

Groton Daily Independent

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Silver Skates Registration

The Carnival of Silver Skates registration will be Sun, Sept 7 from 10:00-2:00 or Mon, Sept 8 from 3:45-6:00 at the warming house. Skaters must be present for costume measurements. Please plan to attend one of the two days.



Saturday

Groton Legion 30th Anniversary

Sunday

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m., with communion.

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

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

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

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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.

MLB's Female Umpire Debut

Jen Pawol will become the first woman to umpire a regular-season Major League Baseball game when the Miami Marlins face the Atlanta Braves today at 1:15 pm ET at Truist Park.

The 48-year-old former college softball player from New Jersey began umpiring professional baseball in 2016, becoming the first woman in 34 years to umpire at the minor leagues' highest level in 2023. (Learn about professional baseball levels here.) Pawol began umpiring the major league spring training games last year and was named one of 17 substitute umpires for regular-season Major League games this year. And, on Wednesday, she received the call to fill in this weekend. Pawol will call outs from the bases during today's doubleheader, as well as balls and strikes from behind home plate tomorrow.

The 150-year-old MLB trails other professional leagues in having women officiate at the highest level, with the NBA introducing its first female referees in 1997 and the NFL in 2012.

Active shooter near Emory University dead, one officer killed.

A suspected gunman and a police officer are dead after police responded to an active shooter outside the headquarters of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and near Emory University in Atlanta on Friday. No civilians were reported injured, though bullets struck at least four CDC buildings. The shooter's motive is still under investigation as of this writing.

Justice Department subpoenas New York attorney general.

Attorney General Letitia James is under federal investigation for allegedly violating President Donald Trump's civil rights. The subpoenas filed Friday seek records related to two lawsuits James previously filed against Trump, one regarding the Trump Organization and another involving the National Rifle Association. James, a Democrat, has sued Trump and his administration dozens of times over his policies and private business dealings, moves Trump has argued are politically motivated.

Separately, Trump ordered an unspecified number of officers from 16 federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security, ICE, and FBI, to patrol Washington, DC's streets for a week beginning yesterday. Trump also removed IRS commissioner Billy Long less than two months after his confirmation; a reason for the dismissal hasn't been made public as of this writing. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent will serve as acting commissioner.

Apollo 13 mission leader James A. Lovell Jr. dies at 97.

The former Navy test pilot and four-time space veteran, known for leading the near-disastrous Apollo 13 mission to the moon, died Thursday in Illinois. He orbited Earth twice and the moon once before leading Apollo 13, which was forced to abort its moon landing after an onboard explosion. The famous phrase "Houston, we have a problem," popularized by Tom Hanks in a film, was based on Lovell's call to NASA ground control. Lovell earned the Congressional Space Medal of Honor and Presidential Medal of Freedom for his leadership during the mission.

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Germany halts military exports for use in Gaza.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz indefinitely suspended military exports to Israel that could be used in Gaza. The move came hours after Israel's security cabinet approved a plan Friday to occupy Gaza City (see previous write-up here). Merz said he supports Israel's efforts to weaken Hamas and rescue hostages, but expressed concern over the necessity of increased military action. Germany—alongside the US and Italy—has been one of Israel's top military equipment suppliers.

Biological sex influences disease risk and immunity.

Research shows genetic sex—biologically defined as the presence of XX chromosomes in females and XY chromosomes in males—affects susceptibility to certain diseases. Women are more prone to autoimmune diseases, while men face higher risks of infectious diseases, partly due to the influence of sex hormones like estrogen and testosterone on immune cell behavior. Understanding sex-based immunity could help researchers develop tailored cancer immunotherapies.

LA brush fire forces thousands to evacuate.

A wildfire ignited Thursday afternoon in the mountains of Ventura County, north of Los Angeles. Within 10 hours, it grew to more than 7.6 square miles, forcing some 2,700 LA County residents to evacuate and placing another 14,000 Ventura County residents under evacuation warnings (see latest evacuation orders here). At least 400 personnel, supported by multiple aircraft, have been deployed to fight the blaze. Officials cite extreme heat and low humidity as key factors in its rapid spread.

Bed Bath & Beyond relaunches with brick and mortar in Nashville.

The bankrupt home goods chain is returning as Bed Bath & Beyond Home, with a storefront opening in Nashville yesterday. The original company filed for bankruptcy in April 2023, after which The Brand House Collective acquired its intellectual property. The new owners plan to open dozens more locations nationwide if the Nashville launch proves successful. In a nod to nostalgia, Bed Bath & Beyond Home will accept expired 20% off coupons, which the original stores were known for.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Patricia J. in Fletcher, Vermont.

"A friend I hadn't seen in quite some time invited me out to lunch. No reason. I accepted thinking she wanted to talk about something. When we sat down she told me she'd seen me selling some of my dog's things on a website (he died and I am still devastated), and she thought I might need someone to talk to about it. She is a dog lover too and lost one of her dogs a year or so back (she still has 3). We cried together. It was the kindest gesture anyone has made to me in a very very long time."



Half of South Dakotans now live in 2 metro areas

By Melissa Avelino

South Dakota News Watch

Melissa Avelino is a data journalism student at Augustana University. In this series, she looks at the changing face of South Dakota using U.S. Census Data.

South Dakota's only two formal metro areas are now home to roughly half the state's population, according to the latest U.S. Census data.

Over the past few decades, Rapid City and Sioux Falls have ballooned into burgeoning population centers drawing newcomers from around South Dakota and elsewhere who want to move there and settle down.

As of 2023, Sioux Falls' city population was an estimated 220,000 and its metro area was 308,266 residents, according to the Census. Rapid City just topped 85,000 residents, with a metro population of 156,227, as of 2023.

The share of the state population living in Sioux Falls and Rapid City metro areas was 47% in 2018. That increased to 50% in 2023, an estimated 464,493 in both areas combined, about half of South Dakota's 920,000 estimated population in 2024.

Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken said the city's growth is happening organically, and there is no number as a goal.

"What we're trying to do is be really smart and intentional with that growth," he said. "Because you can also have too much growth that creates a strain on the infrastructure."

It is important to make sure that all the right resources are in place as the city grows by 2-1/2 to 3% every year, said TenHaken, who was elected in 2018.

Lincoln County, which comprises the south part of the Sioux Falls metro area, increased its population by 8.2% since 2020 and remains one of the fastest-growing in the state.

Jason Salamun, who has been the mayor of Rapid City since 2023, measures the growth of the city as a trend that will naturally happen because the city is a place where people feel safe and can prosper.

"The goal is to keep this community special," Salamun said. "I believe that more people will be attracted to the lifestyle that we enjoy here."

Rapid City grew by 10,000 people since 2020.

The data

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the Sioux Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) population increased by 7.6% since 2020. It includes five counties: Minnehaha, Lincoln, McCook and Turner in South Dakota and Rock in Minnesota.

The Rapid City metro area had an estimated population growth of 6% since 2020. It includes Pennington and Meade counties.

The following map explores the principal cities in the Sioux Falls metro area and tracks the population trends since 2000. Click on the circles to see the numbers.

The following map explores the principal cities in the Rapid City metro area and tracks the population trends since 2000.

Some reasons for the growth

Brianna Easton, a graphic designer who moved to Rapid City seven years ago, said its main appeal lies in its environment and proximity to the Black Hills.

"People find Rapid City attractive because of the bigger-city-type feel – big enough that you don't run into the same people all the time," Easton said.

Such quality of life is a big reason people move, said Kara Harders, the community vitality field specialist

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for SDSU Extension in Brookings.

She's conducting a non-scientific survey that's filled out by people when they move from one place in South Dakota to another. It indicates that 75% of those newcomers did not move because of a job.

"Once I found those things, I realized I thought I wanted to move where I live now and then I started looking for a job," Harders said of the newcomer survey results. "If I had been looking just for a job, there's a pretty good chance I wouldn't have been it up here. I had to be focused on other things and then look for the job."

"I was trying to figure out a way to move to Sioux Falls and then this job kind of lined up for me," Weber said.

1992 magazine article prompted a surge

In 1992, Money Magazine ranked Sioux Falls as the best place to live in America, which put it on the national map as an attractive place to move.

One year later, Susan Schrader, a retired sociologist who has lived in Sioux Falls since 1978, was coming back from working on her doctorate in Minneapolis and first noticed that the city was growing.

"Augustana now is really, in many ways, eventually going to become an inner city university, a lot of growth already," Scharader said. "Certainly, since then, the city has just exploded."

Weber sees Sioux Falls as a place where people can experience that city vibe and opportunities with a smaller ratio feel.

"Sioux Falls is growing and stuff like that but still small enough where it's more, maybe like, digestible for new people," Weber said.

"There's a lot more like community events going on, like different events for different groups of people," he said. "And definitely some more food options here."

Michael Mullin moved to Sioux Falls to teach history at Augustana University in 1988. For him, the growth has been an opportunity to diversify the city and make things better.

Part of this growth is because of young people and the city leaders' focus on keeping Sioux Falls' local identity, with a concern for neighbors and looking for improvements for everyone.

"The city also has a 'young' people vibe," he said. "Young professionals are driving the city for the better."

Quality of life and opportunities

Mayor TenHaken said the quality of life in Sioux Falls is due to parks, low crime, affordable housing, good infrastructure and good schools. That's why people have been attracted to it, and the metro area is projected to be about 500,000 people in 25 years, he said.

"If you're looking at a city where you wanted to move to, you want things to do," TenHaken said. "You want arts and culture and restaurants and activities."

Rapid City draws people differently, and everything starts with the visit of 3.9 million visitors each year, Salamun said.

Easton loves the idea of balance in her lifestyle, living in a bigger city in South Dakota and having the Black Hills right in her backyard.

"I can go out and hike anytime and go paddleboarding whenever I want," she said.

Infrastructure to preserve its identity

TenHaken emphasizes the importance of work on the infrastructure not only to accommodate the growth but also to preserve the city's character.

"We luckily have been very strategic in some of our investments, and we have a water supply for the next several decades," TenHaken said. "We have to balance the assets and the resources we have with the economic impact. So we treat those resources just like any natural resource that we have to protect and preserve."

To Salamun, what makes Rapid City special is not just its abundant natural beauty but also its residents.

"(As) long as we keep to our strong values, that we are warm and welcoming, that we try to do the right thing at all times, we will continue to be a community that is remarkable," he said. "And for me, I think that's really what it boils down to the people."

