Russ Vought told reporters after a closed-door lunch meeting with Republican senators that he didn't want to get "too far ahead" of discussions, but that his office was working with GOP senators to ensure certain local broadcast stations "have the opportunity to continue to do their early warning system and local reporting."

Maine's Collins wants more details

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Collins, who voiced reservations about several of the rescissions during a June hearing, said preserving full funding for PEPFAR represented "progress."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 8 of 64

But Collins said a few hours before the vote she still wants more details from the White House budget office about the exact source of the other \$9 billion in cuts to previously approved spending.

"One of the issues, which I raised at lunch, is the total is still \$9 billion and it's unclear to me how you get to \$9 billion, because he's listed a number of programs he wants to, quote, protect," Collins said, referring to Vought. "So we still have the problem of not having detailed account information from OMB."

Collins, R-Maine, then held up a printed version of the 1992 rescissions request that President George H.W. Bush sent Congress, which she said was "extremely detailed" and listed each account.

"I would contrast that to the message that we got for this rescission, which just has a paragraph and doesn't tell you how it's broken down in each program," Collins said, adding she's still "considering the options."

The Senate's procedural vote began a maximum of 10 hours of debate that will be followed by a marathon amendment voting session that could rework the bill. A final passage vote could take place as soon as Wednesday.

Trump expected to send more requests

The House approved the legislation in June, but the measure will have to go back across the Capitol for a final vote since the Senate is expected to make changes.

The effort to cancel funding that Congress previously approved in bipartisan government funding bills began last month when the Trump administration sent Congress this rescission request.

The initiative, led by White House budget director Vought, is part of Republicans' ongoing efforts to reduce federal spending, which totaled \$6.8 trillion during the last full fiscal year.

Vought expects to send lawmakers additional rescissions proposals in the months ahead, though he hasn't said publicly when or what funding he'll request Congress eliminate.

Once the White House submits a rescission request, it can legally freeze funding on those accounts for 45 days while Congress debates whether to approve, amend, or ignore the proposal.

Johnson slams funding for public media

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., said during a press conference before the PEPFAR removal was announced that he hoped the Senate didn't change the bill at all.

"I've urged them, as I always do, to please keep the product unamended because we have a narrow margin and we've got to pass it," Johnson said. "But we're going to process whatever they send us whenever they send (it to) us and I'm hopeful that it will be soon."

Johnson said canceling the previously approved funding on some foreign aid programs and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting represented "low-hanging fruit."

Federal funding for public media, Johnson said, embodied a "misuse of taxpayer dollars" on organizations that produce "biased reporting."

"While at its origination NPR and PBS might have made some sense, and maybe it does now," Johnson said. "But it shouldn't be subsidized by taxpayers."

Trump has also sought to encourage Republican senators to pass the bill without making any significant changes.

"It is very important that all Republicans adhere to my Recissions Bill and, in particular, DEFUND THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING (PBS and NPR), which is worse than CNN & MSDNC put together," Trump wrote on social media last week. "Any Republican that votes to allow this monstrosity to continue broadcasting will not have my support or Endorsement. Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

South Dakota's votes

FROM SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

Senate Majority Leader John Thune and Sen. Mike Rounds, Republicans from South Dakota, each voted

yes to begin debate on a bill that would cancel \$9 billion in previously approved funding for several foreign aid programs and public broadcasting.

Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, voted for the bill previously.

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.

Legislative committee finalizes benefit cut for needy families

Average household in program will lose \$51 a month

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - JULY 15, 2025 3:17 PM

Starting in August, low-income South Dakota families participating in a welfare program will receive less money to spend on necessities such as gas, groceries, utilities and rent. The benefit cut is the beginning of more reductions planned in the next few years.

Lawmakers on the legislative Rules Review Committee voted 4-2 on Tuesday in Pierre to support the state Department of Social Services' plan to reduce Temporary Assistance for Needy Families benefits by 10%. Recipients will lose anywhere from \$32 to \$136 a month in benefits, depending on the size of their family. The average household will lose \$51 a month.

The state will save about \$1.5 million annually. It distributed \$15.3 million in TANF benefits last fiscal year.

TANF is a federal-state program most commonly used to provide financial assistance to low-income families with children, on the condition that the caregiver searches or trains for a job.

The two Democrats on the committee, Rep. Erik Muckey and Sen. Liz Larson, both from Sioux Falls, voted against the cut. They argued lawmakers were not aware of the reduction in benefits when they prepared the state's budget earlier this year, and that the plan was a misrepresentation of legislative intent. Muckey said he and other legislators on the budget committee believed the \$5.3 million state funding cut would be replaced with unspent TANF funds from previous years.

Instead, the department's plan is to use \$3.8 million of unused TANF funds and the 10% benefit reduction to cover the \$5.3 million cut. The department plans to gradually reduce benefits each year, said Department Secretary Matt Althoff, cushioned by some unused TANF funds, until South Dakota reduces benefits to the minimum state contribution needed to receive federal funding.

"A 35% reduction all at once is a lot more devastating to a household than is the 10% on a strategic glide or slope," Althoff said.

Gradual cuts until the state reaches a 35% reduction add up to the average household eventually losing \$180 a month in benefits.

Republicans on the committee approved the plan, saying it was up to the department how to deal with the reduction in state funds.

"In appropriations we do not get down into the most minutia of running programs," said Sen. Taffy Howard, R-Rapid City. "We have to leave those to the agencies to a certain degree."

Althoff told lawmakers many TANF recipients receive other support: 99% of TANF households are enrolled in Medicaid, 97% receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program funds, 57% live in subsidized housing and 15% are enrolled in the state Child Care Assistance program.

"TANF is not something that makes households whole," Althoff said.

Two people spoke against the benefit cut Tuesday, including Cathy Brechtelsbauer. She opposed the proposal during its earlier public hearing in Sioux Falls as well.

"We don't go through the whole budget process during the state Legislature and then show up in the summer and say, 'Oh, we want to cut money and take it from children,'" Brechtelsbauer said.

The rule change also removes TANF eligibility for families who take in child relatives in situations when they're removed from their homes by the state's child welfare system.

That change incentivizes caregivers to become licensed kinship caregivers with the state, Althoff said during an earlier public hearing. The current foster and kinship subsidy rate for a child in South Dakota is

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 10 of 64

between \$22.85 and \$27.43 a day, depending on their age. That would be roughly \$685.50 to \$822.90 a month, per child.

Lawmakers approved rule changes in May to create the licensed kinship foster care pathway, as required by the federal government. Caregivers must meet training requirements to become a licensed kinship home, similar though less intensive than traditional foster care requirements. There are no such requirements for TANF money.

According to the department, 184 cases per month managed by the department involving families eligible for TANF could be eligible for kinship subsidies.

Families who take in kin and apply for TANF use the "side door" to receive state and federal support, Althoff said. Eliminating TANF eligibility encourages families to "come in through the front door."

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

Senate panel endorses billions for B-21s and millions for South Dakota construction, Rounds says

BY: JOHN HULT - JULY 15, 2025 2:51 PM

Funding for the B-21 bomber program, construction money to support it at a base near Rapid City, and money for a Watertown National Guard vehicle maintenance building are wins for South Dakota in a new defense authorization bill, U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds said this week.

The South Dakota Republican is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity.

The money is in the National Defense Authorization Act, the annual bill that outlines U.S. military funding priorities. The act passed the committee last week.

Ellsworth Air Force Base in Box Elder has been building up in anticipation of the new bomber program. The base will host the first two squadrons of the next-generation bomber, one a training squad and another an operational one. A third squadron would be placed at the base later on.

Rounds did not have a timeline for the delivery of the bombers, but said the inclusion of \$3.5 billion in funding for the bomber program in this year's bill gets it closer to operational.

The B-21 project began in 2015. The planes are meant to replace the B-1 bombers now housed at Ellsworth. Those planes will age out in the next 10-25 years, as B-21s come online. Rounds' office said \$17.31 billion has been spent on B-21 procurement to date.

In construction at Ellsworth alone, Rounds' office said the \$378 million in the new bill for B-21 projects at the base would raise the total spending on such projects to \$1.65 billion since 2021.

"That doesn't include the additional infrastructure around the base itself that we're going to need, the new schools and so forth," Rounds said.

Rounds also talked up a \$28 million allocation for a Watertown National Guard maintenance building and a 3.8% salary increase for military personnel, among other provisions.

The authorization act is the first step toward getting the federal money moving. Congress would need to appropriate the funds in a separate vote, which Rounds said he hopes to see happen sometime this year.

The B-21 Raider program has spurred rapid growth in Box Elder. This year, Gov. Larry Rhoden signed a bill to authorize a \$15 million, no interest loan to the community's Douglas School District to help build space for new students.

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 11 of 64

COMMENTARY

Amid a war of words, Native Americans continue to lack legislative attention **by Dana Hess**

Usually South Dakota has its political controversies during the legislative session or an election campaign. This year, in the dead of summer, we have a state representative's use of the term "White Boy Summer."

It was used in an Instagram post by Rep. Logan Manhart, a District 1 Republican from Aberdeen: "It's White Boy Summer and the boys are back in charge." He wrote that, along with "#MAGA."

I don't use Instagram or hashtags. It seems to me that Instagram and some other social media sites are places online where people post things that they later come to regret. Manhart has since removed the Instagram post.

My ignorance of Instagram and hashtags aside, there are some things that I do know. In this day and age, I know that using the phrase "White Boy" is just asking for trouble. It's particularly troublesome if it's a phrase used by a state representative. It's even more troublesome if it's used by a representative whose district includes the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation.

I've come to learn that the phrase is part of a rap song by Chet Hanks. (Tom Hanks' son is a rapper?) It was written as a parody of a song called "Hot Girl Summer" by rapper Megan Thee Stallion. (I need to get out more.)

Apparently the song by Hanks has been appropriated by various racist extremist groups. (Those groups have theme songs now?)

The song's popularity with extremist groups was enough to get Democratic members of the House involved. It's easy to get them incensed as there are so few of them. Five members signed a letter to House Majority Leader Scott Odenbach and House Speaker Jon Hansen asking them to "address this with the seriousness it demands."

In their letter they said Manhart's post was racist, sexist and insulting to Native Americans. Democrats noted that the state's Native American land was "taken through broken treaties, displacement, and violence."

Odenbach, a Republican, said he wouldn't punish Manhart, and he rejected the "insinuation that South Dakota is a state founded by racist oppressors, or that the great citizens of today are the cause" of continued harm to Native Americans.

To a certain extent, Odenbach is right. Today's South Dakotans didn't break any treaties, they didn't lead any raiding parties, they didn't push Native Americans on to reservations. But someone did. Odenbach's notion that our forefathers were squeaky clean in this regard is a whitewashing of South Dakota history.

There's plenty of blame to go around for the way Native Americans are treated in this state, and it's Odenbach and his political party that must shoulder some of that blame. The South Dakota Legislature, dominated by Republicans, pays woefully little attention to Native American issues, preferring to think of those as federal rather than state problems. This amounts to the Legislature, sworn to serve all South Dakotans, turning its back on a group because of their heritage.

Americans have the First Amendment, so Manhart can say what he wants. It's impossible to know what's in his heart. Even though he has been unrepentant, he said characterizations of him as racist, sexist and antisemitic are false.

Like all political controversies, this one will peter out after a while. When the dust settles, Manhart will still be a representative. Democrats will continue to monitor his public statements. Republicans will maintain that everything in South Dakota is fine. And Native Americans will continue to be largely ignored by the state government sworn to serve them.

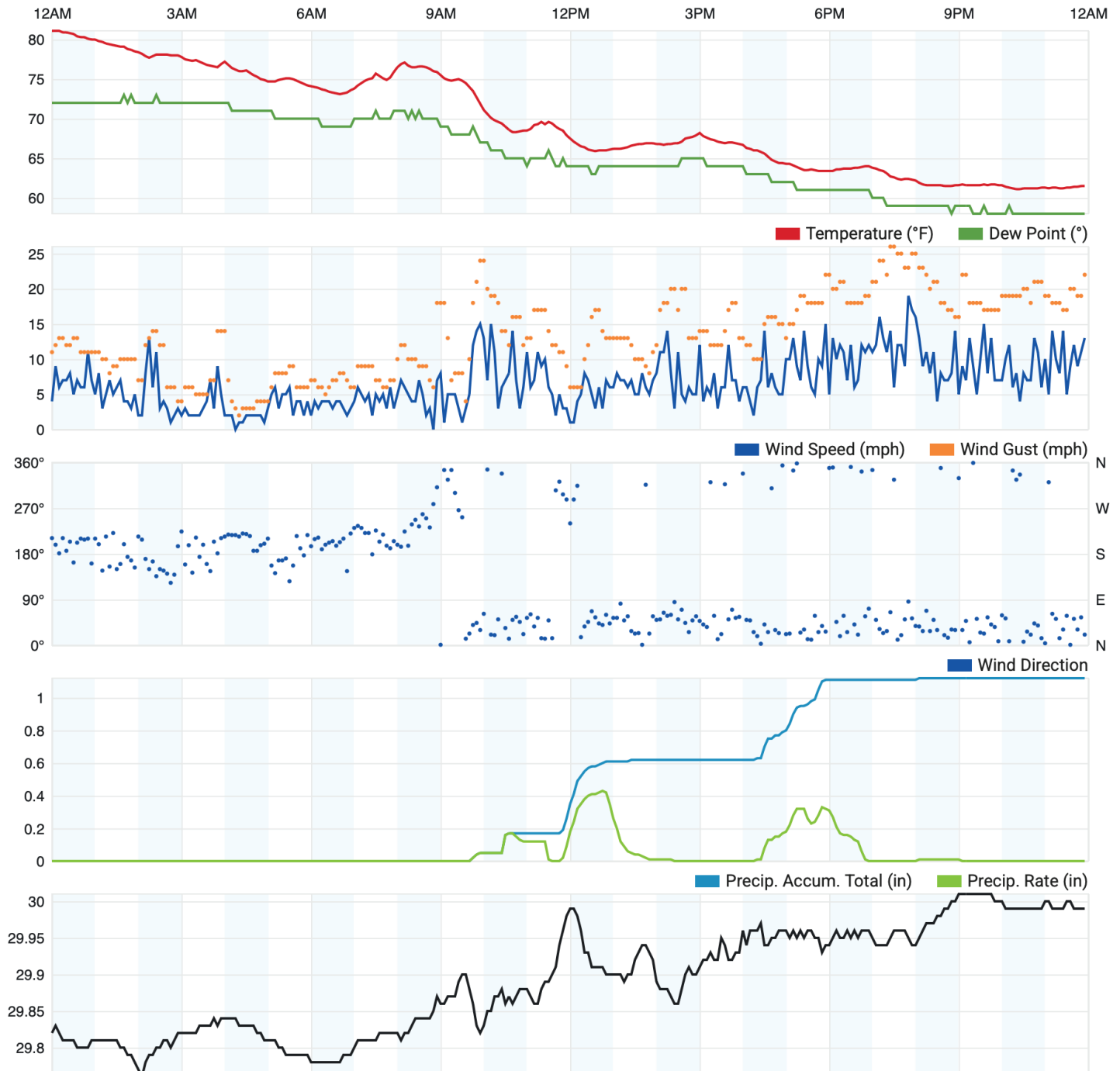
Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 12 of 64

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

July 15, 2025



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 13 of 64

Today



High: 66 °F

Patchy Smoke
then Slight
Chance
Showers

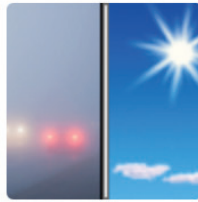
Tonight



Low: 45 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

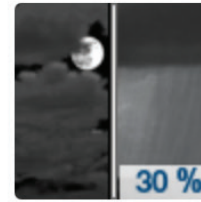
Thursday



High: 73 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

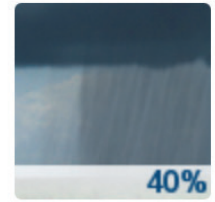
Thursday
Night



Low: 58 °F


Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers


Friday

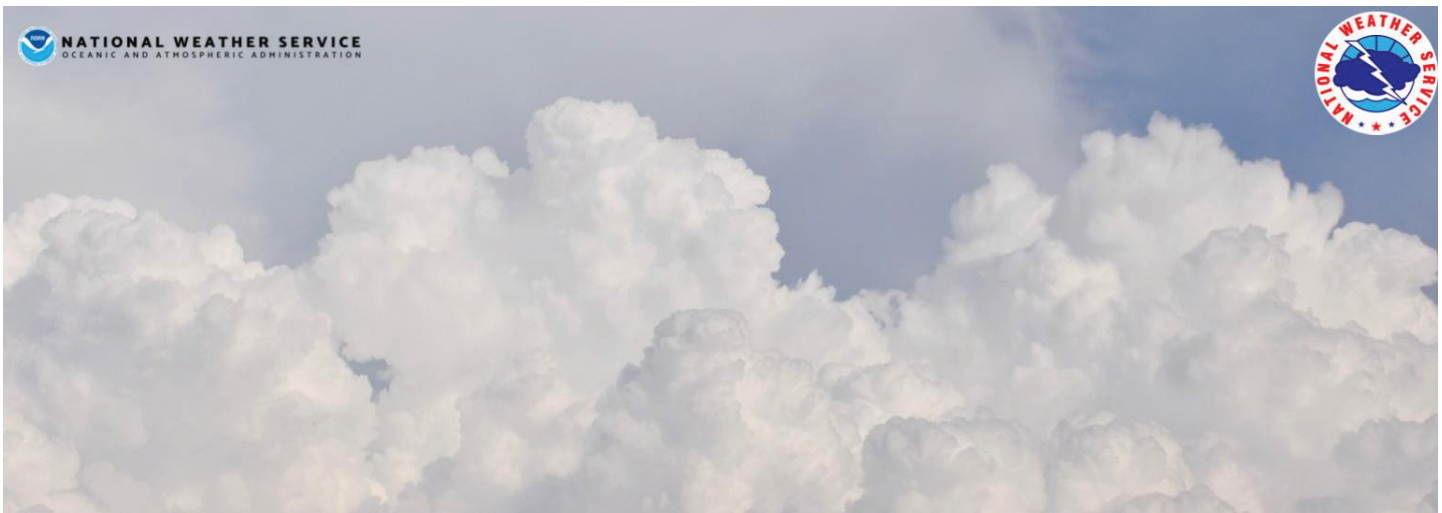


High: 77 °F

Chance
Showers






**NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE**
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION





5 Day Forecast

- Cooler through Thursday. An unsettled weather pattern returns Friday through weekend

Today	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
				
63-70°	70-77°	73-87°	74-80°	76-85°

www.weather.gov/abr

Scattered showers (40-60%) are possible along and west of the Missouri River today, otherwise, east of here may see an isolated shower through the afternoon. High pressure moves over the area this evening with dry weather expected through Thursday. An unsettled weather pattern returns Friday through the weekend bringing the possibility of precipitation. Highs will run 15 to 20 degrees below average today and 10 to 15 degrees below average Thursday before gradually warming up.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 14 of 64

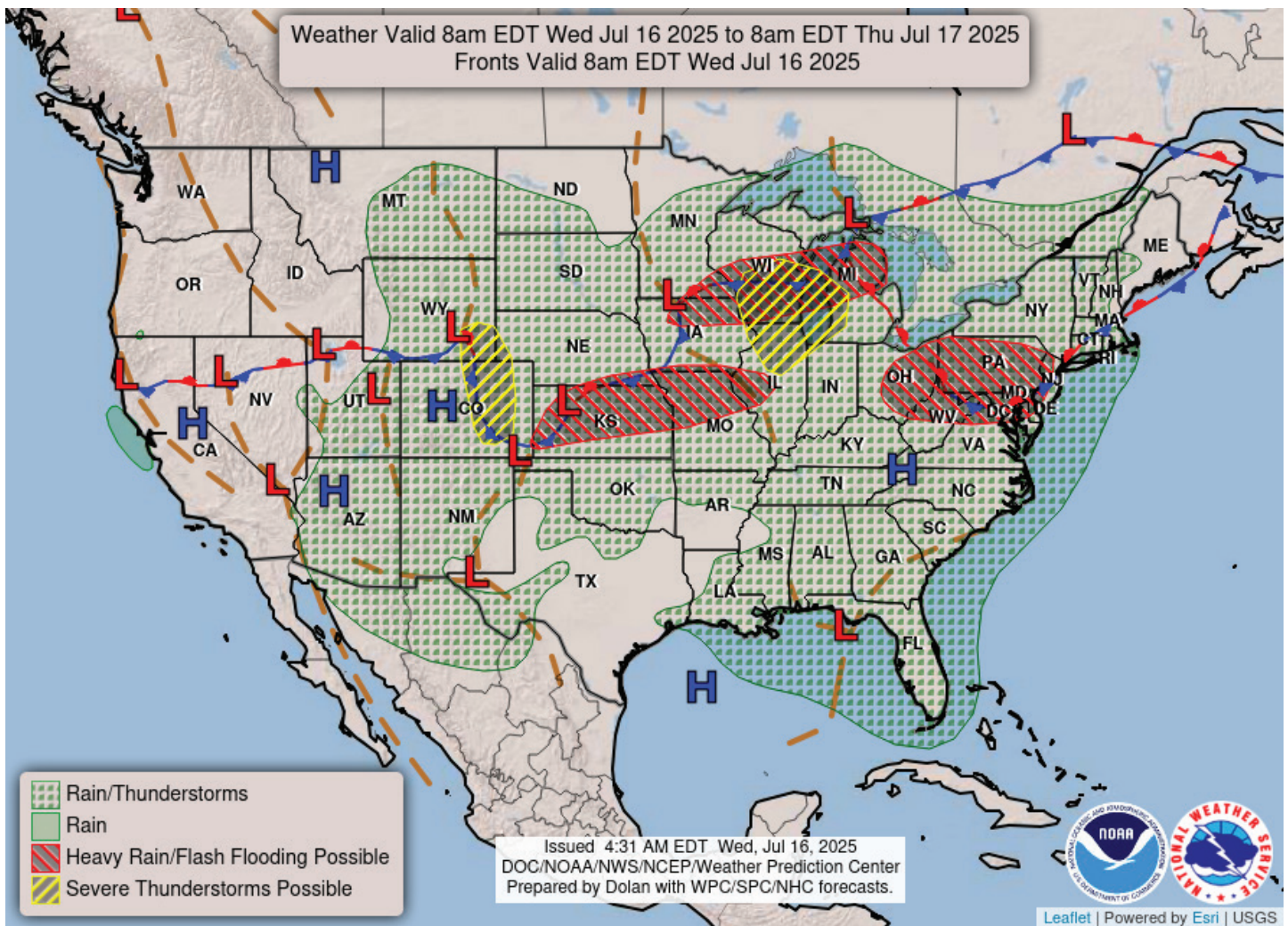
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 81 °F at 12:00 AM
Heat Index: 100 °F at 5:00 PM
Low Temp: 61 °F at 10:13 PM
Wind: 26 mph at 7:22 PM
Precip: : 1.12

Day length: 15 hours, 20 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 112 in 1936
Record Low: 42 in 1976
Average High: 85
Average Low: 60
Average Precip in July.: 1.80
Precip to date in July: 3.72
Average Precip to date: 12.81
Precip Year to Date: 13.84
Sunset Tonight: 9:18:48 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:59:15 am



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 15 of 64

Today in Weather History

July 16, 1993: Thunderstorms, dumping two to seven inches of rain caused flooding problems in north-eastern South Dakota. Several dams and many roads were washed out. Most of the damage was in Marshall County. Six families were evacuated about six miles southeast of Britton as two private earthen dams broke. Winds, as high as 70 mph were also reported in a couple of locations in Marshall County. The torrential rains resulted in flooded farmland, roads, and basements in northeast South Dakota through July 21st. In Groton and Claremont at least 90 percent of the homes had water in the basements. Some storm total rainfall amounts include 3.20 inches in Leola; 3.14 in Ipswich; 3.13 in Britton; and 2.77 in Eureka.

