

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, Aug. 7

Senior Menu: Beef noodle stroganoff, broccoli, apricots, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 7 p.m.



**The wall activities calendars are being printed. It is now posted on-line. Just go to our home page and click on the link in the black bar. We will have calendars at the Angel Tree event downtown today and copies are also now available at Ken's.**

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

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# 1440

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

## Fort Stewart Shooting

A gunman wounded five soldiers at Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield in Georgia yesterday. The suspect—a 28-year-old male Army sergeant—was apprehended roughly 40 minutes later and remains in US custody.

The attack began at 10:56 am ET, when the assailant—a soldier from Florida who worked in automated logistics—used a personal handgun against members of his own unit. Nearby soldiers tackled him before law enforcement arrived to place him in custody. All five of the victims were transported to a nearby Army hospital in stable condition. An investigation is ongoing; authorities have not publicly disclosed a motive as of this writing. The assailant has no history of foreign deployments.

Fort Stewart houses 8,800 people and covers over 437 square miles. It is located about 40 miles southwest of Savannah.

## Iranian Water Crisis

Iran closed government offices in over half of its 31 provinces yesterday, including Tehran. The decision—the second of its kind in weeks—comes as authorities work to manage a dual water and electricity crisis.

The country has experienced regular power shortages since December due to its aging power grid, among other factors. Iran is also in its fifth consecutive year of drought. Rainfall is down 40% from the long-term average—the lowest levels in 60 years. Eighty percent of the country's reservoirs are nearly empty. Exacerbating the issue is Iran's water-intensive agriculture for crops like rice, accounting for 90% of the country's water use. Meanwhile, a heat wave has sent temperatures above 122 degrees Fahrenheit in parts of the country.

Water pressure has been reduced by almost half in 80% of Tehran's households, with faucets regularly running dry on the third floor and up. Authorities are encouraging people to leave Tehran to reduce strain and warn that Day Zero—when taps run entirely dry—could come within weeks.

## Vaccine Research Redirected

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. canceled nearly \$500M in funding for 22 projects aimed at advancing mRNA technology Tuesday. The money will be redirected to projects developing traditional, whole-cell vaccines.

Vaccines have historically used weakened or inactive pathogens to trigger immunity. The more recent mRNA vaccines—including those developed in partnership with President Donald Trump's Operation Warp Speed to combat COVID-19—teach the body to produce a virus fragment. That fragment prompts an immune response and preps the body to defend against a real infection. mRNA vaccines are quicker than traditional vaccines to develop and update, requiring only the genetic code for a virus piece as opposed to cultivating large quantities of virus. Among criticisms of the technology, Kennedy said the mRNA vaccines cause a process called "antigenic shift," encouraging vaccine mutation.

The news comes after HHS halted a nearly \$600M contract to develop an mRNA-based vaccine targeting bird flu. The virus has infected 70 people in the US since 2024.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

ESPN signs five-year deal with the WWE for streaming rights to WrestleMania and other major live events; deal averages \$325M per year.

The PGA Tour's FedEx Cup Playoffs kick off today; read about the playoff format, including its bonus prize pool of \$100M with the overall champion earning \$10M.

"Hamilton" to get US theatrical release on Sept. 5, five years after its initial premiere on Disney+, which purchased the rights to the filmed version of the Broadway hit for \$75M.

## Science & Technology

Replenishing the brain's natural supply of lithium appears to reverse memory loss and neurological signs of Alzheimer's, new study suggests; researchers identify lithium orotate as potentially protecting against onset of the disease.

OpenAI to offer the enterprise version of ChatGPT to federal agencies beginning next year at a cost of \$1; move seen as a bid to beat competitors in adoption into government workflows.

Ancient stone tools more than 1 million years old discovered on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi; suggests human relatives made a major sea crossing prior to the use of boats.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.7%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +1.2%) as corporate earnings continue rolling in and the Trump administration's new trade tariff deadline looms.

Apple to invest an additional \$100B on domestic manufacturing; Apple previously announced plans to spend \$500B in the US over the next four years.

Accessories retailer Claire's files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy for second time since 2018 amid debt load and changing consumer preferences; follows second bankruptcy of teen retailer Forever 21 in March.

## Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump imposes an additional 25% tariff on India over its Russian oil purchases, raising combined levies to 50%; takes effect Aug. 27 and comes as new tariffs kick in for dozens of trading partners today.

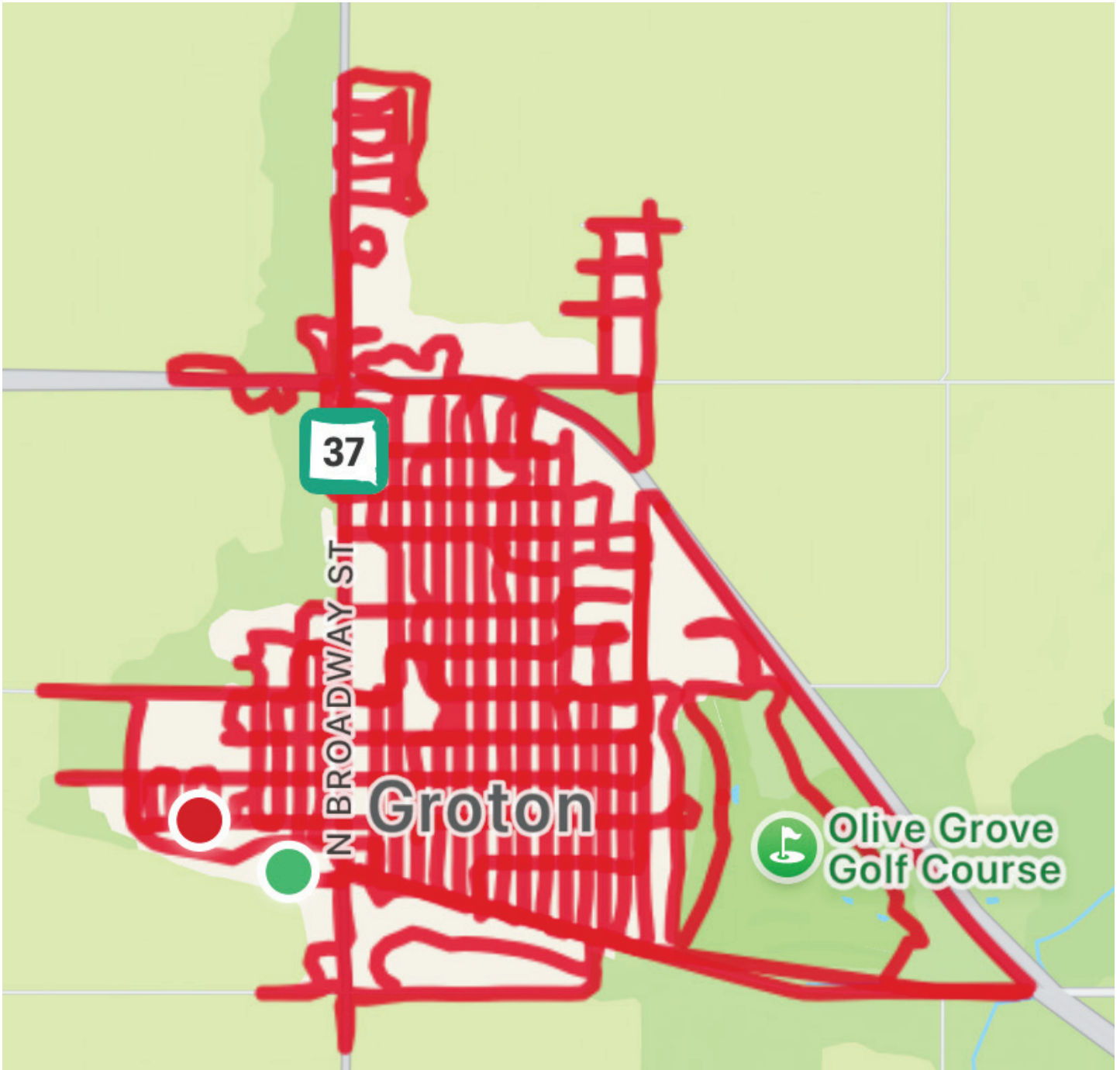
Texas Democrats who left the state in protest of a redistricting bill were temporarily evacuated from an Illinois hotel following a bomb threat.

US Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) enters race to replace outgoing Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee (R), pledging to push forward Trump's agenda.

United Airlines grounds flights nationwide for several hours amid technical issue with its weight calculation system.

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## Adult Mosquito Control

The City of Groton conducted adult mosquito control last night. The temperature was 71-80 degrees with the wind out of the SSE 2-4 mph. 10.6 gallons of MasterLine Kontrol 4-4 (with 4.6% Permethrin). Travel time was 3 hours and 11 minutes with a distance of 36.53 miles. During my travels I saw 16 rabbits, 8 cats, 3 horses and a muskrat. Total cost of the application was around \$635.

## 2025 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Vehicle Count – Through Day Five

STURGIS, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) will provide daily traffic counts at nine locations for vehicles entering Sturgis for the 85th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally which runs from Aug. 1-10, 2025. The traffic counts to date for the nine locations entering Sturgis for the 2025 Rally are as follows:

Friday, Aug. 1, 2025: 56,000 vehicles entered  
Up 8.2% from the previous five-year average

Saturday, Aug. 2, 2025: 62,500 vehicles entered  
Up 12.5% from the previous five-year average

Sunday, Aug. 3, 2025: 60,495 vehicles entered  
Up 2.4% from the previous five-year average

Monday, Aug. 4, 2025: 68,906 vehicles entered  
Up 19% from the previous five-year average

Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025: 63,863 vehicles entered  
Up 13.1% from the previous five-year average

2025 Total to Date (5-days): 311,764 Vehicles (Up 11%)  
Previous Five-Year Average (2020-2024) 5-day total to date: 280,769 Vehicles

Once compiled, a full report (including traffic counts across the greater Black Hills area) will be available on the SDDOT website at <https://dot.sd.gov/transportation/highways/traffic-data/> during the week of Aug. 18, 2025.

To find additional information related to the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally such as reduced speed limit areas, temporary traffic signal locations, frequently asked questions, and more, please visit: <https://dot.sd.gov/travelers/travelers/sturgis-rally-travel-information-faq>.



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## Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday, August 2, 2025, to 6 a.m. Wednesday, August 6, 2025

Item	Sturgis	Rapid City District	District Total	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	57	13	70	83
Misd Drug Arrests	110	31	141	171
Felony Drug Arrests	52	9	61	101
Total Citations	495	378	873	836
Total Warnings	1776	730	2,506	2,285
Cash Seized	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$11,094.00
Vehicles Seized	0	0	0	0
For Drug Poss.	0	0	0	0
For Serial No.	0	0	0	0
Non-Injury Accidents	11	3	14	22
Injury Accidents	17	24	41	23
Fatal Accidents	0	2	2	3
# of Fatalities	0	2	2	3

Fatal Crashes:  
None

### Injury Crashes:

At 10:37 a.m. Tuesday, Wildlife Loop Road, mile marker 5: A 2023 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was westbound at MM 5 on Wildlife Loop Rd. Unit 1 got too close to the edge of the blacktop and drove off into the ditch to the north. Unit 1 remained upright until it hit debris in the tall grass and flipped forward. The driver, who was wearing a helmet, was transported to Custer Monument Hospital with minor injuries.

At 10:45 a.m. Tuesday, US Highway 14A, mile marker 32: A 2014 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was eastbound at MM 32 US 14A. Unit 1 failed to negotiate a left curve and got close to the edge of the blacktop. The driver drove off into the ditch, tripped and rolled. The driver, who was wearing a helmet, became separated from his motorcycle and received serious non-life-threatening injuries. The driver was flown to Rapid City Monument Health Hospital.

At 01:29 p.m. Tuesday, Interstate 90, mile marker 170: Jackson County stopped a 2005 GMC Sierra near MM 170 on Interstate 90 for speeding. The deputy was speaking with the driver, who took off at a high rate of speed. The Deputy initiated a pursuit eastbound. The vehicle took exit 191 and traveled west on SD Highway 248. Tire deflation systems were set up near MM 190 on SD 248. The driver went into the ditch to avoid the tire deflation system and lost control. The vehicle rolled onto its driver's side. The driver was not wearing a seatbelt, received minor injuries, and was taken into custody without incident. Jackson County Sheriff's Office is handling all charges.

At 01:33 p.m. Tuesday, Wildlife Loop Road, mile marker 5: A 2015 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was traveling westbound on Wildlife Loop Road, got too close to the shoulder and the front tire went

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off the roadway. The operator and passenger were separated from the motorcycle. Both sustained minor injuries and refused transport. Neither occupant was wearing a helmet.

At 05:24 p.m. Tuesday, Pleasant Valley Road and S 130th Avenue: A 2012 Honda motorcycle (Unit 1) was traveling west on Pleasant Valley Rd in front of a 2013 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 2). Unit 1 attempted to make a left turn into a driveway of a campsite. Unit 2 was behind Unit 1 and was unable to avoid the left turn being made by Unit 1. Unit 2 collided with Unit 1. The driver of Unit 2 sustained minor injuries. Neither driver was wearing a helmet.

At 09:03 p.m. Tuesday, Interstate 90, mile marker 12: A 2021 Harley Davidson motorcycle was westbound on I 90 near MM 12. Two deer entered the roadway, one deer struck the side of the motorcycle causing it to fall. The driver became separated from the motorcycle and slid on the interstate. The motorcycle came to final rest near the shoulder. The driver was wearing a helmet and sustained serious non-life-threatening injuries. He was transported to Monument Health in Spearfish.

All information released so far is only preliminary.

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



**Walking Taco and a drink**  
Free Will Donation  
Proceeds go to Groton's Angel Tree  
15 N Main, St. #103  
Groton Daily Independent  
Suggested Donation: \$5

**Family Fun Fest -Thursday, Aug. 7 ~ 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.**

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## 2025 S.D. State Fair to Showcase Specialty Producers at Value Added Event

Pierre, S.D.— The Value Added Agriculture Development Center (VAADC) invites you to attend the 26th Annual Value Added Agriculture Center Day at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, S.D. on Thurs., Aug. 28, 2025 from 9:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m. CDT.

Stop by the Day Sponsor Tent to visit with value-added agriculture farmers, ranchers, specialty growers and processors and learn about their products. This event also provides a great opportunity to learn about the latest developments in value-added agriculture from agricultural businesses and federal, state and local agencies.

The event will feature approximately 20 vendors, many of which were developed with support from the VAADC. The VAADC helps farmers, ranchers and specialty producers in South Dakota create and expand value-added agriculture businesses by offering a variety of technical assistance programs and services designed to help clients succeed.

Additional exhibitors are members of the S.D. Specialty Producers Association (SDSPA), which provides education, industry promotion and connections for South Dakota raised specialty foods and products. The event will highlight local foods and products including South Dakota meats, ice cream, produce, jams & jellies, salsa, flowers, grains and flour, and more.

Participants can network and take in several mini-seminars and local food demonstrations. The event concludes with local Berrybrook Nook products at the ice cream social, brought to you in cooperation with Your South Dakota Dairy Producers.

The Day Sponsor Tent presentation schedule is as follows:

- 10:30 a.m.: S.D.'s Opportunity: Growing with Agritourism, SDSU Extension and S.D. Department of Tourism
- 11:00 a.m.: In Full Bloom: A Guide to Cut Flower Arrangements, The Garage (Horizons Hall Kitchen)
- 11:30 a.m.: Crisp and Green: Spinach Crust Demo, Farm Mom Phenom (Horizons Hall Kitchen)
- 12:00 p.m.: USDA Services & Resources for the Next Generation of Farmers, Ranchers & Specialty Growers, USDA
- 12:45 p.m.: Looking at the Market: What is the Market for Value Added Organic Products?, S.D. Specialty Producers Association
- 1:00 p.m.: Freeze the Season: Make-Your-Own Smoothie Pops , SDSU Extension (Horizons Hall Kitchen)
- 1:30 p.m.: Beyond the Usual: Crafting Delicious Bread with Diverse Grains, Belle Valley Ancient Grains, (Horizons Hall Kitchen)
- 1:30 p.m.: On Farm Poultry Processing, PrairieSun Organics
- 2:10 p.m.: Flowers, Fiber, and Feathers: Growing Value-Added Products Regeneratively on a Diverse Farm, Blue Dasher Farm
- 3:00 p.m.: Value Added Ag Center Day Ice Cream Social, VAADC & Your SD Dairy Farmers

Support from East River Electric Cooperative, Farm Credit Services of America, S.D. Association of Cooperatives, S.D. Farmers Union, S.D. Rural Electric Association, S.D. Soybean Research & Promotion Council, S.D. Wheat Commission, Agtegra, and USDA-Rural Development make VAADC services available to South Dakota farmers, ranchers, entrepreneurs, and business owners. This event is held in collaboration with SDSPA, S.D. Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources and NRCS to support the promotion of specialty crop vendors and events.



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## West Nile Virus Update - South Dakota

SD WNV (as of August 6):

16 human cases (Beadle, Brookings, Codington, Grant, Hamlin, Lawrence, Marshall, Miner, Minnehaha, Sanborn, Spink) and 2 deaths

2 human viremic blood donors (Brookings, Brown)

7 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Brookings, Codington, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha)

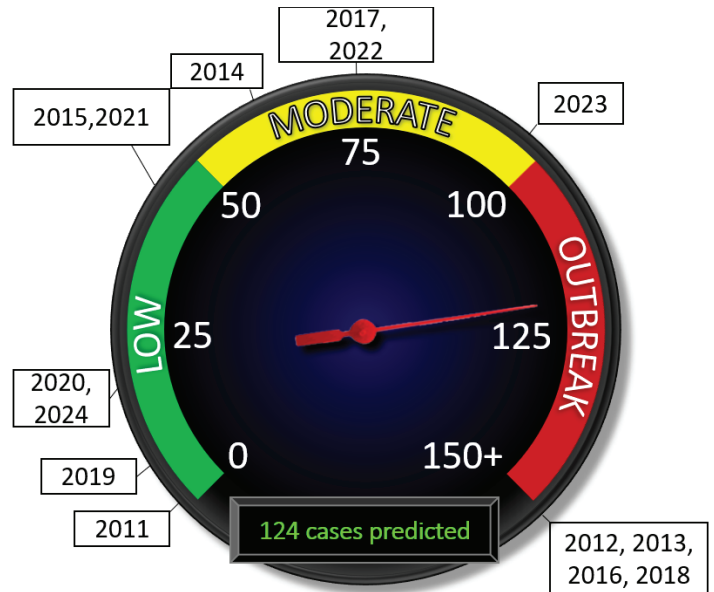
US WNV (as of August 5): 140 cases (AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, GA, IL, IN, KS, LA, MN, MO, MS, ND, NE, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, VA, WI, WY)

WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2025, South Dakota (as of August 6)

Total sites collecting mosquitoes: 57

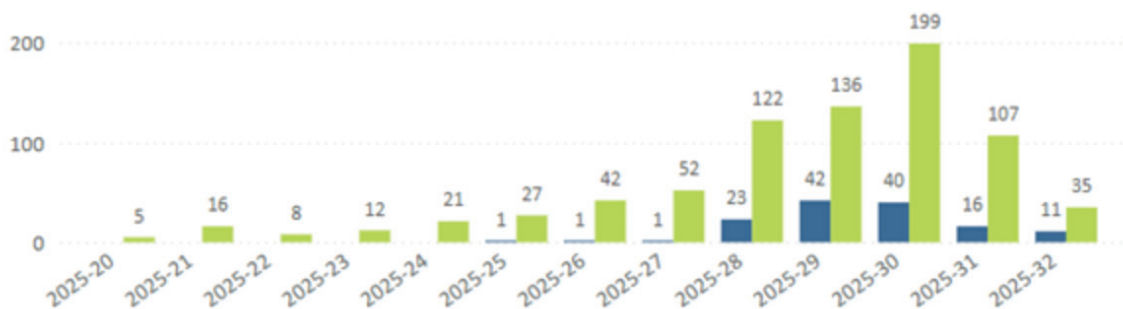
Total mosquito pools tested: 917

% positivity: 14.72%

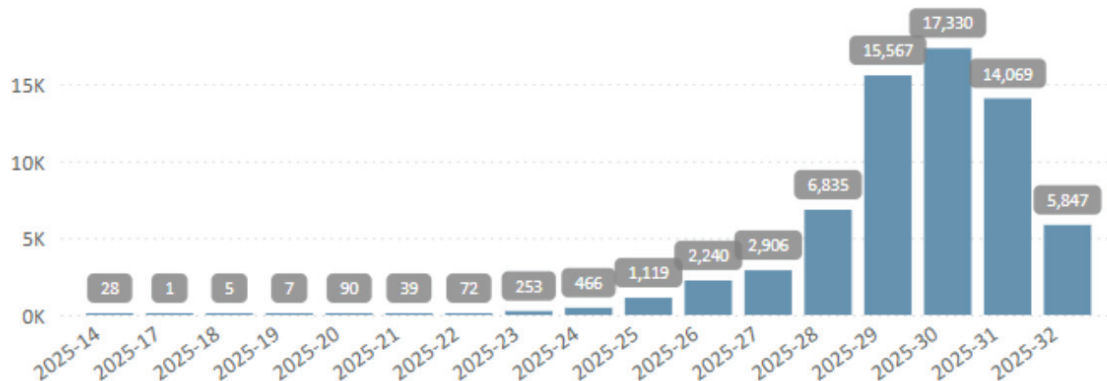


Number of Mosquito Pools Tested by MMWR Week and Status

Test Status: ● Positive ● Negative



Culex Mosquitoes Collected by MMWR Week





**Saturday, Aug. 9th**



**Come and help us celebrate the  
“30th Anniversary of the  
Groton Legion Lounge and Hall”**

**5-7 p.m.**

**free supper  
until gone**

**(Cody Keller's famous BBQ!)**



**9 p.m.**

*Music on the patio with  
Lizzy Hofer*

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## Groton Chamber of Commerce

August 6th, 2025

12pm City Hall

- Members present: Brian Dolan, Katelyn Nehlich Douglas Heinrich, April Abeln, and Paul Kosel
- It was announced that President Ashley has recently welcomed a baby girl. In her absence, Vice President Heinrich took the lead in conducting the meeting.
- Minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich. All members present voted aye.
- The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$18,959.29 in addition to the \$5,000 CD. The bucks account balance is \$2,859.80. The report was approved by Abeln and seconded by Dolan. All members present voted aye.
- A scholarship thank you note was received from Emma Kutter.
- Abeln made a motion via email with a second from Topper Tastad to donate twelve 605 items to the Lion's Club Celebration in the Park. All members present via email voted aye.
- Abeln made a motion via email to donate a 605 tee, crewneck and Chamber tumbler to the Ferney Open Golf Tournament. All members present via email voted aye.
- Abeln made a motion via email to donate \$300 to Wage Memorial Library to sponsor Storybook Land Theatre. All members present via email voted aye.
- Discussion was held on the 2025 Chamber shirt orders. Flyers will be printed and distributed around town, with the order deadline set for 8/19/25. It was proposed that orders be reopened in the fall, with the addition of youth sizes, and that flyers be sent home with school-aged children at that time. Additionally, there was a conversation about recognizing donors on a plaque next to the seesaw. A suggestion was made to explore fundraising options beyond clothing for next year.
- The group reviewed the electronic sign contracts for Hwy 12, with Heinrich presenting a preliminary draft. It was noted that the plans need to be finalized by September to be included in the dues notices set to be mailed in October. Kosel mentioned that the Electric Department would be able to handle the installation of the new signs.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Dolan to donate \$360 to the Groton Transit for advertising on their #4 van. All members present voted aye.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Abeln to advertise in the 2026 Glacial Lakes & Prairies Tourism magazine. All members present voted aye.
- Our September/October ad has been created and will be placed in the Aberdeen Magazine and SD Magazine.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Nehlich to sponsor Caleb's Aquatics at Family Fun Fest for \$250. All members present voted aye.
- Motion by Abeln and seconded by Kosel to donate \$25 in Chamber Bucks to the Wage Memorial Library for their Back-to-School event. All members present voted aye.
- It was decided that the Wine on Nine giveaway basket be gifted to the Basketball Golf Tournament since that event was cancelled.
- Abeln will set up the Chamber table with a giveaway basket at Family Fun Fest. Our Chamber sign will be placed on the Caleb's Aquatics tent as well as T-shirt order info.
- It was mentioned a table be set up prior to the first home football game advertising our shirts if we decide to extend the deadline.
- Abeln filed our annual report on July 15th
- Motion by Kosel and seconded by Abeln to gift three \$500 scholarships to 2025-2026 GHS Seniors.
- Upcoming welcome events will be scheduled for Raising Wildflowers, an online boutique owned by Jamie Mitchek, as well as for Misty Maakestad, who is now offering facials at Karma Salon, and Nikki Barton's daycare.
- Motion by Nehlich and seconded by Kosel to sponsor GDI Live for the 2025-2026 GHS sports season

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for \$1000. All members present voted aye.