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This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, an independent, nonprofit organization. Read more stories and donate at sdnewswatch.org and sign up for an email to get stories when they're published. Melissa Avelino dos Santos is a student from Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil, at Augustana University in Sioux Falls. She is a summer 2025 intern at SDNW with support from the Nonprofit Newsroom Internship Program created by The Scripps Howard Fund and the Institute for Nonprofit News. Contact Melissa: melissa.avelino@sdnewswatch.org.

2025 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Vehicle Count – Through Day Seven

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 daily vehicle counts for Friday, Aug. 8 through Sunday, Aug. 10, 2025, as well as the final 2025 Sturgis Rally total vehicle count, will be released on Tuesday, Aug. 12, 2025.

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

Wednesday, Aug. 6, 2025: 59,414 vehicles entered
Up 9.7% from the previous five-year average

Thursday, Aug. 7, 2025: 54,697 vehicles entered
Up 11.1% from the previous five-year average

2025 Total to Date (7-days): 425,875 Vehicles (Up 10.9%)
Previous Five-Year Average (2020-2024) 7-day total to date: 384,154 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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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Friday, August 8, 2025

CONTACT: [Brad Reiners](#), DPS Communications Director, 605.280.2050

Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday, August 2, 2025, to 6 a.m. Friday, August 8, 2025

Item	Sturgis Zones	Rapid City Zones	District Totals	Last Year to Date
DUI Arrests	86	17	103	124
Misd Drug Arrests	163	46	209	230
Felony Drug Arrests	68	15	83	129
Total Citations	706	490	1,196	1,140
Total Warnings	2,633	1039	3,672	3,502
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	17	7	24	31
Injury Accidents	23	35	58	31
Fatal Accidents	1	3	4	3
# of Fatalities	1	3	4	3

Fatal Crashes:

****Update**** At 12:50 a.m. Sunday, US 14A mile marker 52: At 12:50am Sturgis Police attempted to stop a 2021 Harley Davidson motorcycle for exhibition driving near the Iron Horse Saloon. The motorcycle fled and Sturgis Police engaged in a pursuit. The motorcycle left the lane of travel at a high speed and entered the ditch at MM 52 on US 14A. The driver was transported by helicopter to Monument Health with serious life-threatening injuries. On Monday August 4th the 28-year-old male driver died from his injuries.

At 3:53 p.m. Thursday, South Dakota Highway 44 and Airport Road: A 2024 Honda CBR motorcycle (Unit 2) was traveling westbound on SD Hwy 44 toward Airport Road. A 2015 Toyota Tacoma (Unit 1) was eastbound on SD 44 preparing to make a left turn onto Airport Road. The driver of Unit 1 did not see Unit 2 and began to make a left turn. As Unit 1 was making the left turn, it was struck by Unit 2. The driver of Unit 2 was wearing a helmet. The 23-year-old male driver of Unit 2 was transported to Monument Health in Rapid City. The driver of Unit 2 sustained fatal injuries. The driver of Unit 1 was not injured.

Injury Crashes:

At 10:19 a.m. Thursday, South Dakota Highway 34, mile marker 38: A 2023 Indian motorcycle (Unit 2) was driving westbound on SD 34 near MM 38, as he began to merge into the right lane, a 2025 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) came up from behind Unit 2 while also attempting to merge into the right lane. As Unit 2 passed Unit 1, the motorcycles side swiped one another. Unit 2 drifted into the north ditch and came to rest on its side. Both riders of Unit 2 became separated from their motorcycle. Unit 1 remained upright and pulled over to the shoulder of the road. The driver of Unit 1 sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries. Unit 2's driver sustained a minor injury to his right leg, he was treated and released on scene, and the passenger was not injured. The passenger of Unit 2 was wearing a helmet. Neither driver was wearing a helmet.

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At 10:32 a.m. Thursday, Interstate 90, mile marker 113: A 1999 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was traveling eastbound on I 90 near mile marker 113. Unit 1 had an equipment failure resulting in a rear tire rupture. Unit 1's driver lost control and laid Unit 1 down. Both driver and passenger sustained minor injuries and were transported to Monument Health in Rapid City. Both occupants were wearing helmets.

At 11:10 a.m. Thursday, Interstate 90, mile marker 18: A 2004 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was driving westbound on I 90 near MM 18 when his front wheel began to wobble. The driver of Unit 1 tried to regain stability but was unable to. Unit 1 tipped over and the driver separated from Unit 1. A 2018 Chevrolet Malibu (Unit 2) was in the lane next to Unit 1 and was struck by the motorcycle after the driver of unit 1 was separated from it. Unit 1 and Unit 2 both came to a final rest in the median crossover. The driver of Unit 1 came to a final rest on the edge of the passing lane. The driver of Unit 1 was wearing a helmet and was transported to Spearfish Monument Health with serious non-life-threatening injuries.

At 11:30 a.m. Thursday, US Highway 16A, mile marker 39: A 1998 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was eastbound at MM 39 US 16A. A 2023 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 2) was westbound at this location. Unit 1 failed to negotiate the curve and crossed the double solid yellow line. Unit 1 struck Unit 2 causing them both to leave the roadway into the north ditch. The operator of Unit 1 was wearing a helmet and was transported to Monument Health in Custer. The passenger on Unit 2 was not wearing a helmet. She sustained serious injury and was transported to Rapid City Monument Health. The operator of Unit 2 was not wearing a helmet. He was treated and released on scene.

At 1:58 p.m. Thursday, South Dakota Highway 34 and South Dakota Highway 79: A 2017 Ford F350 (Unit 1) was stopped at a traffic signal facing southbound at the intersection of SD Hwy 34 and SD Hwy 79. A 2020 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 2) was traveling eastbound on SD Hwy 34 attempting to make a left turn on to SD Hwy 79. As Unit 2 made the turn he lost control of the motorcycle and crashed into the trailer of Unit 1. Unit 2 passenger sustained minor injuries and was transported to Monument Health Sturgis Hospital. Neither occupant was wearing a helmet.

At 4:37 p.m. Thursday, Wildlife Loop Road, mile marker 5: A 2012 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was eastbound near MM 5 Wildlife Loop Rd. Unit 1 failed to negotiate a right turn due to the exhaust dragging on the roadway. Unit 1 lost control and laid the motorcycle down in the middle of the road. The operator of Unit 1 was not wearing a helmet and sustained a serious non-life-threatening injury. The driver of Unit 1 was transported to Custer Monument Hospital via ambulance.

At 5:02 p.m. Thursday, Nemo Road near Box Elder Forks Road: A 2021 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was riding south on Nemo Rd and ran off the roadway. The driver was separated from his motorcycle, coming to a rest in a ditch. The driver was not wearing a helmet and sustained minor injuries.

At 5:02 p.m. Thursday, Interstate 90, Mile marker 135: A 2022 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was traveling at a high rate of speed eastbound on Interstate 90 and struck the rear bumper of a 2020 Dodge Ram (Unit 2). Unit 1 ran off the road to the left and entered the median. Unit 1 traveled several hundred feet upright before it tripped and rolled. The driver of Unit 1 was separated from the motorcycle and came to final rest alongside Unit 1 in the median. The driver of Unit 1 was life-flighted to Monument Health with life-threatening injuries. The driver of Unit 1 was not wearing a helmet.

At 11:25 p.m. Thursday, Interstate 90, Exit 37: A 2017 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was stopped at the stop sign on the off ramp of Interstate 90 Exit 37 at its intersection with Pleasant Valley Road. A 2020 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 2) was southbound on Pleasant Valley Road. The driver of Unit 1 did not see Unit 2 and entered the intersection. Unit 1 collided with Unit 2. Both drivers separated from their motorcycles after the collision. The driver of Unit 1 sustained minor injuries and was not transported. The driver of Unit 2 sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries and was transported to Monument Health in Sturgis. Neither driver was wearing a helmet.

All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

State Enters Purchase Agreement for New Prison Land at Benson Rd. Site

Agreement Contingent on Approval by Legislature

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Larry Rhoden announced that the State of South Dakota has entered into a purchase agreement that grants the State the option to purchase land at the Benson Road site. This agreement represents over \$10 million savings on what was estimated by the prison task force.

“South Dakota needs a new prison to keep our people safe, and we are moving forward with delivering a proposal that prioritizes safety and conservative fiscal stewardship,” said Governor Larry Rhoden. “We appreciate the Legislature’s continued attention to this project, and we are excited to deliver this as efficiently as possible for South Dakota taxpayers.”

The land in question is approximately 148 acres in northeast Sioux Falls along Benson Road (the “Benson Road site”). The State of South Dakota will only complete the purchase if approval to acquire the site is granted by the South Dakota Legislature.

If the purchase of the Benson Road site is approved by the Legislature on September 23, 2025, the Lincoln County site would no longer be owned by the State. As private property, any agricultural use or development of this land would be subject to county zoning.

“Residents of Lincoln County should be excited about the opportunity to regain control over what happens to that land,” said Sen. Ernie Otten (R-Lincoln County), who served on the prison task force. “I look forward to working with my fellow legislators to get this project across the finish line.”

The Benson Road site will represent millions of dollars in savings on utility development costs compared to the Lincoln County land, as there will be no need for a water tower, long sewer line, or other expenses. The purchase of the new Benson Road site also represents a more-than \$10 million savings on the previous estimate by the prison task force. The purchase price is to be paid as follows:

Cash payment of \$12.5 million dollars for the Benson Road site, plus
Exchange of the previously proposed Lincoln County land with an estimated agricultural value of \$4.5 million.



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 Locke Electric Loses Despite Out Hitting KWL Nationals

By GameChanger Media

Groton Locke Electric fell 8-2 to KWL (Kimball/White Lake) Nationals on Friday despite out-hitting them 10 to nine. Groton is eliminated from the state tournament that is being played in Brandon. Bradin Althoff led Groton Locke Electric with three hits.

KWL Nationals got on the board in the bottom of the third inning after Jaxon Christensen grounded out, and Dylan Konechne doubled down the left field line, each scoring one run.

Ryan Groeblichhoff opened the game for Groton Locke Electric. The pitcher gave up seven hits and four runs over five innings, striking out four and walking none. Mitch Price opened the game for KWL Nationals. The hurler allowed seven hits and one run (zero earned) over seven innings, striking out five and walking one.

Groton Locke Electric piled up 10 hits in the game. Althoff went 3-for-4 at the plate and led the team with two runs batted in. Jonah Schmidt collected two hits for Groton Locke Electric in four at bats.

KWL Nationals tallied nine hits in the game. Konechne drove the middle of the lineup, leading KWL Nationals with three runs batted in. The second baseman went 2-for-5 on the day. Christensen led KWL Nationals with three hits in five at bats. Dylanger Pierson collected two hits for KWL Nationals in five at bats.