July 16, 2001: Very heavy rains of 3 to 7 inches fell across north central Corson County causing flash flooding. Oak Creek along with several other streams washed out several roads and damaged some fences from Watauga to McIntosh to McLaughlin and north. Travel stopped for a while on the Highway north of McLaughlin.

1920 - A severe hailstorm over parts of Antelope and Boone counties in Nebraska stripped trees of bark and foliage, ruined roofs, and broke nearly every window facing north. (The Weather Channel)

1946 - The temperature at Medford, OR, soared to an all-time high of 115 degrees to begin a two week heat wave. During that Oregon heat wave the mercury hit 100 degrees at Sexton Summit for the only time in forty years of records. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1975 - An early afternoon thunderstorm raked the east side of Tucson, AZ, with gale force winds, heavy rain, and numerous lightning strikes. A thirteen year old boy was swept through a forty foot long culvert by raging waters before being rescued. (The Weather Channel)

1979: The most damaging tornado in Wyoming history touched down 3 miles west-northwest of the Cheyenne airport. This strong tornado moved east or east-southeast across the northern part of Cheyenne, causing \$22 million in damage and one fatality. 140 houses and 17 trailers were destroyed. 325 other homes were damaged. Four C-130 aircraft and National Guard equipment sustained \$12 million damage. Municipal hangars and buildings suffered \$10 million in losses.

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms in the southwestern U.S. ended a record string of thirty-nine consecutive days of 100 degree heat at Tucson, AZ. A thunderstorm at Bullhead City, AZ, produced wind gusts to 70 mph reducing the visibility to near zero in blowing dust. Southerly winds gusting to 40 mph pushed temperature readings above 100 degrees in the Northern Plains. Rapid City, SD, reported a record high of 106 degrees, following a record low of 39 degrees just three days earlier. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-seven cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 96 degrees at Bluefield, WV, and 104 degrees at Charleston WV were all-time records, and afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Binghamton, NY, 99 degrees at Elkins, WV, and 103 degrees at Pittsburgh PA, tied all-time records. Highs of 104 degrees at Baltimore, MD, and 105 degrees at Parkersburg WV were records for July, and Beckley, WV, equalled their record for July with a high of 94 degrees. Martinsburg, WV, was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 107 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms raked the northeastern U.S. with large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms developing along a stationary front drenched the Middle Atlantic Coast States with heavy rain, causing flooding in some areas. More than five inches of rain was reported near Madison and Ferncliff, VA. Hot weather prevailed in Texas. San Angelo reported a record high of 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2009: A hailstone, 3.3 inches in diameter, 6.8 inches circumference, and weighing 2.1 ounces fell in Westford, Vermont. This hailstone is the largest ever found in Vermont.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 16 of 64



"I wish I could buy him for what he's worth and sell him for what he thinks he's worth. We could both retire!" said a colleague to me after interviewing a potential employee.

Many people lead presumptuous lives and never get in touch with who they are and what their strengths or weaknesses might be. They refuse to see themselves as others see them and will not admit the fact that they may have done something wrong or harmful. "It's not my fault. It's theirs. They just wouldn't admit what they did."

In the final analysis, we all have the freedom to choose what path we will take — even though, as Solomon warns, "... in the end that path leads to death."

We may choose a path, even claim that it was a "path from God and was His will for my life," not admitting that our decision was ours alone, ill-conceived, and even ill-advised. "I certainly prayed about it!"

Seems right is a frightening combination of words. It simply means that I (or someone else) did not know what was right and went off in the wrong direction, and it ended in disaster, perhaps death.

Seems right is full of presumptions, beginning with sincerity. Although we may be very sincere about most anything we choose to do, sincerity does not lead to fulfilling God's plan for our lives.

Seems right can be surely wrong!

Those who truly want to live the right way will find it in God's Word. The right way is living a life that agrees with the Word of God, choosing to be obedient to His commands, waiting for His guidance, and putting His will before my wants.

Today's Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we avoid doing what "seems right" by surrendering our lives and will to You. Help us to do right and live right by following You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." Proverbs 14:12

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 17 of 64

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

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

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

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

E-mail _____

Password _____

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

paypal.me/paperpaul

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



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.15.25

6 10 24 35 43 1

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$100,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 57 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

9 30 35 43 49 8

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,800,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 12 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.15.25

21 25 26 39 48 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 27 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.12.25

5 14 15 19 20

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$55,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 27 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

9 14 38 39 41 25

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 56 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 07.14.25

8 12 45 46 63 24

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$264,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 56 Mins 34 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 19 of 64

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

Jr. Legion Baseball Region Tournament

Locke/Karst Field, Groton

Monday, July 28 starting at Noon

Sisseton vs. Redfield

Groton vs. Redfield

Clark vs. Groton

Tuesday, July 29 starting at 2 p.m.

Sisseton vs. Groton

Sisseton vs. Clark

Redfield vs. Clark

If no one is undefeated, or there is no clear winner, a formula is used to determine who will advance to state tournament August 8-10 in Milbank.

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Senate votes to move ahead with Trump's request for \$9 billion in spending cuts

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans on Tuesday advanced President Donald Trump's request to cancel some \$9 billion in previously approved spending, overcoming concerns from some lawmakers about what the rescissions could mean for impoverished people around the globe and for public radio and television stations in their home states.

The Senate vote was 50-50, with Vice President JD Vance breaking the tie.

A final vote in the Senate could occur as early as Wednesday. The bill would then return to the House for another vote before it would go to Trump's desk for his signature before a Friday deadline.

Republicans winnowed down the president's request by taking out his proposed \$400 million cut to a program known as PEPFAR. That change increased the prospects for the bill's passage. The politically popular program is credited with saving millions of lives since its creation under then-President George W. Bush to combat HIV/AIDS.

The president is also looking to claw back money for foreign aid programs targeted by his Department of Government Efficiency and for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

"When you've got a \$36 trillion debt, we have to do something to get spending under control," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D.

The White House tries to win over skeptics

Republicans met with Russ Vought, the director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, during their weekly conference luncheon as the White House worked to address their concerns. He fielded about 20 questions from senators.

The White House campaign to win over potential holdouts had some success. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., tweeted that he would vote to support the measure after working with the administration to "find Green New Deal money that could be reallocated to continue grants to tribal radio stations without interruption."

Some senators worried that the cuts to public media could decimate many of the 1,500 local radio and television stations around the country that rely on some federal funding to operate. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting distributes more than 70% of its funding to those stations.

Maine Sen. Susan Collins, the Republican chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said she was particularly concerned about a lack of specifics from the White House.

"The rescissions package has a big problem — nobody really knows what program reductions are in it," Collins said. "That isn't because we haven't had time to review the bill. Instead, the problem is that OMB has never provided the details that would normally be part of this process."

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said she didn't want the Senate to be going through numerous rounds of rescissions.

"We are lawmakers. We should be legislating," Murkowski said. "What we're getting now is a direction from the White House and being told: 'This is the priority and we want you to execute on it. We'll be back with you with another round.' I don't accept that."

Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., Collins and Murkowski joined with Democrats in voting against the Senate taking up the measure.

McConnell said he wanted to make clear he didn't have any problem with reducing spending, but agreed with Collins that lawmakers didn't have enough details from the White House.

"They would like a blank check is what they would like. And I don't think that's appropriate," McConnell said.

But the large majority of Republicans were supportive of Trump's request.

"This bill is a first step in a long but necessary fight to put our nation's fiscal house in order," said Sen.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 21 of 64

Eric Schmitt, R-Mo.

Democrats warn of the consequences

Democrats warned that it's absurd to expect them to work with Republicans on bipartisan spending measures if Republicans turn around a few months later and use their majority to cut the parts they don't like.

"It shreds the appropriations process," said Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine who caucuses with Democrats. "The Appropriations Committee, and indeed this body, becomes a rubber stamp for whatever the administration wants."

Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said that tens of millions of Americans rely on local public radio and television stations for local news, weather alerts and educational programs. He warned that many could lose access to that information because of the rescissions.

"And these cuts couldn't come at a worse time," Schumer said. "The floods in Texas remind us that speedy alerts and up-to-the-minute forecasts can mean the difference between life and death."

Democrats also scoffed at the GOP's stated motivation for taking up the bill. The amount of savings pales compared to the \$3.4 trillion in projected deficits over the next decade that Republicans put in motion in passing Trump's big tax and spending cut bill two weeks ago.

"Now, Republicans are pretending they are concerned about the debt," said Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash. "So concerned that they need to shut down local radio stations, so concerned they are going to cut off 'Sesame Street.' ... The idea that that is about balancing the debt is laughable."

What's ahead in the Senate

With Republicans providing enough votes to take up the bill, it sets up the potential for 10 hours of debate plus votes on scores of potentially thorny amendments in what is known as a vote-a-rama. The House has already shown its support for the president's request with a mostly party line 214-212 vote, but since the Senate is amending the bill, it will have to go back to the House for another vote.

Republicans who vote against the measure also face the prospect of incurring Trump's wrath. He has issued a warning on his social media site directly aimed at individual Senate Republicans who may be considering voting against the rescissions package. He said it was important that all Republicans adhere to the bill and in particular defund the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

"Any Republican that votes to allow this monstrosity to continue broadcasting will not have my support or Endorsement," he said.

Russia launches new attacks on Ukraine with the countdown to a US peace deadline underway

By ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian weapons pounded four Ukrainian cities overnight from Tuesday to Wednesday, injuring at least 15 people in an attack that mostly targeted energy infrastructure, officials said.

The latest bombardment in Russia's escalating aerial campaign against civilian areas came ahead of a Sept. 2 deadline set by U.S. President Donald Trump for the Kremlin to reach a peace deal in the three-year war, under the threat of possible severe Washington sanctions if it doesn't.

No date has yet been publicly set for a possible third round of direct peace talks between delegations from Russia and Ukraine. Two previous rounds delivered no progress apart from prisoner swaps.

Russia launched 400 Shahed and decoy drones, as well as one ballistic missile, during the night, the Ukrainian air force said. The strikes targeted northeastern Kharkiv, which is Ukraine's second-largest city, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryvyi Rih in central Ukraine, Vinnytsia in the west and Odesa in the south.

"Russia does not change its strategy," Zelenskyy said. "To effectively counter this terror, we need a systemic strengthening of defense: more air defense, more interceptors, and more resolve so that Russia feels our response."

Trump on Monday pledged to deliver more weapons to Ukraine, including vital Patriot air defense systems, and threatened to slap additional sanctions on Russia. It was Trump's toughest stance toward Russian

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 22 of 64

President Vladimir Putin since he returned to the White House nearly six months ago.

But some U.S. lawmakers and European government officials expressed misgivings that the 50-day deadline handed Putin the opportunity to capture more Ukrainian territory before any settlement to end the fighting.

Other U.S. ultimatums to Putin in recent months have failed to persuade the Russian leader to stop his invasion of neighboring Ukraine. Tens of thousands of soldiers have been killed in the war, many of them along the more than 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, and Russian barrages of cities have killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, the United Nations says.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said Tuesday that "Putin holds a theory of victory that posits that Russia can achieve its war aims by continuing to make creeping gains on the battlefield indefinitely and outlasting Western support for Ukraine and Ukraine's ability to defend itself."

Trump said the U.S. is providing additional weapons for Ukraine but European countries are paying for them. While Ukraine and European officials were relieved at the U.S. commitment after months of hesitation, some hoped Washington might shoulder some of the cost.

"We welcome President Trump's announcement to send more weapons to Ukraine, although we would like to see the U.S. share the burden," European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said Tuesday. "If we pay for these weapons, it's our support."

Seth Rogen, Cristin Milioti, Noah Wyle and more react to Emmy nominations

By The Associated Press undefined

LOS ANGELES (AP) — This year's crop of Emmy nominees were announced Tuesday. "Severance" led with 27 Emmy nominations, while "The Studio" led comedy nominees with 23 in a dominant year for Apple TV+.

The 77th Primetime Emmy Awards will air on CBS from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles on Sept. 14. Nate Bargatze is slated to host.

Here are the reactions for some of the day's notable nominees:

Seth Rogen for "The Studio"

"Being at this point in our lives and making a thing that has this type of attention is just so kind of novel in a lot of ways, and really exciting and thrilling and very validating in a way that I'm not used to being validated. — Rogen, nominated for best actor in a comedy series as well as writing and directing, in an interview.

Evan Goldberg for "The Studio"

"My mother never wanted me to grow up to make a bunch of filthy R-rated comedies, but she is really proud today." — Goldberg, nominated for outstanding writing for a comedy series, in an interview.

Erin Doherty for "Adolescence"

"What I love about this job is that when you do the work so wholeheartedly, even when you move on you learn lessons. If you just sit and listen, and let someone talk, that is such a gorgeous offering, and I don't think we do it that often. I'm trying to take that forward." — Doherty, nominated for best supporting actress in a limited series or movie, in an interview.

Katherine LaNasa for "The Pitt"

"What does it feel like? it's like if you made coffee for somebody every day for 20 or 30 years, and you liked making coffee and you were paid well for making coffee ... and then one day, 20 or 30 years later, someone said, you know, we really love the way you make coffee and we really appreciate it! ... I love telling stories about the human condition and I really love acting, and so to suddenly get recognized and sort of applauded for it is just a delightful surprise, and just really feels so nice.

"I went through cancer about a year before I got this job, and I spent some time in the emergency department. ... and one of my worst days was really saved by an emergency department nurse in Atlanta. The things that she said to me just really saved me, and she didn't need to do that. It was just emotional generosity on her part, and I brought all of that into Dana." — LaNasa, nominated for best supporting

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 23 of 64

actress in a drama series, in an interview after a day of filming "The Pitt" Season 2.

Noah Wyle for "The Pitt"

"I'm overjoyed that the nominations were spread across all the different departments as it reflects our collective effort. A heartfelt congrats to all my fellow nominees. I'm humbled and grateful." — Wyle, nominated for best lead actor in a drama series, wrote in a statement.

Cristin Milioti for "The Penguin"

"It's been so beautiful to see how many nominations the show has gotten. I'm so, so thrilled for my fellow cast and crew. It has been a really thrilling day...really wonderful.

"I had been wishing for a role like that for a long time and searching for one, and I just had the time of my life. You know, I connected with that character so deeply." — Milioti, nominated for best actress in a limited series, heard about the nomination while running errands. She spoke in an interview.

Dan Erickson for "Severance"

"I cannot begin to express how excited I am to return to the Emmys and see if the sunglasses I left in the bathroom 3 years ago are still there. — Erickson, who created "Severance," in a statement.

Jason Isaacs for "The White Lotus"

"People wanted to watch it. They wanted to talk about it. They wanted to dress as the characters. They wanted to drink pina coladas. They wanted, they wanted to meet, you know, and watch it together.

"Look, the real world, the clouds are gathering and it's not that easy to be in. It's complicated and challenging to be in and to stay sane and happy and it gave people a happy place to be. And so they just wanted to continue it and so expand it into the periphery of us and our private lives, which seemed a bit odd, but I get why. They wanted to stay talking 'White Lotus' stuff." — Isaacs, nominated for best supporting actor in a drama series, said in an interview.

Michael Urie for "Shrinking"

"I think there's something about the show that gives people permission to take care of their own mental health. And that is, I feel like, kind of a new thing for us, humans in this society, that we're allowed to talk about it and relish in it ... and ask for help. So I'm glad that we're doing and I'm glad that the industry is into it too.

"I didn't really think this would ever happen. I mean, I certainly was aware that Emmys were a thing and that I might someday be in consideration for one, but it didn't seem like it was possible. So it does feel kind of dreamy." — Urie, nominated for best supporting actor in a comedy series, said in an interview.

Tony Gilroy for "Andor"

"I'm really happy to see that the technical side of our show got recognized and Michael Wilkinson and Luke Hall and the sound departments and the visual effects department. I thought that really got a little bit overlooked last time. I wish there'd been more for the actors. — Gilroy, nominated for best drama series and outstanding original music and lyrics, in an interview.

Stephen Graham for "Adolescence"

"Poleaxed is a good word, is it not? (I'm) just so happy and so full of gratitude for the ensemble, for the piece itself as a whole, as a collective... Just the fact that there's not one specific person or there's no one specific thing, but each element has been acknowledged, and to be a part of such a wonderful ensemble, to me, is what it's all about. — Graham was nominated both for best actor and outstanding writing in a limited series or movie. He spoke in an interview.

Connor Tomlinson for "Love On The Spectrum"

"That's amazing...I feel like a leprechaun on St. Patrick's Day." — Connor Tomlinson, a reality star on "Love On The Spectrum," reacting in a video message to the show's five nominations.

Jenny Slate for "Dying for Sex"

"I feel really proud, really proud of our show. Really proud of (show inspiration and producer) Nikki Boyer and all the work she's done. And I just feel so happy that this work came into my life. It's been one sort of happiness after another.

"Our show really allows people to think about choices they want to make for themselves so that they

could have more, so that they could step into the form that they actually like see themselves in, you know, like be the person that they feel that they are, but are somehow kept from.” — Slate, nominated for best supporting actress in a limited series or movie, spoke in an interview from her home in Massachusetts.

Israel threatens to escalate involvement in Syria as a ceasefire collapses

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Clashes raged in the southern Syrian city of Sweida on Wednesday after a ceasefire between government forces and Druze armed groups collapsed and Israel threatened to escalate its involvement in support of the Druze religious minority.

Syria's Defense Ministry blamed militias in Sweida for violating a ceasefire agreement that had been reached Tuesday, causing Syrian army soldiers to return fire and continue military operations in the Druze-majority province.

“Military forces continue to respond to the source of fire inside the city of Sweida, while adhering to rules of engagement to protect residents, prevent harm, and ensure the safe return of those who left the city back to their homes,” the statement said.

A rebel offensive led by Islamist insurgent groups ousted Syria's longtime despotic leader, Bashar Assad, in December, bringing an end to a nearly 14-year civil war. Since then, the country's new rulers have struggled to consolidate control over the territory.