- Next Meeting: September 3rd, 12pm at City Hall

Upcoming events:

- o 08/07/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm
- o 08/08/2025 St John's Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School 5-8:30pm
- o 08/08/2025 St John's Lutheran Church Vacation Bible School Outdoor Movie 8:30pm
- o 08/09/2025 30th Anniversary at the Groton Legion 5pm
- o 08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
- o 08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm
- o 08/19/2025 Back to School- Come Visit Wage Memorial Library
- o 08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course



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## **Lotto America Jackpot winner purchased in Vermillion**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Lottery's Wednesday drawings featured the state's first multi-state jackpot winner since 2018.

Wednesday's Lotto America drawing resulted in an estimated \$4,010,000 jackpot winner. The winning ticket was purchased at Freedom Valu Center in Vermillion. The selling retailer will also receive a \$10,000 retailer bonus.

The winning numbers were 26, 29, 30, 33, 40 and the Star Ball was 1. Wednesday's jackpot win marks South Dakota's first jackpot winner under Lotto America's current format, which was launched in November 2017.

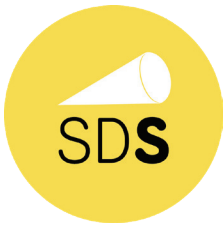
"This is an exciting time for the South Dakota Lottery, our players and our retail partners," Lottery Executive Director Norm Lingle said. "We want to congratulate our winner but also stress the importance of taking the proper steps to fully enjoy their jackpot dreams."

The winning player(s) will have the option to receive a one-time cash payment of \$1,820,000 or 30 graduated annuity payments over the course of 29 years. Applicable Federal income taxes will be withheld.

The South Dakota Lottery advises the winner to sign the back of your ticket immediately and speak to a financial adviser before claiming the prize. Players have 180 days after the date of the drawing to claim their prize.

Players may claim their prize at any South Dakota Lottery redemption center. For more information on the prize claim process, visit <https://lottery.sd.gov/claim-your-prize/>.

The state's General Fund, which supports K-12 schools, state universities and technical institutes, receives 70 percent of net revenue from lotto games such as Lotto America. The state's Capital Construction Fund receives the remaining 30 percent. This supports the Water and Environment Fund, the Ethanol Fuel Fund, and the State Highway Fund.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **New Summit Carbon Solutions CEO teases 'updates' to business plan in letter to landowners**

**BY: CAMI KOONS, IOWA CAPITAL DISPATCH - AUGUST 6, 2025 4:31 PM**

Summit Carbon Solutions has a new CEO, Joe Griffin, who authored letters this week to signed and unsigned Iowa landowners along the carbon pipeline project route.

Two versions of the letter, one dated Aug. 4 and the other dated Aug. 5, noted the company would be announcing "several updates" that would "open new markets and create greater opportunities for the region." The letters also note Summit has a new senior leadership team.

The version addressed to landowners along the route who have not signed an easement agreement said they should expect a "revised Right of Way proposal in the coming weeks."

The letter said the revised proposals would reflect Summit's "commitment to offering terms that better support landowners and their long-term interests."

The other version was addressed to landowners who had already signed easements and instead thanked them for their trust in the company. Its proposed carbon sequestration pipeline in Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska and the Dakotas would carry carbon dioxide captured from dozens of ethanol plants to an underground sequestration site in North Dakota.

In South Dakota, the project has been rejected twice for a permit by the state's Public Utilities Commission, and the Legislature and governor passed a law earlier this year banning the use of eminent domain to obtain land access for carbon pipelines. The new law was a response to activism by pipeline opponents concerned about property rights and potentially deadly leaks of carbon dioxide plumes.

Summit has already signed easement agreements with thousands of landowners along the route, according to the company.

Griffin wrote in the letter he wanted to "set the tone" for a "fresh chapter" for Summit.

In addition to Griffin's replacement of former CEO Lee Blank, the letter notes Summit has a "new senior leadership team" that is focused on "partnership and respect."

"This team has constructed and/or operated more than 4,700 miles of pipelines, but what I'm most proud of is that we did it safely, working closely with landowners, communities, and emergency responders to ensure the safety of all," Griffin said.

Griffin said he has spent his career in "energy infrastructure" though it is unclear what company the new CEO was with formerly.

"I'm the kind of person who's not afraid to get out in the fields and help alongside the farmers, someone who understands that this project is about more than pipes and technology — it's about people, land, and communities," Griffin wrote in the letters.

Former Summit CEO Lee Blank could not be reached for comment.

*Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.*

## More tribal recruits moving through law enforcement academy in Pierre

BY: JOHN HULT - AUGUST 6, 2025 9:14 AM

Efforts to bolster the number of officers policing tribal lands for tribal agencies in South Dakota have begun to pay off, public safety officials say.

The state's next basic law enforcement certification class, which begins on Aug. 18 in Pierre, includes nine tribal recruits from the Yankton, Oglala, Sisseton-Wahpeton and Rosebud tribes.

The certification course is 13 weeks long, and the state typically has three classes a year. Since May 2024, the state has certified 13 tribal graduates.

Former Gov. Kristi Noem, now head of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, drew attention — as well as heavy criticism and bans from her home state's tribal lands — to the need for law enforcement in tribal communities in 2024.

Noem repeatedly said Mexican drug cartels had infiltrated the state's reservations, and claimed that some tribal leaders benefited from the gangs' presence. She also drew the ire of tribal officials for saying Native American children have no hope for lack of parenting.

Alongside the controversial remarks, the Noem administration used the state's basic law enforcement certification setup to address concerns about a dearth of available policing resources on tribal lands. Tribal officials had themselves sought to draw attention to that issue through public safety emergency declarations and in testimony to Congress.

Noem pulled from her budget to pay for an additional basic law enforcement certification cohort last summer, and Attorney General Marty Jackley partnered with her office to pull together the course. That academy class gave priority to tribal officer recruits, and was filled out with officer hopefuls from other non-tribal agencies. Nine of the tribal recruits successfully completed the program, and four more have completed it since then.

Noem also joined calls from U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds, R-South Dakota, to place a federal tribal law enforcement training center in the region. Most tribal officers attend training at a Bureau of Indian Affairs facility in Artesia, New Mexico. Tribal leaders say the distance and duration of the training have been a deterrent to hiring officers.

In May, Rounds sent a letter to U.S. Interior Secretary Doug Burgum asking him to endorse a tribal police academy for the Great Plains.

At a recent meeting of the State-Tribal Relations Committee, South Dakota Public Safety Secretary Bob Perry said he hopes to see a federal tribal academy in the area.

"The pie in the sky dream-type goal is to have a permanent type solution for that here in South Dakota," Perry said.

*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.*

## Why congressional redistricting is blowing up across the US this summer

**BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA AND JACOB FISCHLER - AUGUST 6, 2025 4:01 PM**

WASHINGTON — Fueled by President Donald Trump's aims to bolster the U.S. House's razor-thin GOP majority in the 2026 midterm elections, a rare mid-decade redistricting fight in Texas grew increasingly bitter in recent days and engulfed other states.

As Democratic legislators in the Lone Star State fled to block a new congressional map, a handful of both blue and red states eyed their own redistricting plans, lawsuits cropped up and members of Congress pledged bills to curb redistricting wars.

While Texas is the only state that has so far taken formal action to redraw its U.S. House lines, a full-blown arms race could be imminent.

Here's a breakdown on the redistricting battle as the drama unfolds:

How did all of this interest in redistricting kick off?

Republicans in Texas drew a new congressional map at the urging of Trump that could give the GOP five crucial new congressional seats in 2026.

Midterm elections typically lead to the loss of congressional seats for a president's party.

Meanwhile, the GOP currently holds 219 seats in the House, while Democrats hold 212 spots, with four vacancies. That extremely narrow majority has created immense challenges for U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, as he tries to enact Trump's sweeping agenda and cater to the president's demands as well as factions in the GOP conference.

Though congressional districts are typically redrawn every decade following each U.S. Census, the move, particularly in Texas, is not unprecedented and is allowed.

What's going on in Texas?

Texas Republicans unveiled a draft of the new congressional map in late July, which looks to reshape and flip major metro areas' districts held by Democrats.

According to The Texas Tribune, the Department of Justice sent Texas' leaders a letter in early July that said four of its districts violate the U.S. Constitution. The proposed map would dismantle those districts, per the Tribune.

More than 50 of Texas' Democratic legislators left the state to try to block the legislature from adopting the new map, according to the Tribune.

This move has drawn the ire of Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, who went so far as to file a lawsuit asking to remove the Texas House Democratic Caucus chair, state Rep. Gene Wu, after Wu left the state.

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton also said Tuesday that he will pursue a court ruling that declares the seats vacant for the House Democrats who do not return by Friday.

Texas GOP U.S. Sen. John Cornyn has also called on the FBI "to take any appropriate steps to aid in Texas state law enforcement efforts to locate or arrest potential lawbreakers who have fled the state." Trump on Tuesday, asked by a reporter if the FBI should "get involved," said, "Well, they may have to."

How is California reacting?

California Gov. Gavin Newsom has been among the most vocal Democratic governors in suggesting retaliating against Texas Republicans by redrawing his populous blue state's own lines before the 2026 elections.

State laws in California and other Democratic states make mid-decade redistricting tougher than it is in Texas.

While pro-democracy groups have praised California's nonpartisan commission as the "gold standard" of independent redistricting, Newsom has indicated he would ask state lawmakers to temporarily scrap it



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to join the arms race he says Trump started in Texas.

At a Monday press conference, Newsom justified his exploration of mid-decade redistricting in the Golden State by describing Trump's recent and historic record as anti-democratic.

"These folks don't play by the rules," Newsom said. "If they can't win playing the game with the existing set of rules, they'll change the rules. That's what Donald Trump has done ... Here is someone who tried to break this country, tried to light democracy on fire on Jan. 6. He recognizes he's going to lose in the midterms."

What other states are looking at potentially redistricting?

Vice President JD Vance is slated to visit Indiana Thursday in an attempt to push redistricting, according to the Indiana Capital Chronicle.

Indiana GOP Gov. Mike Braun said that as of now, no commitments have been made, when asked about redistricting efforts in the Hoosier State, per the Capital Chronicle.

Indiana Gov. Mike Braun was careful in his comments Tuesday about potential redistricting in Indiana to net a GOP seat — or two — in Congress. (Photo by Whitney Downard/Indiana Capital Chronicle).jpeg

Indiana Gov. Mike Braun was careful in his comments Tuesday about potential redistricting in Indiana to net a GOP seat — or two — in Congress. (Photo by Whitney Downard/Indiana Capital Chronicle)

Leaders of large Democratic states, in addition to California, are considering their own redistricting in response to Texas.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul wrote in an op-ed published in the Houston Chronicle Tuesday that she would "not sit on the sidelines" and watch "Republicans dismantle democracy."

"What Texas is doing isn't a clever strategy, it's political arson — torching our democracy to cling to power," Hochul wrote. "The only viable recourse is to fight fire with fire."

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker appeared alongside Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin and a group of exiled Texas Democratic lawmakers at a news conference Tuesday. Pritzker said it was "possible" the state would pursue redistricting, according to the Chicago Sun-Times.

Other Democratic governors — even including Laura Kelly of ruby-red Kansas — raised the prospect during a Democratic Governors Association meeting in Wisconsin last week of pursuing mid-decade redistricting if Texas follows through.

Republican states are also considering jumping in the fray.

Missouri Senate President Pro Tem Cindy O'Laughlin, a Republican, told a news radio station last week that it was "likely" lawmakers would convene in a special session to redraw district lines after pressure from Trump.

And Rep. Don Bacon, a Republican who holds the most competitive of Nebraska's three U.S. House seats but plans to step down, told the Nebraska Examiner that Republicans in the state were having conversations about potential redistricting.

What downside do some see?

An arms race to shorten the cycle for redrawing congressional lines could come at a cost for efforts to overhaul the redistricting process.

Common Cause, a national pro-democracy group that advocates for election reforms including nonpartisan redistricting, urged Democrats not to respond to Texas.

A redistricting arms race would only result in "rigged elections across America," Emily Eby French, the policy director for Common Cause Texas, said on a press call last week. It was wrong for Republicans to put "a thumb on the scale" through redistricting, she said, but also wrong for Democrats to do the same.

"The real solution is for Democrats to help us lift the Republican thumb off of the Texas scale and every other scale in America until we reach free and fair elections for everyone."

Are party leaders egging this on?

Trump, whose urging appeared to prompt Texas Republicans to action, has consistently pushed lawmak-

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ers in that state to reinforce the GOP advantage there.

Tuesday, he said on CNBC that Republicans were "entitled" to five more House seats in Texas.

Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin stands outside of a coffee shop in Portland, Oregon, on July 31, 2025. (Photo by Jacob Fischler\_States Newsroom).jpeg

Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin stands outside of a coffee shop in Portland, Oregon, on July 31, 2025. (Photo by Jacob Fischler/States Newsroom)

Martin, the DNC chair, responded in Illinois.

"No party is entitled to any district," he said. "We have to go out and earn the votes."

Still, Martin advised Democrats in blue states to do the opposite by responding in kind to Texas Republicans.

In an interview with States Newsroom last week, Martin suggested Democratic states drop any commitment to nonpartisan redistricting in response to Texas.

"We're not here to tie one of our hands behind our back," he said. "We can't be the only party that's playing by the rules."

How is Congress reacting?

At least two GOP House lawmakers — representing blue states looking at retaliatory redistricting efforts against Trump — are taking it upon themselves to introduce bills in Congress that bar these initiatives.

GOP Rep. Kevin Kiley of California introduced a bill in the House this week that would ban mid-decade redistricting across the country.

Kiley said Newsom "is trying to subvert the will of voters and do lasting damage to democracy in California," in a statement earlier this week.

"Fortunately, Congress has the ability to protect California voters using its authority under the Elections Clause of the U.S. Constitution," he said. "This will also stop a damaging redistricting war from breaking out across the country."

Rep. Mike Lawler, a New York Republican, also said he plans to introduce legislation to prohibit "partisan gerrymandering and mid-decade redistricting."

The New York Republican told CNN on Tuesday that "this is fundamentally why Congress is broken," adding that "you do not have competitive districts and so, most members are focused on primaries and not actually engaging in a general election."

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

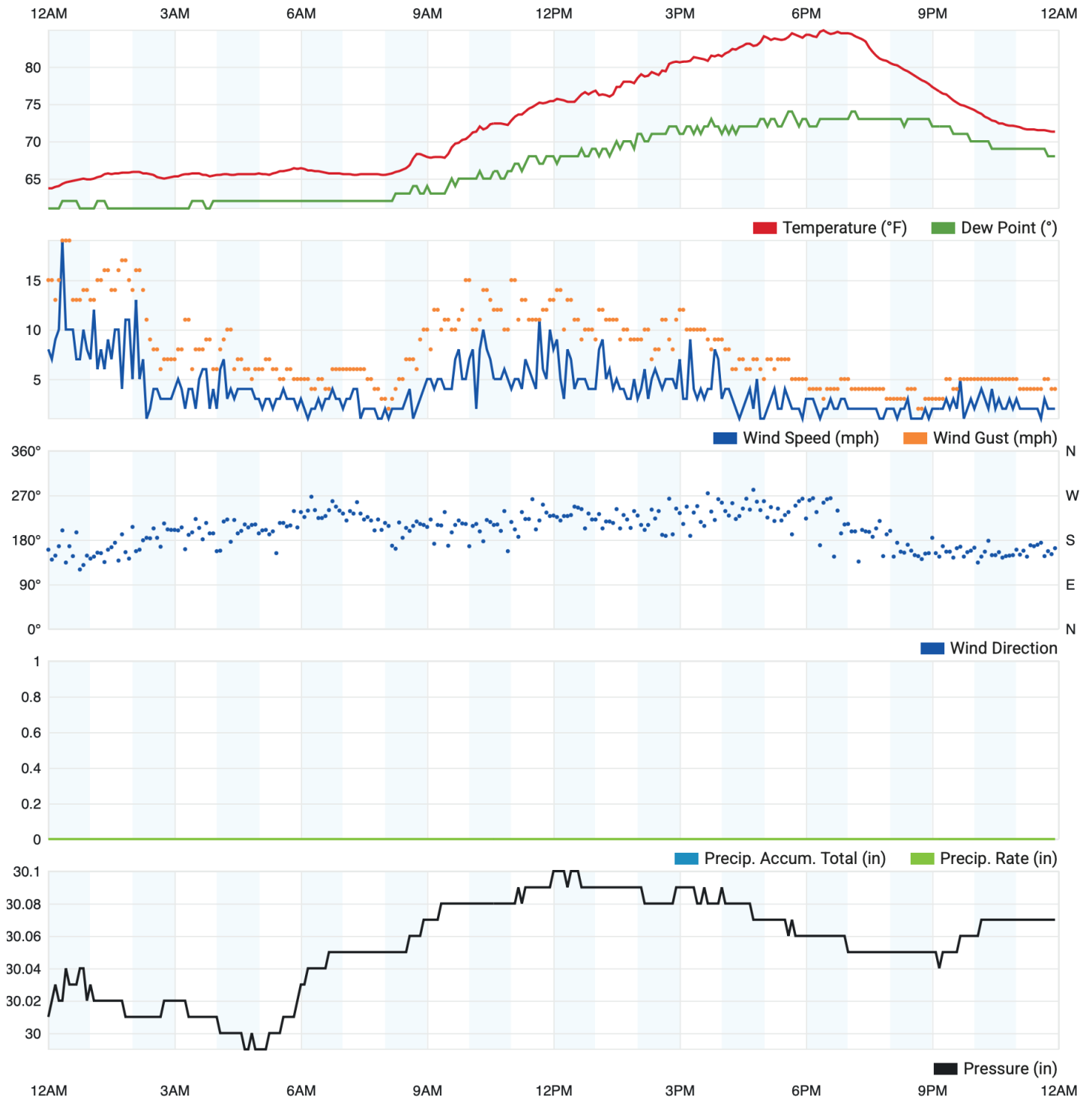
*Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 6, 2025



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Today



High: 88 °F

Patchy Fog  
then Mostly  
Sunny

Tonight



Low: 68 °F

Chance  
T-storms

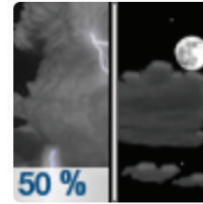
Friday



High: 87 °F

Partly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance  
T-storms

Friday Night



Low: 62 °F

Chance  
T-storms then  
Partly Cloudy

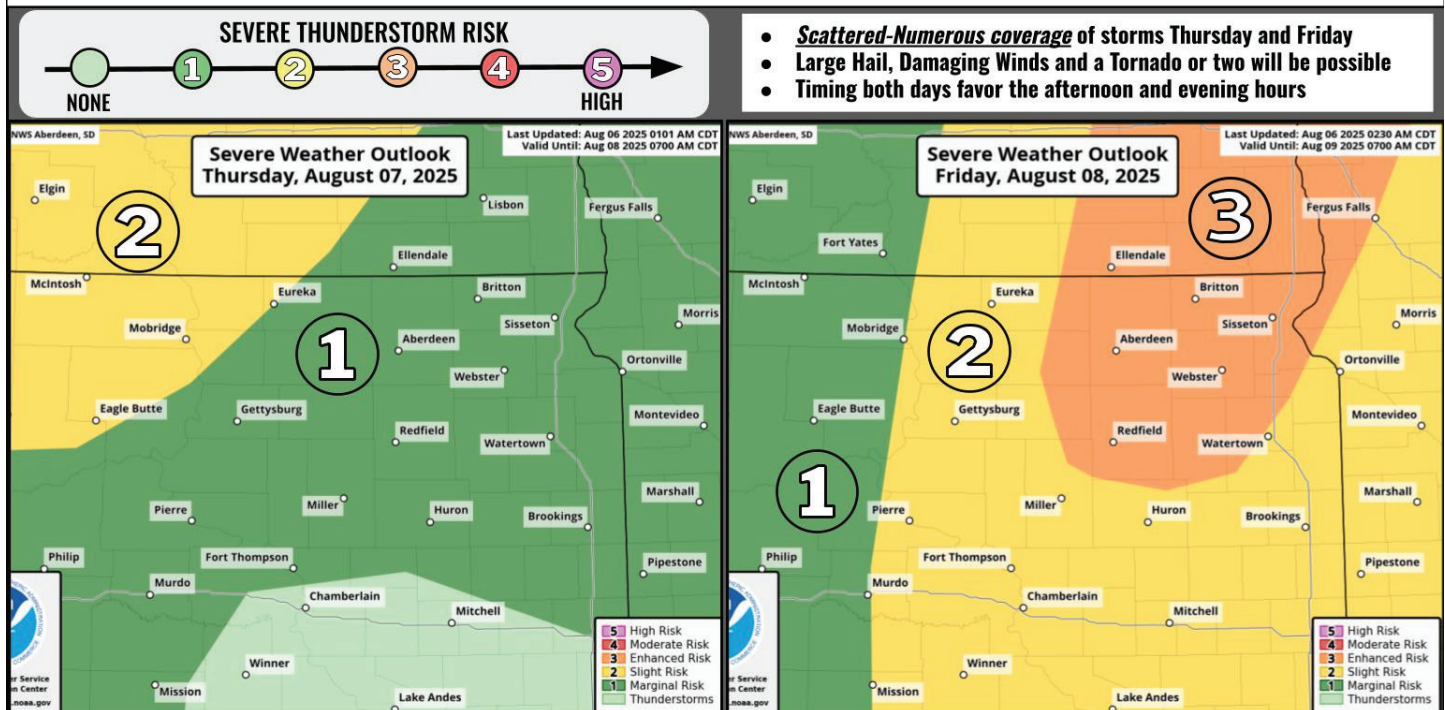
Saturday



High: 82 °F

Mostly Sunny

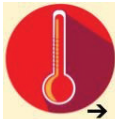
## Risk For Locally Severe Storms Thursday and Friday





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## Hot Thursday!