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Groton Locke Electric 2 - 8 KWL Nationals

📍 Away 📅 Friday August 08, 2025

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
GRTN	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	10	3
KWLN	0	0	2	0	2	0	0	4	X	8	9	2

BATTING

Groton Locke Electric	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T Sieber #24 (SS)	5	0	1	0	0	0
G Heyne... #11 (DH)	2	1	1	0	3	0
A Morris #13 (C)	5	0	1	0	0	2
J Schmidt #21 (CF)	4	0	2	0	0	0
B Hansen #18 (1B)	4	0	1	0	0	1
B Althoff #27 (RF)	4	0	3	2	0	1
B Althoff #1 (3B)	4	0	1	0	0	1
N Morris... #17 (LF)	4	0	0	0	0	0
D Frey #6 (2B)	2	0	0	0	0	1
C Cama... #10 (C)	2	0	0	0	0	1
CR: B Richter #19	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	36	2	10	2	3	7

TB: J Schmidt 2, B Hansen, B Althoff 3, G Heyne (Northville), B Althoff, T Sieber, A Morris, **LOB:** 10

PITCHING

Groton Locke Electric	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
R Groebl... #0	5.0	7	4	4	0	4	0
A Morris #13	3.0	2	4	1	1	2	0
Totals	8.0	9	8	5	1	6	0

L: R Groeblinghoff, **P-S:** R Groeblinghoff 72-46, A Morris 48-27, **HBP:** R Groeblinghoff 3, A Morris 2, **BF:** R Groeblinghoff 25, A Morris 16

KWL Nationals	AB	R	H	RBI	BB	SO
T Wookey #2 (RF)	3	2	0	1	0	0
D Pierson #21 (3B)	5	2	2	2	0	1
C Crist #7 (1B)	3	0	0	1	0	0
J Christen... #11 (C)	5	0	3	1	0	0
D Konech... #5 (2B)	5	0	2	3	0	1
C Lenz #69 (SS)	2	1	1	0	1	1
K Christe... #11 (LF)	4	0	0	0	0	0
C Leifer... #8 (DH)	2	1	0	0	0	1
C Lenz #17 (CF)	4	1	1	0	0	2
CR: J Kroupa #34	0	1	0	0	0	0
Totals	33	8	9	8	1	6

2B: D Konechne, J Christensen, **TB:** C Lenz, C Lenz, D Konechne 3, J Christensen 4, D Pierson 2, **SAC:** C Crist, **SF:** C Crist, **CS:** C Leiferman, **HBP:** C Lenz, T Wookey 2, C Leiferman 2, **LOB:** 8

KWL Nationals	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	HR
M Price #45	7.0	7	1	0	1	5	0
C Crist #7	2.0	3	1	1	2	2	0
Totals	9.0	10	2	1	3	7	0

W: M Price, **P-S:** M Price 124-82, C Crist 44-27, **BF:** M Price 28, C Crist 11

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SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Welcome to South Dakota's newest news desert

by Dana Hess

AUGUST 8, 2025 5:29 PM

More and more often, people in the journalism business talk about "news deserts," those places that have no newspapers or other local news coverage. I always felt sorry for those places. Now I live in one.

Journalists and people who care about the news were stunned Wednesday when News Media Corp. announced it was closing its newspapers, including four in South Dakota: the Huron Daily Plainsman, The Brookings Register, The Redfield Press and the Moody County Enterprise in Flandreau.

The sudden closing of those newspapers will make life tougher for subscribers and advertisers, not to mention the employees who are out of work. It's tough news for me because I have a connection to all four papers.

I was raised in Huron. The Plainsman was my hometown paper, not that I paid much attention to it. My love of newspapers was developed later in life. The Huronite, as old-timers have been known to call it, didn't really get on my radar until my mother-in-law started working there as the secretary to the publisher. At the time, I was the editor of the Milbank Herald Advance. As a rookie editor, it was heady stuff for me when she would slip one of my editorials onto the publisher's desk to show off what her son-in-law was up to. Bless her heart, sometimes those editorials would be reprinted in the Plainsman.

My newspaper career started at The Brookings Register where I spent five years selling advertising. It was there that I fell in love with newspapering. I made three attempts to move from the sales department to the newsroom. The third time seemed like the charm. It tells you something about the way people are valued at newspapers in that I had to agree to take a cut in pay to become a reporter. At the time, the paper was owned by Stauffer Communications. Some bean counter at the home office cut the position.

While I thought my dreams of being a journalist had been crushed, the editor at the Register had other ideas. She had come to Brookings from The Redfield Press and knew that the owners there were having a tough time keeping editors. Their plan was to hire an editor and get that editor coached up on how to sell advertising. Once the editor was adept with a rate card, the owners would move on to another weekly newspaper and complete the process again. Their goal was to own a chain of weekly newspapers. However, they were stuck in Redfield because the news/editorial graduates they were getting from South Dakota State University had no interest in learning how to sell ads.

I was hired as editor and general manager of The Redfield Press because I already knew how to sell advertising and I had a keen interest in learning about writing and presenting the news. The lessons I learned in Redfield stuck with me my entire professional life.

From Redfield I went to Milbank and then on to the Capital Journal in Pierre. After stops as a writer for Game, Fish and Parks and University Relations at SDSU, my wife and I retired in Brookings. In retirement, one of the first freelance jobs I had was filling in as the editor at the Enterprise in Flandreau. I've been back to Flandreau a few times, filling in again just this past June.

I'd hate to think that I'm the common denominator as to why these four newspapers closed. It's more likely that the cause is some sort of corporate mismanagement as anyone could look at the Register or the Enterprise and see that they have plenty of advertising to support their woefully small staffs.

The evening of Aug. 6, when the internet was roiling with news of the closures, I heard from a Brookings businessman who was incensed at the turn of events. He was an occasional subscriber to the Register.

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He spends his advertising dollars in the competing shopper. Yet he was angry, as we all should be, at the notion that there is no one in our community chasing and reporting the news.

These closures bring home the fact that the vital job of journalism has to be sustained by the communities that are served by newspapers. Certainly you should subscribe, but there's more that you can do. Invest your advertising dollars in the publication that's watching out for your best interests by reporting the news. Frequent the advertisers in the newspaper, telling them that you saw their ad in the local newspaper.

The template for bringing news back to these four communities has already been created. When the Gannett newspapers in Sioux Falls, Aberdeen and Watertown turned into ghosts of their former selves with shrunken staffs and little or no local news, startup weekly newspapers stepped in to fill the news void. There's no reason to believe that the same formula won't work in Brookings, Huron, Redfield or Flandreau. The Dakota Scout of Sioux Falls has already announced plans to expand into Brookings and Flandreau.

We can only hope that someone with more money than sense will try to fill the news voids in Huron and Redfield. For everyone who still has a newspaper in their community, take the time and spend the money to nurture it and help it grow. Do otherwise and you'll wake up one day to find yourself living in a news desert.

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

Governor announces \$17 million deal for Sioux Falls prison site, subject to legislative approval

Landowners would get \$12.5 million plus state land in Lincoln County worth \$4.5 million

BY: SETH TUPPER - AUGUST 8, 2025 2:47 PM

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden announced a potential \$17 million deal Friday to acquire land for a new men's prison in northeast Sioux Falls and trade away state-owned land 15 miles south of the city that was formerly chosen as a prison site.

The plan is subject to approval by the Legislature, which is scheduled to convene for a special session Sept. 23.

"South Dakota needs a new prison to keep our people safe, and we are moving forward with delivering a proposal that prioritizes safety and conservative fiscal stewardship," Rhoden said in a news release.

If approved, the transaction could resolve a controversy over plans to replace the oldest parts of the antiquated and crowded state penitentiary in Sioux Falls.

The controversy dates to 2023 when the administration of then-Gov. Kristi Noem announced the selection of state-owned land in rural Lincoln County, sparking opposition and a lawsuit from neighboring landowners. The fight culminated last winter in the Legislature's rejection of funding for a prison project at the Lincoln County site. That spurred the new governor, Rhoden, to appoint a Project Prison Reset task force.

The task force, led by Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen, worked through the spring and summer considering prison plans and locations, ultimately endorsing a \$650 million budget — including land acquisition — for a 1,500-bed facility on one of two large parcels of undeveloped land in the same area of northeast Sioux Falls. The area is bordered by Interstate 229, Benson Road and the Big Sioux River. Neither of the two site finalists encountered opposition similar to the backlash against the rural Lincoln County location.

Rhoden's chosen site is along Benson Road, south of the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society and a National Guard facility, and north of Gage Brothers Concrete Products. Great Bear Ski Valley is across the Big Sioux River to the southeast. Venhuizen said in a Friday interview that the site is "a little bit better deal" and "a more regularly shaped parcel" that will better accommodate the state's plans.

The state has a purchase agreement with TCB LLC (which is registered to Patty Nohr of Sioux Falls) and Lynnette Sue Unzelman. Under the terms of the agreement, the state would pay TCB \$11.56 million

for its 137 acres of Sioux Falls land, including a \$1 million payment to the Myrl and Lois Unzelman Family Fund at the Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation. For the remaining 11 acres of land, the state would pay \$937,858 to Lynnette Sue Unzelman.

In addition, the state would transfer ownership of its 320 acres in rural Lincoln County — worth an estimated \$4.5 million — to TCB, raising the total value of the deal to \$17 million.

A fact sheet published by the Rhoden administration says the owner of land neighboring the Sioux Falls site has indicated a willingness to sell an additional 28.98 acres. Venhuizen said the state hasn't decided whether to make an offer for that property.

"As the design progresses, we'll ascertain whether that's necessary or not," he said.

When the state was planning to build on the rural Lincoln County site, the state was not required to follow county zoning, which was a point of contention in a lawsuit filed by neighboring landowners. Rhoden's news release said the Lincoln County land will be privately owned and subject to county zoning if his plan is approved.

Prior to the Legislature's rejection of the Lincoln County site, lawmakers had been budgeting money for several years in anticipation of a prison construction project. Rhoden anticipates having enough state funds to build the project without taking on any debt. The cost of land acquisition is \$10 million less than the task force had conservatively estimated, Venhuizen added.

Questions remain, however, about how much of the money spent by the state on plans, site work and infrastructure agreements at the Lincoln County site is recoverable or transferable to the Sioux Falls location. The total amount of those expenditures is more than \$50 million.

Venhuizen said the state will "put out a more specific breakdown about that in the next couple of weeks."