The primarily Sunni Muslim leaders have faced suspicion from religious and ethnic minorities. The fears of minorities increased after clashes between government forces and pro-Assad armed groups in March spiraled into sectarian revenge attacks in which hundreds of civilians from the Alawite religious minority, to which Assad belongs, were killed.

Reports of killings and looting in Druze areas

The latest escalation in Syria began with tit-for-tat kidnappings and attacks between local Sunni Bedouin tribes and Druze armed factions in the southern province, a center of the Druze community.

Government forces that intervened to restore order have also clashed with the Druze, while reports have surfaced of members of the security forces carrying out extrajudicial killings, looting and burning civilian homes.

No official casualty figures have been released since Monday, when the Syrian Interior Ministry said 30 people had been killed. The U.K.-based war monitor Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said more than 250 people had been killed as of Wednesday morning, including four children, five women and 138 soldiers and security forces.

The observatory said at least 21 people were killed in “field executions.”

Israel has launched a series of airstrikes on convoys of government forces since the clashes erupted, saying that it is acting to protect the Druze.

The Druze religious sect began as a 10th-century offshoot of Ismailism, a branch of Shiite Islam. More than half the roughly 1 million Druze worldwide live in Syria. Most of the other Druze live in Lebanon and Israel, including in the Golan Heights, which Israel captured from Syria in the 1967 Mideast War and annexed in 1981.

Israel threatens to scale up its intervention

In Israel, the Druze are seen as a loyal minority and often serve in the military. In Syria, the Druze have been divided over how to deal with the country's new leaders, with some advocating for integrating into the new system while others have remained suspicious of the authorities in Damascus and pushed for an autonomous Druze region.

On Wednesday, Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said in a statement that the Israeli army “will continue to attack regime forces until they withdraw from the area — and will also soon raise the bar of responses against the regime if the message is not understood.”

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement Tuesday night that Israel has “a commitment to

preserve the southwestern region of Syria as a demilitarized area on Israel's border" and has "an obligation to safeguard the Druze locals."

Israel has taken an aggressive stance toward Syria's new leaders since Assad's fall, saying it doesn't want Islamist militants near its borders. Israeli forces have seized a U.N.-patrolled buffer zone on Syrian territory along the border with the Golan Heights and launched hundreds of airstrikes on military sites in Syria.

The US sends third-country deportees to the small African kingdom of Eswatini

By GERALD IMRAY Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — The United States has sent five men to the small African nation of Eswatini in an expansion of the Trump administration's third-country deportation program, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said Tuesday.

The U.S. has already deported eight men to another African nation, South Sudan, after the Supreme Court lifted restrictions on sending people to countries where they have no ties.

In a late-night post on X, Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said the men, who are citizens of Vietnam, Jamaica, Cuba, Yemen and Laos, had arrived in Eswatini on a plane. She said they were all convicted criminals and "individuals so uniquely barbaric that their home countries refused to take them back."

There was no immediate comment from Eswatini authorities over any deal to accept third-country deportees or what would happen to them in that country.

The Trump administration has said it is seeking more deals with African nations to take deportees from the U.S. Some have pushed back, with Nigeria saying it is rejecting pressure from the U.S. to take deportees who are citizens of other countries.

The U.S. has also sent hundreds of Venezuelans and others to Costa Rica, El Salvador and Panama.

Eswatini is a country of about 1.2 million people that sits between South Africa and Mozambique. It is one of the world's last remaining absolute monarchies — and the last in Africa — and King Mswati III has ruled by decree since 1986. The country was previously called Swaziland.

Political parties are effectively banned and pro-democracy groups have said for years that Mswati III has crushed any political dissent, sometimes violently.

Some Australian dolphins use sponges to hunt fish, but it's harder than it looks

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some dolphins in Australia have a special technique to flush fish from the seafloor. They hunt with a sponge on their beak, like a clown nose.

Using the sponge to protect from sharp rocks, the dolphins swim with their beaks covered, shoveling through rubble at the bottom of sandy channels and stirring up barred sandperch for a meal.

But this behavior — passed down through generations — is trickier than it looks, according to new research published Tuesday in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

Hunting with a sponge on their face interferes with bottlenose dolphins' finely tuned sense of echolocation, of emitting sounds and listening for echoes to navigate.

"It has a muffling effect in the way that a mask might," said co-author Ellen Rose Jacobs, a marine biologist at the University of Aarhus in Denmark. "Everything looks a little bit weird, but you can still learn how to compensate."

Jacobs used an underwater microphone to confirm that the "sponging" dolphins in Shark Bay, Australia, were still using echolocation clicks to guide them. Then she modeled the extent of the sound wave distortion from the sponges.

For those wild dolphins that have mastered foraging with nose sponges, scientists say it's a very efficient

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 26 of 64

way to catch fish. The wild marine sponges vary from the size of a softball to a cantaloupe.

Sponge hunting is "like hunting when you're blindfolded — you've got to be very good, very well-trained to pull it off," said Mauricio Cantor, a marine biologist at Oregon State University, who was not involved in the study.

That difficulty may explain why it's rare — with only about 5% of the dolphin population studied by the researchers in Shark Bay doing it. That's about 30 dolphins total, said Jacobs.

"It takes them many years to learn this special hunting skill — not everybody sticks with it," said marine ecologist Boris Worm at Dalhousie University in Canada, who was not involved in the study.

Dolphin calves usually spend around three or four years with their mothers, observing and learning crucial life skills.

The delicate art of sponge hunting is "only ever passed down from mother to offspring," said co-author and Georgetown marine biologist Janet Mann.

Trump to put tariffs of over 10% on smaller nations, including those in Africa and the Caribbean

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump told reporters Tuesday that he plans to place tariffs of over 10% on smaller countries, including nations in Africa and the Caribbean.

"We'll probably set one tariff for all of them," Trump said, adding that it could be "a little over 10% tariff" on goods from at least 100 nations.

Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick interjected that the nations with goods being taxed at these rates would be in Africa and the Caribbean, places that generally do relatively modest levels of trade with the U.S. and would be relatively insignificant for addressing Trump's goals of reducing trade imbalances with the rest of the world.

The president had this month been posting letters to roughly two dozen countries and the European Union that simply levied a tariff rate to be charged starting Aug. 1.

Those countries generally faced tax rates on the goods close to the April 2 rates announced by the U.S. president, whose rollout of historically high import taxes for the U.S. caused financial markets to panic and led to Trump setting a 90-day negotiating period that expired July 9.

Trump also said he would "probably" announce tariffs on pharmaceutical drugs at the "end of the month."

The president said he would start out at a lower tariff rate and give companies a year to build domestic factories before they faced higher import tax rates. Trump said computer chips would face a similar style of tariffs.

'American Idol' music supervisor and husband both found dead at LA home

LOS ANGELES (AP) — An "American Idol" music supervisor and her husband were both found dead in their Los Angeles home Monday afternoon.

Officers were conducting a welfare check at a home in the Encino neighborhood when they found the bodies of a man and woman with gunshot wounds.

An "American Idol" spokesperson confirmed the deaths of Robin Kaye and her husband, Thomas Deluca, both 70. The couple owned their home, according to public records.

"Robin has been a cornerstone of the Idol family since 2009 and was truly loved and respected by all who came in contact with her," an "American Idol" spokesperson said in a statement. "Robin will remain in our hearts forever and we share our deepest sympathy with her family and friends during this difficult time."

Los Angeles police said Tuesday afternoon they arrested 22-year-old Raymond Boodarian in connection with the couple's deaths.

Boodarian was allegedly burglarizing their home while the couple was away July 10. He is accused of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 27 of 64

shooting and killing Kaye and her husband when they returned and then fleeing on foot. Boodarian has not yet been assigned a public defender and could not be reached for comment.

Police responded that same afternoon to reports of a burglary at the Encino home, but said in a press release there were "no signs of forced entry or trouble."

Kaye, an industry veteran, has also worked in the music departments of several other productions such as "The Singing Bee," "Hollywood Game Night," "Lip Sync Battle," and several Miss USA and Miss Universe pageants.

Pentagon ends deployment of 2,000 National Guard troops in Los Angeles

By JULIE WATSON, DAVID KLEPPER and DAMIAN DOVARGANES Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Pentagon said Tuesday it is ending the deployment of 2,000 National Guard troops in Los Angeles, accounting for nearly half of the soldiers sent to the city to deal with protests over the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

Roughly 4,000 National Guard soldiers and 700 Marines have been in the city since early June. It wasn't immediately clear what prompted the 60-day deployment to end suddenly, nor was it immediately clear how long the rest of the troops would stay in the region.

In late June, the top military commander in charge of troops deployed to LA had asked Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth for 200 of them to be returned to wildfire fighting duty amid warnings from California Gov. Gavin Newsom that the Guard was understaffed as California entered peak wildfire season.

The end of the deployment comes a week after federal authorities and National Guard troops arrived at MacArthur Park with guns and horses in an operation that ended abruptly. Although the U.S. Department of Homeland Security wouldn't explain the purpose of the operation or whether anyone had been arrested, local officials said it seemed designed to sow fear.

"Thanks to our troops who stepped up to answer the call, the lawlessness in Los Angeles is subsiding," Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a statement in announcing the decision.

On June 8, thousands of protesters took to the streets in response to Trump's deployment of the Guard, blocking off a major freeway as law enforcement used tear gas, rubber bullets and flash bangs to control the crowd. Photos captured several Waymo robotaxis set on fire.

A day later, police officers used flash bangs and shot projectiles as they pushed protesters through Little Tokyo, where bystanders and restaurant workers rushed to get out of their way.

Mayor Karen Bass set a curfew in place for about a week that she said had successfully protected businesses and helped restore order. Demonstrations in the city and the region in recent weeks have been largely small impromptu protests around arrests.

Bass applauded the troops' departure.

"This happened because the people of Los Angeles stood united and stood strong. We organized peaceful protests, we came together at rallies, we took the Trump administration to court — all of this led to today's retreat," she said in a statement, adding that "We will not stop making our voices heard until this ends, not just here in LA, but throughout our country."

Bass said in a press conference that the National Guard's primary mission has been to guard two buildings that "frankly didn't need to be guarded."

"I am hoping that this experiment with the lives of people ends here," she said.

No visible military presence at federal complex

On Tuesday afternoon, there was no visible military presence outside the federal complex downtown that had been the center of early protests and where National Guard troops first stood guard before the Marines were assigned to protect federal buildings. Hundreds of the soldiers have been accompanying agents on immigration operations.

President Donald Trump ordered the deployment against the wishes of Newsom, who sued to stop it.

Newsom argued that Trump violated the law when he deployed the California National Guard troops

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 28 of 64

despite his opposition. He also argued that the National Guard troops were likely violating the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits troops from conducting civilian law enforcement on U.S. soil.

Newsom won an early victory in the case after a federal judge ruled the Guard deployment was illegal and exceeded Trump's authority. But an appeals court tossed that order, and control of the troops remained with the federal government. The federal court is set to hear arguments next month on whether the troops are violating the Posse Comitatus Act.

The deployment of National Guard troops was for 60 days, though Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth had the discretion to shorten or extend it "to flexibly respond to the evolving situation on the ground," the Trump administration's lawyers wrote in a June 23 filing in the legal case.

Following the Pentagon's decision Tuesday, Newsom said in a statement that the National Guard's deployment to Los Angeles County has pulled troops away from their families and civilian work "to serve as political pawns for the President."

He added that the remaining troops "continue without a mission, without direction and without any hopes of returning to help their communities."

"We call on Trump and the Department of Defense to end this theater and send everyone home now," he said.

UN finds rising child malnutrition in Gaza, where officials say Israeli strikes kill 93 people

By WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Malnutrition rates among children in the Gaza Strip have doubled since Israel sharply restricted the entry of food in March, the U.N. said Tuesday. New Israeli strikes killed more than 90 Palestinians, including dozens of women and children, according to health officials.

Hunger has been rising among Gaza's more than 2 million Palestinians since Israel broke a ceasefire in March to resume the war and banned all food and other supplies from entering Gaza, saying it aimed to pressure Hamas to release hostages. It slightly eased the blockade in late May, allowing in a trickle of aid.

UNRWA, the main U.N. agency caring for Palestinians in Gaza, said it had screened nearly 16,000 children under age 5 at its clinics in June and found 10.2% of them were acutely malnourished. By comparison, in March, 5.5% of the nearly 15,000 children it screened were malnourished.

New airstrikes kill several families

One strike in the northern Shati refugee camp killed a 68-year-old Hamas member of the Palestinian legislature, as well as a man and a woman and their six children who were sheltering in the same building, according to officials from the heavily damaged Shifa Hospital, where the casualties were taken.

One of the deadliest strikes hit a house in Gaza City's Tel al-Hawa district on Monday evening and killed 19 members of the family living inside, according to Shifa Hospital. The dead included eight women and six children. A strike on a tent housing displaced people in the same district killed a man and a woman and their two children.

The Israeli military did not comment on the strikes.

Gaza's Health Ministry said in a daily report Tuesday afternoon that the bodies of 93 people killed by Israeli strikes had been brought to hospitals in Gaza over the past 24 hours, along with 278 wounded. It did not specify the total number of women and children among the dead.

The Hamas politician killed in a strike early Tuesday, Mohammed Faraj al-Ghoul, was a member of the bloc of representatives from the group that won seats in the Palestinian Legislative Council in the last national elections, held in 2006.

The Israeli military says it only targets militants and tries to avoid harming civilians. It blames civilian deaths on Hamas because the militants operate in densely populated areas. But daily, it hits homes and shelters where people are living without warning or explanation of the target.

Malnutrition grows

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 29 of 64

UNICEF, which screens children separately from UNRWA, also reported a marked increase in malnutrition cases. It said this week its clinics had documented 5,870 cases of malnutrition among children in June, the fourth straight month of increases and more than double the around 2,000 cases it documented in February.

Experts have warned of famine since Israel tightened its lengthy blockade in March.

Israel has allowed an average of 69 trucks a day carrying supplies, including food, since it eased the blockade in May, according to the latest figures from COGAT, the Israeli military agency in charge of coordinating aid. That is far below the hundreds of trucks a day the U.N. says are needed to sustain Gaza's population.

On Tuesday, COGAT blamed the U.N. for failing to distribute aid, saying in a post on X that thousands of pallets of supplies were inside Gaza waiting to be picked up by U.N. trucks. The U.N. says it has struggled to pick up and distribute aid because of Israeli military restrictions on its movements and the breakdown in law and order.

Israel has also let in food for distribution by an American contractor, the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. GHF says it has distributed food boxes with the equivalent of more than 70 million meals since late May at the four centers it runs in the Rafah area of southern Gaza and in central Gaza.

More than 840 Palestinians have been killed and more than 5,600 others wounded in shootings as they walk for hours trying to reach the GHF centers, according to the Health Ministry. Witnesses say Israeli forces open fire with barrages of live ammunition to control crowds on the roads to the GHF centers, which are located in military-controlled zones.

The military says it has fired warning shots at people it says have approached its forces in a suspicious manner. GHF says no shootings have taken place in or immediately around its distribution sites.

No breakthrough in ceasefire efforts

The latest attacks came after U.S. President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held two days of talks last week that ended with no breakthrough in negotiations over a ceasefire and hostage release.

Israel has killed more than 58,400 Palestinians and wounded more than 139,000 others in its retaliation campaign since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. Just over half the dead are women and children, according to the ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and militants in its tally.

Israel has vowed to destroy Hamas after its attack 21 month ago, in which militants stormed into southern Israel and killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians. They abducted 251 others, and the militants are still holding 50 hostages, less than half of them believed to be alive.

U.S. calls for probe into killing of Palestinian-American

In a separate development, U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee called on Israel to investigate the killing of a 20-year-old Palestinian-American whose family said was beaten to death by Jewish settlers over the weekend in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

"There must be accountability for this criminal and terrorist act," Huckabee wrote on X.

Seifeddin Musalat, born in Florida, and a local friend were killed Friday. Musalat was beaten to death by Israeli settlers on his family's land, his cousin Diana Halum told reporters. The family had called on the U.S. State Department to investigate his death and hold the settlers accountable.

The Israeli military said a confrontation erupted after Palestinians hurled stones at Israelis in the area earlier in the day, lightly wounding two people.

Huckabee, like many in the Trump administration, is a strong supporter of Israeli settlements, which are considered illegal by most of the international community and seen by the Palestinians as a major obstacle to peace.

Israel strikes Lebanon's Bekaa Valley

Also on Tuesday, Israel launched a series of strikes in Lebanon's eastern Bekaa Valley, targeting what the military said were compounds of the Hezbollah militant group.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said that one of the strikes hit a Syrian refugee camp, killing

seven Syrians. Altogether, the strikes killed 12 people and wounded eight, it said. Hezbollah said one of the strikes hit a rig used to drill water wells.

Israel has continued to carry out near-daily strikes in Lebanon since a U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement nominally brought an end to the latest Israel-Hezbollah war in November. Some 4,000 people were killed in Lebanon during the war and more than 250 since the ceasefire.

'Severance' leads Emmy nominees with 27 and 'The Studio' tops comedies as Apple TV+ dominates

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Severance" separated itself from the field with 27 Emmy nominations Tuesday, while "The Studio" led comedy nominees with a record-tying 23 in a dominant year for Apple TV+.

No other dramas came close to the dystopian workplace series "Severance," which achieved a convergence of acclaim and audience buzz for its second season that brought an expected Emmy bounty.

"It's been the best kind of morning," Apple TV+ head of programming Matt Cherniss told The Associated Press.

Lead acting nominations came for "Severance" stars Adam Scott and Britt Lower for what amounted to dual roles as their characters' "innie" work selves and "outie" home selves. Tramell Tillman got a supporting nod for playing their tone-shifting, pineapple-wielding supervisor. Patricia Arquette was nominated for supporting actress for playing an ousted outcast from the sinister family business at the center of the show. And Ben Stiller got a nomination for directing the Season 2 finale.

Apple's Hollywood satire "The Studio" was expected to make a significant showing for its first season, but it romped over more established shows like "Hacks," which got 14, and "The Bear," which got 13. It tied a comedy record set last year by "The Bear" with 23 nominations.

Seth Rogen, who co-created the series with longtime collaborator Evan Goldberg, personally got three nominations — for acting, writing and directing.

Rogen told the AP that "my ego is in shock" and called the raft of nominations "very validating in a way that I'm not used to being validated."

His show's A-list roster of guest stars brought in a bounty, with nominations for Martin Scorsese, Ron Howard, Bryan Cranston, Anthony Mackie, Dave Franco and Zoë Kravitz. The men made for five of the six nominees in the guest actor in a comedy category.

"The Penguin," HBO's dark drama from the "Batman" universe, was surprisingly dominant in the limited series category with 24 nominations, including nods for leads Colin Farrell and Cristin Milioti.

Netflix's acclaimed "Adolescence" got 13 limited series nominations, including a supporting actor nod for 15-year-old Owen Cooper, who plays a 13-year-old suspected of a killing.

Many expect Cooper to become the youngest Emmy winner in more than 40 years, largely because of a breathtaking episode that is one long therapy session inside a juvenile jail. Like all "Adolescence" episodes, it's done in one long shot.

His psychologist scene partner, Erin Doherty, was also nominated, for limited series supporting actress.

"If you just sit and listen, and let someone talk, that is such a gorgeous offering," Doherty told the AP. "I don't think we do it that often. I'm trying to take that forward."

"The White Lotus," "The Pitt" and "Matlock" score in acting categories

HBO's high-end soap "The White Lotus" got its usual flowering of drama acting nominations for its Thailand-set third season, with four cast members including Carrie Coon getting supporting actress nods, and three including Walton Goggins up for supporting actor. It pulled in 23 nominations overall.

"The Pitt," HBO Max's prestige medical procedural, got 13 nominations, including best drama and best actor for its star, "ER" veteran Noah Wyle. One of its nurses, Katherine LaNasa, was able to squeeze in among the women of "The White Lotus" for a supporting actress nod.

"I love telling stories about the human condition and I really love acting, and so to suddenly get recog-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 31 of 64

nized and sort of applauded for it is just a delightful surprise," LaNasa told the AP.

Wyle, who was nominated five times without a win for "ER," could join Scott to make best actor in a drama a two-man race, with both seeking their first Emmy.

The broadcast networks have largely become Emmy non-entities in the top categories. Oscar-winner Kathy Bates was a big exception this year. She's considered a heavy favorite to win best actress in a drama for CBS' "Matlock." She's the first person nominated in the category from a network show since 2019, and would be the first to win it since 2015. At 77, she's also the oldest ever nominee in the category.

ABC's "Abbott Elementary," which has kept hope alive for the networks in recent years, got six nominations including acting and writing nods for creator Quinta Brunson.

HBO is still king in the overall numbers

"The Last of Us" brought in 16 nominations in drama categories for HBO to add to its totals run up by "The White Lotus," "The Pitt" and "The Penguin." Bella Ramsey got a nod for best actress in a drama for "The Last of Us." Pedro Pascal was nominated for lead actor despite appearing in only about half of the season's episodes.