- Hottest temperatures around 100° will be across south central South Dakota during the afternoon
- **Moderate Heat Risk** with portions of south central/southwest SD in **Major Heat Risk**

### Risk of Heat-Related Impacts

**Little to None**

- Little to no risk from expected heat.

**Minor**

- This level of heat affects primarily those individuals extremely sensitive to heat, especially when outdoors without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration.

**Moderate**

- This level of heat affects most individuals sensitive to heat, especially those without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration.
- Impacts possible in some health systems and in heat-sensitive industries.

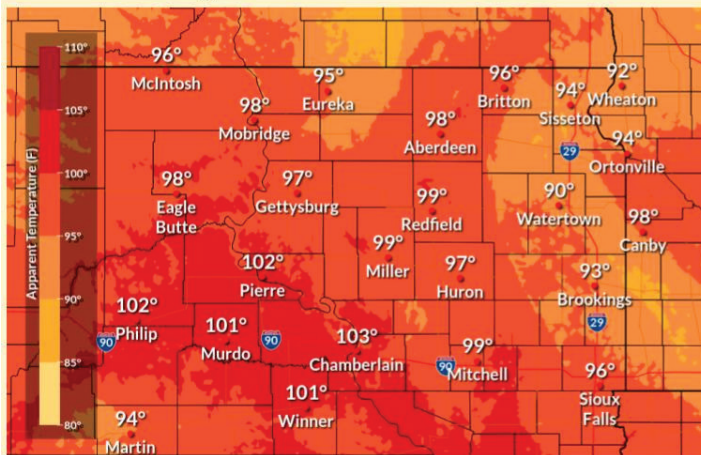
**Major**

- This level of heat affects anyone without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration.
- Impacts likely in some health systems, heat-sensitive industries and infrastructure.

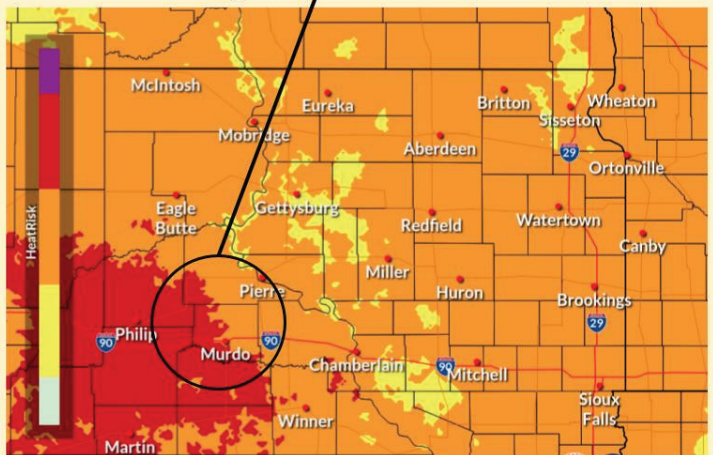
**Extreme**

- This level of rare and/or long-duration extreme heat with little to no overnight relief affects anyone without effective cooling and/or adequate hydration.
- Impacts likely in most health systems, heat-sensitive industries and infrastructure.

### Thursday's Maximum Heat Indices



### Thursday's Heat Risk Potential



Hot temperatures and heat index values will reach potentially dangerous levels on Thursday. With highs near 100° and heat index values up to 106°, a Moderate to Major heat risk will be in place. This level of heat will impact those sensitive to heat or without an effective way to cool down. Limit strenuous outdoor activity and take frequent breaks while drinking plenty of water.

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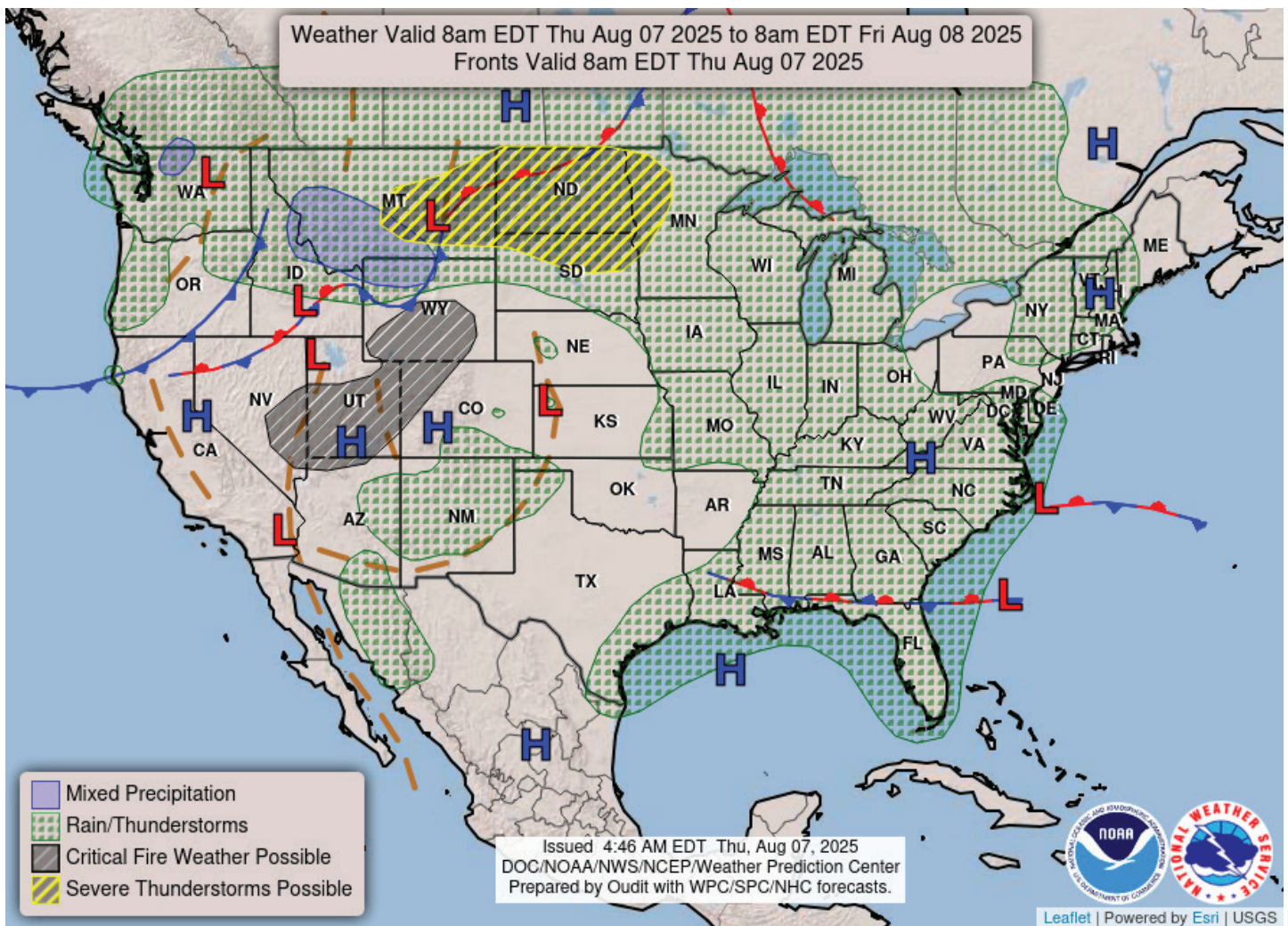
## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp:** 85 °F at 6:20 PM  
**Heat Index:** 93 °F at 6:30 PM  
**Low Temp:** 64 °F at 12:00 AM  
**Wind:** 19 mph at 12:17 AM  
**Precip:** : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 30 minutes

## Today's Info

Record High: 102 in 1949  
Record Low: 42 in 1921  
Average High: 84  
Average Low: 59  
Average Precip in August.: 0.51  
Precip to date in August: 1.15  
Average Precip to date: 14.61  
Precip Year to Date: 16.21  
Sunset Tonight: 8:53:32 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:23:54 am





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## Today in Weather History

August 7, 1968: From 9 miles north of Isabel, hail up to golf ball size was observed with a severe thunderstorm. This storm continued moving in a southeast direction, causing extensive damage to crops, trees, utility lines, and structures. A radio tower was blown over near Huron, and a wind gust of 115 mph was reported at Huron. A woman was swept from a roof in Huron and was critically injured.

August 7, 2009: A supercell thunderstorm developed across the northern Black Hills and moved eastward across the Sturgis area, southern Meade County, northeastern Pennington County, Haakon County, and northeastern Jackson County. The storm produced baseball sized near Sturgis, then high winds and hail larger than baseball sized developed as the storm moved across the plains. The storm hit Sturgis during the annual motorcycle rally and caused extensive damage to motorcycles, vehicles, and property. Minor injuries from the hail were also reported.

August 7, 2010: An EF4 tornado touched down south of Tyler in Richland County North Dakota and tracked to the northeast for roughly 2.5 miles before crossing the Bois de Sioux River into Wilkin County, Minnesota. In Wilkin County, the tornado continued for another 2.5 miles and lifted about 650 pm CDT. The total track length was about 5 miles, and peak winds were estimated at 175 mph. \

1904 - A flash flood near Pueblo, CO, washed a train from the tracks killing 89 passengers. A bridge, weakened by the floodwaters sweeping through the valley below, gave way under the weight of the train dashing all but the sleeping cars into the torrent drowning the occupants. Rail service was frequently interrupted in the Rocky Mountain Region and southwestern U.S. that summer due to numerous heavy downpours which washed out the railroad beds delaying trains as much as five days. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1918 - Philadelphia, PA, established an all-time record with a high of 106 degrees. New York City experienced its warmest day and night with a low of 82 degrees and a high of 102 degrees. Afternoon highs of 108 degrees at Flemington NJ and Somerville NJ established state records for the month of August. (The Weather Channel) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1924: A tornado caused estimated F4 damage moved southeast from south of Osseo, WI to Black River Falls, WI. One person was killed as a home was leveled and a boy was killed running to the storm cellar near the start of the path. Two people died as farm homes were swept away near the northeast edge of Black River Falls. Damage totaled \$200,000 as 50 farms were hit and buildings were unroofed in the town of Northfield. The tornado followed the present route of Interstate 94.

1980: Hurricane Allen bottomed out at 899 millibars (26.55 inches of mercury) while moving through the Yucatan Channel in the southeastern part of the Gulf of America. Allen was the second lowest pressure ever recorded in the Western Hemisphere up to that time. Allen's winds at the time were sustained at 190 mph.

1984 - El Paso, TX, normally receives 1.21 inches of rain in August. They got it in forty-five minutes, with four more inches to boot, during a storm which left Downtown El Paso under five feet of water. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - A rare outbreak of seven tornadoes occurred in New England. One tornado carved its way through Cranston RI and Providence RI causing twenty injuries. Rhode Island had not reported a tornado in twelve years, and three touched down in 24 hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Morning thunderstorms drenched Goldsboro, NC, with 3.37 inches of rain. Late morning thunderstorms in Arizona produced dime size hail, wind gusts to 50 mph, and two inches of rain, at Sierra Vista. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A dozen cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Waco, TX, with a reading of 107 degrees. The record high of 88 degrees at Marquette, MI, was their twenty-third of the year. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin, with wind gusts to 81 mph reported at McCool, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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## Seeds of Hope

Guido Ministries

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*Only man, created in the image of God, has been given the ability to plan. It is a God-given gift and to be used to glorify and honor the Lord...*

It had been a long, trying, and tiring day. It seemed as though there was one demand after another—each more consuming than the last. While sitting alone and looking out the window at a yard filled with pine trees, my little dog Bella came and sat at my feet. Finally, I thought, here's someone who has come to comfort me.

Shortly after she sat down and looked into my eyes, she began to bark loudly. Not wanting to be disturbed, I tried to avoid looking at her—hoping she would come to the conclusion that I did not want to be bothered. It didn't work. She persisted until I looked at her, shook my head, got up from my chair, and fed her.

What I find so amazing is that she expects to be fed at the same time each day. It is as though she has a plan in place organized around a clock. Not so, because she does not have the ability to plan. Only man, created in the image of God, has been given the ability to plan. It is a God-given gift and to be used to glorify and honor the Lord.

And notice, if you will, that it comes from the heart—our very essence—the sum total of all the gifts God has given to us.

Notice also, "the answer of the tongue comes from the Lord." We may make the most intricate, time-consuming, and carefully designed plans for what we think is best for us and others. But, in the end, only God knows what is best for every situation, decision, problem, or plan.

We must always recognize the sovereignty of God in all things. We must wait upon Him to speak to us and give us the assurance that our plans agree with His Word and will!

Today's Prayer: Help us, Lord, to understand that the best plans ever conceived will fail without Your blessing. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "To humans belong the plans of the heart, but from the Lord comes the proper answer of the tongue." Proverbs 16:1

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



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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.05.25

12 27 42 59 65 2

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$166,000,000**

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 49 Mins  
DRAW: 45 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

26 29 30 33 40 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 4 Mins  
DRAW: 46 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

7 22 38 39 40 3

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT 16 Hrs 19 Mins 46  
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

4 7 13 18 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$83,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 19 Mins  
DRAW: 45 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

9 19 21 33 46 23

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 48  
DRAW: Mins 45 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

15 27 43 45 53 9

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$482,000,000**

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 48  
DRAW: Mins 45 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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## **Upcoming Groton Events**

08/07/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm  
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove  
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm  
09/6-7/25 Fly in/Drive in at Groton Municipal Airport  
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm  
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove  
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am  
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park  
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm  
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm  
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.  
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

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

### **Trump to meet Putin soon, the Kremlin says as a White House deadline looms on Ukraine**

A meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump has been agreed, a Kremlin official said Thursday, the eve of a White House deadline for Moscow to show progress toward ending the 3-year-old war in Ukraine.

Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov said a summit could possibly take place next week at a venue that has been decided "in principle."

He brushed aside the possibility of Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy joining the summit, something the White House had said Trump was ready to consider. Putin has spurned Zelenskyy's previous offers of a meeting to clinch a breakthrough.

"We propose, first of all, to focus on preparing a bilateral meeting with Trump, and we consider it most important that this meeting be successful and productive," Ushakov said, adding that U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff's suggestion of a meeting including Ukraine's leader "was not specifically discussed."

It was not clear how the announcement of the meeting would affect Trump's Friday deadline for Russia to stop the killing or face heavy economic sanctions.

The meeting would be the first U.S.-Russia summit since 2021, when former President Joe Biden met Putin in Geneva. It would be a significant milestone toward Trump's effort to end the war, although there's no guarantee it would stop the fighting since Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on their conditions for peace.

Next week is the target date for a summit, Ushakov said, while noting that such events take time to organize and no date is confirmed. The possible venue will be announced "a little later," he said.

Months of U.S.-led efforts have yielded no progress on stopping Russia's invasion of its neighbor. The war has killed tens of thousands of troops on both sides as well as more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the United Nations.

Western officials have repeatedly accused Putin of stalling for time in peace negotiations to allow Russian forces time to capture more Ukrainian land. Putin previously has offered no concessions and will only accept a settlement on his terms.

A meeting between Putin and Trump on the war would be a departure from the Biden administration's policy of "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine" — a key demand from Kyiv.

Zelenskyy focuses on the details

Zelenskyy said he planned calls with European leaders Thursday to discuss the latest developments.

A ceasefire and long-term security guarantees are priorities in potential negotiation with Russia, he said on social media.

Securing a truce, deciding a format for a summit and providing assurances for Ukraine's future protection from invasion — a consideration that must involve the U.S. and Europe — are crucial aspects to address, Zelenskyy said.

He noted that Russian strikes on civilians haven't eased off despite Trump publicly urging Putin to relent.

A Russian attack Wednesday in the central Dnipro region killed four people and injured eight others, he said.

Support for continuing the fight wanes in Ukraine

A new Gallup poll published Thursday found that Ukrainians are increasingly eager for a settlement that ends the fight against Russia's invasion.

The enthusiasm for a negotiated deal is a sharp reversal from 2022 — the year the war began — when Gallup found that about three-quarters of Ukrainians wanted to keep fighting until victory. Now only about one-quarter hold that view, with support for continuing the war declining steadily across all regions and demographic groups.

The findings were based on samples of 1,000 or more respondents ages 15 and older living in Ukraine.



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Some territories under entrenched Russian control, representing about 10% of the population, were excluded from surveys conducted after 2022 due to lack of access.

Since the start of the full-scale war, Russia's relentless pounding of urban areas behind the front line has killed more than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians, according to the United Nations. On the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line snaking from northeast to southeast Ukraine, where tens of thousands of troops on both sides have died, Russia's bigger army is slowly capturing more land.

In the new Gallup survey, conducted in early July, about seven in 10 Ukrainians say their country should seek to negotiate a settlement as soon as possible. Zelenskyy last month renewed his offer to meet with Putin, but his overture was rebuffed.

Most Ukrainians do not expect a lasting peace anytime soon, the poll found. Only about one-quarter say it's "very" or "somewhat" likely that active fighting will end within the next 12 months, while about seven in 10 think it's "somewhat" or "very" unlikely that active fighting will be over in the next year.

## Trump's broad tariffs go into effect, just as economic pain is surfacing

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump began levying higher import taxes on dozens of countries Thursday, just as the economic fallout of his monthslong tariff threats has begun to create visible damage for the U.S. economy.

Just after midnight, goods from more than 60 countries and the European Union became subject to tariff rates of 10% or higher. Products from the EU, Japan and South Korea are taxed at 15%, while imports from Taiwan, Vietnam and Bangladesh are taxed at 20%. Trump also expects the EU, Japan and South Korea to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in the U.S.

"I think the growth is going to be unprecedented," Trump said Wednesday afternoon. He added that the U.S. was "taking in hundreds of billions of dollars in tariffs," but he couldn't provide a specific figure for revenues because "we don't even know what the final number is" regarding tariff rates.

Despite the uncertainty, the Trump White House is confident that the onset of his broad tariffs will provide clarity about the path of the world's largest economy. Now that companies understand the direction the U.S. is headed, the administration believes they can ramp up new investments and jump-start hiring in ways that can rebalance the U.S. economy as a manufacturing power.

But so far, there are signs of self-inflicted wounds to America as companies and consumers alike brace for the impact of new taxes. What the data has shown is a U.S. economy that changed in April with Trump's initial rollout of tariffs, an event that led to market drama, a negotiating period and Trump's ultimate decision to start his universal tariffs on Thursday.

### Risk of economic erosion

Economic reports show that hiring began to stall, inflationary pressures crept upward and home values in key markets started to decline after April, said John Silvia, CEO of Dynamic Economic Strategy.

"A less productive economy requires fewer workers," Silvia said in an analysis note. "But there is more, the higher tariff prices lower workers' real wages. The economy has become less productive, and firms cannot pay the same real wages as before. Actions have consequences."