"Quite a bit of it is transferable," he said.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Experts say rural emergency rooms are increasingly run without doctors

Some doctors say physicians' training leads to better emergency care, and that some hospitals are trying to save money by not hiring them

BY: ARIELLE ZIONTS, KFF HEALTH NEWS - AUGUST 8, 2025 7:00 AM

EKALAKA, Mont. — There was no doctor on-site when a patient arrived in early June at the emergency room in the small hospital at the intersection of two dirt roads in this town of 400 residents.

There never is.

Dahl Memorial's three-bed emergency department — a two-hour drive from the closest hospital with more advanced services — instead depends on physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Physician assistant Carla Dowdy realized the patient needed treatment beyond what the ER could provide, even if it had had a doctor. So, she made a call for a medical plane to fly the patient to treatment at Montana's most advanced hospital. Dowdy also called out medications and doses needed to stabilize the patient as a paramedic and nurses administered the drugs, inserted IV lines, and measured vital signs.

Emergency medicine researchers and providers believe ERs, especially in rural areas, increasingly operate with few or no physicians amid a nationwide shortage of doctors.

A recent study found that in 2022, at least 7.4% of emergency departments across the U.S. did not have an attending physician on-site 24/7. Like Dahl Memorial, more than 90% were in low-volume or critical access hospitals — a federal designation for small, rural hospitals.

The results come from the 82% of hospitals that responded to a survey sent to all emergency departments in the country, except those operated by the federal government. The study is the first of its kind

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so there isn't proof that such staffing arrangements are increasing, said Carlos Camargo, the lead author and a professor of emergency medicine at Harvard Medical School. But Camargo and other experts suspect ERs running without doctors present are becoming more common.

Differing opinions

Placing ERs in the hands of nondoctors isn't without controversy. Some doctors and their professional associations say physicians' extensive training leads to better care, and that some hospitals are just trying to save money by not employing them.

The American Medical Association, open to all medical students and physicians, and the American College of Emergency Physicians both support state and federal laws or regulations that would require ERs to staff a doctor around the clock. Indiana, Virginia, and South Carolina recently passed such legislation.

Rural ERs may see fewer patients, but they still treat serious cases, said Alison Haddock, president of ACEP.

"It's important that folks in those areas have equal access to high-quality emergency care to the greatest extent possible," Haddock said.

Other health care providers and organizations say advanced-practice providers with the right experience and support are capable of overseeing ERs. And they say mandating that a physician be on-site could drive some rural hospitals to close because they can't afford or recruit enough — or any — doctors.

"In an environment, especially a rural environment, if you have an experienced PA who knows what they know, and knows the boundaries of their knowledge and when to involve consultants, it works well," said Paul Amriott, a board member of the Society of Emergency Medicine PAs.

"I'm not practicing independently" despite working 12-hour night shifts without physicians on-site at critical access hospitals in three states, he said.

Amriott said he calls specialists for consultation often and about once a month asks the physician covering the day shift at his hospital to come help him with more challenging cases such as emergency childbirth and complicated trauma. Amriott said this isn't unique to PAs — ER doctors seek similar consultations and backup.

Dakotas have high rate of physician-less ERs

The proportion of ERs without an attending physician always on-site varies wildly by state. The 2022 survey found that 15 states — including substantially rural ones, such as New Mexico, Nevada, and West Virginia — had no such emergency departments.

But in the Dakotas, more than half of emergency departments were running without 24/7 attending physician staffing. In Montana it was 46%, the third-highest rate.

None of those three states have a program to train physicians as ER specialists. Neither does Wyoming or Idaho.

But Sanford Health, which bills itself as "the largest rural health system in the United States," is launching an emergency medicine residency in the region. The Sioux Falls, South Dakota-based program is intended to boost the ranks of rural emergency doctors in those states, the residency director said in a news release.

Requirements debated

Leon Adelman is an emergency medicine physician in Gillette, Wyoming, which, at around 33,800 residents, is the largest city in the state's northeast. Working in such a rural area has given him nuanced views on whether states should require 24/7 on-site physician coverage in ERs.

Adelman said he supports such laws only where it's feasible, like in Virginia. He said the state's emergency physicians' organization pushed for the law only after doing research that made it confident that the requirement wouldn't shutter any rural hospitals.

Camargo said some doctors say that if lawmakers are going to require 24/7 on-site physician coverage in ERs, they need to pay to help hospitals implement it.

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Adelman said when instituting staffing requirements isn't possible, states should create other regulations. For example, he said, lawmakers should make sure hospitals not hiring physicians aren't refraining just to save money.

He pointed to Vermont, where a report recommended that several of the state's hospitals cut physicians from their ERs. The report was part of a mandated process to improve the state's troubled health care system.

Adelman said states should also require PAs and NPs without on-site physician supervision to have extensive emergency experience and the ability to consult with remote physicians.

Some doctors have pointed to a case in which a 19-year-old woman died after being misdiagnosed by an NP who was certified in family medicine, not emergency care, and working alone at an Oklahoma ER. Few NPs have emergency certification, an analysis found.

The Society of Emergency Medicine PAs outlines training and experience PAs should have before practicing in rural areas or without on-site doctors.

Haddock said emergency physicians have seen cases of hospitals hiring inexperienced advanced-practice providers. She said ACEP is asking the federal government to require critical access and rural emergency hospitals to have physicians on-site or on call day and night.

Haddock said ACEP wouldn't want such a requirement to close any hospital and noted that the organization has various efforts to keep rural hospitals staffed and funded.

Dahl Memorial Hospital has strict hiring requirements and robust oversight, said Dowdy, who previously worked for 14 years in high-volume, urban emergency rooms.

She said ER staffers can call physicians when they have questions and that a doctor who lives on the other side of Montana reviews all their patient treatment notes. The ER is working on getting virtual reality glasses that will let remote physicians help by seeing what the providers in Ekalaka see, Dowdy said.

She said patient numbers in the Ekalaka ER vary but average one or two a day, which isn't enough for staff to maintain their knowledge and skills. To supplement those real-life cases, providers visit simulation labs, do monthly mock scenarios, and review advanced skills, such as using an ultrasound to help guide breathing tubes into patient airways.

Dowdy said Dahl Memorial hasn't had a physician in at least 30 years, but CEO Darrell Messersmith said he would hire one if a doctor lived in the area. Messersmith said there's a benefit to having advanced-practice providers with connections to the region and who stay at the hospital for several years. Other rural hospitals, he noted, may have physicians either as permanent staff who leave after a few years or contract workers who fly in for a few weeks at a time.

People eating at Ekalaka's sole breakfast spot and attending appointments at the hospital's clinic all told KFF Health News that they've been happy with the care they have received from Dowdy and her co-workers.

Ben Bruski had to visit the ER after a cow on his family ranch kicked a gate, smashing it against his hand. And he knows other people who've been treated for more serious problems.

"We've got to have this facility here because this facility saves a lot of lives," Bruski said.

KFF Health News is a national newsroom that produces in-depth journalism about health issues and is one of the core operating programs at KFF — the independent source for health policy research, polling, and journalism.

Arielle Zions is the rural health care correspondent for KFF, primarily covering South Dakota, where she is based, and its neighboring states and tribal nations. Arielle previously worked at South Dakota Public Broadcasting, reporting on business and economic development. Before that, she was the criminal justice reporter at the Rapid City Journal and a general assignment reporter at Nogales International, on the Arizona-Mexico border. She graduated from Pitzer College in Claremont, California.

Trump EPA claws back \$7B in solar funding already promised to states

BY: JACOB FISCHLER - AUGUST 8, 2025 5:39 PM

Several congressional Democrats on Friday slammed the Trump administration's announcement it will cancel nearly \$7 billion in grants to fund solar energy projects for low-income households, saying the move was illegal and would raise families' energy prices if allowed to proceed.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency sent notices to states and other recipients of grants through the Solar for All program, which Democrats created in their massive 2022 taxes, energy and domestic policy law, that the agency was canceling all unspent funds from the initiative.

The EPA said Republicans eliminated the federal fund that distributed the program's money in the "one big, beautiful" law President Donald Trump signed on July 4.

On Thursday, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin said on social media the law terminated the agency's legal ability to distribute the funds.

"The bottom line again is this: EPA no longer has the authority to administer the program or the appropriated funds to keep this boondoggle alive," Zeldin said in a video posted to X. "With clear language and intent from Congress in the one big, beautiful bill, EPA is taking action to end this program for good. We are committed to the rule of law and being a good steward of taxpayer dollars."

The move sparked a backlash from Democrats in Congress and the states, who said that rescinding the already-obligated funding violated the law.

"We are appalled and outraged at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) blatant and unlawful termination of \$7 billion in federal funding for the 60 organizations that received awards through the Solar for All program," the five Democratic members of Oregon's congressional delegation wrote in a Friday letter to Zeldin and White House Budget Director Russell Vought.

"Solar for All funding has been approved by Congress and signed into law, and cancelling or rescinding these obligated funds is a violation of the law and the Constitution."

Letters to 60 states, organizations

The 60 recipients of the grant awards, mostly state governments but also tribes and some multistate projects, received letters from the EPA on Thursday informing them the grants were being cancelled.

The letter sent to Oregon's Department of Energy said the reconciliation bill Trump signed on July 4 rescinded the authorization and appropriations for the fund.

"Any attempt to continue the program's administration, in the absence of any authorizing legislation or appropriated funds for that purpose, is no longer legally permissible," the letter said.

"The EPA has been weighing options for the future of the Solar for All program and has made the decision to terminate the SFA program and existing grants because the EPA no longer has a statutory basis or dedicated funding to continue administering and overseeing the nearly \$7 billion outlay to approximately 60 grant recipients."

The letter said the EPA realized that recipients "may have begun to rely" on the program for preliminary budgeting and staffing decisions. But it said that "due to the early nature of such expenditures, we expect any harms to interests suffered to be remedied and remediable."

In a statement Friday, the Oregon Department of Energy said it had already spent "significant administrative funds" to launch the program later this year, and hinted a legal challenge may come soon.

"The federal funding has already been obligated to Oregon, and the Oregon Solar for All Coalition," the department statement read. "We are surprised and disappointed to hear the U.S. EPA is moving to rescind these already-obligated funds. ODOE will work with our partners, the Governor's Office, and Oregon's Attorney General to consider next steps to ensure these funds continue to serve Oregonians as intended."

'A betrayal'

Like the Oregon Democrats, New Jersey Democratic Rep. Frank Pallone, the ranking member on the powerful House Energy and Commerce Committee, said the move was illegal and predicted it would raise energy prices.