HBO with its streaming counterpart HBO Max has been so prolific for decades in Emmy nominations that it almost felt like an off year without it having a "Succession" or a "Game of Thrones" atop the drama category. But it definitely wasn't. It led all outlets with 142 nominations, the most it's ever gotten.

Netflix followed with 120 nominations overall, including 11 for "Monsters: The Lyle And Erik Menendez Story" and 10 for "Black Mirror."

Apple TV+ had 79 nominations overall.

"Shrinking" added to that total with seven in the comedy categories, including acting nominations for Harrison Ford and Jason Segel.

"Andor" represented Disney+ with 14 nominations. The gritty series from the "Star Wars" galaxy is up for best drama series and a slew of technical categories. Forest Whitaker was nominated for best guest actor in a drama.

He's one of several Oscar winners in the guest acting categories along with Scorsese, Howard and Jamie Lee Curtis and Olivia Colman for their performances in "The Bear."

"Andor" star Diego Luna was surprisingly omitted from best actor in a drama. Other snubs included former Emmy powerhouses "The Handmaid's Tale," which got just one nomination, and "Squid Game," which got none.

'Severance' delivers big for Apple TV+

"Severance" has become a signature show for Apple TV+. The streamer has gotten plenty of Emmy nominations for dramas including "The Morning Show" and "Slow Horses," and "Ted Lasso" thrived the comedy side.

But Apple has lacked the kind of breakaway prestige drama that HBO seems to produce perennially. "Severance" became its most-nominated show ever and could easily become its biggest winner when the Emmys are handed out in September, reaching the upper echelons previously enjoyed by "Succession" and "Shogun," which left room for others by taking this year off.

Cherniss said Apple TV+, which has been knocked as the streamer with big stars and big budgets for shows that go unnoticed, was rewarded for taking big swings.

"Severance" is such an ambitious show," he said, adding that "all of the shows that have been nominated took big risks."

How streaming has changed TV and the Emmys

All the shows are living in the splintered world of the streaming era, and the like the Oscars its most acclaimed nominees rarely have the huge audience they once did. While an impressive average of 10 million people per episode watched Wyle on "The Pitt" on HBO Max, 30 years ago an average of 30 million watched him on "ER" on NBC.

The broadcast networks rotate on who airs the Emmys. This year is CBS's turn. It will air the 77th Prime-time Emmy Awards from the Peacock Theater in Los Angeles on Sept. 14. Nate Bargatze is slated to host.

2 dead in New Jersey after floodwaters carry away vehicle during heavy rains that hit Northeast

By SUSAN HAIGH and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Two people in New Jersey were killed after their vehicle was swept up in floodwaters during a storm that moved across the U.S. Northeast overnight, authorities said Tuesday.

Gov. Phil Murphy, a Democrat, noted the deaths occurred in the northern New Jersey city of Plainfield, where there were two storm-related deaths July 3. A third person was killed in North Plainfield during that previous storm.

"We're not unique, but we're in one of these sort of high humidity, high temperature, high storm intensity patterns right now," Murphy told reporters after touring storm damage in Berkeley Heights. "Everybody needs to stay alert."

The names of the two latest victims were not immediately released Tuesday. Local officials said the vehicle they were riding in was swept into a brook during the height of the storm.

"Emergency personnel responded quickly, but tragically, both individuals were pronounced dead at the scene," according to a statement the city posted online.

The heavy rains also caused flash floods in New York and south-central Pennsylvania on Monday night into early Tuesday, prompting road closures and snarling some service on the New York City subway.

It was the second-highest one-hour rainfall ever recorded in Central Park at more than 2 inches (5 centimeters), surpassed only by the remnants of Hurricane Ida in 2021, according to local officials.

Flooding in the New York City subway

Viral videos posted online showed water flooding down into one Manhattan subway station, submerging the platform while passengers inside a train watched on.

Janno Lieber, chair and CEO of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, told ABC 7 in New York the city's sewer system got overwhelmed by the rain and backed up into the subway tunnels and to the stations. In several cases, he said, the backup "popped a manhole," creating the dramatic "geyser" seen in some videos.

"What happened last night is something that is, you know, a reality in our system," he told the TV station, noting the backup happens when more than 1 3/4 inches of rain falls in an hour. "We've been working with the city of New York to try to get them to increase the capacity of the system at these key locations."

City officials said their venerable sewer system worked as well as it could, but it simply was not built to handle that much rain.

"Imagine putting a two-liter bottle of water into a one-liter bottle. Some of it's going to spill," Environmental Protection Commissioner Rohit Aggarwala said at a virtual news briefing Tuesday.

Lieber said full service was restored to the subway, as well as commuter rails, after hundreds of people worked overnight to restore operations.

Flooding has proven to be a stubborn problem for New York's subway system, despite years and billions of dollars' worth of efforts to waterproof them.

Superstorm Sandy in 2012 prompted years of subway repairs and flood-fighting ideas, and some have been put into practice. In some places, transit officials have installed or are installing storm barriers at subway station entrances, seals beneath subway air vents and curbs to raise the vents and entrances above sidewalk level.

Meanwhile, summer thunderstorms and the remains of hurricanes have repeatedly flooded parts of the subway system anew. In 2021, the remnants of Hurricane Ida killed more than a dozen New York City residents, largely in basement apartments, and sent water cascading again into subways, renewing attention to resiliency proposals.

The storm's effects in New Jersey and Pennsylvania

The storm prompted multiple water rescues in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where streets and basements flooded after roughly 7 inches (18 centimeters) of rain fell. Some roads remained closed in parts of Pennsylvania and New Jersey on Tuesday. Murphy said the pavement buckled in some locations and

state and local officials were assessing the level of damage in several counties, noting the White House had reached out to his office.

A major east-to-west highway in New Jersey was closed to make emergency repairs while dozens of flights were delayed or canceled at area airports Tuesday.

Most flash flood watches and warnings had expired in parts of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania as the rain moved on.

In one flooded North Plainfield neighborhood, a house caught on fire and collapsed amid the storm. Murphy said there was an explosion at the house but the family was not home and there were no injuries. The cause was under investigation.

Federal grand jury indicts man accused of killing former Minnesota House Speaker Melissa Hortman

By STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A man indicted Tuesday on charges he fatally shot the Democratic leader in the Minnesota state House and her husband, and wounded another lawmaker and his wife, confessed to the crimes in a rambling handwritten letter to FBI Director Kash Patel, but didn't say why he targeted the couples, prosecutors said.

Vance Boelter also wrote in the letter that Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz had approached him about killing the state's two U.S. senators, fellow Democrats Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith.

Asked by a reporter if all that was a fantasy, acting U.S. Attorney Joseph Thompson replied: "Yes, I agree." "There is little evidence showing why he turned to political violence and extremism," Thompson said. "What he left were lists: politicians in Minnesota, lists of politicians in other states, lists of names of attorneys at national law firms."

The indictment handed up murder, stalking and firearms charges against Boelter. The murder counts in the deaths of former Democratic House Speaker Melissa Hortman and her husband, Mark, could carry the federal death penalty. The indictment also charged Boelter with shooting and wounding a state senator and his wife, and attempting to shoot their adult daughter.

Thompson said a decision on whether to seek the death penalty "will not come for several months" and will be up to U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi. Minnesota abolished its state death penalty in 1911, but President Donald Trump's administration says it intends to be aggressive in seeking capital punishment for eligible federal crimes.

Prosecutors initially charged Boelter with the same six counts. But under federal court rules they needed a grand jury indictment to take the case to trial. His arraignment, where he could enter a plea, will probably be scheduled for later in the week, Thompson said.

Boelter's federal defender, Manny Atwal, did not immediately return messages seeking comment on the indictment and the new allegations.

Political extremism as a motive

Thompson also disclosed new details at a news conference. He said investigators had found the handwritten letter, which was addressed to the FBI chief, in a car Boelter abandoned near his home.

"In the letter, Vance Boelter claims that he had been trained by the U.S. military off the books and he had conducted missions on behalf of the U.S. military in Asia, the Middle East and Africa," Thompson said.

The letter doesn't specifically say though why he targeted the Hortmans and Hoffmans.

Boelter's political and religious views

Friends have described Boelter as an evangelical Christian with politically conservative views who had been struggling to find work. At a hearing July 3, Boelter said he was "looking forward to the facts about the 14th coming out."

In an interview published by the New York Post on Saturday, Boelter insisted the shootings had nothing to do with his opposition to abortion or his support for Trump, but he declined to discuss why he allegedly

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 34 of 64

killed the Hortmans and wounded the Hoffmans.

"You are fishing and I can't talk about my case...I'll say it didn't involve either the Trump stuff or pro life," Boelter wrote in a message to the newspaper via the jail's messaging system.

Boelter also faces state murder and attempted murder charges in Hennepin County, but the federal case will go first.

Other details of the case

Prosecutors say Boelter, 57, who has lived in rural Sibley County south of Minneapolis, was disguised as a police officer, driving a fake squad car, wearing a realistic rubber mask and wearing tactical gear around 2 a.m. on June 14 when he went to the home of Sen. John Hoffman, a Democrat, and his wife, Yvette, in the Minneapolis suburb of Champlin. He allegedly shot the senator nine times, and Yvette Hoffman eight times, but they survived. He also allegedly tried to kill their adult daughter, Hope, but they pushed her out of the way and she was not hit.

Prosecutors allege he then stopped at the homes of two other lawmakers. One wasn't home while a police officer may have scared him off from the other target. Boelter then allegedly went to the Hortmans' home in nearby Brooklyn Park and killed both of them. Their dog was so gravely injured that he had to be euthanized.

Brooklyn Park police, who had been alerted to the shootings of the Hoffmans, arrived at the Hortman home around 3:30 a.m., moments before the gunman opened fire on the couple, court documents said. Boelter allegedly fled and left behind his car, which contained notebooks listing dozens of Democratic officials as potential targets with their home addresses, as well as five guns and a large quantity of ammunition.

Thompson said the gun used to shoot the Hoffmans was found near the Hortman home, while the gun used to shoot the Hortmans was recovered from a pond near their home a few days later.

Law enforcement officers finally captured Boelter about 40 hours later, about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from his rural home in Green Isle, after what authorities called the largest search for a suspect in state history.

Remembering the victims

Sen. Hoffman is out of the hospital and is now at a rehabilitation facility, his family announced last week, adding he has a long road to recovery. Yvette Hoffman was released a few days after the attack.

Hope Hoffman said in a statement Tuesday that she was relieved that Boelter will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

"Though I was not shot physically, I will now forever coexist with the PTSD of watching my parents be nearly shot dead in front of me and seeing my life flash before my eyes with a gun in my face," she said.

Hortman led the House from 2019 until January and was a driving force as Democrats passed an ambitious list of liberal priorities in 2023. She yielded the speakership to a Republican in a power-sharing deal after the November elections left the House tied, and she took the title speaker emerita.

With Epstein conspiracy theories, Trump faces a crisis of his own making

By ALI SWENSON and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As his supporters erupt over the Justice Department's failure to release much-hyped records in Jeffrey Epstein's sex trafficking investigation, President Donald Trump's strategy has been to downplay the issue.

"I don't understand what the interest or what the fascination is," Trump told reporters Tuesday.

His problem? That nothing-to-see-here approach doesn't work for those who've learned from him they must not give up until the government's deepest, darkest secrets are exposed.

Last week, the Justice Department and the FBI abruptly walked back the notion there's an Epstein client list of elites who participated in the wealthy New York financier's trafficking of underage girls. Trump quickly defended Attorney General Pam Bondi and chided a reporter for daring to ask about the documents.

The online reaction was swift, with followers calling the Republican president "out of touch" and demanding transparency.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 35 of 64

Trump's comments to reporters Tuesday while returning to Washington from a brief Pittsburgh trip were just the latest in a days-long campaign to quell the uproar. He called the Epstein case "pretty boring" and said "the credible information has been given."

"I don't understand why the Jeffrey Epstein case would be of interest to anybody," he said.

Trying to 'put the genie back in the bottle'

Over the weekend, Trump used his Truth Social platform to attempt to call supporters off the Epstein trail amid reports of infighting between Bondi and FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino over the issue. He suggested the turmoil was undermining his administration — "all over a guy who never dies, Jeffrey Epstein."

That did little to mollify Trump's supporters, who urged him to release the files or risk losing his base.

The political crisis is especially challenging for Trump because it's one of his own making. The president has spent years stoking dark theories and embracing QAnon-tinged propaganda that casts him as the only savior who can demolish the "deep state."

Now that he's running the federal government, the community he helped build is coming back to haunt him. It's demanding answers he either isn't able to or doesn't want to provide.

Asked Tuesday whether Bondi had told him his name was in the Epstein files, Trump said no. He praised her handling of the case and said she should release "whatever she thinks is credible." But he also claimed there were credibility issues with the documents, suggesting without citing evidence they were "made up" by former FBI Director James Comey and former Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden, both Democrats. Bondi declined to discuss the Epstein files Tuesday during a press briefing about drug trafficking.

"The faulty assumption Trump and others make is they can peddle conspiracy theories without any blowback," said Matt Dallek, a political scientist at George Washington University. "The Epstein case is a neat encapsulation that it is hard to put the genie back in the bottle."

A problem that's not going away

Last week's two-page statement from the Justice Department and the FBI saying they had concluded Epstein didn't possess a client list roiled Trump's supporters, who pointed to past statements from several administration officials that the list ought to be revealed.

Bondi had suggested in February such a document was sitting on her desk waiting for review, though last week she said she'd been referring generally to the Epstein case file, not a client list.

Conservative influencers have since demanded to see all the files related to Epstein's crimes, even as Trump has tried to put the issue to bed.

Far-right commentator Jack Posobiec said at Turning Point USA's Student Action Summit on Saturday he wouldn't rest "until we go full Jan. 6 committee on the Jeffrey Epstein files."

Trump's weekend post called on supporters to focus on investigating Democrats and arresting criminals rather than "spending month after month looking at nothing but the same old, Radical Left inspired Documents on Jeffrey Epstein." His first-term national security adviser, retired Lt. Gen. Michael Flynn, pleaded with him to reconsider.

"@realdonaldtrump please understand the EPSTEIN AFFAIR is not going away," Flynn wrote.

Other Trump allies continue to push for answers, among them far-right activist Laura Loomer, who has called for Bondi to resign. She told Politico's Playbook newsletter on Sunday a special counsel should be appointed to investigate the handling of the files on Epstein, who was found dead in his federal jail cell in 2019 weeks after he was arrested.

House Speaker Mike Johnson told right-wing influencer Benny Johnson in an interview released Tuesday that he is "for transparency," and wants Bondi to "put everything out there and let the people decide." He said the Justice Department needs to focus on crime and other priorities, including elections and investigating ActBlue, the Democrats' top fundraising platform.

Experts who study conspiracy theories warned more sunlight doesn't necessarily make far-fetched narratives disappear.

"For some portion of this set of conspiracy theory believers, no amount of contradictory evidence will ever be enough," said Josephine Lukito, who studies conspiracy theorists at the University of Texas at Austin.

Trump and his colleagues set their own trap

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 36 of 64

The president and many figures in his administration — including Bondi, Bongino and FBI Director Kash Patel — earned their political capital over the years in part by encouraging disproven conspiracy theories.

Now, they're tasked with trying to reveal the evidence they'd long insisted was there — a challenge that's reached across the government.

Last week, Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin posted on X what seemed like an endorsement of a conspiracy theory that the contrails left by aircraft are releasing chemicals for potentially nefarious reasons. But a second post from Zeldin underscored the fine line the Trump administration is trying to walk by linking to a new page on the EPA website that essentially debunked the theory.

The value of conspiratorial fabrications is they help people get political power, said Russell Muirhead, who teaches political science at Dartmouth College. He said Trump has been skilled in exploiting that.

But the Epstein case brings unique challenges, he said. That's because it's rooted in truth: A wealthy and well-connected financier did spend years abusing large numbers of young girls while escaping justice.

So, Trump needs to come forward with truth and transparency on the topic, Muirhead said. If he doesn't, "large segments of his most enthusiastic and devoted supporters are going to lose faith in him."

A potentially costly distraction

Trump's rivals have been taking advantage of right-wing fissures over Epstein.

Democrats sought to capitalize on the controversy, with several lawmakers calling for the release of all Epstein files and suggesting Trump could be resisting because he or someone close to him is featured in them.

The Democratic House Majority PAC on Tuesday emailed a memo that called out some House Republicans by name. It said they are "complicit" with the Trump administration because they had called for the Epstein files to be made public but then voted against a Democratic amendment to force their release.

Conservatives expressed concerns Trump's approach on Epstein could hurt them in the midterms.

"For this to go away, you're going to lose 10% of the MAGA movement," right-wing podcaster Steve Bannon said during the Turning Point USA Student Action Summit on Friday.

There's also the challenge of governing.

Bondi and Bongino had a tense exchange last week at the White House over a story about Epstein, according to a person familiar with the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss a private conversation.

And Loomer, who's close to Trump, said Friday she was told Bongino was "seriously thinking about resigning." The FBI declined to comment.

Dallek, the George Washington University professor, said it's alarming that the country's top law enforcement officials are feuding over a conspiracy theory.

"It's possible at some time voters are going to notice the things they want or expect government to do aren't being done because the people in charge are either incompetent or off chasing rabbits," he said. "Who is fulfilling the mission of the FBI to protect the American people?"

Trump promotes energy and tech investments at a summit in Pennsylvania

By SEUNG MIN KIM and MARC LEVY Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — President Donald Trump touted tens of billions of dollars of recent energy and technology investments Tuesday in Pennsylvania while boasting of a "true golden age for America" in energy policy and artificial intelligence.

Trump traveled to Pittsburgh at a summit helmed by Republican Sen. David McCormick that included dozens of top executives from companies aiming to make the city and the state a hot spot for advancements in robotics, artificial intelligence and energy. McCormick announced more than \$90 billion of investments in the state — spurring tens of thousands of jobs — although some of the projects had already been in progress ahead of the summit.

"I think we have a true golden age for America. And we've been showing it, and it truly is the hottest

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 37 of 64

country anywhere in the world,” Trump said at the Pennsylvania Energy and Innovation Summit, held at Carnegie Mellon University. “I’m honored to be in Pennsylvania, and I’m honored to be in Pittsburgh. And you’re going to see some real action here. So get ready.”

Trump has repeatedly pledged U.S. “energy dominance” in the global market, and Pennsylvania — a swing state critical to his wins in 2016 and 2024 — is at the forefront of that agenda, in large part due to its coal and gas industry that the Republican administration has taken steps to bolster.

Both the president and senior administration officials on Tuesday framed the investments as part of a race against China for the most advanced deployment of artificial intelligence, with Trump saying, “We are way ahead of China, I have to say.”

“China and other countries are racing to catch up to America on AI, and we’re not going to let them do it,” Trump said during the hourlong roundtable held in a university gymnasium, speaking often from prepared notes. Flanked by several of his Cabinet members, company executives and local political leaders, Trump added that the U.S. will be “fighting them in a very friendly fashion.”

Before Trump spoke, his Cabinet members spoke of the need to produce as much energy as possible — especially from coal and natural gas — to beat China in the AI race for the sake of economic and national security.

“The AI revolution is upon us,” Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said during an earlier panel discussion. “The Trump administration will not let us lose. We need to do clean, beautiful coal. We need to do natural gas, we need to embrace nuclear, we need to embrace it all because we have the power to do it and if we don’t do it we’re fools.”

Some of the investments on a list released by McCormick’s office were not necessarily brand-new, while others were. Some involve massive data center projects — such as a \$15 billion project in central Pennsylvania — while others involve building power plants, expanding natural gas pipelines, upgrading power plants or improving electricity transmission networks.

Google said it would invest \$25 billion on AI and data center infrastructure over the next two years in PJM’s mid-Atlantic electricity grid, while investment firm Brookfield said it had signed contracts to provide more than \$3 billion of power to Google’s data centers from two hydroelectric dams on the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania.

Frontier Group said it would transform the former Bruce Mansfield coal-fired power plant in western Pennsylvania into a new natural gas-fired plant, and AI cloud computing firm CoreWeave said it will spend more than \$6 billion to equip a data center in south-central Pennsylvania.

Blackstone plans to spend \$25 billion on data centers and building new natural gas-fired power plants in northeastern Pennsylvania, and the company will start construction by the end of 2028, said Jon Gray, its CEO.

McCormick, a first-term Republican senator who organized the inaugural event, said the summit was meant to bring together top energy companies and AI leaders, global investors and labor behind Trump’s energy policies and priorities.

The list of participating CEOs includes leaders from global behemoths like Blackstone, Bridgewater, SoftBank, Amazon Web Services, BlackRock and ExxonMobil and local companies such as the Pittsburgh-based Gecko Robotics, which deploys AI to bolster energy capacity.