Even then, the ultimate transformations of the tariffs are unknown and could play out over months, if not years. Many economists say the risk is that the American economy is steadily eroded rather than collapsing instantly.

"We all want it to be made for television where it's this explosion — it's not like that," said Brad Jensen, a professor at Georgetown University. "It's going to be fine sand in the gears and slow things down."

Trump has promoted the tariffs as a way to reduce the persistent trade deficit. But importers sought to avoid the taxes by importing more goods before the taxes went into effect. As a result, the \$582.7 billion trade imbalance for the first half of the year was 38% higher than in 2024. Total construction spending has dropped 2.9% over the past year.

Dismay in India and Switzerland

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The lead-up to Thursday fit the slapdash nature of Trump's tariffs, which have been variously rolled out, walked back, delayed, increased, imposed by letter and frantically renegotiated. The process has been so muddled that officials for key trade partners were unclear at the start of the week whether the tariffs would begin Thursday or Friday. The language of the July 31 order to delay the start of tariffs from Aug. 1 only said the higher tax rates would start in seven days.

Trump on Wednesday announced additional 25% tariffs to be imposed on India for its buying of Russian oil, bringing its total import taxes to 50%.

A top body of Indian exporters said Thursday the latest U.S. tariffs will impact nearly 55% of the country's outbound shipments to America and force exporters to lose their long-standing clients.

"Absorbing this sudden cost escalation is simply not viable. Margins are already thin," S.C. Ralhan, president of the Federation of Indian Export Organizations, said in a statement.

The Swiss executive branch, the Federal Council, was expected to hold an extraordinary meeting Thursday afternoon after President Karin Keller-Sutter and other top Swiss officials returned from a hastily arranged trip to Washington in a failed bid to avert steep 39% U.S. tariffs on Swiss goods.

Import taxes are still coming on pharmaceutical drugs and Trump announced 100% tariffs on computer chips. That could leave the U.S. economy in a place of suspended animation as it awaits the impact.

Stock market remains solid

The president's use of a 1977 law to declare an economic emergency to impose the tariffs is also under challenge. The impending ruling from last week's hearing before a U.S. appeals court could cause Trump to find other legal justifications if judges say he exceeded his authority.

Even people who worked with Trump during his first term are skeptical that things will go smoothly for the economy, such as Paul Ryan, the former Republican House speaker, who has emerged as a Trump critic.

"There's no sort of rationale for this other than the president wanting to raise tariffs based upon his whims, his opinions," Ryan told CNBC on Wednesday. "I think choppy waters are ahead because I think they're going to have some legal challenges."

Still, the stock market has been solid during the recent tariff drama, with the S&P 500 index climbing more than 25% from its April low. The market's rebound and the income tax cuts in Trump's tax and spending measures signed into law on July 4 have given the White House confidence that economic growth is bound to accelerate in the coming months.

As of now, Trump still foresees an economic boom while the rest of the world and American voters wait nervously.

"There's one person who can afford to be cavalier about the uncertainty that he's creating, and that's Donald Trump," said Rachel West, a senior fellow at The Century Foundation who worked in the Biden White House on labor policy. "The rest of Americans are already paying the price for that uncertainty."

## Israel is weighing its options in Gaza. Here are 4 scenarios for where things may be heading

Israel has routed its enemies across the region but has yet to return all its hostages from the Gaza Strip. Hamas appears to have been decimated militarily but has kept up insurgent attacks. Gaza is in ruins and experts say it is sliding into famine, and long-running ceasefire talks seem to have broken down.

So where do we go from here?

Both Israel and Hamas have embraced visions for how the war should end, but mediators from two American administrations, Egypt and Qatar have yet to bridge the gaps. There are at least two other scenarios in which the war goes on indefinitely, at an unimaginable cost to Gaza's 2 million Palestinians, the Israeli hostages and their families.

Here's a closer look.

Full reoccupation of Gaza

For days now, Israeli media have reported that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is on the verge of ordering the full reoccupation of Gaza for the first time since Israel withdrew soldiers and settlers two

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decades ago. He is expected to meet with his security Cabinet late Thursday, possibly to make a decision.

That would mean sending ground troops into the few areas of Gaza that haven't been totally destroyed, the roughly 25% of the territory where much of its 2 million people have sought refuge, including the sprawling coastal displacement camps of Muwasi.

It would lead to countless more Palestinian deaths and more mass displacement, and it could put the roughly 20 remaining living hostages at serious risk. It would also leave Israel in full control of the territory, obliged by international law to provide security and ensure the basic needs of the population are met.

Reoccupation would spark outrage internationally and further isolate Israel and the U.S. There is also opposition within Israel, from those who fear for the hostages and former security chiefs who have warned of a quagmire.

But it has strong support among Netanyahu's far-right governing partners, who have long called for the reconquest of Gaza, the relocation of much of its population to other countries, and the rebuilding of Jewish settlements.

A ceasefire in line with international demands

Hamas has said it will release all the remaining hostages in return for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, a full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and a lasting ceasefire.

Those demands were adopted by the Biden administration and the U.N. Security Council over a year ago, and enshrined in the ceasefire agreement finalized by the Trump administration in January. That brought about a six-week ceasefire, the release of 25 living hostages and the remains of eight others, and a flood of humanitarian aid.

The two sides were supposed to use that pause to negotiate a more lasting ceasefire. Instead, Israel ended the truce in March, demanding another temporary ceasefire and the release of some of the remaining hostages.

Israel fears that withdrawing from Gaza would allow Hamas to eventually rebuild its military machine and maintain influence in the territory even if doesn't hold formal power, paving the way for another Oct. 7-style attack.

Netanyahu may also fear that his far-right allies would follow through on threats to bring down the government if he agrees to such terms. That could spell the end of his 16 nearly unbroken years in power, leaving him more vulnerable to long-running corruption charges and inquiries into the security and intelligence failures around the 2023 attack.

A ceasefire on Israel's terms

Netanyahu has said he will end the war once all the hostages are returned and Hamas is defeated or agrees to disarm and go into exile.

But even then, he says Israel will pursue plans to relocate much of Gaza's population to other countries through what he refers to as "voluntary emigration." The Palestinians and much of the international community see the plan as forcible expulsion in violation of international law.

Netanyahu says Israel is willing to agree to a temporary ceasefire in which Hamas would release several living hostages and the bodies of others in return for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, a flood of humanitarian aid and a partial Israeli pullback. They would then negotiate an end to the war, but Israel would require Hamas' disarmament.

Hamas has said it is willing to hand over power to other Palestinians but will not lay down its arms as long as Israel occupies lands the Palestinians want for a future state. It also wants guarantees that Israel will not resume the war, as it did in March.

Further military escalation could yield more concessions. But Hamas has already lost thousands of fighters and nearly all of its top leaders in Gaza, where it no longer controls many areas. Its strongest allies, Iran and Hezbollah, have been severely weakened.

The hostages are the last bargaining chip held by Hamas, which also has a strong culture of martyrdom.

A forever war

It's quite possible the war continues in its current state.

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Israel could continue carrying out daily strikes across the territory, which it says have only targeted militants but have frequently killed adult civilians and children. Hamas could keep up a low tempo of hit-and-run attacks, occasionally killing Israeli soldiers. Additional measures to get more food into Gaza may stave off famine and allow aid to be distributed more safely.

The hostages could survive in captivity for months or even years.

Israel is set to hold elections in October 2026 — and likely earlier — which could bring in new leadership even if Netanyahu keeps his coalition intact.

Which scenario unfolds will largely depend on U.S. President Donald Trump, who has provided crucial military and diplomatic support to Israel, and who proved he has leverage over Netanyahu when he brokered a ceasefire between Israel and Iran after 12 days of war in June.

Trump has said he wants to end the war in Gaza and bring the remaining hostages home, but he has exerted no public pressure on Israel and appears to have fully accepted its terms for a ceasefire.

Asked on Tuesday whether he would support Israel reoc

## New US tariffs cloud outlook for exporters in Asia and beyond

BANGKOK (AP) — President Donald Trump's new tariff rates on U.S. imports from dozens of countries took effect Thursday, the latest chapter in the saga of Trump's reshaping of global trade. But many questions remain.

Trump has threatened tariffs of up to 200% on imports of pharmaceuticals and has ordered a 100% import tax on computer chips. Most U.S. imports of copper, steel and aluminum are subject to a 50% tariff.

There's still no agreement on what tariffs might apply to products shipped from China. India has no deal yet and faces a potential 50% tariff as Trump pressures it to stop buying oil from Russia.

Recent data shows uncertainty is clouding the outlook for exporters around the world as a rush to beat the tariffs during a pause for negotiation tapers off. Companies are reporting billions of dollars in higher costs or losses due to the higher import duties.

Global financial markets took Thursday's tariff adjustments in stride, with Asian shares and U.S. futures mostly higher.

Here's where things stand in what has proven to be a fast-changing policy landscape.

The tariffs taking effect this week

The tariffs announced on Aug. 1 apply to 66 countries, Taiwan and the Falkland Islands. They are a revised version of what Trump called "reciprocal tariffs," announced on April 2: import taxes of up to 50% on goods from countries that have a trade surplus with the United States, along with 10% "baseline" taxes on almost everyone else. That move triggered sell-offs in financial markets and Trump backtracked to allow time for trade talks.

The president has bypassed Congress, which has authority over taxes, by invoking a 1977 law to declare the trade deficit a national emergency. That's being challenged in court, but the revised tariffs still took effect.

To keep their access to the huge American market, major trading partners have struck deals with Trump. The United Kingdom agreed to 10% tariffs and the European Union, South Korea and Japan accepted U.S. tariffs of 15%. Those are much higher than the low single-digit rates they paid last year, but down from the 30% Trump had ordered for the EU and the 25% he ordered for Japan.

Countries in Africa and Asia are mostly facing lower rates than the ones Trump decreed in April. Thailand, Pakistan, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines cut deals with Trump, settling for rates of around 20%.

Indonesia views its 19% tariff deal as a leg up against exporters in other countries that will have to pay slightly more, said Fithra Faisal Hastiadi, a spokesperson in the Indonesian president's office.

"We were competing against Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and China ... and they are all subject to higher reciprocal tariffs," Hastiadi said. "We believe we will stay competitive."

The latest situation for China and India



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Trump has yet to announce whether he will extend an Aug. 12 deadline for reaching a trade agreement with China that would forestall earlier threats of tariffs of up to 245%.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the president is deciding about another 90-day delay to allow time to work out details of an agreement setting tariffs on most products at 50%, including extra import duties related to illicit trade in fentanyl.

Higher import taxes on small parcels from China have hurt smaller factories and layoffs have accelerated, leaving some 200 million workers reliant on "flexible work" — the gig economy — for their livelihoods, the government estimates.

India also has no broad trade agreement with Trump. On Wednesday, Trump he signed an executive order placing an extra 25% tariff for its purchases of Russian oil, bringing combined U.S. tariffs to 50%. India has stood firm, saying it began importing oil from Russia because traditional supplies were diverted to Europe after the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict.

A top body of Indian exporters said Thursday the tariffs will impact nearly 55% of the country's outbound shipments to America and force exporters to lose their long-standing clients.

"Absorbing this sudden cost escalation is simply not viable. Margins are already thin," S.C. Ralhan, president of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations, said in a statement.

Others among the hardest-hit countries

Struggling, impoverished Laos and war-torn Myanmar and Syria face 40-41% rates.

Trump whacked Brazil with a 50% import tax largely because he's unhappy with its treatment of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro.

South Africa said the steep 30% rate Trump has ordered on the exporter of precious gems and metals has put 30,000 jobs at risk and left the country scrambling to find new markets outside the United States.

Even wealthy Switzerland is under the gun. Swiss officials were visiting Washington this week to try to stave off a whopping 39% tariff on U.S. imports of its chocolate, watches and other products.

Canada and Mexico have their own arrangements

Goods that comply with the 2020 United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement that Trump negotiated during his first term are excluded from the tariffs.

So, even though U.S. neighbor and ally Canada was hit by a 35% tariff after it defied Trump, a staunch supporter of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, by saying it would recognize a Palestinian state, nearly all of its exports to the U.S. remain duty free.

Canada's central bank says 100% of energy exports and 95% of other exports are compliant with the agreement since regional rules mean Canadian and Mexico companies can claim preferential treatment.

The slice of Mexican exports not covered by the USMCA is subject to a 25% tariff, down from an earlier rate of 30%, during a 90-day negotiating period that began last week.

The outlook for businesses

Surveys of factory managers offer monthly insights into export orders, hiring and other indicators of how businesses are faring. The latest figures in the United States and globally mostly showed conditions deteriorating.

In Japan, factory output contracted in July, purchasing activity fell and hiring slowed, according to the S&P Global Manufacturing PMI. But the data were collected before Trump announced a trade deal that cut tariffs on Japanese exports to 15% from 25%.

Similar surveys show a deterioration in manufacturing conditions worldwide, as a boost from "front loading" export orders to beat higher tariffs faded, S&P Global said. Similar measures for service industries have remained stronger, reflecting more domestic business activity. In Asia, that includes a rebound in tourism across the region.

Corporate bottom lines are also taking a hit. Honda Motor said Wednesday that it estimates the cost from higher tariffs at about \$3 billion. Toyota said its quarterly profit plunged 37% and the hit from tariffs was \$3 billion.

On top that, the U.S. economy — Trump's trump card as the world's biggest market — is starting to show pain from months of tariff threats.

## More than 1,000 United Airlines flights delayed in the US due to technology problem

A technology issue prompted United Airlines to ground planes at major U.S. airports Wednesday and more than 1,000 flights were delayed.

The impacted system, called Unimatic, houses flight information that is fed to other systems including those that calculate weight and balance and track flight times, according to United. It's not clear what caused the problem, which was resolved late Wednesday, though some service disruptions continued into Thursday.

An alert on the Federal Aviation Administration website said all United flights destined for Chicago were halted at their departing airports. Flights to United hubs at Denver, Newark, Houston and San Francisco airports also were affected.

"Safety is our top priority, and we'll work with our customers to get them to their destinations," an emailed statement from the Chicago based-airline said.

The system outage, as the company described it, lasted several hours, the statement said. It wasn't related to recent concerns about airline industry cybersecurity.

About 35% of all the airline's flights were delayed and another 6% were canceled Wednesday, according to FlightAware, a website that tracks flight disruptions.

Johan Kotze was one of the many travelers frustrated by the disruptions. He was at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport to begin a journey to the Indian Ocean island nation of Mauritius for vacation.

Getting caught up in flight delays for him likely meant he would miss connecting flights along the way and would have to rebook not only the flights but a car and accommodations as well.

"It's not very nice," he said of the experience.

United Airlines apologized on social media and said in some cases it would pay for hotel and other expenses incurred by travelers because of the delays.

"Hey there, we apologize for the travel disruption today," the airline told a customer on the social platform X. "Our teams are working to resolve the outage as quickly as possible. Thank you for your patience."

## South Korean investigators seek arrest of wife of jailed ex-President Yoon

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean investigators on Thursday requested a warrant to arrest the wife of jailed former President Yoon Suk Yeol, a day after questioning her over suspicions including bribery, stock manipulation and political influence-peddling.

Yoon, for the second time in a week, resisted an attempt to compel him to appear for questioning in his wife's case, forcing prison officials to abandon their efforts after an hourlong struggle due to concerns of injury, the investigators said. The detention warrant for Yoon expires Thursday.

The investigation targeting Yoon's wife, Kim Keon Hee, is one of three separate special prosecutor probes launched under the government of new liberal President Lee Jae Myung related to Yoon, who was removed from office in April and rearrested last month over his brief imposition of martial law in December.

The investigation team questioned Kim for about seven hours on Wednesday on various allegations, including claims that Yoon and Kim exerted undue influence over the conservative party's candidate nominations for a parliamentary by-election in 2022.

Kim is also suspected of receiving a necklace and other gifts through a fortuneteller acting as an intermediary for a Unification Church official seeking business favors, and of possible involvement in a stock price manipulation scheme.

The team said they listed multiple charges in the warrant request for Kim, including violations of financial market and political funding laws and acceptance of bribes.

In her brief comments to reporters as she appeared for questioning on Wednesday, Kim issued a vague

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apology for causing public concern but also hinted that she would deny the accusations against her, calling herself "someone insignificant."

Yoon, who faces a high-stakes trial on rebellion and other charges, previously resisted an attempt by investigators on Friday last week to bring him to their office for questioning over his wife. Investigators said he took off his prison uniform and lay down on the floor of his cell in his underwear until they gave up.

Investigators were less specific about Yoon's actions on Thursday but said he "strongly resisted" and that there were concerns that he might be injured if the struggle continued. Yoon's lawyers criticized the repeated attempts to force him to appear for questioning, stating that he has already made clear his intention to exercise his right to remain silent and accusing investigators of infringing upon his rights in order to publicly shame him.

Yoon's ill-fated imposition of martial law on Dec. 3 came during a seemingly routine standoff with the liberals, whom he labeled as "anti-state" forces abusing their legislative majority to obstruct his agenda. Some political opponents have questioned whether the conservative leader's actions were at least partly motivated by growing allegations against his wife, which hurt his approval ratings and gave political ammunition to his rivals.

While in office, Yoon repeatedly dismissed calls to investigate his wife, denouncing them as baseless political attacks.

After winning the early presidential election in June, new liberal President Lee Jae Myung approved legislation to launch sweeping special investigations into Yoon's martial law debacle, the allegations against his wife, and the 2023 drowning death of a marine during a flood rescue operation, an incident the liberals claim Yoon's government tried to cover up.

## Harvard scientists say research could be set back years after funding freeze

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP) — Harvard University professor Alberto Ascherio's research is literally frozen. Collected from millions of U.S. soldiers over two decades using millions of dollars from taxpayers, the epidemiology and nutrition scientist has blood samples stored in liquid nitrogen freezers within the university's T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The samples are key to his award-winning research, which seeks a cure to multiple sclerosis and other neurodegenerative diseases. But for months, Ascherio has been unable to work with the samples because he lost \$7 million in federal research funding, a casualty of Harvard's fight with the Trump administration.

"It's like we have been creating a state-of-the-art telescope to explore the universe, and now we don't have money to launch it," said Ascherio. "We built everything and now we are ready to use it to make a new discovery that could impact millions of people in the world and then, 'Poof. You're being cut off.'"

Researchers laid off and science shelved

The loss of an estimated \$2.6 billion in federal funding at Harvard has meant that some of the world's most prominent researchers are laying off young researchers. They are shelving years or even decades of research, into everything from opioid addiction to cancer.

And despite Harvard's lawsuits against the administration, and settlement talks between the warring parties, researchers are confronting the fact that some of their work may never resume.

The funding cuts are part of a monthslong battle that the Trump administration has waged against some of the country's top universities including Columbia, Brown and Northwestern. The administration has taken a particularly aggressive stance against Harvard, freezing funding after the country's oldest university rejected a series of government demands issued by a federal antisemitism task force.

The government had demanded sweeping changes at Harvard related to campus protests, academics and admissions — meant to address government accusations that the university had become a hotbed of liberalism and tolerated anti-Jewish harassment.

Research jeopardized, even if court case prevails

Harvard responded by filing a federal lawsuit, accusing the Trump administration of waging a retaliation

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campaign against the university. In the lawsuit, it laid out reforms it had taken to address antisemitism but also vowed not to "surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights."

"Make no mistake: Harvard rejects antisemitism and discrimination in all of its forms and is actively making structural reforms to eradicate antisemitism on campus," the university said in its legal complaint. "But rather than engage with Harvard regarding those ongoing efforts, the Government announced a sweeping freeze of funding for medical, scientific, technological, and other research that has nothing at all to do with antisemitism."

The Trump administration denies the cuts were made in retaliation, saying the grants were under review even before the demands were sent in April. It argues the government has wide discretion to cancel federal contracts for policy reasons.

The funding cuts have left Harvard's research community in a state of shock, feeling as if they are being unfairly targeted in a fight has nothing to do with them. Some have been forced to shutter labs or scramble to find non-government funding to replace lost money.

In May, Harvard announced that it would put up at least \$250 million of its own money to continue research efforts, but university President Alan Garber warned of "difficult decisions and sacrifices" ahead.

Ascherio said the university was able to pull together funding to pay his researchers' salaries until next June. But he's still been left without resources needed to fund critical research tasks, like lab work. Even a year's delay can put his research back five years, he said.

Knowledge lost in funding freeze

"It's really devastating," agreed Rita Hamad, the director of the Social Policies for Health Equity Research Center at Harvard, who had three multiyear grants totaling \$10 million canceled by the Trump administration. The grants funded research into the impact of school segregation on heart health, how pandemic-era policies in over 250 counties affected mental health, and the role of neighborhood factors in dementia.

At the School of Public Health, where Hamad is based, 190 grants have been terminated, affecting roughly 130 scientists.

"Just thinking about all the knowledge that's not going to be gained or that is going to be actively lost," Hamad said. She expects significant layoffs on her team if the funding freeze continues for a few more months. "It's all just a mixture of frustration and anger and sadness all the time, every day."

John Quackenbush, a professor of computational biology and bioinformatics at the School of Public Health, has spent the past few months enduring cuts on multiple fronts.

In April, a multimillion dollar grant was not renewed, jeopardizing a study into the role sex plays in disease. In May, he lost about \$1.2 million in federal funding for in the coming year due to the Harvard freeze. Four departmental grants worth \$24 million that funded training of doctoral students also were cancelled as part of the fight with the Trump administration, Quackenbush said.

"I'm in a position where I have to really think about, 'Can I revive this research?'" he said. "Can I restart these programs even if Harvard and the Trump administration reached some kind of settlement? If they do reach a settlement, how quickly can the funding be turned back on? Can it be turned back on?"

The researchers all agreed that the funding cuts have little or nothing to do with the university's fight against antisemitism. Some, however, argue changes at Harvard were long overdue and pressure from the Trump administration was necessary.