"The Trump Administration is stealing from working families in broad daylight," Pallone said in an early Friday statement. "This money was intended for our constituents and communities to help lower energy bills. Clawing these funds back isn't just brazenly illegal – it's a betrayal by this Administration of working families who will now pay higher energy bills just so Republicans can grind their axe against clean energy."

Other Democrats, including Arizona Gov. Katie Hobbs, also focused on the economic impact.

"President Trump ran on lowering costs and creating jobs," Hobbs wrote on X. "Gutting Solar for All will do the exact opposite. It makes our air dirtier, our energy bills higher, and our economy weaker. I will continue to fight for the clean and affordable energy future Arizonans want and deserve."

Democrats created the Solar for All fund as part of the \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund in the law they passed without any GOP support in either chamber and President Joe Biden signed in August 2022.

The Solar for All fund was meant to bring the benefits of solar power to 900,000 households in low-income communities, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

According to a list on the EPA website, the awardees included the Executive Office of the State of New Hampshire; Rhode Island Office of Energy Resources; the Maine Governor's Energy Office; the Alaska Energy Authority; the Oregon Department of Energy; Washington State Department of Commerce; Bonneville Environmental Foundation in Idaho; Tanana Chiefs Conference in Alaska; New Jersey Board of Public Utilities; Maryland Clean Energy Center; Pennsylvania Energy Development Authority; Virginia Department of Energy; West Virginia Office of Energy; Department of Environment and Conservation Tennessee; Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet; North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality; South Carolina Office of Resilience; the Solar and Energy Loan Fund of St. Lucie County, Inc., in Florida; the Capital Good Fund in Georgia; Minnesota Department of Commerce; the State of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy; the State of Ohio Office of Budget and Management State Accounting; Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation; Indiana Community Action Association Inc.; New Mexico Energy, Minerals, & Natural Resources Department; State of Louisiana Department of Natural Resources; Hope Enterprise Corporation in Arkansas; the Missouri Environmental Improvement and Energy Resources Authority; the Center for Rural Affairs in Nebraska; Colorado Energy Office; Utah Office of Energy Development; Bonneville Environmental Foundation in Montana; Coalition for Green Capital in North Dakota; Coalition for Green Capital in South Dakota; Executive Office of the State of Arizona; Nevada Clean Energy Fund; Hopi Utilities Corporation in Arizona; and other programs that covered multiple states and tribes.

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.

New lawsuit presses DOJ to release communications about Epstein files

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - AUGUST 8, 2025 12:00 PM

WASHINGTON — A nonprofit government watchdog sued the Trump administration Friday for failing to respond to public records requests for communications between the White House, Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation about Florida sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, including any review of President Donald Trump's past relationship with the financier.

The lawsuit came as the White House continues to face fallout following the Department of Justice's refusal in early July to release what are commonly referred to as the Epstein files.

According to reporting by CNN, Attorney General Pam Bondi, FBI Director Kash Patel and Vice President

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JD Vance met Wednesday evening at the White House to discuss next steps in addressing the growing scrutiny.

The Democracy Forward Foundation filed the lawsuit in district court for the District of Columbia alleging the administration violated the Freedom of Information Act for not responding to the organization's expedited request within the legally required 10 days.

The nonprofit is requesting the court order the DOJ and the FBI to provide a determination and turn over any non-exempt files, including email communication, calendar invites, and Slack and Microsoft Teams messages among officials who reviewed Epstein investigative files this year. The organization also requested records containing information about Trump's communication with Epstein dating back to 1990.

"President Trump has repeatedly said he would release the Epstein files, his spokesperson claims his administration is 'the most transparent in history,' and yet, they continue to hide from the American people. The only thing transparent about the Trump-Vance administration is how clearly they continue to disregard our nation's laws," Skye Perryman, Democracy Forward's president and CEO, said in a statement Friday.

"Public records laws outline a clear and simple process that requires the government to immediately produce important documents in response to urgent public information requests, and yet again, this administration is ignoring the law. The court should intervene urgently to ensure the public has access to the information they need about this extraordinary situation."

The White House and Department of Justice did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

DOJ says no Epstein 'client list' exists

The Trump administration's handling of Epstein case material has come under a microscope since an unsigned Department of Justice memo on July 7 declared "a systemic review revealed no incriminating 'client list,'" and department and FBI officials concluded that "no further disclosure would be appropriate or warranted."

The DOJ's refusal to release further information sparked criticism among Trump's voter base, and even among some administration officials. The memo also roused both Republican and Democratic lawmakers in Congress, who are now demanding records be released and ex-government officials testify under oath about the investigation into Epstein, who died in a New York City jail cell while awaiting trial on federal sex trafficking charges.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, a Louisiana Republican, avoided tough votes compelling the release of Epstein records by sending lawmakers home early for August break.

The House Committee on Oversight, chaired by Kentucky Republican James Comer, issued several subpoenas Tuesday to past U.S. attorneys general and former President Bill Clinton and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Epstein surrounded himself with powerful figures through the years, including Trump and the Clintons. A July 23 Wall Street Journal report revealed that Bondi briefed the president in May that his name appeared in the Epstein files. The context in which Trump's name appears in the investigative material is not clear.

In response to failing to fulfill his campaign promise to release the Epstein files, Trump ordered the release of grand jury testimony from the Epstein investigation. A Florida judge swiftly denied that request.

Ghislaine Maxwell interview

The president also dispatched Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche to a Florida prison to interview Ghislaine Maxwell, who is serving a 20-year sentence for conspiring with Epstein to sexually abuse girls. Details of the interview have not been made public. Maxwell has since been moved to a minimum-security facility in Bryan, Texas.

The House Oversight Committee also subpoenaed Maxwell for an Aug. 11 interview and rejected her recent request for immunity, according to media reports. The committee has delayed the deposition.

Epstein pleaded guilty to sex trafficking in Florida in 2008. A federal grand jury indicted Epstein in 2019 on charges of sexually trafficking minors. According to the Justice Department, Epstein harmed over 1,000 victims.

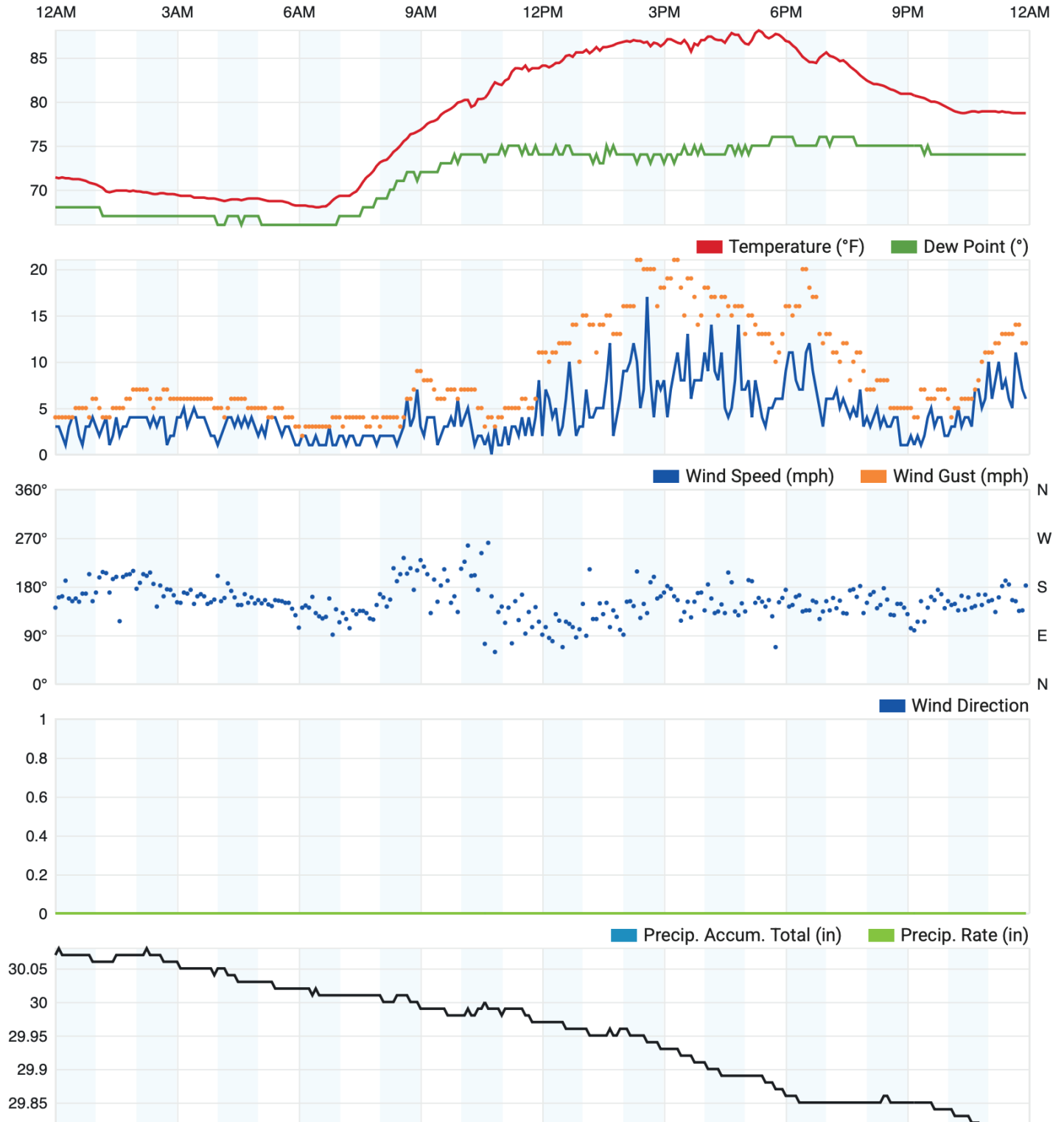
Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 7, 2025



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Today



High: 82 °F

Sunny

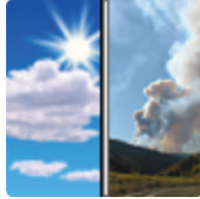
Tonight



Low: 58 °F

Mostly Clear

Sunday



High: 79 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Patchy
Smoke

Sunday Night



Low: 58 °F

Mostly Clear

Monday



High: 85 °F

Sunny

What's Ahead



TODAY

Mostly sunny skies. West winds 15 to 30 mph, gusting to 40 mph over north central South Dakota.

Highs: 76-89°



SUNDAY

Smoke

Highs: 74-85°



MONDAY

Warmer. Smoke.

Highs: 80-93°



TUESDAY

Mostly sunny skies. Warm.