“What’s exciting about this event is it’s a great catalyst for investments and closing deals in the region,” said Jake Loosarian, the founder and CEO of Gecko Robotics.

Administration officials at the summit included White House crypto czar David Sacks, Energy Secretary Chris Wright and Lutnick. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and Interior Secretary Doug Burgum also attended. Gov. Josh Shapiro, a Democrat, also spoke.

McCormick credited his wife, Dina Powell McCormick, with the idea for a summit. Powell McCormick served as Trump’s deputy national security adviser in his first term and is a former Goldman Sachs executive who is now at BDT & MSD Partners, a merchant bank.

Pittsburgh is home to Carnegie Mellon University, a prestigious engineering school, plus a growing industry of small robotics firms and a so-called AI Avenue that’s home to offices for Google and other AI

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 38 of 64

firms. It also sits in the middle of the prolific Marcellus Shale natural gas reservoir.

"What's going on is a rewiring of the economy, of the world over the next 15 years and that takes trillions and trillions and tens of trillions of dollars, and it starts with power," said Bruce Flatt, CEO of Brookfield, during a panel discussion.

Pennsylvania has scored big investment wins in recent months, some driven by federal manufacturing policy and others by the ravenous need for electricity from the fast-growing AI business.

Nippon Steel just bought U.S. Steel for almost \$15 billion, getting Trump's approval after pledging to invest billions alone in U.S. Steel's Pittsburgh-area plants.

Amazon will spend \$20 billion on two data center complexes in Pennsylvania, while the one-time Homer City coal-fired power plant is being turned into the nation's largest gas-fired power plant to fuel a data center campus. Meanwhile, Constellation Energy is reopening the lone functional nuclear reactor on Three Mile Island under a long-term power supply agreement for Microsoft's data centers.

A lockout is looming over MLB in December 2026, with a salary cap fight possibly at the center

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Looming over baseball is a likely lockout in December 2026, a possible management push for a salary cap and perhaps lost regular-season games for the first time since 1995.

"No one's talking about it, but we all know that they're going to lock us out for it, and then we're going to miss time," New York Mets All-Star first baseman Pete Alonso said Monday at the All-Star Game. "We're definitely going to fight to not have a salary cap and the league's obviously not going to like that."

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred and some owners have cited payroll disparity as a problem, while at the same time MLB is working to address a revenue decline from regional sports networks. Unlike the NFL, NBA and NHL, baseball has never had a salary cap because its players staunchly oppose one.

Despite higher levels of luxury tax that started in 2022, the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Mets have pushed payrolls to record levels. The last small-market MLB club to win a World Series was the Kansas City Royals in 2015.

After signing outfielder Juan Soto to a record \$765 million contract, New York opened this season with an industry-high \$326 million payroll, nearly five times Miami's \$69 million, according to Major League Baseball's figures. Using luxury tax payrolls, based on average annual values that account for future commitments and include benefits, the Dodgers were first at \$400 million and on track to owe a record luxury tax of about \$151 million — shattering the previous tax record of \$103 million set by Los Angeles last year.

"When I talk to the players, I don't try to convince them that a salary cap system would be a good thing," Manfred told the Baseball Writers' Association of America on Tuesday. "I identify a problem in the media business and explain to them that owners need to change to address that problem. I then identify a second problem that we need to work together and that is that there are fans in a lot of our markets who feel like we have a competitive balance problem."

Baseball's collective bargaining agreement expires Dec. 1, 2026, and management lockouts have become the norm, which shifts the start of a stoppage to the offseason. During the last negotiations, the sides reached a five-year deal on March 10 after a 99-day lockout, salvaging a 162-game 2022 season.

"A cap is not about a partnership. A cap isn't about growing the game," union head Tony Clark said Tuesday. "A cap is about franchise values and profits. ... A salary cap historically has limited contract guarantees associated with it, literally pits one player against another and is often what we share with players as the definitive non-competitive system. It doesn't reward excellence. It undermines it from an organizational standpoint. That's why this is not about competitive balance. It's not about a fair versus not. This is institutionalized collusion."

The union's opposition to a cap has paved the way for record-breaking salaries for star players. Soto's deal is believed to be the richest in pro sports history, eclipsing Shohei Ohtani's \$700 million deal with the Dodgers signed a year earlier. By comparison, the biggest guaranteed contract in the NFL is \$250 million

for Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen.

Manfred cites that 10% of players earn 72% of salaries.

"I never use the word 'salary' within one of 'cap,'" he said. "What I do say to them is in addressing this competitive issue that's real we should think about whether this system is the perfect system from a players' perspective."

A management salary cap proposal could contain a salary floor and a guaranteed percentage of revenue to players. Baseball players have endured nine work stoppages, including a 7 1/2-month strike in 1994-95 that fought off a cap proposal.

Agent Scott Boras likens a cap plan to attracting kids to a "gingerbread house."

"We've heard it for 20 years. It's almost like the childhood fable," he said. "This very traditional, same approach is not something that would lead the younger players to the gingerbread house."

Trump downplays possibility of sending Ukraine long-range weapons as it struggles to repel Russia

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, AAMER MADHANI and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday downplayed the possibility of sending Ukraine long-range weapons as Kyiv awaits an injection of U.S. weaponry that it hopes will help it beat back an intensifying Russian air offensive.

Trump offered a more cautious tone on what to expect after he threatened Russia a day earlier with steep tariffs if President Vladimir Putin doesn't act within 50 days to end the three-year conflict. He also on Monday announced plans to bolster Kyiv's stockpile by selling American weapons to NATO allies who would in turn send arms to Ukraine.

Providing Ukraine with more long-range weaponry would give Kyiv the chance to strike further into Russian territory, a move that some in Ukraine and the U.S. have said could help push Putin toward negotiations to end the fighting.

Asked if he intended to supply Ukraine with weapons that could reach deeper into Russian territory, Trump replied, "We're not looking to do that." He made the remarks to reporters before departing the White House for an energy investment event in Pittsburgh.

While Trump's threats of weapons, sanctions and tariffs mark the most substantive pressure he's placed on Putin since returning to office nearly six months ago, some lawmakers said they remain concerned that the administration, with the 50-day deadline, is giving Putin time to grab even more Ukrainian territory.

Sens. Thom Tillis, a Republican from North Carolina, and Jeanne Shaheen, a Democrat from New Hampshire, said waiting 50 days before imposing sanctions on Russia would give Putin more time to gain an advantage in the war.

"The 50-day delay worries me that Putin would try to use the 50 days to win the war, or to be better positioned to negotiate a peace agreement after having murdered and potentially collected more ground," said Tillis, who recently announced he won't run for reelection.

Tillis and Shaheen lead the Senate NATO Observer Group, which facilitates work between Congress and NATO, and met Tuesday with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on Capitol Hill.

Trump himself scoffed at the idea that 50 days is giving Putin too much time. The president suggested he may act more quickly if he does not see signs that Putin is taking steps toward ending the conflict.

"I don't think 50 days is very long and it could be shorter than that," he said.

Ahead of Trump's announcement that he would impose a 100% tariff on Russia's trading partners if Putin doesn't negotiate an end to the war, bipartisan legislation proscribing even tougher sanctions on Moscow was gaining steam in the Senate.

The legislation, in part, calls for a 500% tariff on goods imported from countries that continue to buy Russian oil, gas, uranium and other exports. It would have an enormous impact on the economies of Brazil, China and India, which account for the vast majority of Russia's energy trade.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 40 of 64

But Trump on Monday said “at a certain point it doesn’t matter” how high the tariff is set and that “100% is going to serve the same function.” Senate Majority Leader John Thune said he was putting the legislation on hold following Trump’s announcement.

Trump during his campaign described the conflict as a waste of U.S. taxpayer money and vowed to quickly end it on his first day back in office. He deflected when asked by a reporter on Tuesday if his tougher tone on Putin suggests he’s now on Ukraine’s side in the bloody conflict.

“I’m on nobody’s side,” Trump said, adding this concern was for “humanity.”

U.S. officials say they are still sorting through Ukraine’s wish list of weaponry to determine what can be most quickly replaced after Trump announced an agreement for Europe to supply Ukraine with defensive munitions from existing stocks.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss arms transfers that have not yet been approved or completed, said Ukraine’s requests for military equipment are roughly the same as they have been since the start of Russia’s invasion. Those include air defenses like Patriot missiles and Advanced Precision Kill Weapon Systems, long-range missiles known as ATACMS and short- to medium-range ground-to-air missiles known as NASAMs, and assorted artillery, according to the officials.

Under the terms of the very rough agreement sketched out by Trump and Rutte on Monday, NATO members would ship billions of dollars of these weapons to Ukraine and then purchase replacements for them from the United States.

One official said some of the larger items — such as Patriots— could take up to five years to produce to deliver to the European donors, while smaller munitions like 155mm artillery shells can be produced on a much shorter timeline.

Trump has lately changed his once friendly tune toward Putin, whom he has long admired and whom he sided with publicly over his national security team during his first term when asked whether Russia had interfered in the 2016 election.

In recent weeks, Trump has chastised Putin for continuing his brutal assault on Ukrainian cities, even noting that the Russian leader “talks nice and then he bombs everybody.”

Trump has continued to blame his White House predecessors for Putin’s 2022 invasion on neighboring Ukraine — a conflict he says would have never happened if he were reelected in 2020.

“He’s fooled a lot of people,” Trump said Monday at the White House. “He fooled Clinton, Bush, Obama, Biden. He didn’t fool me.”

In February, Trump expressed confidence that Putin “will keep his word” on any deal to end the war in Ukraine. But in an interview with the BBC published Tuesday, when asked whether he trusted Putin, Trump paused before answering.

“I trust almost nobody, to be honest with you,” Trump said. “I’m disappointed in him, but I’m not done with him. But I’m disappointed in him.”

Trump wields tariffs to sway Putin on Ukraine. Here’s how they might work, or not

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin has sacrificed an estimated 1 million of his soldiers, killed and wounded, in a three-year campaign to crush Ukraine.

Now President Donald Trump is betting that his go-to economic weapon — tariffs — can succeed where Ukrainian drones and rockets haven’t, and finally persuade Putin to end his war.

Tariffs, which the U.S. president has called “the most beautiful word in the dictionary,” are taxes on imports. They are Trump’s all-purpose fix — a tool he deploys to protect American industry, lure factories to the United States, tackle drug trafficking and illegal immigration, and raise money to pay for his massive tax cuts.

On the campaign trail last year, Trump promised he’d negotiate an end to the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 24 hours. But months have passed without a peace deal, and the president has recently expressed frus-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 41 of 64

tration with the Russians. "We're very, very unhappy with them ... I thought we would have had a deal two months ago, but it doesn't seem to get there," Trump told reporters Monday.

So in addition to agreeing to send more weapons to Ukraine, he's once again unsheathing tariffs.

He said Monday the U.S. would impose 100% tariffs on countries that buy Russian oil, natural gas and other products if there isn't a peace deal in 50 days. The levies are meant to cause Russia financial pain by making its trading partners think twice before buying Russian energy.

"I use trade for a lot of things," Trump said, "but it's great for settling wars."

Trump did not spell out exactly how these "secondary" tariffs would work, and trade analysts are skeptical.

"Unilateral tariffs are likely to be ineffective in influencing Putin's actions," said Douglas Irwin, a Dartmouth College economist who studies American trade policy. "Financial sanctions in cooperation with European and other allies are much more likely to damage Russian economy, but whether they soften Russia's approach is also uncertain."

The secondary tariffs idea isn't new. Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina and Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut earlier this year introduced legislation that would impose a 500% tariff on countries that buy Russian oil, petroleum products and uranium.

If Trump goes through with his threat, his 100% tariffs have the potential to disrupt global commerce and push oil prices higher. They might also complicate Trump's efforts to strike separate trade deals with countries like China and India.

The 100% tariffs would likely target China and India

Since December 2022, when the European Union banned Russian oil, China and India have bought 85% of Russia's crude oil exports and 63% of its coal, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, a Finnish nonprofit. So they would likely be the two countries most affected by Trump's 100% import taxes.

Trump has already tangled with China this year, and things did not go well.

In April, Trump plastered a 145% levy on Chinese imports, and Beijing counterpunched with 125% tariffs of its own. The triple-digit tariffs threatened to end trade between the world's two biggest economies and briefly sent financial markets reeling. China also withheld shipments of rare earth minerals used in products such as electric vehicles and wind turbines, crippling U.S. businesses.

After showing how much pain they could inflict on each other, the United States and China agreed to a ceasefire. A new 100% secondary tariff "would blow up that deal," said Gary Hufbauer, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

"China is particularly well-placed to hold out," said Nicholas Mulder, a Cornell University historian. "All this would get us back to a position of full confrontation that would be uncomfortable for all sides."

Hufbauer also noted that the secondary tariffs would also likely end "any rapprochement with India" — the world's fifth-biggest economy and one with which Trump is pursuing a trade deal.

Energy prices could climb

If Trump goes ahead with the tariffs, "it would invariably lead to higher global energy prices," especially for natural gas, economists Kieran Tompkins and Liam Peach of Capital Economics wrote in a commentary Monday.

Other oil-exporting countries have enough spare capacity to ramp up production and offset any loss of Russian oil exports in global market. But if they did, the world would have no buffer to rely on if there were an oil shock caused by, say, conflict in the Middle East — and prices could skyrocket.

"Removing that spare capacity would be akin to riding a bike with no shock absorbers," Tompkins and Peach wrote.

The Russian economy has been resilient

After Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the United States and its allies slammed Russia with sanctions.

Among other things, the U.S. froze the assets of Russia's central bank and barred some Russian banks from using a key international payments system run by Belgium. With its allies from the Group of Seven

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 42 of 64

rich nations, it also capped the price that importers could pay for Russian oil.

The sanctions were expected to crush the Russian economy, but they didn't. Putin put Russia on a war-time budget, and high defense spending kept unemployment low.

Military recruits were given big sign-up bonuses and the families of the fallen received death benefits, pumping income into some of Russia's poorer regions. To keep its oil sales going, Russia deployed "shadow fleets," hundreds of aging tankers of uncertain ownership and dodgy safety practices that delivered oil priced above the G7 price cap.

"The experience of the G7 oil price cap against Russia showed how challenging the enforcement of measures against the Russian oil trade can be," Mulder said.

Last year, the Russian economy grew 4.1%, according to the International Monetary Fund.

But strains are showing, partly because Putin's war has made Russia a pariah to foreign investors. The IMF forecasts growth will decelerate to 1.5% this year, and last month the Russian economy minister warned the country is "on the brink of going into a recession."

Trump's tariffs could increase the pressure, in part by driving down Russia's energy exports — and the revenue the Russian government collects from an energy tax.

Tariffs are mostly untried as a diplomatic lever

"To my knowledge, tariffs have never been applied as an explicit anti-aggression measure," said Mulder, author of a 2022 history of economic sanctions. "I am skeptical that the secondary tariffs threat will be effective."

For one thing, he said, it's unclear whether Trump will actually impose them after 50 days. The president has repeatedly announced tariffs against other countries, and then sometimes suspended or tweaked them.

For another, the secondary tariffs would target countries — namely China and India — that might have some sway in Moscow. "The United States needs cooperation and collaboration to bring Russia to the negotiating table," said Cullen Hendrix, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute. "Threatening to harm the actors who actually have leverage over Moscow may backfire."

Emmys show love for 'Shrinking,' but not for Ted Danson and give chilly goodbye to 'Handmaid's Tale'

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

As expected, Emmy voters heaped love on the so-called "Big Four" of comedy — "Hacks," "The Bear," "Abbott Elementary" and "Only Murders in the Building." Many of those competing in the drama categories were likely just happy the Emmy-gobbling "Shogun" is between seasons.

Emmy voters are creatures of habit but there were some happy differences this time around, like "Matlock" star Kathy Bates becoming the oldest performer ever nominated in the lead drama actress category at age 77. And "Severance," which last year only won for dramatic score and title design, looks in better shape for its second season.

Here are other talking points, "snubs" and surprises from the Emmy nominations:

The growing love for 'Shrinking'

"Shrinking," the Apple TV+ comedy about a group of funny, complicated therapists, didn't get much Emmy attention last year during its debut season, with only two nominations for stars Jason Segel, a co-creator, and Jessica Williams. This time, "Shrinking," well, expanded — with seven nods, including best comedy, and nods for Segel, Williams, Michael Urie and Harrison Ford's first Emmy nomination.

Fallout from an act of violence

"Adolescence," the Netflix four-part series that traces the emotional fallout after a U.K. teen stabbing, became a sensation, a sort of 2025 version of "Baby Reindeer," and has earned a boatload of Emmy nominations, with 13. Owen Cooper, who plays the young attacker, became the youngest nominee in the history of his category — best supporting actor in a limited/anthology series or TV movie. The series was co-created and co-written by Stephen Graham, who also stars as the accused attacker's father and earned a nomination for his work. "Adolescence" reached No. 2 in Netflix's Top 10 most popular English-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 43 of 64

language series.

Late night door is locked

"The Daily Show," "Jimmy Kimmel Live" and "The Late Show With Stephen Colbert" filled up the outstanding talk series category, dashing hopes that newcomers might crash the party. Like John Mulaney's "Everybody's Live With John Mulaney" on Netflix, which features a quirky mix of guests, the host doing odd things like fighting three 14-year-old-boys and an episode when Mulaney was completely in a blind-fold. There's also the spicy wing YouTube interview series "Hot Ones," hosted by Sean Evans, which has attracted A-list talent and often pulls in an audience higher than the established network late-night boys.

Green light, now red-light

The first season of "Squid Game" became an international phenomenon after its release in 2021 and was embraced by the Television Academy the next year, racking up 14 Emmy nominations and winning six, including best actor for Lee Jung-jae. Three years later, the second season continued to captivate audiences, logging over 192 million views on Netflix. But not a single Emmy nomination went to its cut-throat look at life.

'The Handmaid's Tale' says goodbye, quietly

After six harrowing, powerful seasons, Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale" ended its exploration of an alternative America taken over by a totalitarian theocracy with a meek showing. The dystopian drama had garnered 76 nominations and 15 wins over its lifetime going into Tuesday's announcement — including a historic outstanding drama series win in its first season, the first ever for a streaming platform. But the series got a sole nomination Tuesday, for guest actress. It's a hard way to say goodbye to a series that was ranked as the 25th and 38th best TV series of the 21st century by The Guardian and BBC, respectively.

TV voters love a good Hollywood satire

"The Studio" received 23 Emmy nominations — the most ever for a comedy series in its first season. Seth Rogen's critically acclaimed Apple TV+ series is about a Hollywood head struggling to balance his love of cinema with the mercenary demands of the market. Rogen got four individual nominations, including lead actor, writing and directing. The show mocks Hollywood's addiction to franchises and the explosive issue of diverse casting, with famous actors and filmmakers happily playing heightened versions of themselves. Five of the six guest actor nods went to the show, including to Bryan Cranston, Dave Franco, Ron Howard, Anthony Mackie and Martin Scorsese.

Coldness for 'The Four Seasons'

If Netflix thought combining Tina Fey and Steve Carell — two of the most Emmy-nominated comedic actors of the last 20 years — would lead to Emmy triumph, it thought wrong. Neither actor got a nod and the series only got one, for supporting actor Colman Domingo. The eight-episode relationship comedy is about three couples who are friends and meet up on four seasonal vacations throughout the year. Fey (45 career Emmy noms and nine wins as an actor, writer and producer) and Carell (10 nominations) will have to wait for another TV season.

'Slow Horses' gathers speed

The momentum seems to have continued for Apple TV+'s "Slow Horses," a critical darling that gained traction in the U.S. only last year, in the fourth season. That's when the show about lovable loser spies was added for the first time in the best drama series category. (So far, its only win is for writing.) This season, it earned five nods, including best drama, directing, casting, writing and for Gary Oldman, who leads the underdogs.

Gaga for Goggins

Walton Goggins is having quite a moment, earning back-to-back Emmy nominations. Last year it was for playing a ghoul on "Fallout" and this year it is for his "White Lotus" portrayal of the troubled Rick Hatchett. The Alabama-born, Georgia-raised actor has been around for over three decades, with memorable turns in blockbusters like "Django Unchained" and "Lincoln," playing a spray-tanned, silver-streaked televangelist in "The Righteous Gemstones" and a hosting stint on NBC's "Saturday Night Live." "Thank You God for All This Goggins," said a headline in Vulture.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 44 of 64

Something off-pitch?

"The Voice" heard a sour note, missing a nomination in the reality competition category for the first time since 2012. The 26th season didn't have too many changes, with host Carson Daly returning, as well as judges Reba McEntire and Gwen Stefani. The new faces were debut coaches Michael Bublé and Snoop Dogg. The season's winner was Sofronio Vasquez, the show's first foreign male winner and second winner of Asian descent. "The Voice" has been nominated for an Emmy every year since its second season in 2012 with wins in 2013, 2015, 2016 and 2017. But it will take a year off and watch one of the following shows take the crown: "The Traitors," "RuPaul's Drag Race," "The Amazing Race," "Survivor" and "Top Chef."