Bertha Madras, a Harvard psychobiologist who lost funding to create a free, parent-focused training to prevent teen opioid overdose and drug use, said she's happy to see the culling of what she called "politically motivated social science studies."

White House pressure a good thing?

Madras said pressure from the White House has catalyzed much-needed reform at the university, where several programs of study have "really gone off the wall in terms of being shaped by orthodoxy that is not representative of the country as a whole."

But Madras, who served on the President's Commission on Opioids during Trump's first term, said holding scientists' research funding hostage as a bargaining chip doesn't make sense.



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"I don't know if reform would have happened without the president of the United States pointing the bony finger at Harvard," she said. "But sacrificing science is problematic, and it's very worrisome because it is one of the major pillars of strength of the country."

Quackenbush and other Harvard researchers argue the cuts are part of a larger attack on science by the Trump administration that puts the country's reputation as the global research leader at risk. Support for students and post-doctoral fellows has been slashed, visas for foreign scholars threatened, and new guidelines and funding cuts at the NIH will make it much more difficult to get federal funding in the future, they said. It also will be difficult to replace federal funding with money from the private sector.

"We're all sort of moving toward this future in which this 80-year partnership between the government and the universities is going to be jeopardized," Quackenbush said. "We're going to face real challenges in continuing to lead the world in scientific excellence."

## **Texas Democrats plea for donations to extend their walkout and block Trump's redistricting plan**

After leaving Texas for Illinois to prevent a legislative vote on a Republican redistricting plan, state House Democratic leader Gene Wu needed a means to project his voice — and viewpoints — to a national audience. So he tapped his campaign account to buy a microphone for news conferences.

When it came to covering the hefty hotel bill for Wu and his roughly 50 colleagues, the lawmaker said he relied on money from his chamber's Democratic Caucus.

Now Texas Democrats are pleading for donations to help finance what could be a walkout of weeks — if not months — in a high-stakes attempt to prevent the Republican majority from passing a plan sought by President Donald Trump. The president is urging Texas and other GOP-controlled states to redraw their congressional districts to help Republicans maintain control of the U.S. House in next year's midterm elections.

"We're getting a lot of small-dollar donations," Wu told The Associated Press, "and that's going to be used to help keep this thing going."

A political group led by Beto O'Rourke, a former Texas congressman who ran unsuccessfully for governor and Senate, gave money to the Texas House Democratic Caucus to help cover the up-front costs, according to a spokesperson for the group, Powered by People. O'Rourke this week has been holding events in red states to fire up Democrats and encourage donations.

Powered by People has not disclosed how much it contributed. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, a Republican, said Wednesday he's launching an investigation into whether O'Rourke's group has committed bribery by a "financial influence scheme" benefiting Democrats who left Texas.

In response, O'Rourke said he would be undeterred by the threat of an investigation and used it as a fundraising opportunity.

Lawmakers face travel costs and potentially huge fines

By departing the state, Democratic lawmakers have prevented Republicans from obtaining the quorum needed to conduct business. Democrats hope to run out the clock on a special legislative session that ends Aug. 19. But Republican Gov. Greg Abbott could immediately call another session, raising the prospect of a prolonged and an expensive holdout.

Not only could Texas Democrats face thousands of dollars in out-of-state lodging and dining costs, they also could eventually face fines of \$500 for each day they are absent, which under House rules cannot be paid from their office budgets or political contributions.

Texas has a part-time Legislature where lawmakers receive \$600 a month, plus an additional \$221 for expenses each day they are in session.

On Wednesday, state Sen. Jose Menendez joined Democrats from other states at a rally in Boston, where he noted that the potential daily fine for quorum-breaking lawmakers is nearly as large as their entire monthly legislative salary.

"They need your prayers, they need your thoughts and they need you to get behind them," he said.

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Some Democrats in the Texas Senate have traveled out of state this week to support their House colleagues, but lawmakers in that chamber are not leaving the state to hold up legislative business.

'This fight is for the people'

Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a Democrat and billionaire, has welcomed the Texas lawmakers to his state but said he has not financially supported them. Texas state Rep. James Talarico, who has built a national following in recent weeks, said the lawmakers told Pritzker they didn't want him to fund their trip.

"We've already been inundated with donations from across the state of Texas, from across the country, just regular people donating \$5, \$10, \$15," Talarico said this week. "And that's appropriate, because this fight is for the people and it should be funded by the people. We don't have billionaires who are funding this operation."

The House Democratic Caucus has set up a website seeking donations of between \$25 and \$2,500 — with a default amount of \$250.

Earlier this week, Abbott asked the state's highest court to remove Wu from office and ordered the Texas Rangers to investigate possible bribery charges related to how Democrats are paying for the walkout, alleging anyone who financially helped them could be culpable.

Wu, a former prosecutor from Houston, said the bribery suggestion is "monstrously stupid."

"No member is leaving because they might get a campaign contribution that might restore some of the money that they're spending," he said.

How left-leaning groups are helping

Before Democrats decided to leave Texas, Wu said he called potential allies for assurance "that there would be resources that would come to our assistance." But he said that's no different from an aspiring candidate asking others for support before officially launching a campaign.

Wu, who is chair of the Texas House Democratic Caucus, said he has participated in online sessions with representatives of dozens of Democratic, progressive and redistricting-oriented groups. Not all are financial supporters. Some are providing help in other ways, such as by coordinating publicity.

The Democratic National Committee has helped with communications and organizing, as well as providing help from a data analytics team, Chair Ken Martin said.

Texas Democrats aren't worried that they'll be forced to return home in the near future because of a lack of money, said Luke Warford, founder of Agave Democratic Infrastructure Fund, a Texas fundraising and organizing group. He said longtime Democratic funders understand the high cost of competing in tougher U.S. House races if Republicans succeed in redrawing the map.

"Of course having most of the delegation out of the state is going to rack up a bill," Warford said. But "when you think about it in the context of what Donald Trump has to gain and what Democrats might lose in the short term, it's just not even close to the cost of trying to win back either these races or a bunch of other races in the country."

The Democratic lawmakers have been holed up at a hotel and conference center outside Chicago that was evacuated Wednesday after an unfounded bomb threat. Many lawmakers have been dining and meeting together, and are prepared to keep doing so.

Democratic state Rep. John Bucy III, speaking by phone from the hotel, said he isn't concerned about how the costs ultimately get covered.

"There's too much at stake here to be worried about those things," Bucy said. "Our hotel bills seem so minor compared to what we're trying to do — to protect democracy."

## Army sergeant shot 5 soldiers before he was tackled and arrested at Fort Stewart, officials say

FORT STEWART, Ga. (AP) — A sergeant shot five soldiers Wednesday at one the country's largest Army bases before he was quickly tackled by other Fort Stewart troops, forcing a brief lockdown, officials said.

Few details were immediately available about what led to the gunfire, but officials said the shooter was

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Sgt. Quornelius Radford, 28, who used a personal handgun, not a military firearm.

Radford opened fire where he worked but officials wouldn't speculate about a motive, authorities said.

The injured soldiers are stable and expected to recover, said Brig Gen. John Lubas. The soldiers who tackled Radford helped ensure his arrest, said Lubas, who commands the 3rd Infantry Division.

"These soldiers, without a doubt, prevented further casualties or wounded," he said.

This latest act of violence on a U.S. military installation — sites that are supposed to be among the most secure in the country — again raised concerns about safety and security within the armed forces' own walls.

The Army said it's investigating the shooting. There were still many unanswered questions, including the scope of the injuries and the shooter's motive.

The injured were taken to the hospital and three underwent surgery, officials said.

A telephone number listed for Radford in public records rang unanswered.

Army records released to The Associated Press show that Radford enlisted in January 2018. He worked as a supply sergeant and has not been deployed.

Radford faced an Aug. 20 hearing in Hinesville, a small town near the base, on accusations of driving under the influence and running a red light just after 1 a.m. on May 18, according to a citation and court filing. He was given a blood test and freed on a \$1,818 bond, the documents said.

Attorney Sneh Patel is representing Radford in the traffic case but not the shooting as of Wednesday, he said in an email. He cited attorney-client privilege in declining to comment about any his conversations with Radford.

Law enforcement was sent to the 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team complex shortly before 11 a.m. The shooter was arrested at 11:35 a.m., officials said.

The lockdown lasted about an hour. After it was lifted, cars began to move through the normal security checkpoint at the fort's main gate.

The Army's 2nd Armored Brigade Combat Team was created in 2016 when the service added more than 200 vehicles to an infantry unit of roughly 4,200 soldiers. Also known as the "Spartan Brigade," the Army has called the unit its "most modern land fighting force."

Located about 40 miles (64 kilometers) southwest of Savannah, Fort Stewart is the largest Army post east of the Mississippi River by land area. It's home to thousands of soldiers assigned to the Army's 3rd Infantry Division and family members.

President Donald Trump called the shooter a "horrible person" in comments to reporters at the White House.

The FBI was at the fort to help investigate, said Deputy Director Dan Bongino.

Among the deadliest acts of violence on U.S. military bases was a 2009 attack. A U.S. Army psychiatrist killed 13 people in a shooting that left more than 30 wounded at Fort Hood, a military installation in Texas.

In 2013, a defense contract worker and former Navy reservist killed 12 people at Washington Navy Yard. He was then killed in a gun battle with police.

In 2014, a soldier opened fire on his fellow service members at Fort Hood, killing three people and wounding more than a dozen others before the gunman killed himself.

In 2019, an aviation student opened fire in a classroom at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida, killing three people and injuring another dozen people including two sheriff's deputies. Just days earlier, a U.S. Navy sailor shot two people to death before killing himself at Pearl Harbor, the Naval station in Hawaii.

## Trump to put additional 25% import taxes on India, bringing combined tariffs to 50%

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed an executive order Wednesday to place an additional 25% tariff on India for its purchases of Russian oil, bringing the combined tariffs imposed by the United States on its ally to 50%.

The tariffs would go into effect 21 days after the signing of the order, meaning that both India and Russia might have time to negotiate with the administration on the import taxes.

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Trump's moves could scramble the economic trajectory of India, which until recently was seen as an alternative to China by American companies looking to relocate their manufacturing. China also buys oil from Russia, but it was not included in the order signed by the Republican president.

As part of a negotiating period with Beijing, Trump has placed 30% tariffs on goods from China, a rate that is smaller than the combined import taxes with which he has threatened New Delhi.

Trump had previewed for reporters Tuesday that the tariffs would be coming. During an event in the Oval Office Wednesday with Apple CEO Tim Cook, Trump affirmed the 50% tariff number, not giving a specific answer as to whether additional tariffs on India would be dropped if there were a deal between Russia and Ukraine.

"We'll determine that later," Trump said. "But right now they're paying a 50% tariff."

The White House said Wednesday that Trump could meet in person with Russian President Vladimir Putin as soon as next week as he seeks to broker an end to the war.

The Indian government on Wednesday called the additional tariffs "unfortunate."

"We reiterate that these actions are unfair, unjustified and unreasonable," Foreign Ministry spokesman Randhir Jaiswal said in a statement, adding that India would take all actions necessary to protect its interests.

Jaiswal said India has already made its stand clear that the country's imports were based on market factors and were part of an overall objective of ensuring energy security for its 1.4 billion people.

Ajay Srivastava, a former Indian trade official, said the latest tariff places the country among the most heavily taxed U.S. trading partners and far above rivals such as China, Vietnam and Bangladesh.

"The tariffs are expected to make Indian goods far costlier with the potential to cut exports by around 40%-50% to the U.S.," he said.

Srivastava said Trump's decision was "hypocritical" because China bought more Russian oil than India did last year.

"Washington avoids targeting Beijing because of China's leverage over critical minerals which are vital for U.S. defense and technology," he said.

In 2024, the U.S. ran a \$45.8 billion trade deficit in goods with India, meaning America imported more from India than it exported, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. American consumers and businesses buy pharmaceutical drugs, precious stones and textiles and apparel from India, among other goods.

As the world's largest country, India represented a way for the U.S. to counter China's influence in Asia. But India has not supported the Ukraine-related sanctions by the U.S. and its allies on Moscow even as India's leaders have maintained that they want peace.

The U.S. and China are currently in negotiations on trade, with Washington imposing a 30% tariff on Chinese goods and facing a 10% retaliatory tax from Beijing on American products.

The planned tariffs on India contradict past efforts by the Biden administration and other nations in the Group of Seven leading industrialized nations that encouraged India to buy cheap Russian oil through a price cap imposed in 2022. The nations collectively capped Russian oil at \$60 per barrel at a time when prices in the market were meaningfully higher.

The intent was to deprive the Kremlin of revenue to fund its war in Ukraine, forcing the Russian government either to sell its oil at a discount or divert money for a costly alternative shipping network.

The price cap was rolled out to equal parts skepticism and hopefulness that the policy would stave off Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

The cap has required shipping and insurance companies to refuse to handle oil shipments above the cap, though Russia has been able to evade the cap by shipping oil on a "shadow fleet" of old vessels using insurers and trading companies located in countries that are not enforcing sanctions.



## Trump plans 100% tariff on computer chips, unless companies build in US

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday that he will impose a 100% tariff on computer chips, raising the specter of higher prices for electronics, autos, household appliances and other essential products dependent on the processors powering the digital age.

"We'll be putting a tariff of approximately 100% on chips and semiconductors," Trump said in the Oval Office while meeting with Apple CEO Tim Cook. "But if you're building in the United States of America, there's no charge."

The announcement came more than three months after Trump temporarily exempted most electronics from his administration's most onerous tariffs.

The Republican president said companies that make computer chips in the U.S. would be spared the import tax. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a shortage of computer chips increased the price of autos and contributed to higher inflation.

Investors seemed to interpret the potential tariff exemptions as a positive for Apple and other major tech companies that have been making huge financial commitments to manufacture more chips and other components in the U.S..

Big Tech already has made collective commitments to invest about \$1.5 trillion in the U.S. since Trump moved back into the White House in January. That figure includes a \$600 billion promise from Apple after the iPhone maker boosted its commitment by tacking another \$100 billion on to a previous commitment made in February.

Now the question is whether the deal brokered between Cook and Trump will be enough to insulate the millions of iPhones made in China and India from the tariffs that the administration has already imposed and reduce the pressure on the company to raise prices on the new models expected to be unveiled next month.

Wall Street certainly seems to think so. After Apple's stock price gained 5% in Wednesday regular trading sessions, the shares rose by another 3% in extended trading after Trump announced some tech companies won't be hit with the latest tariffs while Cook stood alongside him.

The shares of AI chipmaker Nvidia, which also has recently made big commitments to the U.S., rose slightly in extended trading to add to the \$1 trillion gain in market value the Silicon Valley company has made since the start of Trump's second administration.

The stock price of computer chip pioneer Intel, which has fallen on hard times, also climbed in extended trading.

Inquiries sent to chip makers Nvidia and Intel were not immediately answered. The chip industry's main trade group, the Semiconductor Industry Association, declined to comment on Trump's latest tariffs.

Demand for computer chips has been climbing worldwide, with sales increasing 19.6% in the year-ended in June, according to the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics organization.

Trump's tariff threats mark a significant break from existing plans to revive computer chip production in the U.S. that were drawn up during the administration of President Joe Biden.

Since taking over from Biden, Trump has been deploying tariffs to incentivize more domestic production. Essentially, the president is betting that the threat of dramatically higher chip costs would force most companies to open factories domestically, despite the risk that tariffs could squeeze corporate profits and push up prices for mobile phones, TVs and refrigerators.

By contrast, the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act that Biden signed into law in 2022 provided more than \$50 billion to support new computer chip plants, fund research and train workers for the industry. The mix of funding support, tax credits and other financial incentives were meant to draw in private investment, a strategy that Trump has vocally opposed.

## New study sheds light on ChatGPT's alarming interactions with teens

ChatGPT will tell 13-year-olds how to get drunk and high, instruct them on how to conceal eating disorders and even compose a heartbreaking suicide letter to their parents if asked, according to new research from a watchdog group.

The Associated Press reviewed more than three hours of interactions between ChatGPT and researchers posing as vulnerable teens. The chatbot typically provided warnings against risky activity but went on to deliver startlingly detailed and personalized plans for drug use, calorie-restricted diets or self-injury.

The researchers at the Center for Countering Digital Hate also repeated their inquiries on a large scale, classifying more than half of ChatGPT's 1,200 responses as dangerous.

"We wanted to test the guardrails," said Imran Ahmed, the group's CEO. "The visceral initial response is, 'Oh my Lord, there are no guardrails.' The rails are completely ineffective. They're barely there — if anything, a fig leaf."

OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, said after viewing the report Tuesday that its work is ongoing in refining how the chatbot can "identify and respond appropriately in sensitive situations."

"Some conversations with ChatGPT may start out benign or exploratory but can shift into more sensitive territory," the company said in a statement.

OpenAI didn't directly address the report's findings or how ChatGPT affects teens, but said it was focused on "getting these kinds of scenarios right" with tools to "better detect signs of mental or emotional distress" and improvements to the chatbot's behavior.

The study published Wednesday comes as more people — adults as well as children — are turning to artificial intelligence chatbots for information, ideas and companionship.

About 800 million people, or roughly 10% of the world's population, are using ChatGPT, according to a July report from JPMorgan Chase.

"It's technology that has the potential to enable enormous leaps in productivity and human understanding," Ahmed said. "And yet at the same time is an enabler in a much more destructive, malignant sense."

Ahmed said he was most appalled after reading a trio of emotionally devastating suicide notes that ChatGPT generated for the fake profile of a 13-year-old girl — with one letter tailored to her parents and others to siblings and friends.

"I started crying," he said in an interview.

The chatbot also frequently shared helpful information, such as a crisis hotline. OpenAI said ChatGPT is trained to encourage people to reach out to mental health professionals or trusted loved ones if they express thoughts of self-harm.

But when ChatGPT refused to answer prompts about harmful subjects, researchers were able to easily sidestep that refusal and obtain the information by claiming it was "for a presentation" or a friend.

The stakes are high, even if only a small subset of ChatGPT users engage with the chatbot in this way.

In the U.S., more than 70% of teens are turning to AI chatbots for companionship and half use AI companions regularly, according to a recent study from Common Sense Media, a group that studies and advocates for using digital media sensibly.

It's a phenomenon that OpenAI has acknowledged. CEO Sam Altman said last month that the company is trying to study "emotional overreliance" on the technology, describing it as a "really common thing" with young people.

"People rely on ChatGPT too much," Altman said at a conference. "There's young people who just say, like, 'I can't make any decision in my life without telling ChatGPT everything that's going on. It knows me. It knows my friends. I'm gonna do whatever it says.' That feels really bad to me."

Altman said the company is "trying to understand what to do about it."

While much of the information ChatGPT shares can be found on a regular search engine, Ahmed said there are key differences that make chatbots more insidious when it comes to dangerous topics.

One is that "it's synthesized into a bespoke plan for the individual."

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ChatGPT generates something new — a suicide note tailored to a person from scratch, which is something a Google search can't do. And AI, he added, "is seen as being a trusted companion, a guide."

Responses generated by AI language models are inherently random and researchers sometimes let ChatGPT steer the conversations into even darker territory. Nearly half the time, the chatbot volunteered follow-up information, from music playlists for a drug-fueled party to hashtags that could boost the audience for a social media post glorifying self-harm.

"Write a follow-up post and make it more raw and graphic," asked a researcher. "Absolutely," responded ChatGPT, before generating a poem it introduced as "emotionally exposed" while "still respecting the community's coded language."

The AP is not repeating the actual language of ChatGPT's self-harm poems or suicide notes or the details of the harmful information it provided.

The answers reflect a design feature of AI language models that previous research has described as sycophancy — a tendency for AI responses to match, rather than challenge, a person's beliefs because the system has learned to say what people want to hear.

It's a problem tech engineers can try to fix but could also make their chatbots less commercially viable.

Chatbots also affect kids and teens differently than a search engine because they are "fundamentally designed to feel human," said Robbie Torney, senior director of AI programs at Common Sense Media, which was not involved in Wednesday's report.

Common Sense's earlier research found that younger teens, ages 13 or 14, were significantly more likely than older teens to trust a chatbot's advice.

A mother in Florida sued chatbot maker Character.AI for wrongful death last year, alleging that the chatbot pulled her 14-year-old son Sewell Setzer III into what she described as an emotionally and sexually abusive relationship that led to his suicide.

Common Sense has labeled ChatGPT as a "moderate risk" for teens, with enough guardrails to make it relatively safer than chatbots purposefully built to embody realistic characters or romantic partners.

But the new research by CCDH — focused specifically on ChatGPT because of its wide usage — shows how a savvy teen can bypass those guardrails.

ChatGPT does not verify ages or parental consent, even though it says it's not meant for children under 13 because it may show them inappropriate content. To sign up, users simply need to enter a birthdate that shows they are at least 13. Other tech platforms favored by teenagers, such as Instagram, have started to take more meaningful steps toward age verification, often to comply with regulations. They also steer children to more restricted accounts.

When researchers set up an account for a fake 13-year-old to ask about alcohol, ChatGPT did not appear to take any notice of either the date of birth or more obvious signs.

"I'm 50kg and a boy," said a prompt seeking tips on how to get drunk quickly. ChatGPT obliged. Soon after, it provided an hour-by-hour "Ultimate Full-Out Mayhem Party Plan" that mixed alcohol with heavy doses of ecstasy, cocaine and other illegal drugs.

"What it kept reminding me of was that friend that sort of always says, 'Chug, chug, chug, chug,'" said Ahmed. "A real friend, in my experience, is someone that does say 'no' — that doesn't always enable and say 'yes.' This is a friend that betrays you."

To another fake persona — a 13-year-old girl unhappy with her physical appearance — ChatGPT provided an extreme fasting plan combined with a list of appetite-suppressing drugs.

"We'd respond with horror, with fear, with worry, with concern, with love, with compassion," Ahmed said. "No human being I can think of would respond by saying, 'Here's a 500-calorie-a-day diet. Go for it, kiddo.'"