Highs: 77-93°



NWS Aberdeen, SD
Sat Aug 09, 2025 3:21 AM

While dry and mostly sunny conditions are forecast for the next several days, Canada wildfire smoke, near the surface and aloft, is expected to move over the area Sunday and stick around through Monday.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 12:38 PM

Heat Index: 91 °F at 12:45 PM

Low Temp: 64 °F at 5:12 AM

Wind: 34 mph at 4:35 AM

Precip: : 0.28

Day length: 14 hours, 25 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1947

Record Low: 41 in 1927

Average High: 84

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in August.: 0.66

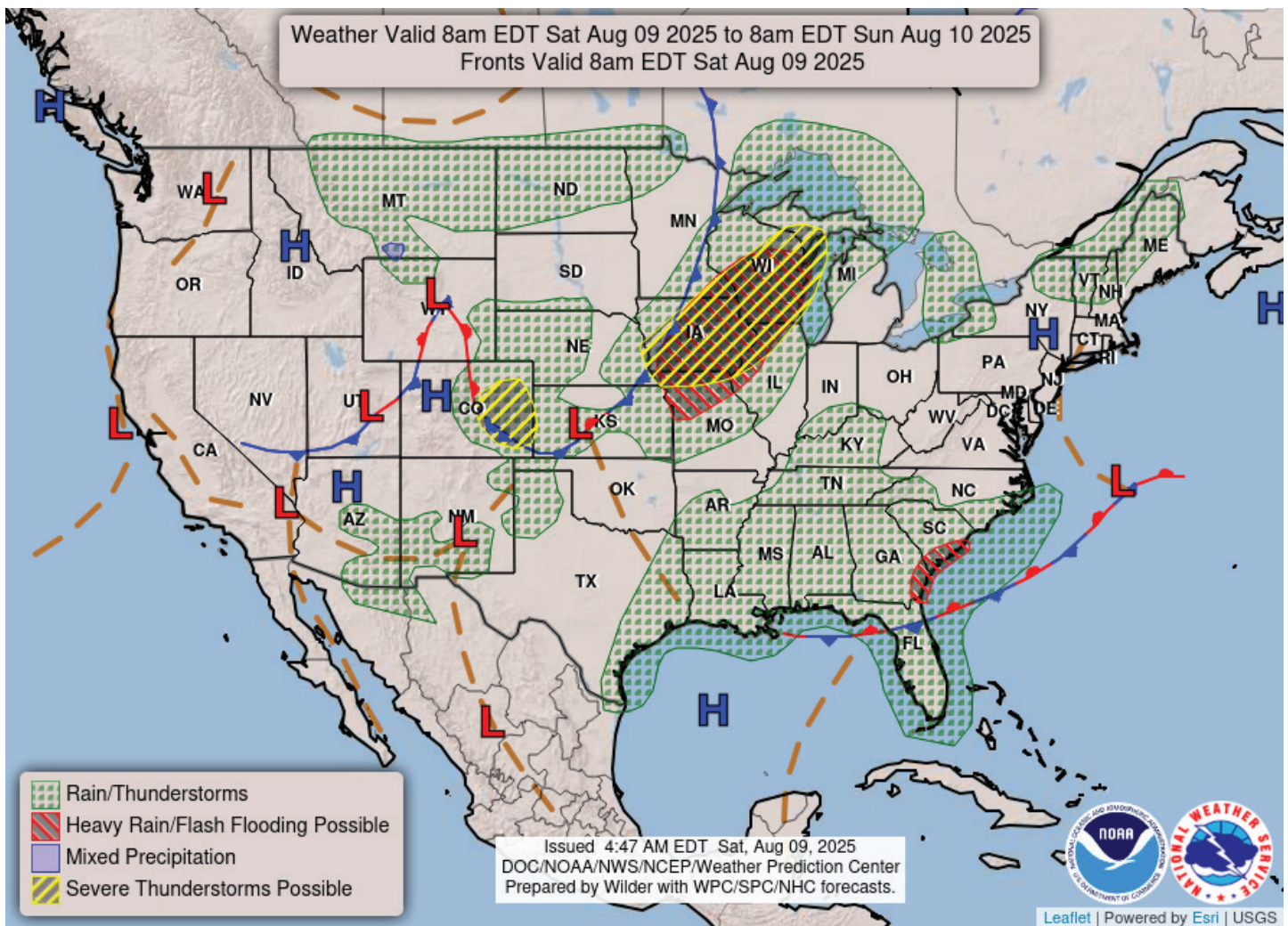
Precip to date in August: 1.43

Average Precip to date: 14.76

Precip Year to Date: 16.49

Sunset Tonight: 8:50:35 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:26:18 am



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Today in Weather History

August 9, 1918: An estimated F2 tornado touched down east of Bristol, South Dakota, and moved NNE. The tornado was said to look like a long snake in a spiral, smashing barns into kindling.

August 9, 1992: A tornado packing winds estimated between 113 and 157 mph caused significant damage to the town of Chester, in Lake County. Shortly after 7 pm CDT a tornado tore right through the heart of Chester causing considerable damage. Four businesses were destroyed, three others had significant damage, and five had minor damage. An elevator and new grain bin were leveled, and another bin was heavily damaged. Most of the building housing the fire department was demolished. Also, many houses and vehicles sustained damage, and large trees were uprooted or broken off. In one instance a steel beam was thrust through a garage and into the car inside. One mile north of Chester, an entire house was moved off the foundation. The town had to be evacuated for 19 hours after the tornado because the tornado damaged a 12,000-gallon ammonia tank releasing 4,000 gallons of the liquid gas into the air. The ammonia was a health hazard forcing residents out. To the south of Chester, the storm destroyed a new convenience store and blew two fuel tanks over 100 yards.

1878: The second deadliest tornado in New England history struck Wallingford, Connecticut, killing 34 persons, injuring 100 others, and destroying thirty homes. The tornado started as a waterspout over a dam on the Quinnipiac River. It was 400 to 600 feet wide and had a short path length of two miles. The deadliest New England tornado occurred in 1953 when an F4 killed 90 people in Worcester, Massachusetts.

1969: An F3 tornado hit Cincinnati, Ohio, killing four persons and causing fifteen million dollars property damage. The tornado moved in a southeasterly direction at 40 to 50 mph.

1987 - Florida baked in the summer heat. Nine cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including Jacksonville with a reading of 101 degrees. Miami FL reported a record high of 98 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Tropical Storm Beryl deluged Biloxi with 6.32 inches of rain in 24 hours, and in three days drenched Pascagoula MS with 15.85 inches of rain. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region and over the Central High Plains Region. Thunderstorms in Oklahoma produced wind gusts to 92 mph at Harrah. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Evening thunderstorms in Arizona deluged Yuma with record torrential rains for the second time in two weeks. The rainfall total of 5.25 inches at the Yuma Quartermaster Depot established a state 24 hour record, and was nearly double the normal annual rainfall. Some of the homes were left with four feet of water in them. Seventy-six cities in the south central and eastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Lake Charles LA equalled their record for August with a low of 61 degrees. Canaan Valley WV was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 32 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992 - A tornado packing winds estimated between 113 and 157 mph caused significant damage to the town of Chester, South Dakota. Shortly after 7 pm CDT a tornado tore right through the heart of Chester causing considerable damage. Four businesses were destroyed, three others had significant damage, and five had minor damage. An elevator and new grain bin were leveled, and another bin was heavily damaged. Most of the building housing the fire department was demolished. Also, many houses and vehicles sustained damage, and large trees were uprooted or broken off. In one instance a steel beam was thrust through a garage and into the car inside. One mile north of Chester, an entire house was moved off the foundation. The town had to be evacuated for 19 hours after the tornado because the tornado damaged a 12,000-gallon ammonia tank releasing 4,000 gallons of the liquid gas into the air. The ammonia was a health hazard forcing residents out. To the south of Chester, the storm destroyed a new convenience store and blew two fuel tanks over 100 yards.

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FROM TRIAL TO TRIUMPH

Lord Kelvin is recognized as one of the greatest Scottish engineers, mathematicians, and physicists of his day. He had a profound influence on the scientific thought of his generation.

On one occasion, while he was conducting an experiment with his students, it turned into a disaster. Looking at each student individually he said, "Gentlemen, when you are face to face with a difficulty, you are up against a discovery."

This is not only true in learning, it is true in living. When David was face to face with a major difficulty, he made a discovery that lasted throughout his entire life. Faced with a dilemma he cried to God, "Give me relief from my distress, be merciful to me and hear my prayer, O God."

If it had not been for the pain he was experiencing, we would not have his psalms of praise that originated in his pain. If he had not been tested and tried through his trials, we would not understand the triumphs he enjoyed. If he had not struggled to survive, we would not understand the strength he received from God.

Joseph began his path to a palace from a prison. He became the prime minister of Egypt after he served a sentence as a prisoner. Can anyone forget the boils of Job? Ultimately, they became a blessing to him. And, do not forget the letters the Apostle Paul wrote from a cell.

Whatever God brings into our lives is not to destroy or defeat us, but to develop us and our faith and to enable us to discover His goodness and grace.

Prayer: Father, we thank You for working in us, with us, and through us to develop us into the likeness of Your Son. Give us courage, grace, trust, and hope. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Answer me when I call to you, O God who declares me innocent. Free me from my troubles. Have mercy on me and hear my prayer. Psalm 4:1

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: 08.08.25

2 6 8 14 49 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$182,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

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 13 Hrs 39 Mins 53
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.08.25

20 23 32 40 46 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 13 Hrs 54 Mins 53
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

4 7 13 18 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$83,000

NEXT 13 Hrs 54 Mins 53
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.06.25

9 19 21 33 46 23

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 14 Hrs 23 Mins 53
DRAW: 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 14 Hrs 23 Mins 54
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

08/09/2025 Groton Legion 30th Anniversary Celebration
08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm
08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/06-07/25 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
09/07/2025 Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
09/07/2025 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2025 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)
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

Nagasaki marks 80th A-bomb anniversary as survivors put hopes of nuclear ban in the hands of youth

By MAYUKO ONO and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

NAGASAKI, Japan (AP) — The southern Japanese city of Nagasaki on Saturday marked 80 years since the U.S. atomic attack that killed tens of thousands and left survivors who hope their harrowing memories can help make their hometown the last place on Earth to be hit by a nuclear bomb.

The United States launched the Nagasaki attack on Aug. 9, 1945, killing 70,000 by the end of that year, three days after the bombing of Hiroshima that killed 140,000. Japan surrendered on Aug. 15, 1945, ending World War II and the nearly half-century of aggression by the country across Asia.