Ring her bell

Kristen Bell has been a TV fixture for years — think "Veronica Mars," "The Good Place" or "Gossip Girl" — but has never gotten an Emmy nod — until now. In the Netflix romantic comedy series "Nobody Wants This," Bell plays an agnostic sex and dating podcaster who finds herself romantically drawn to a rabbi played by Adam Brody, who also earned his first nod. Their on-screen chemistry and easy bantering has won over TV audiences and now Emmy voters.

Noah Wyle scrubs in for a nod

"The Pitt," a throwback medical drama that's like a mashup of "ER" and "24," has been a ratings hit — among the top three most-watched HBO Max titles ever — and now has 13 Emmy nods. "The Pitt" throws us into the chaos of the Pittsburgh Trauma Medical Center and takes viewers hour-by-hour through a single shift overseen by Noah Wyle's Dr. Michael "Robby" Robinavitch. Wyle, who is also a producer and writer, earned his first Emmy nod in 26 years, since back when he was on "ER."

No cheers for Ted Danson

Ted Danson, surprisingly, will not be able to extend his record for the most nominations — 14 — in the best comedy actor category this year. He already received Golden Globe and Screen Actors Guild Award nominations for his performance as Charles Nieuwendyk on the Netflix comedy "A Man on the Inside." Forbes called it "one of the best shows of 2024" and said Danson "has never been better." The Guardian said "A Man on the Inside" was "as good a vehicle as he has ever had." It drew 12.4 million viewers, good enough for No. 14 on Nielsen's chart of most watched series that combines over-the-air, on demand and streaming.

The tariff-driven inflation that economists feared begins to emerge

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and JOSH BOAK AP Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Inflation rose last month to its highest level since February as President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs push up the cost of everything from groceries and clothes to furniture and appliances.

Consumer prices rose 2.7% in June from a year earlier, the Labor Department said Tuesday, up from an annual increase of 2.4% in May. On a monthly basis, prices climbed 0.3% from May to June, after rising just 0.1% the previous month.

Worsening inflation poses a political challenge for Trump, who as a candidate promised to immediately lower costs, but instead has engaged in a whipsawed frenzy of tariffs that have jolted businesses and consumers. Trump insists that the U.S. effectively has no inflation as he has attempted to pressure Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell into cutting short-term interest rates.

Yet the new inflation numbers make it more likely that the central bank will leave rates where they are. Powell has said that he wants to gauge the economic impact of Trump's tariffs before reducing borrowing costs.

Excluding volatile food and energy, core inflation increased 2.9% in June from a year earlier, up from 2.8% in May. On a monthly basis, it picked up 0.2% from May to June. Economists closely watch core prices because they typically provide a better sense of where inflation is headed.

The uptick in inflation was driven by a range of higher prices. The cost of gasoline rose 1% just from May to June, while grocery prices increased 0.3%. Appliance prices jumped for the third straight month. Toys,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 45 of 64

clothes, audio equipment, shoes, and sporting goods all got more expensive, and are all heavily imported.

"You are starting to see scattered bits of the tariff inflation regime filter in," said Eric Winograd, chief economist at asset management firm AllianceBernstein, who added that the cost of long-lasting goods rose last month, compared with a year ago, for the first time in about three years.

Winograd also noted that housing costs, a big inflation driver since the pandemic, have continued to cool, actually holding down broader inflation. The cost of rent rose 3.8% in June compared with a year ago, the smallest yearly increase since late 2021.

"Were it not for the tariff uncertainty, the Fed would already be cutting rates," Winograd said. "The question is whether there is more to come, and the Fed clearly thinks there is," along with most economists.

Some items got cheaper last month, including new and used cars, hotel rooms, and fares. Travel prices have generally declined in recent months as fewer international tourists visit the U.S.

A broader political battle over Trump's tariffs is emerging, a fight that will ultimately be determined by how the U.S. public feels about their cost of living and whether the president is making good on his 2024 promise to help the middle class.

The White House pushed back on claims that the report showed a negative impact from tariffs, since the cost of new cars fell despite the 25% tariffs on autos and 50% tariffs on steel and aluminum. The administration also noted that despite the June bump in apparel prices, clothing prices are still cheaper than three months ago.

"Consumer Prices LOW," Trump posted on Truth Social. "Bring down the Fed Rate, NOW!!!"

For Democratic lawmakers, the inflation report confirmed their warnings over the past several months that Trump's tariffs could reignite inflation. They said Tuesday that it will only become more painful given the size of the tariff rates in the letters that Trump posted over the past week.

"For those saying we have not seen the impact of Trump's tariff wars, look at today's data. Americans continue to struggle with the costs of groceries and rent — and now prices of food and appliances are rising," said Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

Many businesses built up a stockpile of goods this spring and were able to delay price hikes, while others likely waited to see if the duties would become permanent.

More businesses now appear to be throwing in the towel and passing on costs to consumers, including Walmart, the world's largest retailer, which has said it raised prices in June. Automaker Mitsubishi said last month that it was lifting prices by an average of 2.1% in response to the duties, and Nike has said it would implement "surgical" price hikes.

Powell said last month that companies up and down the supply chain would seek to avoid paying tariffs, but that ultimately some combination of businesses and consumers would bear the cost.

"There's the manufacturer, the exporter, the importer, the retailer, and the consumer, and each one of those is going to be trying not to be the one to pay for the tariff," the Fed chair said. "But together, they will all pay for it together—or maybe one party will pay it all. But that process is very hard to predict, and we haven't been through a situation like this."

Trump has imposed sweeping duties of 10% on all imports plus 30% on goods from China. Last week the president threatened to hit the European Union with a new 30% tariff starting Aug. 1.

He has also threatened to slap 50% duties on Brazil, which would push up the cost of orange juice and coffee. Orange prices leaped 3.5% just from May to June, and are 3.4% higher than a year ago, the government said Tuesday.

Overall, grocery prices rose 0.3% last month and are up 2.4% from a year earlier. While that is a much smaller increase than after the pandemic, when inflation surged, it is slightly bigger than the pre-pandemic pace. The Trump administration has also placed a 17% duty on Mexican tomatoes.

Families have cut spending on food as prices rise. Cassidy Grom, 29, her husband, and his mother are eating out less and try to stretch grocery store rotisserie chickens as far as possible, using them in salads and the bones for soup.

"It feels like a miracle if I'm able to leave the grocery store without spending \$100," the Edison, New Jersey resident said. "We're trying to save for a house, we're trying to save for a family, so prices are re-

ally on our mind.”

Accelerated inflation could provide a respite for Powell, who has come under withering fire from the White House over interest rates.

The Fed chair has said that the duties could both push up prices and slow the economy, a tricky combination for the central bank since higher costs would typically lead the Fed to hike rates while a weaker economy often spurs it to reduce them.

Mike Waltz pledges to make UN ‘great again’ at Senate confirmation hearing

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mike Waltz painted an image for lawmakers Tuesday of what the United Nations would look like as the U.S. — its largest donor — reviews its support, opting to go “back to basics” under a Trump administration push to “make the U.N. great again.”

During his Senate confirmation hearing to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Waltz echoed the priorities of his bosses — President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio — of pursuing major reforms to the 80-year-old world body.

It was the first time senators could grill Waltz since he was ousted as Trump’s national security adviser in May after he mistakenly added a journalist to a private Signal chat used to discuss sensitive military plans. He denied Tuesday that he was removed from the post, while laying out his plans to bring “America First” to the U.N.

“We should have one place in the world where everyone can talk — where China, Russia, Europe and the developing world can come together and resolve conflicts,” Waltz told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee about the U.N. “But after 80 years, it’s drifted from its core mission of peacemaking.”

The U.N. is pursuing its own reforms while the Republican administration has spent the last six months reshaping American diplomacy and working aggressively to shrink the size of the federal government, including recent mass dismissals at the State Department.

On the agenda for Waltz would be combating China’s influence, reviewing U.S. funding to U.N. agencies with “often duplicative and wasteful mandates,” as well as rooting out what Waltz called deep antisemitism within the U.N. system.

The U.N. post is the last one to be filled in Trump’s Cabinet following months of delay, including the withdrawal of the previous nominee.

Democrats criticize Waltz over the Signal chat

The Signal episode — in which Waltz, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and other high-level officials faced intense criticism — didn’t come up at the hearing for more than an hour.

It was revealed in March that Waltz added The Atlantic editor-in-chief Jeffrey Goldberg to a private text chain on an unclassified messaging app that was used to discuss planning for strikes on Houthi militants in Yemen.

“We both know Signal is not an appropriate and secure means of communicating highly sensitive information,” said Democratic Sen. Chris Coons of Delaware, who was first to raise the issue.

He added that Waltz shared “demonstrably sensitive information” in an improper manner. Fellow Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia called it “an amateurish move.”

Waltz, a former Florida congressman, said the chat met the administration’s cybersecurity standards, “no classified information was shared” and the military was still conducting an ongoing investigation.

Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey blasted what he called a “lack of accountability” from Waltz and other administration officials.

“I’ve watched this hearing, and I’ve been really disappointed,” Booker said. “What’s been troubling to me about your nomination from the beginning is your failure to just stand up and take accountability for mistakes that you made.”

United Nations is facing major changes

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 47 of 64

If confirmed, Waltz would arrive at the U.N. at a moment of great change. The world body is reeling from Trump's decision to slash foreign assistance — affecting its humanitarian aid agencies — and it anticipates U.S. funding cuts to the U.N. annual budget.

Facing financial instability, the U.N. has spent months shedding jobs and consolidating projects while beginning to tackle long-delayed reforms. The U.N. is also facing growing frustration over what critics describe as a lack of efficiency and power in delivering on its mandate to end conflict.

"With Waltz at the helm, the U.N. will have what I regard as what should be its last chance to demonstrate its actual value to the United States," said Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah. "Instead of progressive political virtue signaling, the Security Council has the chance to prove its value, and settling disputes and brokering deals."

Waltz said U.N. revenue "has quadrupled in the last 20 years" but that it hasn't been commensurate with increased peace.

"The U.S. must ensure that every foreign aid dollar and every contribution to an international organization, particularly the U.N., draws a straight and direct line to a compelling U.S. national interest," Waltz said.

He said the administration's diplomatic strategy would be focused on cutting costs to what he called "waste, fraud, and abuse that are endemic to the U.N. system."

Waltz also accused the U.N. of "pervasive antisemitism." He testified that the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, has been promoting "antisemitic hate" in its schools in Gaza.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appointed a British human rights activist on Tuesday to carry out a strategic review of UNRWA.

Israel has alleged that 19 out of UNRWA's roughly 13,000 staffers in Gaza participated in the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks that launched the war. UNRWA said it fired nine workers after an internal U.N. investigation. Israel later alleged that about 100 other Palestinians in Gaza were Hamas members but didn't provide evidence to the United Nations.

Waltz is still on the White House payroll

Waltz has spent the last few months on the White House payroll despite departing as national security adviser. The latest list of White House salaries, current as of July 1, includes Waltz as an adviser earning an annual salary of \$195,200.

A White House official, granted anonymity to discuss personnel matters, said Waltz stayed on to "ensure a smooth and successful transition given the extreme importance of the role of NSA."

Sen. Jacky Rosen, a Democrat from Nevada, questioned why Waltz was still being paid by the administration.

"Throughout this year, you've made (assertions) that, if confirmed, you would root out waste and unnecessary overhead at the U.N. So can you confirm for us whether you've been receiving a salary from the White House since being let go as the NSA?"

Waltz denied the fact that he had been fired, saying he was being paid as an adviser "transitioning a number of important activities."

They cut down England's beloved Sycamore Gap tree. Now they face over 4 years in prison

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Vandals who cut down England's beloved Sycamore Gap tree were sentenced Tuesday to more than four years in prison for damaging the country's natural heritage and for the outrage and distress they caused.

Daniel Graham and Adam Carruthers set out with a chainsaw on a dark and stormy night in 2023 to carry out what a prosecutor called a "moronic mission" and toppled the majestic sycamore onto Hadrian's Wall.

Graham, 39, and Carruthers, 32, were each convicted of two counts of criminal damage — one for destroying the tree, the other for damaging the ancient wall that is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Justice Christina Lambert sentenced the pair in Newcastle Crown Court to four years and three months

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 48 of 64

in prison because there was a high degree of premeditation and planning to destroy the tree and because the act had angered and saddened so many people.

Lambert concluded the two had largely done it for the "sheer bravado."

"Felling the tree in the middle of the night and in the middle of a storm gave you some sort of thrill," she said. "You reveled in the coverage, taking evident pride in what you had done, knowing that you were responsible for the crime which so many were talking about."

A first for a crime against a tree

Sarah Dodd, a lawyer specializing in tree law, said it was the first time in the U.K. that someone had been sent to prison for illegally felling a tree.

"Today felt profoundly sad. There are no winners," Dodd said. "The Sycamore Gap tree wasn't just wood and leaves. It was a marker of memory, history, belonging."

The tree, in a saddle between two hills, had been known to locals but became famous after a cameo in Kevin Costner's 1991 film "Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves." It drew tourists, lovers, landscape photographers and those who spread the ashes of loved ones. It was voted English "Tree of the Year" in 2016.

At trial, the two men testified they were at their homes on the night in question and had nothing to do with destroying the tree.

But faced with spending up to 10 years behind bars, they changed their tune when interviewed by a probation officer in advance of sentencing, though they sought to minimize their culpability, the judge said.

Culprits admit some culpability

Carruthers said he drank a bottle of whisky after a rough day and everything was a blur, Lambert said. While Graham admitted he had joined Carruthers on the journey, he said he was shocked that his former friend had actually cut the tree down.

"Although there may be grains of truth in what you have each said, I do not accept that your explanations to the probation officers are wholly honest or the whole story," Lambert said.

The tree's felling in Northumberland National Park on Sept. 28, 2023, caused fury and condemnation as news quickly spread beyond the ancient wall built by Emperor Hadrian in A.D. 122 to protect the northwest frontier of the Roman Empire.

Messages of heartbreak poured in from around the world, said Andrew Poad, general manager of the heritage and nature conservation charity National Trust.

"This iconic tree can never be replaced," Poad said in a statement read by a prosecutor. "It belonged to the people. It was a totemic symbol for many; a destination to visit whilst walking Hadrian's Wall, a place to make memories, take photos in all seasons; but it was also a place of sanctuary."

Digital evidence connected men to crime

Prosecutors said the tree's value was estimated at about 460,000 pounds (\$615,000), while Graham's lawyer said it was valued at about 150,000 pounds (\$200,000).

Graham, who had a small construction business, and Carruthers, a mechanic who sometimes worked with him, had once been close friends. But the men who showed up together for their initial court appearance with their faces masked had a falling-out as the case progressed.

Graham said Carruthers was guilty and asserted that his friend had tried to frame him. Carruthers' lawyer said Graham's story was implausible and accused him of trying to deflect blame.

Jurors quickly convicted both in May based on a trove of digital evidence.

Graham's Range Rover was tracked to a location near the tree around the time it fell. Grainy video of the felling was found on his phone — with metadata showing that it was shot at the tree's location.

As digital data showed Graham's vehicle on its way back to where the two lived about 40 minutes away, Carruthers got a text from his girlfriend with footage of their 12-day-old son.

"I've got a better video than that," Carruthers replied.

Lawyer says 'drunken stupidity' to blame

The black-and-white video showed a single figure next to the tree's silhouette as a chainsaw sparked to life. The person leaned into the trunk and in less than three minutes the tree that had stood for about

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 49 of 64

150 years teetered and fell.

Prosecutors couldn't say at trial who cut down the tree and who memorialized the senseless act, but said both were equally culpable.

Lambert agreed that both shared equal responsibility. But she said the men's recent admissions made it clear that Carruthers wielded the saw while Graham shot the video. Graham sent the video to Carruthers.

"Unfortunately, it is no more than drunken stupidity," defense lawyer Andrew Gurney said. "He felled that tree and it is something he will regret for the rest of his life. There's no better explanation than that."

System over Florida has potential to develop into tropical depression, weather service says

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — A drenching weather system moving across Florida on Tuesday wasn't even a tropical anything but has the potential to develop into a tropical depression as it moves into the north-eastern and northern Gulf later in the week, according to National Weather Service forecasters.

The system would be called Tropical Storm Dexter if it became a named storm, but it was expected to be far less lethal than the namesake vigilante serial killer of the Showtime crime drama, "Dexter" which was set in Florida.

The National Weather Service said the area of low pressure off Florida's east coast was becoming better defined and moving west across the Florida Peninsula on Tuesday. The system was drenching the peninsula with heavy rains, and the weather service warned of the potential for flash flooding in parts of the state through the middle of the week.

"Environmental conditions appear generally favorable for additional development, and a tropical depression could form by the middle to latter part of this week as the system moves across the northeastern and north-central Gulf," the National Weather Service said.

How many storms have we had so far?

Just six weeks into the start of the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season, three tropical storms have developed — Andrea, Barry and Chantal. Dexter would be the fourth if it develops that way.

Andrea dissipated in the Atlantic after forming at sea last month. Barry dumped rain on eastern Mexico at the end of last month. Chantal made landfall in South Carolina last week, and its remnants caused flooding in North Carolina that killed an 83-year-old woman when her car was swept off a rural road. Floodwaters also forced dozens of people to flee their homes in North Carolina.

How many Atlantic storms are predicted this season?

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in May forecast 13 to 19 named storms, with six to 10 becoming hurricanes and three to five reaching major status with winds of more than 110 mph (177 kph). A normal season has 14 named storms, seven of which strengthen to hurricanes and three power up further to major hurricanes.

Colorado State University researchers last month estimated there would be 17 named storms this year, with nine of them becoming hurricanes. Of the predicted hurricanes, the researchers said four could become major hurricanes.

'Weather modification' reports required in Florida

With hurricane season on Floridians' minds, state Attorney General James Uthmeier this week sent a letter to the state's airports telling them that they must report the presence of any aircraft used for the purposes of "weather modification" starting in October to comply with a new Florida law.

After flash floods killed scores of Texas residents over the Fourth of July holiday weekend, social media users spread false claims that the devastation was caused by weather modification. Many pointed to one process in particular, blaming cloud seeding performed on July 2 by a California-based company for the tragedy. But officials say there is no evidence that the floods are the result of cloud seeding and experts agree that cloud seeding would not result in precipitation of this magnitude.

Uthmeier said at a news conference on Tuesday that "this stuff sounds pretty scary to me."

"My letter was to put airports on notice that they do have obligations and could face penalties, including some criminal penalties, if they don't comply," Uthmeier said.

Capital One, Walmart: A look at some of the consumer cases dropped by the CFPB under Trump

By KEN SWEET AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In the nearly six months since the Trump administration has had control of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the bureau's leadership has focused almost exclusively on rolling back any punishments, fines and penalties made against companies during the Biden administration.

In some cases, companies that were supposed to refund their customers or pay a penalty for unfair or deceptive practices are no longer bound to make their customers whole. Other companies facing charges of fraud or deceptive practices saw their lawsuits dropped in the early days of the Trump administration.

Here are some of the Trump administration's rollbacks:

Navy Federal Credit Union

The CFPB accused Navy Federal Credit Union, the nation's largest credit union, of having unfair and deceptive overdraft fee practices. NFCU settled with the bureau and agreed to refund its members \$80 million in overdraft fees. However, when the new administration took over, NFCU asked to have the order dismissed, which the CFPB agreed to do without giving a reason. Navy Federal has not said whether it would refund their members, which are mostly service men and women, families and veterans.

Reduced overdraft fees

The CFPB proposed new regulations that would have reduced overdraft fees to \$5 from their industry average of \$27. The regulations focused on a bureau analysis on what it actually cost banks to make short-term loans to customers to cover those purchases when a customer's account went negative. The banking industry stood to lose billions of dollars in overdraft revenue, although banks have been weening themselves off overdraft fee revenue for years. The regulations were overturned by the Republican-controlled Congress in April.

Capital One

In the last days of the Biden administration, the CFPB sued banking giant Capital One for allegedly cheating its customers out of \$2 billion in interest payments on their savings accounts. The case involved a product that Capital One sold known as 360 Savings, which the bank advertised as having the best savings rate in the country. Capital One failed to tell some customers that it had another product with a higher savings rate. The case was dropped within days of the Trump administration taking over the bureau.

Walmart

The CFPB filed a lawsuit in December against Walmart and workforce company Branch Messenger, accusing the companies of deceptively steering delivery drivers to open accounts with Branch, in order for those employees to get instant access to their wages. However, the CFPB said these Branch accounts came with high fees and deceptive marketing, and said Walmart and Branch should return \$10 million to harmed drivers. Both Walmart and Branch denied the accusations. The lawsuit was dropped by the CFPB in the first weeks of the Trump administration.