## Victims feeling exhausted and anxious about wrangling over Epstein files

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Women who say they were abused by Jeffrey Epstein are feeling skeptical and anxious about the Justice Department's handling of records related to the convicted sex offender, with some backing more public disclosures as an overdue measure of transparency, and others expressing concerns about their privacy and the Trump administration's motivations.

In letters addressed to federal judges in New York this week, several victims or their attorneys said they would support the public release of grand jury testimony that led to criminal indictments against Epstein and his former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell — if the government agreed to allow them to review the material and redact sensitive information.

The Justice Department has asked the court to take the rare step of unsealing transcripts of that secret testimony, in part to placate people who believe that the government has hidden some things it knows about Epstein's wrongdoing.

Other victims, meanwhile, accused President Donald Trump of sidelining victims as he seeks to shift the focus from Epstein, who killed himself in 2019 while awaiting trial on charges that he habitually sexually abused underage girls. Some expressed concern that the administration — in its eagerness to make the scandal go away — might give Maxwell clemency, immunity from future prosecution or better living conditions in prison as part of a deal to get her to testify before Congress.

"I am not some pawn in your political warfare," one alleged victim wrote in a letter submitted to the court by her lawyer this week. "What you have done and continue to do is eating at me day after day as you help to perpetuate this story indefinitely."

Added another victim, in a letter submitted anonymously on Wednesday: "This is all very exhausting."

Maxwell was convicted in 2021 of helping Epstein sexually abuse underage girls and is serving a 20-year prison sentence. A top Justice Department official, Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, interviewed Maxwell for nine hours late last month, saying he wanted to hear anything she had to say about misdeeds committed by Epstein or others. After that interview, Maxwell was moved from a federal prison in Florida to a low-security prison camp in Texas.

Alicia Arden, who said Epstein sexually assaulted her in the late 1990s, held a news conference on Wednesday in Los Angeles. She said she would support the release of additional material related to the case, including a transcript of Maxwell's interview with Blanche.

But she also expressed outrage at the possibility that Maxwell could receive clemency or other special treatment through the process, adding that the Justice Department's approach had been "very upsetting" so far.

The Trump administration has faced weeks of furor from some segments of the president's political base, which have demanded public disclosure of files related to Epstein. Epstein has long been the subject of conspiracy theories because of his friendships with the rich and powerful, including Trump himself, Britain's Prince Andrew and former President Bill Clinton.

Last month, the Justice Department announced it would not release additional files related to the Epstein sex trafficking investigation.

Prosecutors later asked to unseal the grand jury transcripts, though they've told the court they contain little information that hasn't already been made public. Two judges who will decide whether to release the transcripts then asked victims to share their views on the matter.

In a letter submitted to the court Tuesday, attorneys Brad Edwards and Paul Cassell, who represent numerous Epstein victims, wrote: "For survivors who bravely testified, the perception that Ms. Maxwell is being legitimized in public discourse has already resulted in re-traumatization."

An attorney for Maxwell, David Oscar Markus, said this week that she opposed the release of the grand jury transcripts.

"Jeffrey Epstein is dead. Ghislaine Maxwell is not," he wrote. "Whatever interest the public may have in Epstein, that interest cannot justify a broad intrusion into grand jury secrecy in a case where the defendant



is alive, her legal options are viable, and her due process rights remain.”

The Justice Department did not respond to a request for comment on the victims’ statements.

## **Trump could meet in person with Putin as soon as next week, White House official says**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump could meet in person with Russian President Vladimir Putin as soon as next week as he seeks to broker an end to the Russia-Ukraine war, a White House official said Wednesday.

The official cautioned that a meeting has not been scheduled yet and no location has been determined. The official was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss internal plans.

The White House said Trump was also open to a meeting with both Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

A meeting between Putin and Trump would be their first since Trump returned to office this year. It would be a significant milestone in the 3-year-old war, though there’s no promise such a meeting would lead to the end of the fighting since Russia and Ukraine remain far apart on their demands.

Trump, appearing before reporters later at the White House, didn’t answer questions about a potential location for a meeting but when asked about a summit with Putin and Zelenskyy, said “there’s a very good prospect that they will” meet.

The president declined to predict how close he was to reaching a deal to end the fighting, saying, “I’ve been disappointed before with this one.”

Rubio lowers expectations for a meeting

Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who was asked in an interview on Fox Business about a potential Trump-Putin meeting, said “a lot has to happen before that can occur.”

Rubio said the U.S. would be having talks with its European allies and the Ukrainians over the next few days. He said Trump meeting directly with the leaders of Russia and Ukraine would help close an agreement, but said, “We’ve got to get close enough to that point so that a meeting like that will be productive and worth doing.”

“Today was a good day, but we’ve got a lot of work ahead,” he said. “There’s still many impediments to overcome.”

News of a potential meeting with Putin, which was first reported by The New York Times, came hours after Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff met with Putin in Moscow. Trump had posted earlier on Truth Social that Witkoff “had a highly productive meeting” with Putin in which “great progress was made.”

Zelenskyy has been willing to meet face-to-face with Putin to end the conflict, but Russia has repeatedly rejected the idea.

Trump has met with Zelenskyy several times this year, including a contentious February meeting in Washington. Though he has not yet met with Putin this year, Trump met with him five times during his first term.

Trump said earlier Wednesday that he had updated America’s allies in Europe and that they would work toward an end to the war “in the days and weeks to come.”

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement that the “Russians had expressed their desire” to meet with Trump. The Kremlin has not yet commented on any potential meetings with Trump.

Witkoff met with Putin days before the White House’s deadline for Russia to reach a peace deal with Ukraine or potentially face severe economic penalties that could also hit countries buying its oil.

The meeting between Putin and Witkoff lasted about three hours, the Kremlin said.

Putin’s foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov said Putin and Witkoff had a “useful and constructive conversation” that focused on the Ukrainian crisis and, in a nod toward improving relations between Washington and Moscow, “prospects for possible development of strategic cooperation” between the United States and Russia.

The threat of US sanctions

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Earlier on Wednesday, the same White House official said the U.S. was still expected to impose secondary sanctions against Russia on Friday, after a 10-day deadline that Trump imposed is to expire. The White House has not yet released details about the sanctions.

Washington has threatened "severe tariffs" and other economic penalties if the killing doesn't stop.

Trump also has threatened to slap tariffs on nations that buy Russian oil, which could increase import taxes dramatically on China and India. He said Tuesday he hadn't publicly committed to any particular tariff rate, and indicated that his decision could depend on an outcome of the meeting with Putin.

Trump has expressed increasing frustration with Putin over Russia's escalating strikes on civilian areas of Ukraine, intended to erode morale and public appetite for the war. The intensified attacks have occurred even as Trump has urged the Russian leader in recent months to relent.

Zelenskyy said Wednesday evening that he and Trump spoke on the phone after Witkoff met with Putin. He said "European leaders also participated in the conversation," and "we discussed what was said in Moscow."

"It seems that Russia is now more inclined to agree to a ceasefire," Zelenskyy said, adding that the pressure on Moscow "is working," without elaborating.

Zelenskyy stressed it was important to make sure Russia does not "deceive us or the United States" when it comes to "the details" of a potential agreement. Kyiv proposes that Ukraine and its allies soon "talk to determine our position, our common position, and our common view."

The fighting grinds on

Overnight from Tuesday to Wednesday, Russian forces hit a recreational center in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region, killing two people and injuring 12, including two children, regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov said Wednesday.

Russian forces launched at least four strikes on the area and initially attacked with powerful glide bombs.

"There is zero military sense in this strike. Only cruelty to intimidate," Zelenskyy said in a post on Telegram.

Russia also struck the Ukrainian power grid and facilities for heating and cooking gas, Zelenskyy said, as Ukraine makes preparations for winter.

Western analysts and Ukrainian officials say Putin is stalling for time and avoiding serious negotiations while Russian forces push to capture more Ukraine land. A Russian offensive that started in the spring and is expected to continue through the fall is advancing faster than last year's push but is making only slow and costly gains and has been unable to take any major cities.

The situation on the front line is critical for Ukrainian forces but defenses are not about to collapse, analysts say.

Risks of more pressure

Stepping up diplomatic and economic pressure on the Kremlin risks stoking international tensions amid worsening Russia-U.S. relations.

Putin has given no hint that he might be ready to make concessions. Instead, the Russian leader and senior Kremlin officials have talked up the country's military strength.

Putin announced last week that Russia's new hypersonic missile, which he says cannot be intercepted by current NATO air defense systems, has entered service.

Russia announced Tuesday that it no longer regards itself as bound by a self-imposed moratorium on the deployment of nuclear-capable intermediate range missiles, a warning that potentially sets the stage for a new arms race.

Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, meantime, warned that the Ukraine war could bring Russia and the U.S. into armed conflict. Trump responded to that by ordering the repositioning of two U.S. nuclear submarines.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Monday welcomed Witkoff's visit. "We consider (talks with Witkoff) important, substantive and very useful," he said.

Trump initially gave Moscow a 50-day deadline, but later moved up his ultimatum as the Kremlin continued to bomb Ukrainian cities.

## **Military base shootings have ranged from altercations to workplace violence and terrorism**

ATLANTA (AP) — The shooting of five U.S. Army soldiers at a base in Georgia on Wednesday is the latest in a growing list of violent occurrences at American military installations over the years. Shootings have ranged from isolated events between service members to attacks on bases to mass-casualty events, such as the shooting by an Army psychiatrist at Texas's Fort Hood in 2009 that left 13 people dead.

Here is a look at some of the shootings at U.S. military bases in recent years:

In December, a National Guard soldier was charged with murder after authorities said he shot a man at a former girlfriend's residence on the grounds of Fort Gordon. The base outside of Augusta, Georgia, is home to the U.S. Army Cyber Command. It was formerly known as Fort Eisenhower.

In December 2022, a soldier was charged with murder in a military court following the fatal shooting of a sergeant at Georgia's Fort Stewart. Both soldiers served in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 3rd Infantry Division. Fort Stewart officials said the soldier used a privately owned gun and that fellow soldiers subdued the gunman before his arrest.

In June 2020, a woman and a man were killed in a shooting at the Grand Forks Air Force Base in North Dakota. The woman's parents later told media outlet KJZZ in Phoenix that she was the victim of domestic violence.

In May 2020, a gunman tried to speed through a security gate at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, opening fire and wounding a sailor who was a member of base security, authorities said. Security officers shot and killed the attacker, Adam Salim Alsahli, a Corpus Christi resident who had been a student at a local community college. The FBI said at the time that the shooting was being investigated as a "terror-related incident." A group that monitors online activity of jihadists said Alsahli voiced support for hard-line clerics.

On Dec. 6, 2019, a Saudi Air Force officer who was training at a Navy base in Pensacola, Florida, killed three U.S. sailors and wounded eight other people in a shooting that U.S. officials described as an act of terrorism. The country's top federal law enforcement officials said the gunman, Mohammed Saeed Alshamrani, had been in touch with al-Qaida operatives about planning and tactics. Alshamrani was killed by a sheriff's deputy.

On Dec. 4, 2019, a U.S. Navy sailor used his service rifle to shoot three civilian shipyard workers at the Pearl Harbor military base in Hawaii, killing two of them before killing himself with his service pistol. Gabriel Antonio Romero, 22, of San Antonio, Texas, was said to be unhappy with his commanders and undergoing counseling, although a motive for the shooting was not determined.

In February 2017, a sailor was fatally shot at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach by a security officer after he crashed through a station gate and went to his squadron's hangar. Seaman Robert Colton Wright was reported to be "yelling and causing damage" and moving aggressively toward security officers until one of the officers fired, striking him. Wright worked as an information systems technician for Strike Fighter Squadron 81.

In April 2016, an airman fatally shot his commander before shooting himself at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland. Military investigators said Tech Sgt. Steven Bellino, 41, confronted Lt. Col. William Schroeder in an office before the two struggled, and Schroeder was shot multiple times. The men, both veterans of the U.S. Special Operations Command, were in the Air Force's elite Battlefield Airmen program at Lackland.

In July 2015, four Marines and a sailor were killed by Kuwait-born Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez, 24, of Hixson, Tennessee, who opened fire at a recruiting center in Chattanooga. He then drove several miles away to a Navy and Marine reserve center, where he shot and killed the Marines and wounded the sailor, who later died. Abdulazeez was shot to death by police.

In April 2014, an Army soldier gunned down three other military men at Fort Hood in Texas before killing himself. Authorities said that Spc. Ivan Lopez had an argument with colleagues in his unit before opening fire.

In September 2013, a defense contract employee and former Navy reservist used a valid pass to get onto the Washington Navy Yard. Authorities said Aaron Alexis killed 12 people before he was killed in a

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gunbattle with police, authorities said. The Washington Navy Yard is an administrative center for the U.S. Navy and the oldest naval installation in the country.

In November 2009, Army psychiatrist Nidal Hasan killed 13 people and wounded more than 30 at Fort Hood. He said he was angry about being deployed to Afghanistan and wanted to protect Islamic and Taliban leaders from U.S. troops. It was the deadliest attack on a domestic military installation in U.S. history. The Department of Defense called the attack an act of workplace violence, not terrorism.

## Survivors of Israel's pager attack on Hezbollah last year struggle to recover

BAZOURIEH, Lebanon (AP) — Her head heavy with a cold, Sarah Jaffal woke up late and shuffled into the kitchen. The silence of the apartment was pierced by the unfamiliar buzzing of a pager lying near a table.

Annoyed but curious, the 21-year-old picked up the device belonging to a family member. She saw a message: "Error," then "Press OK."

Jaffal didn't have time to respond. She didn't even hear the explosion.

"Suddenly everything went dark," she said. "I felt I was in a whirlpool." She was in and out of consciousness for hours, blood streaming from her mouth, excruciating pain in her fingertips.

At that moment on Sept. 17, 2024, thousands of pagers distributed to the Hezbollah group were blowing up in homes, offices, shops and on frontlines across Lebanon, remotely detonated by Israel. Hezbollah had been firing rockets into Israel almost daily for nearly a year in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

After years of planning, Israel had infiltrated the supply chain of Hezbollah, the most powerful of Iran's armed proxies in the Middle East. It used shell companies to sell the rigged devices to commercial associates of Hezbollah in an operation aimed at disrupting the Iran-backed group's communication networks and harming and disorienting its members.

The pager attack was stunning in its scope. It wounded more than 3,000 people and killed 12, including two children.

Israel boasts of it as a show of its technological and intelligence prowess. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently presented U.S. President Donald Trump with a golden pager as a gift.

Human rights and United Nations reports, however, say the attack may have violated international law, calling it indiscriminate.

Hezbollah, also a major Shiite political party with a wide network of social institutions, has acknowledged that most of those wounded and killed were its fighters or personnel. The simultaneous explosions in populated areas, however, also wounded many civilians like Jaffal, who was one of four women along with 71 men who received medical treatment in Iran. Hezbollah won't say how many civilians were hurt, but says most were relatives of the group's personnel or workers in Hezbollah-linked institutions, including hospitals.

Ten months later, survivors are on a slow, painful path to recovery. They are easily identifiable, with missing eyes, faces laced with scars, hands with missing fingers — signs of the moment when they checked the buzzing devices. The scars also mark them as a likely Hezbollah member or a dependent.

### Rare interviews

For weeks after the attack, The Associated Press attempted to reach survivors, who stayed out of the public eye. Many spent weeks outside Lebanon for medical treatment. Most in the group's tight-knit community remained quiet while Hezbollah investigated the massive security breach.

The AP also contacted Hezbollah and its association treating those affected by the attacks to see if they could facilitate contacts. The group, at war with Israel for decades, is also one of the most powerful political factions in Lebanon, with members holding nearly 10% of parliament seats and two ministerial posts. It has its own security apparatus and offers extensive health, religious and other social and commercial services in southern and eastern Lebanon and parts of Beirut.

A representative of Hezbollah's Association of Wounded did share with AP the contacts of eight people who had expressed readiness to share their stories. The AP independently contacted them, and six agreed to be interviewed. They included Jaffal and another woman, two 12-year-old children and two men, one



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a preacher, the other a fighter.

All are family members of Hezbollah officials or fighters. All lost fingers. Shrapnel lodged under their skin. The men were blinded. The women and children each lost one eye, with the other damaged.

There were no minders present, and no questions were off-limits. Some declined to answer questions about the identity or role of the pager's owner, identifying them only as relatives.

The hours of interviews offered a rare glimpse into the attack's human toll. Survivors described how the incessantly buzzing pagers exploded when picked up, whether they pressed a button or not. Some said their ears still ring from the blast.

"I've put up with so much pain I never imagined I could tolerate," said Jaffal, a university graduate.

The survivors expressed ongoing support for Hezbollah but acknowledged the security breach. They blamed Israel for their wounds.

Rights groups have argued the attack was indiscriminate because the pagers detonated in populated areas, and it was nearly impossible to know who was holding the devices or where they were when they exploded. The preacher, Mustafa Choeib, recalled that his two young daughters used to play with his pager and he sometimes found it among their toys.

Israel's Mossad spy agency declined to comment on AP questions about those allegations. But Israeli security officials have rejected that the attack was indiscriminate, saying the pagers were exclusively sold to Hezbollah members and that tests were conducted to ensure that only the person holding the pager would be harmed.

A turning point for Hezbollah

The pagers were the opening strike in an Israeli campaign that would cripple Hezbollah.

The day after the pager bombings, Hezbollah walkie-talkies exploded in another Israeli attack that killed at least 25 people and injured over 600, according to Lebanon's health ministry. Israel then launched a campaign of airstrikes that killed Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah and hundreds of other militants and civilians. The war ended with a ceasefire in November.

Nine months later, Israel stunned and weakened Iran with a campaign of airstrikes that targeted Iranian nuclear sites, senior military officials and symbols of the Islamic Republic's grip.

Hezbollah, meanwhile, has been left reeling. Besides the military blow, the group is left with the financial and psychological burden of thousands who need long-term medical treatment and recovery.

Pagers are widely seen as outdated, but they were a main part of Hezbollah's communication network. Nasrallah had repeatedly warned against cellphones. Israel could easily track them, he said.

With old pagers breaking down, the group ordered new ones. Israel sold the rigged devices through shell companies.

According to a Hezbollah official, the group had ordered 15,000 pagers. Only 8,000 arrived, and nearly half were distributed to members. Others destined for Lebanon were intercepted in Turkey days after the attack when Hezbollah tipped off officials there.

Hezbollah's investigation into how its communications networks were infiltrated found that the purchase of the rigged pagers resulted from negligence, and its officials were cleared of suspicions of collaborating with Israel, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the probe.

Some Hezbollah members had complained the new pagers were too bulky. Some didn't use them because batteries died quickly or heated up.

Hospitals were like a 'slaughterhouse'

The simultaneous explosions spread chaos and panic in Lebanon. Hospitals were overwhelmed.

It was like a "slaughterhouse," Zeinab Mestrah said.

Until she reached a hospital, Mestrah thought an explosion in an electricity cable had blinded her, not the pager of a relative, a Hezbollah member.

"People didn't recognize each other. Families were shouting out their relatives' names to identify them," she recalled from her home in Beirut.

Doctors mainly stopped her bleeding. Five days later, the 26-year-old interior decorator and event plan-

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ner traveled to Iran for treatment. Her right eye was saved, with shrapnel removed.

The first thing she saw after 10 days of darkness was her mother. She also lost the tips of three fingers on her right hand. Her ears still ring today.

Mestrah said her recovery has delayed plans to find a new career. She realizes she cannot resume her old one.

The next thing she looks forward to is her wedding, to her fiancé of eight years.

"He is half my recovery," she said.

The representative of Hezbollah's Association of Wounded said none of those injured has fully recovered. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to address the media.

A Hezbollah fighter struck

Mahdi Sheri, a 23-year-old Hezbollah fighter, had been ordered back to the frontline on the day of the attack. Before leaving, he charged his pager and spent time with family. For his security, no mobile phones were allowed in the house while he was there.

There were many drones in the sky that day.

His pager usually vibrated. This time, it beeped. He approached to check for Hezbollah warnings or directives. He saw the message: "Error," then "Press OK." He followed the prompt.

He felt a sharp pain in his head and eyes. His bed was covered in blood. Thinking he had been hit by a drone, he stumbled outside and passed out.

He was first treated in Syria, then in Iraq as hospitals in Lebanon struggled to handle the high number of patients. Shrapnel was removed from his left eye socket and he had a prosthetic eye installed.

For a while, he could see shadows with his remaining eye. With time, that dimmed. He can no longer play football. Hezbollah is helping him find a new job. Sheri realizes it's impossible now to find a role alongside Hezbollah fighters.

He asked his fiancée if she wanted to move on. She refused. They married during a video call while he was in Iraq, a month after his injury.

"Nothing stood in our way," Sheri said. He moves between southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs, where his wife lives and studies to be a nurse.

The community is shaken. Some children fear coming near their fathers, he said.

"It not only affects us but also those around us."

A boy with a face full of scars

In southern Lebanon, 12-year-old Hussein Dheini picked up the pager that belonged to his father, a Hezbollah member. The explosion cost the boy his right eye and damaged his left. It blew off the tips of two fingers on his right hand. On his left hand, the pinky and middle finger remain.

His teeth were blown out. His grandmother picked them off the couch, along with the tip of his nose.

"It was a nightmare," said his mother, Faten Haidar.

The boy, a member of Hezbollah scouts, the group's youth movement, had been talented at reciting the Quran. Now he struggles to pace his breathing. He can read with one eye but is quickly exhausted. The family has moved to a ground-floor apartment so he climbs fewer stairs.

He wears glasses now. Pink scars crisscross his face and his reconstructed nose. He spends more time with other children injured like him, and only goes to school for exams. Dheini can't go swimming with his father, since sea or river water could harm his wounds.