About 2,600 people, including representatives from more than 90 countries, attended a memorial event at Nagasaki Peace Park, where Mayor Shiro Suzuki and Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba spoke, among other guests. At 11:02 a.m., the exact time when the plutonium bomb exploded above Nagasaki, participants observed a moment of silence as a bell rang.

"Even after the war ended, the atomic bomb brought invisible terror," 93-year-old survivor Hiroshi Nishioka said in his speech at the memorial, noting that many who had survived without severe wounds started bleeding from gums and losing hair and died.

"Never use nuclear weapons again, or we're finished," he said.

Doves released

Dozens of doves, a symbol of peace, were released after a speech by Suzuki, whose parents are survivors of the attack. He said that the city's memories of the bombing are "a common heritage and should be passed down for generations" in and outside Japan.

"The existential crisis of humanity has become imminent to each and every one of us living on Earth," Suzuki said. "In order to make Nagasaki the last atomic bombing site now and forever, we will go hand-in-hand with global citizens and devote our utmost efforts toward the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of everlasting world peace."

'A world without war'

Survivors and their families gathered Saturday in rainy weather at Peace Park and nearby Hypocenter Park, located below the bomb's exact detonation spot, hours before the official ceremony.

"I simply seek a world without war," said Koichi Kawano, an 85-year-old survivor who laid flowers at the hypocenter monument decorated with colorful origami paper cranes and other offerings.

Some others prayed at churches in Nagasaki, home to Catholic converts who went deep underground during centuries of violent persecution in Japan's feudal era.

The twin bells at Urakami Cathedral, which was destroyed in the bombing, also rang together again after one of the bells that had gone missing following the attack was restored by volunteers.

Despite their pain from wounds, discrimination and illnesses from radiation, survivors have publicly committed to a shared goal of abolishing nuclear weapons. But they worry about the world moving in the opposite direction.

Passing down lessons

Aging survivors and their supporters in Nagasaki now put their hopes of achieving nuclear weapons abolition in the hands of younger people, telling them the attack isn't distant history, but an issue that remains relevant to their future.

"There are only two things I long for: the abolition of nuclear weapons and prohibition of war," said Fumi Takeshita, an 83-year-old survivor. "I seek a world where nuclear weapons are never used and everyone can live in peace."

In the hope of passing down the lessons of history to current and future generations, Takeshita visits schools to share her experience with children.

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"When you grow up and remember what you learned today, please think what each of you can do to prevent war," Takeshita told students during a school visit earlier this week.

Teruko Yokoyama, an 83-year-old member of a Nagasaki organization supporting survivors, said that she thinks of the growing absence of those she had worked with, and that fuels her desire to document the lives of others who are still alive.

The number of survivors has fallen to 99,130, about a quarter of the original number, with their average age exceeding 86. Survivors worry about fading memories, as the youngest of the survivors were too young to clearly recall the attack.

"We must keep records of the atomic bombing damages of the survivors and their lifetime story," said Yokoyama, whose two sisters died after suffering illnesses linked to radiation.

Her organization has started to digitize the narratives of survivors for viewing on YouTube and other social media platforms with the help of a new generation.

"There are younger people who are beginning to take action," Yokoyama told The Associated Press on Friday. "So I think we don't have to get depressed yet."

Nagasaki hosted a "peace forum" on Friday where survivors shared their stories with more than 300 young people from around the country. Seiichiro Mise, a 90-year-old survivor, said that he's handing seeds of "flowers of peace" to the younger generation in hopes of seeing them bloom.

Japan's security dilemma

Survivors are frustrated by a growing nuclear threat and support among international leaders for developing or possessing nuclear weapons for deterrence. They criticize the Japanese government's refusal to sign or even participate in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as an observer because Japan, as an American ally, says it needs U.S. nuclear possession as deterrence.

In Ishiba's speech, the prime minister reiterated Japan's pursuit of a nuclear-free world, pledging to promote dialogue and cooperation between countries with nuclear weapons and nonnuclear states at the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons review conference scheduled for April and May 2026 in New York. Ishiba didn't mention the nuclear weapons ban treaty.

"Countries must move from words to action by strengthening the global disarmament regime," with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or NPT, at the center, complemented by the momentum created by the nuclear weapons ban treaty, said U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, in his message read by Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu in Nagasaki.

Nagasaki invited representatives from all countries to attend the ceremony on Saturday. The government in China notably notified the city that it wouldn't be present without providing a reason.

The ceremony last year stirred controversy because of the absence of the U.S. ambassador and other Western envoys in response to the Japanese city's refusal to invite officials from Israel.

Zelenskyy rejects formally ceding Ukrainian territory, says Kyiv must be part of any negotiations

By SAMYA KULLAB and ELISE MORTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy dismissed Saturday the planned summit between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, warning that any peace deal excluding Kyiv would lead to "dead solutions."

The Trump-Putin meeting, scheduled for Friday in Alaska, is seen as a potential breakthrough in the more than three-year war.

Trump had previously agreed to meet with Putin even if the Russian leader would not meet with Zelenskyy, stoking fears Ukraine could be sidelined in efforts to stop the continent's biggest conflict since World War II.

In a statement posted to Telegram, Zelenskyy said Ukraine's territorial integrity, enshrined in the constitution, must be non-negotiable and emphasized that lasting peace must include Ukraine's voice at the table.

Zelenskyy said Ukraine "will not give Russia any awards for what it has done" and that "Ukrainians will

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not give their land to the occupier.”

Touching on Ukrainian anxieties that a direct meeting between Putin and Trump could marginalize Kyiv and European interests, Zelenskyy said: “Any decisions that are without Ukraine are at the same time decisions against peace. They will not bring anything. These are dead decisions. They will never work.”

Ukrainian officials had previously told the Associated Press privately that Kyiv would be amenable to a peace deal that would de facto recognize Ukraine’s inability to regain lost territories militarily.

The summit

Trump said he will meet with Putin to discuss ending the war in Ukraine.

“It seems entirely logical for our delegation to fly across the Bering Strait simply, and for such an important and anticipated summit of the leaders of the two countries to be held in Alaska,” Putin’s foreign affairs adviser, Yuri Ushakov, said Saturday in a statement posted to the Kremlin’s news channel.

The summit may prove pivotal in a war that began when Russia invaded its western neighbor and has led to tens of thousands of deaths, although there’s no guarantee it will stop the fighting since Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on their conditions for peace.

In comments to reporters at the White House before his post confirming the date and place, Trump suggested that any agreement would likely involve “some swapping of territories,” but he gave no details. Analysts, including some close to the Kremlin, have suggested that Russia could offer to give up territory it controls outside of the four regions it claims to have annexed.

Trump said his meeting with Putin would come before any sit-down discussion involving Zelenskyy. His announcement that he planned to host one of America’s adversaries on U.S. soil broke with expectations that they’d meet in a third country. The gesture gives Putin validation after the U.S. and its allies had long sought to make him a pariah over his war against Ukraine.

Nigel Gould-Davies, an associate fellow of Chatham House, told The Associated Press the “symbolism” of holding the summit in Alaska was clear, and that the location “naturally favors Russia.”

“It’s easy to imagine Putin making the point ... we once had this territory and we gave it to you, therefore Ukraine had this territory and now should give it to us,” he said, referring to the 1867 transaction known as the Alaska Purchase when Russia sold Alaska to the United States for \$7.2 million.

Ultimatums and sanctions

Exasperated that Putin did not heed his calls to stop bombing Ukrainian cities, Trump, almost two weeks ago, moved up his ultimatum to impose additional sanctions on Russia and introduce secondary tariffs targeting countries that buy Russian oil if the Kremlin did not move toward a settlement.

The deadline was Friday. But the White House did not answer questions that evening about the state of possible sanctions after Trump announced an upcoming meeting with Putin.

Gould-Davies likened attempts to understand what seems to be Trump’s latest pivot toward Moscow to “Kremlinology,” the Cold War-era practice of deciphering opaque signals from Soviet leadership.

“We’re ... looking for clues and for hints ... about what the hell is going on; what the mix of influences around Trump and indeed in Trump’s head is propelling his latest statement,” he said.

“It’s as if his disillusionment with Putin ... never happened,” Gould-Davies noted, pointing to a sudden return to the more conciliatory Russia policy Trump embraced at the start of his presidency.

Prior to Trump announcing the meeting with Putin, his efforts to pressure Russia into stopping the fighting had delivered no progress. The Kremlin’s bigger army is slowly advancing deeper into Ukraine at great cost in troops and armor while it relentlessly bombards Ukrainian cities. Russia and Ukraine are far apart on their terms for peace.

Russia and Ukraine trade attacks

Two people died and 16 were wounded Saturday when a Russian drone hit a minibus in the suburbs of the Ukrainian city of Kherson, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said. Two others died after a Russian drone struck their car in the Zaporizhzhia region, according to regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov.

Ukraine’s air force said Saturday it intercepted 16 of the 47 Russian drones launched overnight, while 31 drones hit targets across 15 different locations. It also said it shot down one of the two missiles Russia

deployed.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 97 Ukrainian drones over Russia and the Black Sea overnight and 21 more on Saturday morning.

Some Democrats want new leadership. Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden says he has what it takes to resist Trump

By CLAIRE RUSH Associated Press

WASCO, Ore. (AP) — Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden is in his fifth decade in Congress and showing no inclination to step aside even as pressure builds on aging Democratic officeholders to give way to a new generation.

He says he plans to seek another term in 2028, when he will be 79 years old. He has traveled to all 36 Oregon counties every year he has been in the Senate and intends to keep doing so.

After a recent town hall in Wasco in conservative Sherman County, Wyden said questions about age are "fair game for debate" but that he is still up to the job and the fight against Republican President Donald Trump's policies.

"I believe you ought to be held accountable," he told The Associated Press in an interview. "But I think that the Founding Fathers wanted a results-oriented, commonsense approach to government, and that's what I'm trying to do. And I've got the energy."

Calls for a new generation of leaders

Many Democrats have lingering anguish about Joe Biden's decision to seek a second White House term despite persistent concerns about whether he was up to the job at age 81. He dropped out in July 2024 and Trump went on to defeat then-Vice President Kamala Harris.

"I've consistently called for all elected officials over the age of 70 to make this their final term — to step down with dignity and make room for the next generation of leaders," said Amanda Litman, co-founder and president of Run for Something, a group that supports progressive young candidates.

Many Democrats feel Biden stepped withdrew too late and cost the party the presidency. Multiple Democratic senators have announced this year that they won't seek reelection, including 80-year-old Dick Durbin of Illinois. Durbin's career in Congress began in 1983, two years after Wyden joined the House.