Zelle

The parent company of Zelle, the peer-to-peer payment system, as well as some of the nation's largest banks, were sued by the CFPB late last year over accusations they failed to protect hundreds of thousands of consumers from rampant fraud on Zelle, in violation of consumer financial laws. The CFPB's lawsuit claimed hundreds of thousands of customers lost approximately \$870 million in funds to fraud over the seven years that Zelle had been in existence. That lawsuit was dropped by the CFPB in March.

As Waltz faces UN post hearings, an update on the Signal situation that led to his initial ousting

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

As Mike Waltz, President Donald Trump's nominee for U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, appears before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Tuesday for his confirmation hearing, focus returns to his ousting as national security adviser over what some referred to as "Signalgate."

The former Florida Republican congressman served mere weeks in Trump's administration before revelations that he mistakenly added journalist Jeffrey Goldberg of The Atlantic to a private Signal chat that was used to discuss sensitive military plans, including planning for strikes on Houthi militants in Yemen.

Calls came quickly for Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth to be removed from office, accompanied by criticism of the Trump administration for failing to take action against the top national security officials who discussed plans for the military strike in Signal. After weeks of scrutiny, Waltz left his security post but was swiftly nominated to the U.N. position.

Months after the chat was disclosed, questions remain over the controversy, including if federal laws were violated, if classified information was exposed on the commercial messaging app and if anyone else will face consequences.

Here's what we know and don't know:

KNOWN: Signal is a publicly available app that provides encrypted communications, but it can be hacked. It is not approved for carrying classified information. On March 14, one day before the strikes, the Defense Department cautioned personnel about the vulnerability of Signal, specifically that Russia was attempting to hack the app, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to speak to the press and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

One known vulnerability is that a malicious actor, if they have access to a person's phone, can link their own device to the user's Signal — and monitor messages remotely.

NOT KNOWN: How frequently the administration and the Defense Department use Signal for sensitive government communications, and whether those on the chat were using unauthorized personal devices to transmit or receive those messages. The department put out an instruction in 2023 restricting what information could be posted on unauthorized and unclassified systems.

At a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing earlier this year, Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard would not say whether she was accessing the information on her personal phone or government-issued phone, citing an ongoing investigation by the National Security Council.

KNOWN: The government has a requirement under the Presidential Records Act to archive all of those planning discussions.

NOT KNOWN: Whether anyone in the group archived the messages as required by law to a government server. The images of the text chain posted by The Atlantic show that the messages were set to disappear in one week.

KNOWN: Hegseth had an internet connection that bypassed the Pentagon's security protocols — known in the IT industry as a "dirty" internet line — set up in his office to use Signal on a personal computer, two people familiar with the line have told The Associated Press.

Other Pentagon offices have used them, particularly if there's a need to monitor information or websites that would otherwise be blocked. The biggest advantage of using such a line is that the user would not show up as an IP address assigned to the Defense Department — essentially the user is masked, according to a senior U.S. official familiar with military network security.

NOT KNOWN: If use of the line left any Defense-related materials more vulnerable than they would have been on a Pentagon secure line.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 52 of 64

KNOWN: The chat group included 18 members, including Jeffrey Goldberg, top editor of The Atlantic. The group, called "Houthi PC Small Group," likely for Houthi "principals committee" — was comprised of Trump's senior-most advisers on national security, including Gabbard, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and CIA Director John Ratcliffe. The National Security Council said the text chain "appears to be authentic."

NOT KNOWN: How Goldberg got added. Waltz said he built the message chain and didn't know how Goldberg ended up on the chat. He called it a mistake.

KNOWN: Just hours before the attack on the Houthis in Yemen began, Hegseth shared details on the timing, targets, weapons and sequence of strikes that would take place.

NOT KNOWN: Whether the information was classified. Gabbard, Ratcliffe and the White House have all said it was not classified, and Hegseth said the same in a post on social media. Democrats said that strains credulity.

KNOWN: Hegseth has adamantly denied that "war plans" were texted on Signal, something current and former U.S. officials called "semantics." War plans carry a specific meaning. They often refer to the numbered and highly classified planning documents — sometimes thousands of pages long — that would inform U.S. decisions in case of a major conflict.

But the information Hegseth did post — specific attack details selecting human and weapons storage targets — was a subset of those plans and was likely informed by the same classified intelligence. Posting those details to an unclassified app risked tipping off adversaries of the pending attack and could have put U.S. service members at risk, multiple U.S. officials said.

Sharing that information on a commercial app like Signal in advance of a strike "would be a violation of everything that we're about," said former Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, who served under Democratic President Barack Obama.

NOT KNOWN: If anyone outside the messaging group got access to the Signal texts.

KNOWN: Hegseth began cracking down on unauthorized leaks of information inside the Defense Department, and his chief of staff issued a memo on March 21 saying the Pentagon would use polygraph tests to determine the sources of recent leaks and prosecute them.

NOT KNOWN: Whether Hegseth will take responsibility for the unauthorized release of national defense information regarding the attack plans on the Houthis. Trump in March bristled at a suggestion that Hegseth should step down, saying "He's doing a great job. He had nothing to do with it."

KNOWN: In April, Dan Caldwell, a senior Hegseth adviser who in the Signal chat had been designated as the secretary's point person, was placed on administrative leave and escorted out of the Pentagon by security. Officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters told The AP that the former Marine's sudden downfall was tied to an investigation into unauthorized disclosure of department information.

NOT KNOWN: If any others affiliated with the Signal situation will face reprisals.

KNOWN: Also in April, Hegseth was forced to defend himself against a second assertion that he shared classified material through an unapproved and unsecured network, this time taking airstrike information from a military communications channel and sharing it in a Signal chat with his wife, his brother and others. A person familiar with the chat confirmed to The AP that Hegseth pulled the information — such as launch times and bomb drop times of U.S. warplanes about to strike Houthi targets in Yemen — he posted in the chat from a secure communications channel used by U.S. Central Command.

NOT KNOWN: If that's the extent of Hegseth's Signal usage.

KNOWN: The Pentagon's watchdog has begun looking into Hegseth's use of Signal, and also whether any of Hegseth's aides were asked to delete Signal messages that may have shared sensitive military information with a reporter.

NOT KNOWN: What the inspector general will find, or what will be done as a result of those findings.

Thousands of Afghans have been brought to Britain in secrecy after a data leak

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Thousands of Afghans, including many who worked with British forces, have been secretly resettled in the U.K. after a leak of data on their identities raised fears that the Taliban could target them, the British government revealed Tuesday.

The government said it is closing the program, which a rare court order had barred the media from disclosing.

"To all those whose information was compromised, I offer a sincere apology today," Defense Secretary John Healey said in the House of Commons. He said he regretted the secrecy and "have felt deeply concerned about the lack of transparency to Parliament and the public."

Healey told lawmakers that a spreadsheet containing the personal information of nearly 19,000 people who had applied to come to Britain after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan was accidentally released in 2022 because of a defense official's email error. The government only became aware of the leak when some of the data was published on Facebook 18 months later.

The then-Conservative government sought a court order barring disclosure of the leak, in an attempt to prevent the personal information being made public any further. The High Court issued an order known as a super injunction that barred anyone from revealing its existence.

The government then set up a secret program to resettle the Afghans judged to be at greatest threat from the country's Taliban rulers.

The injunction was lifted on Tuesday in conjunction with a decision by Britain's current Labour Party government to make the program public.

It said an independent review had found little evidence that the leaked data would expose Afghans to a greater risk of retribution from the Taliban. The review said the Taliban had other sources of information on those who had worked with the previous Afghan government and international forces, and in any case was more concerned with current threats to its authority.

Some 4,500 Afghans — 900 applicants and approximately 3,600 family members — have been brought to Britain under the program, and about 6,900 people are expected to be relocated by the time it closes, at a total cost of about 850 million pounds (\$1.1 billion).

Around 36,000 Afghans have been relocated to the U.K. under other resettlement routes since 2021.

Critics say that still leaves thousands of people who helped British troops as interpreters or in other roles at risk of torture, imprisonment or death.

Sean Humber, a lawyer at the firm Leigh Day, which has represented many Afghan claimants, said the "catastrophic" data breach had caused "anxiety, fear and distress" to those affected.

Nooralhaq Nasimi, founder of the U.K.'s Afghanistan and Central Asian Association, said "thousands of Afghans who supported the U.K. mission — many of whom placed their trust in this country — have had that trust gravely betrayed." He urged the government to "offer meaningful compensation, and take urgent steps to protect those still at risk."

British soldiers were sent to Afghanistan as part of an international deployment against al-Qaida and Taliban forces in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. At the peak of the operation, there were almost 10,000 U.K. troops in the country, mostly in Helmand province in the south.

Britain ended combat operations in 2014, and its remaining troops left Afghanistan in 2021 as the Taliban swept back to power, two decades after they were ousted. The Taliban's return triggered chaotic scenes

as Western nations rushed to evacuate citizens and Afghan employees.

Super injunctions are relatively rare, and their use is controversial. Unlike regular court injunctions, super injunctions bar reporting that they were even ordered. The handful of cases in which they have come to light involved celebrities trying to prevent disclosures about their private lives.

This is the first known case of a super injunction being granted to the government. Healey said he was not aware of any others.

Judge Martin Chamberlain, who ruled that the injunction should be lifted, said Tuesday at the High Court that the gag order had "given rise to serious free speech concerns."

"The super injunction had the effect of completely shutting down the ordinary mechanisms of accountability, which operate in a democracy," he said. "This led to what I describe as a 'scrutiny vacuum.'"

Scottie Scheffler is chasing the claret jug at the British Open and searching for what it all means

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

PORTRUSH, Northern Ireland (AP) — Scottie Scheffler has won more tournaments and majors than anyone over the last three years. He is No. 1 in the world and no one is close to him. Nothing would mean more to him than leaving Royal Portrush with the silver claret jug.

And then?

That's where golf gets a little complicated for Scheffler, who loves his job and all the work it entails, but who found himself searching Tuesday for what it all means.

He delivered an amazing soliloquy ahead of the British Open about fulfillment. The short answer: It's not the two Masters green jackets, the Wanamaker Trophy he won at the PGA Championship, the three Jack Nicklaus Awards as PGA Tour player of the year or the FedEx Cup.

"Is it great to be able to win tournaments and to accomplish the things I have in the game of golf? Yeah, it brings tears to my eyes just to think about because I've literally worked my entire life to be good at this sport," Scheffler said.

"But at the end of the day, I'm not out here to inspire the next generation of golfers," he said. "I'm not out here to inspire someone to be the best player in the world because what's the point? This is not a fulfilling life. It's fulfilling from the sense of accomplishment, but it's not fulfilling from a sense of the deepest places of your heart."

His comments came in a year when Rory McIlroy fulfilled his life dream of winning the Masters, which gave him the career Grand Slam. McIlroy spoke last month about growing weary of being asked about his next set of goals, the next mountain he wants to climb.

"I probably just didn't give myself enough time to let it all sink in. But that's the nature of professional golf," McIlroy said. "They do a very good job of keeping you on the hamster wheel, and you feel like it's hard to get off at times."

This is where Scheffler might be different. He seems to enjoy the hamster wheel. There is no next mountain to find because he's busy scaling the one he is on.

He loves the chase. He wants the prize. He finds satisfaction in putting in the work. The thrill comes from competition. Scheffler also hates losing, no matter what's at stake.

"Scottie don't play games when he's playing games," said his caddie, Ted Scott.

They played a match at Cypress Point this year. It was Scheffler's fourth day swinging a club since puncturing his right hand with a wine glass in a freak accident while making ravioli.

Scheffler gave him 10 shots, and the countdown began.

Scott his his approach into 5 feet and was feeling good about his chances, right up until Scheffler's shot spun back and hit his caddie's golf ball. They both made birdie. Scheffler won the next hole and said loud enough for Scott to hear, "Nine."

He won the next hole with a par and said even louder, "EIGHT."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 55 of 64

"He was 6 under through six," Scott said. "I gave him the \$100 and said: 'Don't say anything else. I want to enjoy my day.'"

This is what drives Scheffler — winning the Masters, winning a bet with his caddie, winning anything. He has won 19 times since his first title at the 2022 Phoenix Open. Strictly by his math, that would be 38 minutes worth of celebrating.

"Sometimes the feeling only lasts about two minutes," he said. "It's pretty exciting and fun, but it just doesn't last that long."

So where does fulfillment come from if it's not winning?

Scheffler is grounded in his faith, in a simple family life with a wife he has been with since high school, a 15-month-old son, three sisters and friends that are not part of the tour community.

"I love the challenge. I love being able to play this game for a living. It's one of the greatest joys of my life," he said. "But does it fill the deepest wants and desires of my heart? Absolutely not."

He often says golf doesn't define him as a person, and he said if it reached a point where the sport ever affected life at home, "that's going to be the last day that I play out here for a living."

He's had moments of appreciation, for sure.

There was one moment last summer when his wife, Meredith, was in the living room and he was in his office. He walked out with the Masters green jacket and the plaid jacket from winning Hilton Head. He had The Players Championship trophy in one hand and another trophy in his other hand.

"Wassup, Mere," he said to his wife.

Scheffler laughed telling the story. He's not sure why he did it, except it was fun. And then it was back to work. There's always the next tournament.

"There's a lot of people that make it to what they thought was going to fulfill them in life, and you get there — you get to No. 1 in the world — and they're like, 'What's the point?' I really do believe that because what is the point? Why do I want to win this tournament so bad? That's something that I wrestle with on a daily basis.

"It's like showing up at the Masters every year. Why do I want to win this golf tournament so badly? Why do I want to win The Open Championship so badly? I don't know," he said. "Because, if I win, it's going to be awesome for two minutes.

"Then we're going to get to the next week."

Xander Schauffele spent time with him at the Olympics last summer. Schauffele won two majors last year, including the claret jug. What they have in common is not lingering on laurels.

"That's why he's been No. 1 and hasn't even sniffed looking backwards," Schauffele said. "If he was sitting there looking at all his trophies every day, I'm sure he'd still be playing great golf, but I don't think he's that guy."

Ukraine's prime minister resigns, opening the door to a broad government reshuffle

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's prime minister announced his resignation Tuesday in the first formal step of what is expected to be a significant reshuffle of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government, which could also see the country's ambassador to Washington replaced.

"I am tendering my resignation from the post of the Prime Minister of Ukraine," Denys Shmyhal wrote in a letter posted on his Telegram page.

Zelenskyy said Monday that he has offered Shmyhal's job to 39-year-old Yuliia Svyrydenko, who is currently deputy prime minister and the country's first female economy minister.

Svyrydenko played a key role in negotiating a U.S.-Ukraine mineral agreement. She has frequently represented Ukraine in high-level talks with Western partners, focusing on defense cooperation, economic recovery and reconstruction.

It wasn't immediately clear how the reshuffle will play out in coming days, as the Ukrainian parliament

must schedule a vote on Zelenskyy's proposed changes amid the all-out war launched by Russia on Feb. 24, 2022.

The reshuffle coincides with increasing pressure on the front line by Russia's bigger army and escalating assaults by drones and missiles on Ukrainian cities.

U.S. President Donald Trump pledged Monday to supply more weapons for Ukraine, paid for by European countries. But Kyiv officials are keen to lock in Washington's future support amid fears that the Republican administration could walk away from the conflict.

"To us it is very important, in the context of what is happening now, to strengthen ties with the U.S.," Zelenskyy said last week.

The Ukrainian leader recently said that he thought Shmyhal would make a good defense minister — a move that would make the current defense chief, Rustem Umerov, available to take over as Ukraine's envoy to Washington, observers note.

Zelenskyy had previously voiced his intention to replace U.S. Ambassador Oksana Markarova.

Umerov, 43, was appointed as Ukraine's defense minister in September 2023, following a series of corruption scandals. He has sought to introduce reforms, but critics said that the Defense Ministry was plagued by mismanagement.

A wildfire that destroyed historic Grand Canyon Lodge spread after being allowed to burn for days

By ROSS D. FRANKLIN and JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK, Ariz. (AP) — A wildfire that tore through a historic Grand Canyon lodge and raged out of control Monday had been allowed to burn for days before erupting over the weekend, raising scrutiny over the National Park Service's decision not to aggressively attack the fire right away.

The wildfire along the canyon's more isolated North Rim, where most visitors don't venture, was burning quickly with no containment, fire officials said. No injuries had been reported, but more than 70 structures were lost, including a visitors center and several cabins.

At first, the fire didn't raise alarms after igniting from a lightning strike on July 4. Four days later, the Park Service said the fire was being allowed to burn to benefit the land and fire crews were keeping close watch.

"There are no threats to infrastructure or public safety at this time," the park said on Facebook.

Then three days later, on Friday, fire officials and the park service sent out warnings to "evacuate immediately" as the fire grew by nearly eight times within a day to more than 1.4 square miles (3.6 square kilometers).

Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs called for a federal investigation into the park service's handling of the fire.

"The federal government chose to manage that fire as a controlled burn during the driest, hottest part of the Arizona summer," the governor said in a social media post Sunday.

She will be meeting with leadership in the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior soon to learn more about the decisions made in managing the wildfire, Hobbs' spokesperson Christian Slater said in an email.

Authorities first used a "confine and contain" strategy but shifted to aggressive suppression as the fire — one of two that firefighters are dealing with on the North Rim — rapidly grew because of hot temperatures, low humidity and strong wind gusts, fire officials said.

The Associated Press left phone and email messages Monday with a park service spokesperson seeking comment about how the fire was managed.

Historic lodge destroyed

The fire destroyed the Grand Canyon Lodge, the only lodging inside the park's North Rim, along with employee housing and a wastewater treatment plant, park Superintendent Ed Keable said Sunday.

Park officials have closed access for the rest of the year to the North Rim, a less popular area that draws only about 10% of the Grand Canyon's millions of annual visitors.

Hikers in the area were evacuated and rafters on the Colorado River, which snakes through the canyon,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 57 of 64

were told to bypass Phantom Ranch, an outpost of cabins and dormitories. Trails to the area from the canyon's North and South rims also were closed.

From the air, plumes of black smoke could be seen rising above the canyon walls and haze filled parts of the park. From the park's South Rim, visitors took pictures on Monday of the smoke blanketing the canyon in the distance.

The fire flared up Saturday night, fueled by high winds. Firefighters managed to make progress, using aerial fire retardant drops near the lodge before they had to pull back because of a chlorine gas leak at the water treatment plant, the park service said.

Hikers also were evacuated over concern that the poisonous, heavier-than-air gas could sink downhill, into the canyon.

U.S. Sens. Mark Kelly and Ruben Gallego sent a letter Monday to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum asking among other things how the administration planned to track wildfire decision-making under a recent executive order to consolidate federal firefighting forces into a single program.

Fire season in the Western US

Across the West, about three dozen fires were burning uncontained and another 80 fires were being managed to clear out vegetation that has clogged the landscape, according to the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho.

So far this year, nearly 2.5 million acres (1 million hectares) have burned. That's slightly below the 10-year average, the center said Monday.

A wildfire burning in southwestern Colorado closed Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park and forced evacuations nearby. It had burned about 5.7 square miles (14.8 square kilometers) as of Monday. The fire was started by lightning Thursday on the park's south rim, a dramatic, deep gorge carved by the Gunnison River.

Fire officials said the brush and trees were very dry and there was only a minimal chance for rain in the coming days. Colorado Gov. Jared Polis issued a disaster declaration because of the fire and others in western Colorado.

Along the Grand Canyon's North Rim, the Dragon Bravo Fire that destroyed the lodge and other buildings spread to nearly 9 square miles (23 square kilometers) Monday.

The White Sage Fire also grew significantly over the past day, now having charred 77 square miles (199 square kilometers) of terrain with no containment. Officials reported progress in battling the fire.

The fires came three years after two errant prescribed fires conducted by the U.S. Forest Service sparked the Hermit's Peak-Calf Canyon Fire, which burned more than 530 square miles (1,373 square kilometers) of the Rocky Mountain foothills and destroyed hundreds of homes.

History of the Grand Canyon Lodge

The Grand Canyon Lodge, known for its huge ponderosa beams, massive limestone facade and a bronze statue of a donkey named "Brighty the Burro," was perched on the edge of the North Rim and offered sweeping views of the canyon.

"It was like you're looking at this movie all the time," said Erik Ammerlann, who lived in Arizona for most of his adult life and stayed at the lodge nearly 10 years ago. "You're really just one with nature."

Caren Carney was staying there last week with her husband, parents and 12-year-old son when a park ranger knocked on their door Thursday and told them to evacuate.

She was heartbroken Sunday to hear that such a "magical place" had burned down. After evacuating, the family from Georgia went to the South Rim and could see the blaze across the canyon.

"I'm so glad we got to have one final look at it in the present before it was lost," Carney said.

Aramark, the company that operated the lodge, said all employees and guests were safely evacuated.

An original lodge burned down from a kitchen fire in 1932, four years after construction was completed, according to the Grand Canyon Historical Society. The redesigned lodge using the original stonework opened in 1937.