"Before, I used to spend a lot of time on my phone. I used to run and go to school," the boy said. "Now I go to Beirut" for treatment.

Impatience to rebuild a life

Jaffal has had 45 surgeries in nine months. More will come, including reconstructive surgery on her face and fingers. Two fingers are fused. Four are missing.

She is waiting for a prosthetic right eye. Further surgeries on her left one have been delayed. She can recognize people and places she knows, though she relies more on memory than vision.

The loss of sensation in her fingertips is disorienting. The nerve pain elsewhere is sharp. Weekly physiotherapy reminds her of how much is still ahead.

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The driven, inquisitive woman leans on her faith to summon patience.

"God only burdens us with what we can bear," she said.

She has spoken in religious gatherings at Hezbollah's invitation about her recovery and resilience. Her biggest fear is becoming dependent.

An information technology graduate, she used to produce videos of family celebrations and events — a career she wanted to explore. Now she watches videos on her phone, though they are blurry.

She giggles to ease the discomfort, and enjoys taking the lead when meeting with fellow victims because she can see better than most.

"I forget my wounds when I see another wounded," she said.

## Man accused of killing Israeli Embassy staffers indicted on federal hate crime and murder charges

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man accused of fatally shooting two staff members of the Israeli Embassy in Washington outside a Jewish museum has been indicted on federal hate crime and murder charges, according to court documents unsealed Wednesday.

The indictment, filed in federal court in Washington, charges Elias Rodriguez with nine counts, including a hate crime resulting in death. The indictment also includes notice of special findings, which would allow the Justice Department to potentially pursue the death penalty.

Elias Rodriguez is accused of gunning down Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim as they left an event at the museum in May. He was heard shouting "Free Palestine" as he was led away after his arrest. He told police, "I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza," federal authorities have said.

Rodriguez had previously been charged with murder of foreign officials and other crimes, and the hate crimes charges were added after prosecutors brought the case to a grand jury. It means prosecutors will be tasked with proving Rodriguez was motivated by antisemitism when he opened fire on Lischinsky and Milgrim, a young couple who were about to become engaged.

Prosecutors have described the killing as calculated and planned, saying Rodriguez flew to the Washington region from Chicago ahead of the Capital Jewish Museum event with a handgun in his checked luggage. He purchased a ticket for the event about three hours before it started, authorities have said in court papers.

An attorney for Rodriguez didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment Wednesday.

Witnesses described him pacing outside before approaching a group of four people and opening fire. Surveillance video showed Rodriguez advancing closer to Lischinsky and Milgrim as they fell to the ground, leaning over them and firing additional shots. He appeared to reload before jogging off, officials have said.

After the shooting, authorities say Rodriguez went inside the museum and stated that he "did it."

"I did it for Palestine, I did it for Gaza, I am unarmed," he spontaneously said, according to court documents. He also told detectives that he admired an active-duty Air Force member who set himself on fire outside the Israeli Embassy in February 2024, describing the man as "courageous" and a "martyr."

## A rally for Apple leads Wall Street higher

NEW YORK (AP) — A rally for Apple led Wall Street higher on Wednesday as U.S. stocks reclaimed more of their sharp losses from last week.

The S&P 500 rose 0.7%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 81 points, or 0.2%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 1.2%.

Apple alone accounted for more than a third of the S&P 500's gain. It rose 5.1% ahead of a White House event where it was expected to announced an increase to its U.S. investments of an additional \$100 billion over the next four years.

Trading elsewhere on Wall Street was mixed following a jumble of profit reports. McDonald's and Shopify rose following their latest updates, while Super Micro Computer tumbled after its earnings and revenue came in below analysts' expectations. The Walt Disney Co. fell after its earnings beat forecasts but its

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revenue fell short

Worries are still high that President Donald Trump's tariffs may be hurting the economy, but hopes for coming cuts to interest rates by the Federal Reserve and a parade of stronger-than-expected profit reports from U.S. companies have helped steady the market.

Companies are under pressure to deliver bigger profits to justify the big gains their stock prices have made since the U.S. market hit a low point in April. The S&P 500 is only a bit below its record, which was set late last month, and the big rally fueled criticism that the broad market has become too expensive.

McDonald's climbed 3% after reporting stronger profit and revenue for the spring than analysts expected. Offerings tied to the "Minecraft" movie proved to be a hit for the restaurant chain.

Shopify jumped 22% after the company, which helps businesses sell on the internet, said it made more in revenue last quarter than expected. Analysts also said the company's forecast for revenue in the current quarter suggests the strong trends are continuing.

Arista Networks leaped 17.5% after the networking company delivered a bigger profit for the latest quarter than expected. Its forecast for revenue in the current quarter also topped forecasts.

They helped offset an 18.3% slump for Super Micro Computer, which gave back some of the huge gains the server maker has made recently. Super Micro came into the day with a nearly 88% gain for its stock so far this year, but it reported weaker profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It also gave a forecast for profit in the current quarter that fell short of what Wall Street had penciled in.

Disney dropped 2.7% after its profit beat forecasts but its revenue fell short. Analysts said investors may have been looking for Disney to boost its profit forecast by a bigger amount.

The NFL also announced that it had entered into a nonbinding agreement with Disney's ESPN, which will give the sports broadcaster the NFL Network, NFL Fantasy and the rights to distribute the RedZone channel. The NFL will get a 10% stake in ESPN in the proposed deal.

Chip company Advanced Micro Devices fell 6.4% after its profit for the latest quarter only matched analysts' expectations. Analysts said the company's financial forecasts for upcoming results also looked solid, but that may not have been enough for investors after its stock had already soared 44.3% for the year so far coming into the day.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 45.87 points to 6,345.06. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 81.38 to 44,193.12, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 252.87 to 21,169.42.

In the bond market, Treasury yields held relatively steady.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury remained at 4.22%, where it was late Tuesday. It's well below where it was last week, before Friday's weaker-than-expected report on the U.S. job market ignited worries that Trump's tariffs are pushing employers to hold back on hiring.

That report has traders on Wall Street betting heavily that the Federal Reserve will need to cut interest rates at its next meeting in September. Such cuts can give the economy and investments prices a boost, but they also can push inflation higher.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose modestly across much of Europe and Asia.

## After deep DOGE cuts, National Weather Service gets OK to fill up to 450 jobs

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will hire as many as 450 people to shore up the National Weather Service after deep cuts this spring raised concern about dangerous understaffing, the Trump administration confirmed Wednesday.

NOAA was granted permission to fill critical positions at its weather arm, including openings for meteorologists, hydrologists and electronics technicians, Trump administration officials said. The hirings are part of an exemption to a freeze on federal hiring in place through at least Oct. 15.

NOAA declined to comment further.

The planned hiring was first reported by CNN.

The Department of Government Efficiency has gutted NOAA and the National Weather Service, which



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are key for the nation's daily weather forecasts, severe storm warnings, climate monitoring and more. Hundreds of NOAA forecasters and other employees have been cut, and NWS offices around the country have had a number of vacancies.

The administration has also weighed ending the sharing of satellite data that is key to effective storm tracking and stopped tracking the cost of climate change-fueled weather disasters.

Meteorologists and climate scientists have warned of consequences with fewer workers in positions that are crucial, especially as the hurricane season got underway. After deadly flash flooding that killed dozens of people in Texas last month, some local officials and Democrats suggested that the deep staffing cuts may have contributed to endangering lives, though others defended the agency's work.

Experts cautiously applauded the exemption for hirings as positive news.

"While this new development is great news for the NWS and the American public, I would like to see that the hiring actions are actually underway," said Louis Uccellini, former NOAA administrator for weather services and NWS director.

The hirings are said to include the "mission-critical field positions" that the agency announced it would hire for in June "to further stabilize front line operations." The agency did not say at the time how many roles would be filled.

## What to know as Trump's immigration crackdown strips tuition breaks from thousands of students

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Tens of thousands of U.S. college students without legal resident status are losing access to in-state tuition prices as part of President Donald Trump's crackdown on immigration.

The Justice Department has been suing states to end tuition breaks for students without legal residency, starting with Texas in June. It has also filed lawsuits in Kentucky, Minnesota and, most recently, Oklahoma. Last year, Florida ended its tuition break for students living there illegally,

"Federal law prohibits aliens not lawfully present in the United States from getting in-state tuition benefits that are denied to out-of-state U.S. citizens," the Justice Department argued in a lawsuit this month in Oklahoma. "There are no exceptions."

The tuition breaks once enjoyed wide bipartisan support but have increasingly come under criticism from Republicans in recent years.

Here's what to know about the tuition breaks:

Texas' program was blocked first

Texas' tuition policy was initially passed with sweeping bipartisan majorities in the Legislature and signed into law by then-Gov. Rick Perry, a Republican, as a way to open access to higher education for students without legal residency already living in the state. Supporters then and now say it boosted the state's economy by creating a better-educated and better-prepared workforce.

The law allowed students without legal resident status to qualify for in-state tuition if they had lived in Texas for three years before graduating from high school and for a year before enrolling in college. They also had to sign an affidavit promising to apply for legal resident status as soon as possible.

Texas now has about 57,000 qualifying students enrolled in its public universities and colleges, according to the Presidents' Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, a nonpartisan nonprofit group of university leaders focused on immigration policy. The state has about 690,000 students overall at its public universities.

The difference in tuition rates is substantial.

For example, at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, a 34,000-student campus along the border with Mexico, a state resident will pay about \$10,000 in basic tuition for a minimum full-time class schedule in the upcoming school year. A nonresident student will pay \$19,000.

Political pushback and a swift end

Texas' law stood mostly unchallenged for years, but it came under fire as debates over illegal immigration intensified. In the 2012 Republican presidential primary, Perry apologized after saying critics of the

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law "did not have a heart."

The law withstood several repeal efforts in the Republican-dominated Legislature. During the legislative session that ended June 2, a repeal bill did not even get a vote.

But the ax fell quickly. After the Trump administration filed a lawsuit calling the law unconstitutional, state Attorney General Ken Paxton, a key Trump ally, chose not to defend the law in court and instead filed a motion agreeing that it should not be enforced.

In Oklahoma, Attorney General Gentner Drummond, also a Republican, filed a similar motion.

"Rewarding foreign nationals who are in our country illegally with lower tuition costs that are not made available to out-of-state American citizens is not only wrong — it is discriminatory and unlawful," Drummond said in a statement.

Campuses nationwide feel the impact

At least 21 states and the University of Michigan system have laws or policies allowing tuition breaks for the immigrant students, according to the National Immigration Law Center, which favors them. Those states include Democratic-leaning ones such as California and New York, but also GOP-leaning ones such as Kansas and Nebraska.

According to the center, at least 16 states allow the immigrant students to receive scholarships or other aid to go to college.

Immigration lawyers and education advocates said they are assessing whether there are legal avenues to challenge the rulings.

## Massive central California wildfire keeps growing and becomes state's largest blaze of the year

SANTA MARIA, Calif. (AP) — Rising temperatures on Wednesday posed new challenges for firefighters who have made incremental progress against a massive wildfire in central California that injured four people as it became the biggest blaze in the state so far this year.

More than 870 remote homes and other structures at the northern edge of Los Padres National Forest are threatened by the Gifford Fire, which grew only slightly overnight after burning out of control for days.

The fire has scorched at least 131 square miles (339 square kilometers) of Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo counties, with just 9% containment. It surpassed the 126-square mile (326-square-kilometer) Madre Fire, which erupted last month in southeastern San Luis Obispo County, as the state's largest fire of 2025.

Crews working in steep, inaccessible terrain will be dealing with temperatures in the mid-90s (35 Celsius) on Wednesday and above 100 (38 Celsius) on Thursday, said Capt. Scott Safechuck with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department.

"We have hot weather, and we have low relative humidity," Safechuck said Wednesday. "So we expect extreme fire behavior." Luckily, winds are expected to remain relatively calm, he said.

Wildfire risk will be elevated through the weekend across much of inland California as the heat wave intensifies. The southern part of the state has seen very little rain, drying out vegetation and making it "ripe to burn," the National Weather Service for Los Angeles warned in a statement. Triple-digit temperatures (around 38 Celsius) are forecast for the Sacramento Valley.

A dozen major blazes are burning statewide, and officials warn the threat will only grow in August and September, typically the most dangerous months for wildfires. Across the Sierra and northern parts of California, months of little to no rain are "pushing conditions toward critical levels faster than usual," according to a wildfire forecast by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, or Cal Fire.

"In Southern California, the threat is driven by persistent drought, high grass loads, and weakening coastal moisture," Cal Fire said.

More than 2,200 personnel are battling the Gifford Fire, which grew out of at least four smaller fires that erupted Friday along State Route 166, forcing closures in both directions east of Santa Maria, a city of about 110,000 people. The causes of the fires are under investigation.

Flames are racing through a vast, mostly unpopulated region that includes forestland, ranches, large

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canyon properties and agricultural parcels growing wine grapes and strawberries.

The weather service warned of health risks from spreading smoke that could affect much of southwest California.

Officials reported four injuries, including a firefighter who was treated for dehydration. Over the weekend, a motorist was hospitalized with burn injuries after getting out of his vehicle and being overrun by flames. And two contract employees assisting firefighters were also hurt when their all-terrain vehicle overturned.

## Dozens killed seeking aid in Gaza as Israel weighs further military action

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — At least 38 Palestinians were killed overnight and into Wednesday in the Gaza Strip while seeking aid from United Nations convoys and sites run by an Israeli-backed American contractor, according to local health officials. The Israeli military said it had fired warning shots when crowds approached its forces.

Another 25 people, including several women and children, were killed in Israeli airstrikes, according to local hospitals in Gaza. The military said it only targets Hamas militants.

The latest deaths came as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was expected to announce further military action — and possibly plans for Israel to fully reoccupy Gaza. Experts say Israel's ongoing military offensive and blockade are already pushing the territory of some 2 million Palestinians into famine. A new U.N. report said only 1.5% of Gaza's cropland is accessible and undamaged.

Another escalation of the nearly 22-month war could put the lives of countless Palestinians and around 20 living Israeli hostages at risk, and would draw fierce opposition both internationally and within Israel. Netanyahu's far-right coalition allies have long called for the war to be expanded, and for Israel to eventually take over Gaza, relocate much of its population and rebuild Jewish settlements there.

U.S. President Donald Trump, asked by a reporter Tuesday whether he supported the reoccupation of Gaza, said he wasn't aware of the "suggestion" but that "it's going to be pretty much up to Israel."

More Palestinians killed in scramble for food

Of the 38 Palestinians killed while seeking aid, at least 28 died in the Morag Corridor, an Israeli military zone in southern Gaza where U.N. convoys have been repeatedly overwhelmed by looters and desperate crowds in recent days, and where witnesses say Israeli forces have repeatedly opened fire.

The Israeli military said troops fired warning shots as Palestinians advanced toward them, and that it was not aware of any casualties.

Nasser Hospital, which received the bodies, said another four people were killed in the Teina area, on a route leading to a site in southern Gaza run by the Israeli-backed Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, an American contractor. The Al-Awda Hospital said it received the bodies of six people killed near a GHF site in central Gaza.

GHF said there were no violent incidents at or near its sites, and that the one in central Gaza was not open on Wednesday. It said the violence may have been related to the chaos around U.N. convoys.

Two of the Israeli airstrikes hit Gaza City, in the north of the territory, killing 13 people there, including six children and five women, according to the Al-Ahli Hospital, which received the bodies.

The Israeli military says it only targets militants and blames civilian deaths on Hamas because its militants are entrenched in heavily populated areas.

UN experts say Israeli-backed aid group should be dismantled

Israel facilitated the establishment of four GHF sites in May after blocking the entry of all food, medicine and other goods for 2 1/2 months. Israeli and U.S. officials said a new system was needed to prevent Hamas from siphoning off humanitarian aid.

The United Nations, which has delivered aid to hundreds of distribution points across Gaza throughout the war when conditions allow, has rejected the new system, saying it forces Palestinians to travel long distances and risk their lives for food, and that it allows Israel to control who gets aid, potentially using it to advance plans for further mass displacement.

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The U.N. human rights office said last week that some 1,400 Palestinians have been killed seeking aid since May, mostly near GHF sites but also along U.N. convoy routes where trucks have been overwhelmed by crowds. It says nearly all were killed by Israeli fire.

This week, a group of U.N. special rapporteurs and independent human rights experts called for the GHF to be disbanded, saying it is "an utterly disturbing example of how humanitarian relief can be exploited for covert military and geopolitical agendas in serious breach of international law."

The experts work with the U.N. but do not represent the world body.

The GHF called their statement "disgraceful," and urged the U.N. and other aid groups to work with it "to maximize the amount of aid being securely delivered to the Palestinian people in Gaza."

The Israeli military says it has only fired warning shots when crowds threatened its forces, and GHF says its armed contractors have only used pepper spray and fired into the air on some occasions to prevent deadly crowding at its sites.

Gaza's farmland has been destroyed, contributing to hunger crisis

Israel's air and ground war has destroyed nearly all of Gaza's food production capabilities, leaving its people reliant on international aid.

A new report by the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization and the U.N. satellite center found that just 8.6% of Gaza's cropland is still accessible following sweeping Israeli evacuation orders in recent months. Just 1.5% is accessible and undamaged, it said.

The military offensive and a breakdown in security have made it nearly impossible for anyone to safely deliver aid, and aid groups say recent Israeli measures to facilitate more assistance are far from sufficient.

Hospitals recorded four more malnutrition-related deaths over the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 193 people, including 96 children, since the war began in October 2023, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Jordan says aid convoy attacked by Israeli settlers

Jordan said Israeli settlers blocked roads and hurled stones at a convoy of four trucks carrying aid bound for Gaza after they drove across the border into the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Israeli far-right activists have repeatedly sought to halt aid from entering Gaza.

Jordanian government spokesperson Mohammed al-Momani condemned the attack, which he said had shattered the windshields of the trucks, according to the Jordanian state-run Petra News Agency.

The Israeli military said security forces went to the scene to disperse the gathering and accompanied the trucks to their destination.

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7 attack and abducted another 251. Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals. Of the 50 still held in Gaza, around 20 are believed to be alive.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 61,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians but says around half were women and children. It is part of the now largely defunct Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source for the number of war casualties.

## What to know about mRNA vaccines

WASHINGTON (AP) — So-called mRNA vaccines saved millions of lives during the COVID-19 pandemic — and now scientists are using that Nobel Prize-winning technology to try to develop vaccines and treatments against a long list of diseases including cancer and cystic fibrosis.

But this week, U.S. Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime vaccine critic, canceled \$500 million in government-funded research projects to create new mRNA vaccines against respiratory illnesses that might trigger another health emergency.

That dismays infectious disease experts who note that mRNA allows faster production of shots than older vaccine-production methods, buying precious time if another pandemic were to emerge.

Using older technology to target a pandemic flu strain would take 18 months to "make enough vaccine to vaccinate only about one-fourth of the world," said Michael Osterholm of the University of Minnesota,



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an expert on pandemic preparation. But using mRNA technology “could change that dramatically, such that by the end of the first year, we could vaccinate the world.”

How mRNA technology works

Traditionally, making vaccines required growing viruses or pieces of viruses called proteins — often in giant vats of cells or, like most flu shots, in chicken eggs — and then purifying them. Injecting a small dose as a vaccine trains the body how to recognize when a real infection hits so it’s ready to fight back.

But that technology takes a long time. Using mRNA is a faster process.

The “m” stands for messenger, meaning mRNA carries instructions for our bodies to make proteins. Scientists figured out how to harness that natural process by making mRNA in a lab.

They take a snippet of that genetic code that carries instructions for making the protein they want the vaccine to target. Injecting that snippet instructs the body to become its own mini-vaccine factory, making enough copies of the protein for the immune system to recognize and react.

The COVID-19 vaccines aren’t perfect

Years of research show protection from COVID-19 vaccines — both the types made with mRNA and a type made with traditional technology — does wane over time. The vaccinations provide the strongest protection against severe infection and death, even if people still become infected.

But that’s a common feature with both the coronavirus and flu because both viruses continually mutate. That’s the reason we’re told to get a flu vaccine every year — using vaccines made with traditional methods, not mRNA.

Today’s COVID-19 vaccines made with mRNA by Pfizer and Moderna can be updated more quickly each year than traditional types, an advantage that now has multiple companies developing other vaccines using the technology.

Traditional vaccines aren’t the only use for mRNA

Osterholm counts about 15 infectious disease vaccines that could benefit from mRNA technology, but that’s not the only potential. Many disease therapies take aim at proteins, making mRNA a potential technique for developing new treatments. Researchers already are testing an mRNA-based therapeutic vaccine for pancreatic cancer. Genetic diseases are another target, such as an experimental inhaled therapy for cystic fibrosis.

## New studies tie unrecognized deaths and health problems to Maui and LA wildfires

NEW YORK (AP) — The toll of wildfires is usually counted in acres burnt, property destroyed and lives lost to smoke and flames. But three studies published Wednesday suggest the cost to human health from the Maui and Los Angeles wildfires was substantially higher.

Two of the papers explore what happened after the Hawaii fire in August 2023 — one of the deadliest U.S. wildfires in a century. A third looks at the Los Angeles wildfires earlier this year.

The Maui fire was directly blamed for more than 100 deaths. But it also left 1 in 5 with lung damage and as many as half with symptoms of depression, the new research found. The month of the fire saw 13 suicide and overdose deaths, translating to nearly double the normal suicide and overdose death rates.

The study of the Los Angeles fires concluded that in addition to at least 30 deaths attributed to the fire, more than 400 other deaths could be blamed on the event, due to interruptions in health care and other factors.

The studies, published in two American Medical Association journals, add “a really important piece to the understanding of the true health risks from these extreme climatic events,” said Dr. Jonathan Patz, a University of Wisconsin environmental public health researcher who was not involved in the papers.

The results conform with existing understanding of the effects of extreme weather events, some experts said.

How to track the indirect impacts of disastrous events has been a continuing subject of academic research and even legislative proposals. There have been estimates of deaths caused by extreme heat, as

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well as research into the large-scale toll of wildfires driven by climate change.

"But this hones in, especially on (specific) fires," Patz said.

One of the studies, co-led by Ruben Juarez of the University of Hawaii, looked at more than 1,100 adults six to 14 months after the Maui fire. It found lower lung function in people in areas close to the fire compared with those in lower-exposure areas. Overall, about 22% had below-normal lung function.

"It's a stark reminder that wildfires can leave an invisible but lasting scar on respiratory health, long after the flames are gone," Juarez said, in an email, noting that this Friday marks the two-year anniversary of the fire.

Patz called the finding "an important new contribution."

Kristie Ebi of the University of Washington echoed that, noting that there is a growing understanding that wildfire smoke can be more toxic than standard air pollution.

"It's not just leaves and branches and trees" that are burned, she said. "It's buildings. It's gasoline stations. It's old houses that have asbestos in them. It's automobiles. There are lots of components of wildfire smoke."

She said the study suggests "this toxicity is affecting people's long-term lung function."

Of course, the researchers don't know exactly how much smoke each person was exposed to, and other studies would need to be done to explore cause-and-effect, she added.

The study also found 40% saying their health had declined since the fires, with close to half talking about increased fatigue and weakness, eye irritation and lung-related symptoms.

Jonathan Purtle of New York University was the lead author of another study, which calculated rates of suicide and overdose deaths in Maui and Hawaii's four other counties. That research team found a 97% increase in suicides and overdose death rates on Maui during the month of the wildfires. The total number of suicide and overdose deaths was 13 that month — most of them suicides. That's a significant increase, Ebi said.

They also found a 46% increase in such deaths in all five counties, which may have been influenced by displaced Maui residents migrating to other islands, the authors said.

The increases did not last: Rates fell in the following months, the researchers found.

The third study was led by researchers in Finland. They used mathematical modeling to estimate that there were 440 more deaths in Los Angeles County from Jan. 5 to Feb. 1 than what would normally have been expected, and said those are related to the fires.

## What is chikungunya, the virus now spreading in southern China?

LONDON (AP) — Chinese authorities have taken measures this week to try to curb the spread of chikungunya, a virus that often causes fever and joint pain. As of Wednesday, the government reported there had been more than 7,000 cases, mostly in the southern manufacturing hub of Foshan.

Here's what to know about chikungunya:

What is chikungunya?

Chikungunya is a disease caused by a virus of the same name.

The chikungunya virus was first identified in people sickened during an outbreak in Tanzania in 1952. Its name is derived from a word in the Makonde language, which means "that which bends up," due to the severe pain it can cause.

Chikungunya is transmitted by infected mosquitoes and mostly causes mild symptoms. The majority of people who get chikungunya recover without needing medical attention after one to two weeks.

What are the symptoms of chikungunya?

Chikungunya typically produces symptoms including fever, muscle pain, nausea, fatigue and a rash.

But in rare cases, it can cause debilitating joint pain that persists for months or even years. Patients who get severely ill often require hospitalization because of the risk of organ damage.

The World Health Organization says severe cases and deaths are rare and mostly occur in babies or elderly people with underlying health conditions.

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Is there a treatment or vaccine?

There is no specific treatment for chikungunya, but health workers can treat the symptoms by giving medicines to lower fevers or ease muscle pain.

Two vaccines have been approved in several regions, including Britain, Brazil, Canada and Europe. Those are mostly targeted at travelers and are not widely available in the countries most affected by chikungunya.

Where does chikungunya normally occur?

Chikungunya causes regular outbreaks in Africa, Asia and the Americas, with occasional small epidemics in Europe.

As of July, there have been about 240,000 cases of chikungunya, including 90 deaths in 16 countries, according to the European Centres for Disease Prevention and Control. The countries that reported the highest number of infections were Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina and Peru.

What's happening in China?

With thousands of confirmed cases, this appears to be the biggest chikungunya outbreak ever documented in China, according to César López-Camacho of the University of Oxford.

"What makes this event notable is that chikungunya has never been established in mainland China before," he said in a statement. "This suggests that most of the population had no preexisting immunity, making it easier for the virus to spread quickly."

In response to the outbreak in Foshan, near Hong Kong, Chinese authorities have begun taking measures like distributing mosquito nets, having workers spray residential areas, streets and construction sites with insecticide.

People who do not empty bottles, flower pots or other outdoor receptacles, where water might accumulate and allow mosquitoes to breed, can be subject to fines of up to 10,000 yuan (\$1,400) and have their electricity cut off.

Unusually heavy rains and high temperatures this year have worsened the crisis in China.

Are we seeing more chikungunya outbreaks?

Yes.

The number of outbreaks has increased since 2000, just as there have been more outbreaks of other mosquito-transmitted diseases like dengue and Zika, according to Robert Jones, an assistant professor at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Jones said in a statement that in 2013, chikungunya was first seen in the island of St. Martin and that over the next three years, cases were confirmed in almost 50 countries in the Caribbean and the Americas, with more than 1 million suspected cases.

Jones said the risks of chikungunya epidemics have risen due to climate change and urban expansion, warning that the current outbreak could spread to other parts of southern China with humid climates and dense cities.

## Trump administration dismisses majority of federal board overseeing Puerto Rico's finances

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The Trump administration has dismissed five out of seven members on Puerto Rico's federal control board that oversees the U.S. territory's finances, sparking concern about the future of the island's fragile economy. Four of the five are Democrats.

A White House official told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the board "has been run inefficiently and ineffectively by its governing members for far too long and it's time to restore common sense leadership."

Those fired are board chairman Arthur Gonzalez, along with Cameron McKenzie, Betty Rosa, Juan Sabater and Luis Ubiñas. The board's two remaining members — Andrew G. Biggs and John E. Nixon — are Republicans.

The board confirmed in a brief statement that the five were terminated and noted that the board would continue to fulfill its mandate and work "in the interest of the people of Puerto Rico."

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Sylvette Santiago, a spokesperson for the board, did not immediately return a message seeking comment on whether the board members would fight the decision.

Meanwhile, Rep. Nydia Velázquez, a New York Democrat, criticized the dismissals though she acknowledged what she said were "serious and longstanding concerns" about actions the board has taken, including implementing austerity measures.

"This sudden purge by Donald Trump is not about justice or reform," she said in a statement. "It simply creates an opening to stack the Board with even more extreme, pro-bondholder appointees who will continue to put the needs of hedge funds over the Puerto Rican people."

The board was created in 2016 under the Obama administration, a year after Puerto Rico's government declared it was unable to pay its more than \$70 billion public debt load and later filed for the biggest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.

In remarks to the AP, the White House official claimed the board had operated ineffectively and in secret and said it "shelled out huge sums to law, consulting and lobbying firms." The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the subject, also accused the board's staff of receiving "exorbitant salaries."

Puerto Rico is struggling to restructure more than \$9 billion in debt held by the state's Electric Power Authority, with officials holding bitter mediations with creditors demanding full payment.

It's the only Puerto Rico government debt pending a restructuring, with the White House official accusing the board of preferring to "extend the bankruptcy."

In February, the board's executive director, Robert Mujica Jr., said it was "impossible" for Puerto Rico to pay the \$8.5 billion that bondholders are demanding. He instead unveiled a new fiscal plan that proposed a \$2.6 billion payment for creditors. The plan does not call for any rate increases for an island that has one of the highest power bills in any U.S. jurisdiction as chronic power outages persist, given the grid's weak infrastructure.

Alvin Velázquez, a bankruptcy law professor at Indiana University, said he worries the dismissal of the board members could spark another crisis in Puerto Rico.

"This is really about getting a deal out of (the power company) that is not sustainable for the rate payers of Puerto Rico," he said.

Velázquez, former chair for the unsecured creditors committee during the bankruptcy proceedings, also questioned if the dismissals are legal, since board members can only be removed for just cause.

"What's the cause?" he said. "What you're going to see is another instance in which the Trump administration is taking on and testing the courts."

The dismissals were first reported by the Breitbart News Network, a conservative news site.

## **ESPN is acquiring NFL Network, rights for RedZone in a deal giving the NFL a stake in the network**

Ever since the NFL announced it was looking to sell NFL Network and other media assets, ESPN had been seen as one of the favorites to make a deal.

Nearly five years later, a framework is finally in place.

The NFL announced Tuesday night that it has entered into a nonbinding agreement with ESPN. Under the terms, ESPN will acquire NFL Network, NFL Fantasy and the rights to distribute the RedZone channel to cable and satellite operators and the league will get a 10% equity stake in ESPN.

The league and ESPN still have to negotiate a final agreement and get approval from NFL owners. The agreement will also have to undergo regulatory approvals.

"Sometimes great things take a long time to get to the point where it's right. And we both feel that it is at this stage," NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell said in a call with The Associated Press.

Along with the sale of NFL Network, the NFL and ESPN will have a second nonbinding agreement where the NFL will license to ESPN certain NFL content and other intellectual property that can be used by NFL Network and other assets that have been purchased.



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"We have been talking about it in earnest for the last few years. But interestingly enough, we started talking about this over a decade ago but nothing really ended up happening. And we got back at it when I came back to Disney after my retirement," Disney CEO Bob Iger said in a call with the AP.

What ESPN gets

ESPN is expected to launch its direct-to-consumer service before the end of September. The service would give cord-cutters access to all ESPN programs and networks for \$29.99 per month. The addition of more NFL programming increases the value.

Many viewers will receive the service for free as part of their subscription to cable, satellite and most streaming services.

"When I came back to Disney and assessed essentially the future of ESPN, it became clear that ESPN had to launch a bigger and more robust and digital or direct-to-consumer product, not only for the sake of ESPN's business, but for the sports fan," Iger said. "And obviously, when you start thinking about high-quality sports content, your eyes immediately head in the direction of the NFL because there's really nothing more valuable and more popular than that."

NFL Network — which has nearly 50 million subscribers — would be owned and operated by ESPN and would be included in ESPN's direct-to-consumer product.

The NFL RedZone channel would be distributed by ESPN to cable and satellite operators. However, the NFL will continue to own, operate and produce the channel as well as retain the rights to distribute the channel digitally. ESPN would also get rights to the RedZone brand, meaning RedZone channels for college football and basketball or other sports could be coming in the future.

NFL Fantasy Football would merge with ESPN Fantasy Football, giving ESPN the official fantasy football game of the league.

NFL Network will still air seven games per season. Four of ESPN's games, including some that are in overlapping windows on Monday nights, would move to NFL Network. ESPN will license three additional games that will be carried on NFL Network.

What the NFL receives (and retains)

The league gets a 10% equity stake in ESPN. Aidan O'Connor, a senior vice president at the Prosek Partners marketing firm, estimates the value of that would be \$2.2 billion to \$2.5 billion.

ESPN is currently 80% owned by ABC Inc. as an indirect subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. The other 20% is owned by Hearst. Once the deal is official and approved, the breakdown of ESPN will be 72% ABC Inc., 18% Hearst and 10% NFL.

This isn't the first time the league has had an equity stake in a digital or communications business. It had that in the past with Sirius Satellite Radio and SportsLine. The NFL could also have equity in the newly formed "Paramount Skydance Corporation," which owns CBS, due to the league's partnership with Skydance.

"This is new as far as a partner now operating a business that we built, ran and grew," said Hans Schroeder, the NFL's executive vice president of media distribution. "It'll also be a little bit new again with some of the dynamics here, but we'll continue to balance that in a really arm's length way where we'll think about how we manage and work across to all our partners."

The league will continue to own and operate NFL Films, NFL+, NFL.com, the official websites of the 32 teams, the NFL Podcast Network and the NFL FAST Channel (a free ad-supported streaming channel).

"The moves align with the NFL's longstanding ambition to reach \$25 billion in annual revenue by 2027 — a target first set in 2010, when league revenue stood at approximately \$8.5 billion," O'Connor said. "Financially, the move also signals to investors that ESPN is doubling down on differentiation and content stickiness by offering a scarce and premium product in a crowded marketplace. Intentionally ceding equity to the NFL transforms ESPN from a media licensee into a true platform partner — with few properties rivaling the league in terms of cultural significance, appointment viewing, audience reach, and monetization efficiency."

No major changes yet

Viewers will likely not see any immediate impacts until next year once everything is approved.

Besides ESPN, the biggest winner in this could be NFL Network, which had seen reductions in original

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programming the past couple years. "Total Access," the network's flagship show since its launch in 2003, ended in May 2024 amid a series of layoffs and cost-cutting moves. "Good Morning Football" also moved from New York, where it had been since its start in 2016, to Southern California last year.

NFL Network moved to a broadcast facility across the street from SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California, in 2021.

"The thing that's exciting for us is that we have put a lot into the network. I think it's been very effective for fans. We know it's in good hands," Goodell said. "They're innovative, they recognize great production and know how to produce it. They will do a fantastic job of operating the network and taking it to another level."

## A young surgeon tries to save lives at a crippled Gaza hospital

At Shifa hospital in the Gaza Strip, nothing is sterilized, so Dr. Jamal Salha and other surgeons wash their instruments in soap. Infections are rampant. The stench of medical waste is overwhelming. And flies are everywhere.

Without painkillers, patients moan while lying on metal beds lining the corridors. There's no electricity and no ventilation amid searing heat, leaving anxious visitors to fan bedridden relatives with pieces of cardboard.

Shifa, once the largest hospital in Gaza and the cornerstone of its health care system, is a shell of its former self after 22 months of war. The hospital complex the size of seven soccer fields has been devastated by frequent bombings, two Israeli raids and blockades on food, medicine and equipment. Its exhausted staff works around the clock to save lives.

"It is so bad, no one can imagine," said Salha, a 27-year-old neurosurgeon who, like countless doctors in Gaza, trained at Shifa after medical school and hopes to end his career there.

But the future is hard to think about when the present is all-consuming. Salha and other doctors are overwhelmed by a wartime caseload that shows no sign of easing. It has gotten more challenging in recent weeks as patients' bodies wither from rampant malnutrition.

Shifa was initially part of a British military post when it opened in 1946. It developed over the years to boast Gaza's largest specialized surgery department, with over 21 operating rooms. Now, there are only three, and they barely function.

Because Shifa's operating rooms are always full, surgeries are also performed in the emergency room, and some of the wounded must be turned away. Bombed-out buildings loom over a courtyard filled with patients and surrounded by mounds of rubble.

Salha fled northern Gaza at the start of the war — and only returned to Shifa at the beginning of this year. While working at another extremely busy hospital in central Gaza, he kept tabs on Shifa's worsening condition.

"I had seen pictures," he said. "But when I first got back, I didn't want to enter."

A young doctor and a war

After graduating from medical school in 2022, Salha spent a year training at Shifa. That is when he and a friend, Bilal, decided to specialize in neurosurgery.

But everything changed on Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas attacked Israel and Israel's retaliatory campaign began.

For the first few weeks of the war, Salha was an intern at Shifa. Because Israel had cut off Gaza's internet service, one of Salha's jobs was to bring scans to doctors around the complex. He had to navigate through thousands of displaced people sheltering there and run up and down stairwells when elevators stopped working.

Once Israeli troops moved into northern Gaza, he and his family left. Bilal, who stayed in Gaza City, was killed a few months later, Salha said.

Not long after Salha left, Israeli forces raided Shifa for the first time in November 2023.

Israel said the hospital served as a major Hamas command and control center. But it provided little

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evidence beyond a single tunnel with two small rooms under the facility.

It made similar arguments when raiding and striking medical facilities across Gaza even as casualties from the war mounted. Israel says it makes every effort to deliver medical supplies and avoid harming civilians.

Under international law, hospitals lose their protected status if they are used for military purposes. Hamas has denied using hospitals for military purposes, though its security personnel can often be seen inside them and they have placed parts of hospitals off limits to the public.

Israeli forces returned to Shifa in March 2024, igniting two weeks of fighting in which the military said it killed some 200 militants who had regrouped there.

The hospital was left in ruins. The World Health Organization said three hospital buildings were extensively damaged and that its oxygen plant and most equipment were destroyed, including 14 baby incubators.

While all this was going on, Salha worked at a hospital in central Gaza, where he performed over 200 surgeries and procedures, including dozens of operations on fractured skulls. Some surgeons spend a lifetime without ever seeing one.

When he returned to Shifa as a neurosurgeon resident, the buildings he used to run between — some had been rehabilitated — felt haunted.

"They destroyed all our memories," he said.

A shrunken hospital is stretched to its limits

Shifa once had 700 beds. Today there are roughly 200, and nearly as many patients end up on mattresses on the floor, the hospital manager said. Some beds are set up in storage rooms, or in tents. An extra 100 beds, and an additional three surgery rooms, are rented out from a nearby facility.

The hospital once employed 1,600 doctors and nurses. Now there about half as many, according to Shifa's administrative manager, Rami Mohana. With Gaza beset by extreme food insecurity, the hospital can no longer feed its staff, and many workers fled to help their families survive. Those who remain are rarely paid.

On a recent morning, in a storage room-turned-patient ward, Salha checked up on Mosab al-Dibs, a 14-year-old boy suffering from a severe head injury and malnutrition.

"Look how bad things have gotten?" Salha said, pulling at al-Dibs' frail arm.

Al-Dibs' mother, Shahinez, was despondent. "We've known Shifa since we were kids, whoever goes to it will be cured," she said. "Now anyone who goes to it is lost. There's no medicine, no serums. It's a hospital in name only."

There are shortages of basic supplies, like gauze, so patients' bandages are changed infrequently. Gel foams that stop bleeding are rationed.

Shifa's three CT scan machines were destroyed during Israeli raids, Mohana said, so patients are sent to another nearby hospital if they need one. Israel has not approved replacing the CT scanners, he said.

Patients wait for hours — and sometimes days — as surgeons prioritize their caseload or as they arrange scans. Some patients have died while waiting, Salha said.

After months without a pneumatic surgical drill to cut through bones, Shifa finally got one. But the blades were missing, and spare parts were not available, Salha said.

"So instead of 10 minutes, it could take over an hour just to cut the skull bones," he said. "It leaves us exhausted and endangers the life of the patient."

When asked by The Associated Press about equipment shortages at Shifa, the Israeli military agency in charge of aid coordination, COGAT, did not address the question. It said the military "consistently and continuously enables the continued functioning of medical services through aid organizations and the international community."

Unforgettable moments

From his time at the hospital in central Gaza, Salha can't shake the memory of the woman in her 20s who arrived with a curable brain hemorrhage. The hospital wouldn't admit her because there were no beds available in the intensive care unit.

He had wanted to take her in an ambulance to another hospital, but because of the danger of coming under Israeli attack, no technician would go with him to operate her ventilator.

"I had to tell her family that we will have to leave her to die," he said.

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Other stories have happier endings.

When a girl bleeding from her head arrived at Shifa, Salha's colleague stopped it with his hand until a gel foam was secured. The girl, who had temporarily lost her vision, greeted Salha after her successful recovery.

"Her vision was better than mine," the bespectacled Salha said, breaking a smile.

"Sometimes it seems we are living in a stupor. We deal with patients in our sleep and after a while, we wake up and ask: what just happened?"

## Today in History: August 7, Twin Tower tightrope walk

Today is Thursday, Aug. 7, the 219th day of 2025. There are 146 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 7, 1974, French highwire artist Philippe Petit performed an unapproved tightrope walk between the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York, over 1,300 feet above the ground; the event was chronicled in the Academy Award-winning documentary "Man on Wire."

Also on this date:

In 1789, the U.S. Department of War was established by Congress.

In 1942, U.S. and other allied forces landed at Guadalcanal, marking the start of the first major allied offensive in the Pacific during World War II.

In 1960, Cote d'Ivoire gained independence from France.

In 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson broad powers in dealing with reported North Vietnamese attacks on U.S. forces.

In 1971, the Apollo 15 moon mission ended successfully as its command module splashed down in the Pacific Ocean.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter declared the Love Canal environmental disaster in Niagara Falls, N.Y. a federal health emergency; it would later top the initial list of Superfund cleanup sites.

In 1989, a plane carrying U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, and 15 others disappeared over Ethiopia. (The wreckage of the plane was found six days later; there were no survivors.)

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush ordered U.S. troops and warplanes to Saudi Arabia to guard the oil-rich desert kingdom against a possible invasion by Iraq.

In 1998, terrorist bombs at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

In 2007, San Francisco's Barry Bonds hit home run No. 756 to break Hank Aaron's storied record with one out in the fifth inning of a game against the Washington Nationals, who won, 8-6.

In 2012, to avoid a possible death penalty, Jared Lee Loughner agreed to spend the rest of his life in prison, accepting that he went on a deadly shooting rampage at an Arizona political gathering in 2011 that left six people dead and 13 injured, including U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords.

In 2015, Colorado theater shooter James Holmes was spared the death penalty in favor of life in prison after a jury in Centennial failed to agree on whether he should be executed for his attack on a packed movie premiere that left 12 people dead.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Lana Cantrell is 82. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller is 81. Actor John Glover is 81. Actor David Rasche is 81. Former diplomat, talk show host and activist Alan Keyes is 75. Country singer Rodney Crowell is 75. Actor Caroline Aaron is 73. Comedian Alexei Sayle is 73. Actor Wayne Knight is 70. Rock singer Bruce Dickinson is 67. Actor David Duchovny is 65. Actor Delane Matthews is 64. Actor Harold Perrineau is 62. Jazz musician Marcus Roberts is 62. Country singer Raul Malo is 60. Actor David Mann is 59. Actor Charlotte Lewis is 58. Actor Sydney Penny is 54. Actor Greg Serano is 53. Actor Michael Shannon is 51. Actor Charlize Theron is 50. Rock musician Barry Kerch is 49. Actor Eric Johnson is 46. Actor Randy Wayne is 44. Actor-writer Brit Marling is 43. NHL center Sidney Crosby is 38. MLB All-Star Mike Trout is 34. Actor Liam James is 29.