Native American teens kayak major US river to celebrate removal of dams and return of salmon

By BRITTANY PETERSON ASSOCIATED PRESS

KLAMATH, Calif. (AP) — As bright-colored kayaks push through a thick wall of fog, voices and the beats of drums build as kayakers approach a crowd that has formed on the beach. Applause erupts as the boats land on the sandy spit that partially separates the Klamath River from the Pacific Ocean in northern California.

Native American teenagers from tribes across the river basin push themselves up and out of the kayaks and begin to cross the sand, some breaking into a sprint. They kick playfully at the cold waves of the ocean they've been paddling toward over the last month — the ocean that's seen fewer and fewer salmon return to it over the last century as four hydropower dams blocked their ideal spawning grounds upstream.

"I think our ancestors would be proud because this is what they've been fighting for," said Tasia Linwood, a 15-year-old member of the Karuk Tribe, on Thursday night, ahead of the group's final push to the end on Friday.

The Klamath River is newly navigable after a decades-long effort to remove its four hydropower dams to help restore the salmon run — an ancient source of life, food and culture for these paddlers' tribes who have lived alongside the river for millennia. Youth primarily from the Yurok, Klamath, Hoopa Valley, Karuk, Quartz Valley and Warm Springs tribes paddled 310 miles (499 kilometers) over a month from the headwaters of the Wood River, a tributary to the Klamath that some tribes consider sacred, to the Pacific Ocean.

The teens spent several years learning to navigate white water through Paddle Tribal Waters, a program set up by the nonprofit Rios to Rivers, to prepare local Native youth for the day this would be possible.

During their last days on the water, the group of several dozen swelled to more than 100, joined by some family members and Indigenous people from Bolivia, Chile and New Zealand who face similar challenges on their home rivers.

Dams built decades ago for electricity

Starting in the early 1900s, power company PacifiCorp built the dams over several decades to generate electricity. But the structures, which provided 2% of the utility's power, halted the natural flow of a waterway that was once known as the third-largest salmon-producing river on the West Coast.

With the dams in place, tribes lost access to a reliable source of food. The dams blocked the path to hundreds of miles of cool freshwater streams, ideal for salmon returning from the ocean to lay their eggs. Salmon numbers declined dramatically along with the water quality.

In 2002, a bacterial outbreak caused by low water and warm temperatures killed more than 34,000 fish, mostly Chinook salmon. That galvanized decades of advocacy by tribes and environmental groups, culminating in 2022 when federal regulators approved a plan to remove the dams.

Through protests, testimony and lawsuits, the tribes showcased the environmental devastation caused by the dams, especially to salmon. From 2023 to 2024, the four dams were dynamited and removed, freeing hundreds of miles of the Klamath.

The renewable electricity lost by removing the hydropower dams was enough to power the equivalent of 70,000 homes, although PacifiCorp has since expanded its renewable sources through wind and solar projects.

Two dams used for irrigation and flood control remain on the upper stretch of the river. They have "ladders" that allow some fish to pass through, although their efficacy for adult salmon is questionable. On the journey, the paddlers got out of the river and carried their kayaks around the dams.

For teens, a month of paddling and making memories

The journey began June 12 with ceremonial blessings and kayaks gathered in a circle above a natural pool of springs where fresh water bubbles to the surface at the headwater of the Wood River, just upstream of the Klamath River.

The youth camped in tents as they made their way across Upper Klamath Lake and down the Klamath River, jumping in the water or doing flips in their kayaks to cool down in the summer heat. A few kayakers came down with swimmer's ear, but overall everybody on the trip remained healthy.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 59 of 64

Nearly everyone had a story to share of a family's fishing cabin or a favorite swimming hole while passing through ancestral territory of the Klamath, Modoc, Shasta, Karuk and Yurok.

More than 2,200 dams were removed from rivers in the United States from 1912 through 2024, most in the last couple of decades as momentum grows to restore the natural flow of rivers and the wildlife they support, according to the conservation group American Rivers.

"I believe that it was kind of symbolic of a bigger issue," said John Acuna, member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe and a leader on the trip.

Removal of dams represents end of long fight with federal government

The federal government signed treaties with these tribes outlining their right to govern themselves, which is violated when they can't rely on their traditional food from the river. Acuna said these violations are familiar to many tribal communities, and included when his great-grandmother was sent to boarding school as part of a national strategy to strip culture and language from Native Americans.

That history "comes with generational trauma," he said.

Their treaty-enshrined right to fish was also blatantly disregarded by regional authorities in the 1970s but later upheld by various court decisions, said Yurok council member Phillip Williams.

Standing on a fog-shrouded boat ramp in the town of Requa awaiting the arrival of the youth, Williams recounted the time when it was illegal to fish here using the tribes' traditional nets. As a child, his elders were arrested and even killed for daring to defy authorities and fish in broad daylight.

Fifty years later, with the hydropower dams now gone, large numbers of salmon are beginning to return and youth are paddling the length of the Klamath.

"If there's a heaviness that I feel it's because there's a lot of people that lived all in these places, all these little houses here that are no longer here no more," said Williams. "They don't get to see what's happening today. And that's a heavy, heavy, feeling."

Even as a teen, Linwood says she feels both the pleasure of a month-long river trip with her friends and the weight of the past.

"I kind of feel guilty, like I haven't done enough to be fighting," she said. "I gotta remember that's what our ancestors fought for. They fought for that — so that we could feel this joy with the river."

Ukrainians welcome US aid but see Trump's 50-day ultimatum to Putin as too long

By VASILISA STEPANENKO and LORNE COOK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainians welcomed U.S. President Donald Trump's pledge of more U.S.-made weapons in their three-year fight against Russia's invasion, though it is unclear what exactly they will get and how quickly.

The time frame for the further arms deliveries, which European countries have agreed to pay for, is crucial. Russia is making a summer push to break through along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line, and its drones and missiles are hammering Ukrainian cities more than at any time in the war.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked Trump for his "willingness to support Ukraine." In Kyiv, resident Nina Tokar, 70, said Tuesday that with more U.S. weapons going to Ukraine "maybe this will all end faster."

However, following Trump's threat late last week to impose major sanctions on Russia for failing to reach a deal to end the fighting, the American president said Monday that Moscow would get 50 days to come to a settlement or face "very severe" economic sanctions.

While some believe strict tariffs on Moscow could be a game changer, the decision to postpone them until September struck some European observers as being too long. Ukrainian officials made no direct comment about the 50-day window, but for Russia, the delay of new sanctions came as a reprieve.

Senior Russian lawmaker Konstantin Kosachev commented: "Oh, how much can change both on the battlefield and with the mood of those leading the U.S. and NATO in 50 days."

Russian President Vladimir Putin hasn't budged when presented with previous U.S. deadlines and threats.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 60 of 64

In an interview with the BBC broadcast Tuesday, Trump said of Putin: "I'm disappointed in him, but I'm not done with him."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Moscow "would like to understand what is behind this statement about 50 days," noting that the Kremlin has offered to continue direct peace talks with Ukraine.

"Earlier, there were also the deadlines of 24 hours and of 100 days," Lavrov said during an official trip to China. "We've seen it all and really would like to understand the motivation of the U.S. president."

An assessment published Tuesday by Chatham House noted that "the exact details of what has been agreed remain hazy."

"Putin will continue to judge Trump by his actions, not by his words — and so far, there is little enough action to be seen," the London-based think tank said.

Military experts are trying to figure out whether Russian forces could use the window left by Trump to achieve significant territorial gains.

Russian troops are slowly ramming through the Ukrainian defenses in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, the main focus of the Russian offensive. They are also trying to carve out a buffer zone along the border with the northeastern Ukrainian regions of Sumy and Kharkiv.

Russia currently holds about 20% of Ukraine. Ukraine's depleted army has recently been losing more territory, but there is no sign of a looming collapse on the front line, analysts say.

Zelenskyy said he spoke to Trump after the Republican leader's Oval Office announcement Monday on weapons sales, expressing gratitude for the decision to send more Patriot air defense missiles that are vital to defend Ukrainian cities.

"We discussed ... the necessary measures and decisions to provide greater protection for people from Russian attacks and strengthen our positions," Zelenskyy said on Telegram. "We agreed to talk more often and coordinate our steps in the future."

Trump and Zelenskyy have had a notoriously fraught relationship, and Washington's consent to providing more weaponry has eased Kyiv's worries.

Even so, some Ukrainians felt the U.S. decision won't alter the course of the war. "If we take the situation as a whole, it hardly looks like this will fundamentally change anything," Kyiv resident Oles Oliynyk, 33, told The Associated Press.

Tokar, the Kyiv resident, was also skeptical. "I have very little faith in (Trump). He says one thing today, and tomorrow he may say something else."

Dutch Foreign Minister Caspar Veldkamp expressed misgivings about the 50-day delay on sanctions.

"I do believe that the 50 days that Mr Trump has announced is rather long. It's up to September 2. I think that's rather long," he said in Brussels on Tuesday.

Much remains to be worked out about how and when the weapons, especially the Patriot systems, will be provided, Denmark's Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen said.

But, in an indication that Europe is relieved that the U.S. hasn't walked away from the conflict, he added: "The most important thing is that we now have an American readiness to deliver these most needed weapons."

Some European countries, such as Hungary and Slovakia, still rely heavily on Russia for energy supplies and could be hit hard by Trump's threatened secondary sanctions on countries that buy its oil and gas — an effort to isolate Moscow in the global economy.

Lithuania's Foreign Minister Kęstutis Budrys said Trump's 50-day delay was a "signal for Europe to prepare ourselves, because we still have some member states that are exposed to imports of oil and oil products from Russia."

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius said it remains to be seen whether Trump's announcement will be a turnaround but "what is decisive is that the tone has changed." The president's threat to impose sanctions after 50 days is "significant progress," Pistorius told ARD television.

Private spaceflight ends with a Pacific splashdown for astronauts from India, Poland and Hungary

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — A private spaceflight featuring the first astronauts in more than 40 years from India, Poland and Hungary came to a close Tuesday with a Pacific splashdown.

Their SpaceX capsule undocked from the International Space Station on Monday and parachuted into the ocean off the Southern California coast, less than 24 hours later.

The crew of four launched nearly three weeks ago on a flight chartered by the Houston company Axiom Space.

Axiom's Peggy Whitson, the most experienced U.S. astronaut, served as commander. Joining her were India's Shubhanshu Shukla, Poland's Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski and Hungary's Tibor Kapu, whose countries paid more than \$65 million apiece for the mission.

"Thanks for the great ride and safe trip," Whitson radioed moments after splashdown. Her record now stands at 695 days in space over five missions, longer than any other American or woman.

The visiting astronauts conducted dozens of experiments in orbit while celebrating their heritage. The last time India, Poland and Hungary put anyone in space was during the late 1970s and 1980s, launching with the Soviets. They waved and smiled as they emerged from the capsule, one by one, into the early morning darkness.

It was Axiom's fourth mission to the orbiting outpost since 2022, part of NASA's ongoing effort to open up space to more businesses and people. The company is one of several developing their own space stations to replace the current one. NASA plans to abandon the outpost in 2030, after more than 30 years of operation.

14 million children did not receive a single vaccine in 2024, UN estimates

LONDON (AP) — More than 14 million children did not receive a single vaccine last year — about the same number as the year before — according to U.N. health officials. Nine countries accounted for more than half of those unprotected children.

In their annual estimate of global vaccine coverage, released Tuesday, the World Health Organization and UNICEF said about 89% of children under 1 year old got a first dose of the diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine in 2024, the same as in 2023. About 85% completed the three-dose series, up from 84% in 2023.

Officials acknowledged, however, that the collapse of international aid this year will make it more difficult to reduce the number of unprotected children. In January, U.S. President Trump withdrew the country from the WHO, froze nearly all humanitarian aid and later moved to close the U.S. AID Agency. And last month, Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said it was pulling the billions of dollars the U.S. had previously pledged to the vaccines alliance Gavi, saying the group had "ignored the science."

Kennedy, a longtime vaccine skeptic, has previously raised questions the diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough vaccine — which has proven to be safe and effective after years of study and real-world use. Vaccines prevent 3.5 million to 5 million deaths a year, according to U.N. estimates.

"Drastic cuts in aid, coupled with misinformation about the safety of vaccines, threaten to unwind decades of progress," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

U.N. experts said that access to vaccines remained "deeply unequal" and that conflict and humanitarian crises quickly unraveled progress; Sudan had the lowest reported coverage against diphtheria, tetanus and whooping cough. The data showed that nine countries accounted for 52% of all children who missed out on immunizations entirely: Nigeria, India, Sudan, Congo, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Yemen, Afghanistan and Angola.

WHO and UNICEF said coverage against measles rose slightly, with 76% of children worldwide receiving

both vaccine doses. But experts say measles vaccine rates need to reach 95% to prevent outbreaks of the extremely contagious disease. WHO noted that 60 countries reported big measles outbreaks last year.

The U.S. is now having its worst measles outbreak in more than three decades, while the disease has also surged across Europe, with 125,000 cases in 2024 — twice as many as the previous year, according to WHO.

Last week, British authorities reported a child died of measles in a Liverpool hospital. Health officials said that despite years of efforts to raise awareness, only about 84% of children in the U.K. are protected.

"It is hugely concerning, but not at all surprising, that we are continuing to see outbreaks of measles," said Helen Bradford, a professor of children's health at University College London. "The only way to stop measles spreading is with vaccination," she said in a statement. "It is never too late to be vaccinated — even as an adult."

India orders airlines to inspect certain Boeing models after Air India crash

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's aviation regulator ordered on Monday airlines operating several Boeing models to examine fuel control switches, days after an investigation into last month's Air India plane crash found they were flipped off, starving both engines of fuel.

India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation stated the directive would apply to Boeing 787 Dreamliners and select Boeing 737 variants and that airlines must complete inspections and submit their findings to the regulator by July 21.

A preliminary report into the Air India crash that killed 260 people in the northwestern city of Ahmedabad found that the switches shifted within one second of each other, cutting off fuel supply to both engines. The report, released last week, did not offer any conclusions as to why the plane crashed. It also did not say how the switches could have flipped from run position to the cutoff during the flight.

The movement of the fuel control switches allows and cuts fuel flow to the plane's engines.

The Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed on June 12 shortly after takeoff. It killed all but one of the 242 people on board as well as 19 people on the ground.

The report, issued by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, noted a 2018 advisory from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, recommending airlines operating Boeing models to inspect the locking feature of fuel cutoff switches.

According to the report, cockpit voice recordings captured a moment of confusion between the pilots, with one asking the other why he cut off the fuel. "The other pilot responded that he did not do so," the report said.

Some aviation experts in India speculated the crash was caused due to human error based on the preliminary report. At least two commercial pilots' associations have rejected such claims.

The Indian Commercial Pilots' Association in a statement on Sunday said it was "deeply disturbed by speculative narratives ... particularly the reckless and unfounded insinuation of pilot suicide."

Air India CEO Campbell Wilson on Monday said the preliminary report into the crash of the London-bound plane found no mechanical or maintenance issues with the aircraft and its engines.

In an internal memo to airline staff seen by The Associated Press, Wilson said the report stated that all mandatory maintenance tasks of the aircraft had been completed.

"There was no issue with the quality of fuel and no abnormality with the take-off roll. The pilots had passed their mandatory pre-flight breathalyser and there were no observations pertaining to their medical status," he said in the note.

After the crash, Indian authorities ordered deeper checks of Air India's entire Boeing 787 Dreamliner fleet to prevent future incidents. Air India has 33 Dreamliners in its fleet.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 63 of 64

Heavy rains and flash flooding sweep across the Northeast

NEW YORK (AP) — Heavy rain swept across parts of the U.S. Northeast on Monday night, inundating sections of New York and New Jersey with flash flooding that stranded vehicles in roadways, closed subway lines and led to a declaration of a state of emergency.

Most flash flood watches and warnings expired in parts of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania as the rain moved on, but some roads and streets were still flooded as of Tuesday morning.

New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy declared a state of emergency due to flash flooding and heavy rainfall, advising people to stay indoors and avoid unnecessary travel. A video posted to social media by CBS showed flood waters bring a major roadway in Scotch Plains, New Jersey, to a standstill, stranding buses.

In one flooded North Plainfield, New Jersey, neighborhood, a house caught on fire and collapsed, possibly due to an explosion, not long after the family inside had evacuated, authorities said. No injuries were reported.

In New York City, some subway service was temporarily suspended while other lines were running with severe delays due to flooding, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. New York's emergency services agency wrote on the social platform X that parts of the city and mid-Hudson were getting hit with flash floods.

Video posted on social media appears to show water flooding down into a Manhattan subway station, submerging the platform while passengers inside a train watch. Another photo appears to show passengers standing on a train's seats to avoid the water beginning to soak the floor.

Parts of major thoroughfares in New York, such as the northbound lanes of the Saw Mill River Parkway and the Cross Bronx Expressway, were temporarily closed due to flooding and at least one downed tree.

Officials in New York's Westchester County were working to rescue people whose vehicles were submerged in water, according to Carolyn Fortino, a spokesperson for the county executive.

"At this time, residents are still strongly advised to avoid all travel unless fleeing an area that is subject to flooding, or under an evacuation order," she said in an email.

A flood warning was also issued for Staten Island, which had seen about 4 to 6 inches (10.2 to 15.2 centimeters) of rain, according to NYC's emergency notification system.

Mount Joy, in southeastern Pennsylvania, declared a disaster emergency as more than 7 inches (17.8 centimeters) of rain fell in less than five hours Monday, according to the Fire Department Mount Joy. Some people reported over 5 feet (1.5 meters) of water in their homes and emergency responders made 16 water rescues, although no injuries were reported.

"The declaration enables us to access additional resources to support residents and accelerate recovery efforts," Borough Emergency Management Coordinator Philip Colvin said in a statement.

By Monday evening, the rainfall had lessened and water in Mount Joy had started to recede.

In Metuchen, New Jersey, about 34 miles (55 kilometers) southwest of New York City, Mayor Jonathan M. Busch, wrote on Facebook that the borough was significantly flooded, but by Monday evening water levels had already receded.

"It looks like the worst of the storm is behind us and thankfully, everyone is safe," he said.

Today in History: July 16, Trinity nuclear weapon test

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 16, the 197th day of 2025. There are 168 days left in the year.

Today in History:

On July 16, 1945, the United States exploded its first experimental atomic bomb in the desert of Alamogordo, New Mexico; the same day, the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis left Mare (mar-AY') Island Naval Shipyard in California on a secret mission to deliver atomic bomb components to Tinian Island in the Marianas.

Also on this date:

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 16, 2025 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 003 ~ 64 of 64

In 1790, a site along the Potomac River was designated the permanent seat of the United States government; the area became Washington, D.C.

In 1862, Flag Officer David G. Farragut became the first rear admiral in the United States Navy.

In 1951, the novel "The Catcher in the Rye" by J.D. Salinger was first published by Little, Brown and Co.

In 1957, Marine Corps Maj. John Glenn set a transcontinental speed record by flying a Vought F8U Crusader jet from California to New York in 3 hours, 23 minutes and 8.4 seconds.

In 1964, as he accepted the Republican presidential nomination in San Francisco, Barry M. Goldwater declared that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" and that "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

In 1969, Apollo 11 launched from Cape Kennedy in Florida on the first manned mission to the surface of the moon.

In 1999, John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and her sister, Lauren Bessette, died when their single-engine plane, piloted by Kennedy, plunged into the Atlantic Ocean near Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

In 2004, Martha Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of home confinement by a federal judge in New York for lying about a stock sale.

In 2008, Florida resident Casey Anthony, whose 2-year-old daughter, Caylee, had been missing a month, was arrested on charges of child neglect, making false official statements and obstructing a criminal investigation. (Casey Anthony was later acquitted at trial of murdering Caylee, whose skeletal remains were found in December 2008; Casey was convicted of lying to police.)

In 2015, a jury in Centennial, Colorado, convicted James Holmes of 165 counts of murder, attempted murder and other charges in the 2012 Aurora movie theater rampage that left 12 people dead.

In 2017, 10 people died at a popular swimming hole in Arizona's Tonto National Forest after a rainstorm unleashed a flash flood.

In 2018, after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, President Donald Trump openly questioned the finding of his own intelligence agencies that Russia had meddled in the 2016 U.S. election to his benefit. (Trump said a day later that he misspoke.)

Today's Birthdays: International Tennis Hall of Famer Margaret Court is 83. Violinist Pinchas Zukerman is 77. Actor-singer Ruben Blades is 77. Rock composer-musician Stewart Copeland is 73. Playwright Tony Kushner is 69. Dancer Michael Flatley is 67. Former actor and teen model Phoebe Cates is 62. Actor Daryl "Chill" Mitchell is 60. Actor-comedian Will Ferrell is 58. Football Hall of Famer Barry Sanders is 57. Actor Corey Feldman is 54. Actor Jayma Mays is 46. Retired soccer star Carli Lloyd is 43. Actor AnnaLynne McCord is 38. Actor-singer James Maslow (Big Time Rush) is 35. Actor Mark Indelicato is 31. Pop singer-musician Luke Hemmings (5 Seconds of Summer) is 29.