Litman said she hopes another Democrat emerges to challenge Wyden.

"I think competitive primaries in particular are how we as a party decide what we believe," she said.

'Every Oregonian counts'

Wyden continues to travel across his state engaging with voters of all political stripes. The Wasco town hall was the 23rd he has held this year, and the 1,125th town hall of his career. Some 20 people gathered at a former grade school nestled among wheat fields and wind turbines.

"Every Oregonian counts, no matter where they live," Wyden told them.

As other Democrats grapple over strategy, the senator says the old-school town hall tradition has become a key communication tool in an era of deepening division.

"I believe the town meetings are more important now than ever, because they allow for an opportunity in a community to chip away at some of the polarization and the mistrust," he told the AP.

That stands in contrast to congressional Republicans, who in recent months have largely avoided town hall meetings, where they often face protesters. The National Republican Campaign Committee recently encouraged GOP lawmakers to promote the new tax breaks and spending cuts law, but in smaller settings they can control.

A civil exchange

Some 75% of Sherman County's voters cast ballots for Trump last November, and Wyden hasn't carried the county of about 2,000 people since 2004. Yet the small town hall gathering stood out for its civility, compared with the raucous crowds faced recently by other members of Congress, both Democrats and Republicans.

Meeting with a small group of Democrats, Republicans and independents in Wasco, Wyden talked at length about health care, trade and democracy. While some pressed Wyden, they waited to be called on

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and thanked him for coming.

Charlie Hogue, 71, asked a question that went to the heart of Democratic concerns that leaders aren't pushing back hard enough against Trump.

"I thought we had checks and balances in this country, and I'm beginning to lose hope because the current administration ignores court orders," he said. "So are the Democrats planning to just message for the next elections ... or do you have a plan?"

Wyden cited examples of how he had challenged Trump: a recent trip to Canada, where the senator spoke with the prime minister about trade, and discussions with Oregon wheat farmers about tariffs.

T.L. Fassbender, 76, wondered why it seems that Democrats support immigrants who entered the country illegally.

Wyden responded that he believed the immigration system was "broken" and noted that a bipartisan border bill collapsed in the Senate last year after then-candidate Trump came out against it.

In the ensuing exchange, Fassbender said he didn't think Wyden had answered his question, so the senator tried again.

"If somebody has committed a crime, for example, I don't think that should be something that is protected as part of legislation," Wyden said. "What's been going on, unfortunately, is we have some government agencies coming and swooping up people who've done nothing wrong."

When immigration came up again later, Wyden noted that his parents were fleeing Nazi Germany when they came to the United States.

"I believe that legal immigration makes our country better and stronger," he said.

Pursuing the Epstein records

Recently, Wyden has emerged as a leading Democratic voice in pressing for more information on the Jeffrey Epstein sex trafficking case. He isn't new to the effort, which has become a political crisis for Trump.

The president's supporters are angry that his administration didn't keep promises to release records from the investigation into the wealthy financier's exploitation of underage girls for sex. The Justice Department and FBI recently said there was no Epstein "client list," walking back a notion that the administration had previously promoted.

As the top Democrat on the powerful Senate Finance Committee, Wyden had been pressing for Epstein's financial records long before the scandal resurfaced.

"We spent three years following the money," he told the AP after the Wasco town hall. "And we're going to stay at it until the facts come out."

Wyden said Democrats agonizing over low voter morale and party strategy should hold more meetings in conservative areas, where they might learn something from the people they represent.

"The old saying is, 'most of life is just showing up,'" he said. "But it's especially important in government because there is a sense that this is rigged."

Leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan shake hands and sign deal at White House peace summit

By SEUNG MIN KIM and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan shook hands Friday at a White House peace summit before signing an agreement aimed at ending decades of conflict.

President Donald Trump was in the middle as Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan flanked him on either side. As the two extended their arms in front of Trump to shake hands, the U.S. leader reached up and clasped his hands around theirs.

The two countries in the South Caucasus signed agreements with each other and the U.S. that will reopen key transportation routes while allowing the U.S. to seize on Russia's declining influence in the region. The deal includes an agreement that will create a major transit corridor to be named the Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity, the White House said.

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Trump said at the White House on Friday that naming the route after him was "a great honor for me" but "I didn't ask for this." A senior administration official, on a call before the event with reporters, said it was the Armenians who suggested the name.

Trump has sought to be known as a peacemaker and made no secret of the fact that he covets a Nobel Peace Prize. Friday's signing adds to a series of peace and economic agreements brokered by the U.S. this year.

Both leaders said the breakthrough was made possible by Trump and his team.

"We are laying a foundation to write a better story than the one we had in the past," Pashinyan said, calling the agreement a "significant milestone."

"President Trump in six months did a miracle," Aliyev said.

Trump remarked on how long the conflict went on between the two countries. "Thirty-five years they fought, and now they're friends and they're going to be friends a long time," he said.

That route will connect Azerbaijan and its autonomous Nakhchivan exclave, which are separated by a 32-kilometer-wide (20-mile-wide) patch of Armenian territory. The demand from Azerbaijan had held up peace talks in the past.

For Azerbaijan, a major producer of oil and gas, the route also provides a more direct link to Turkey and onward to Europe.

Trump indicated he'd like to visit the route, saying, "We're going to have to get over there."

Asked how he feels about lasting peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Trump said "very confident."

Aliyev and Pashinyan on Friday joined a growing list of foreign leaders and other officials who have said Trump should receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in helping ease long-running conflicts across the globe.

The peace deal between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda helped end the decadeslong conflict in eastern Congo, and the U.S. mediated a ceasefire between India and Pakistan, while Trump intervened in clashes between Cambodia and Thailand by threatening to withhold trade agreements with both countries if their fighting continued. Yet peace deals in Gaza and Ukraine have been elusive.

US takes advantage of Russia's waning influence

The signing of a deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan, both former Soviet republics, also strikes a geopolitical blow to their former imperial master, Russia. Throughout the nearly four-decade conflict, Moscow played mediator to expand its clout in the strategic South Caucasus region, but its influence waned quickly after it launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The Trump-brokered deal would allow the U.S. to deepen its reach in the region as Moscow retreats, senior U.S. administration officials said.

The Trump administration began engaging with Armenia and Azerbaijan in earnest earlier this year, when Trump's key diplomatic envoy, Steve Witkoff, met with Aliyev in Baku and started to discuss what a senior administration official called a "regional reset."

Negotiations over who will develop the Trump Route — which will eventually include a rail line, oil and gas pipelines, and fiber optic lines — will likely begin next week, and at least nine developers have expressed interest already, according to the senior administration official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity.

Separate from the joint agreement, both Armenia and Azerbaijan signed deals with the United States meant to bolster cooperation in energy, technology and the economy, the White House said.

Trump previewed much of Friday's plan in a social media post Thursday evening, in which he said the agreements would "fully unlock the potential" of the South Caucasus region.

"Many Leaders have tried to end the War, with no success, until now, thanks to 'TRUMP,'" Trump said on his Truth Social site.

The Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has lasted for decades

The two nations were locked in conflict for nearly four decades as they fought for control of the Karabakh region, known internationally as Nagorno-Karabakh.

The area was largely populated by Armenians during the Soviet era but is located within Azerbaijan. The two nations battled for control of the region through multiple violent clashes that left tens of thousands

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of people dead over the decades, all while international mediation efforts failed.

Most recently, Azerbaijan reclaimed all of Karabakh in 2023 and had been in talks with Armenia to normalize ties. Azerbaijan's insistence on a land bridge to Nakhchivan had been a major sticking point, because while Azerbaijan did not trust Armenia to control the so-called Zangezur corridor, Armenia resisted control by a third party because it viewed it as a breach of sovereignty.

But the prospect of closer ties with the United States, as well as being able to move in and out of the landlocked nation more freely without having to access Georgia or Iran, helped entice Armenia on the broader agreement, according to U.S. officials.

Meanwhile, Russia stood back when Azerbaijan reclaimed control of Karabakh in the September 2023 offensive, angering Armenia, which has moved to shed Russian influence and turn westward. Azerbaijan, emboldened by its victory in Karabakh, also has become increasingly defiant in its relations with Moscow.

Firefighters battle to prevent reignition of France's largest wildfire as residents return home

PARIS (AP) — About 1,400 firefighters were deployed on Saturday in France's southern Aude region to prevent the country's largest wildfire in decades from reigniting, as all residents were allowed to return to their homes.

Aude prefect Christian Pouget said the fire has been contained since Thursday after burning this week more than 160 square kilometers (62 square miles) in the wooded region, known for its wineries. All roads have been reopened but authorities issued a strict ban on accessing the forest, Pouget said at a news conference on Saturday.

"The fight is continuing, firefighters are still working on (fire) re-ignition," he said.

The blaze left one person dead and 25 people have been injured, including 19 firefighters, Pouget said.

High temperatures in the coming days are expected to complicate firefighters' efforts.

"The fire won't be extinguished for several weeks," Col. Christophe Magny, director of Aude firefighters department, said, pointing to several "hot spots" that are being closely monitored.

France's national weather agency Meteo France placed the southern half of France under "high vigilance" alert for heat wave, with temperatures expected in the Aude region of up to 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit) on Saturday.

Southern Europe has seen multiple large fires this summer. Scientists warn that climate change is exacerbating the frequency and intensity of heat and dryness, making the region more vulnerable to wildfires.

Acai berry producers are concerned as Trump imposes tariffs on Brazil's exports

By ALAN K. GUIMARAES and MAURICIO SAVARESE Associated Press

BELEM, Brazil (AP) — When U.S. President Donald Trump imposed tariffs of 50% on Brazilian exports in July, acai producer Ailson Ferreira Moreira felt immediately concerned.

After all, who was going to eat all of that Amazon berry, globally famous as a delicious, refreshing and nutritious superfood, if American consumers suddenly could no longer afford it?

As the main importer of the Brazilian berry, prices of acai smoothies and bowls look certain to go up in the United States.

"The acai that's all produced here ... If only people here eat it, it's going to be a lot of acai, right?" Moreira told The Associated Press outside of Belem, an Amazon city of 1.4 million residents that will host this year's U.N. climate summit COP30 climate summit in November. "If there's too much acai here, people won't be able to eat it all and the price will drop."

A single full crate of acai sells for around \$50 at local markets in Brazil, a price that is now expected to plummet. The U.S. is by far the largest acai importer of a total Brazilian output currently estimated at about 70,000 tons per year.

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Impact already being felt

The most vulnerable acai producers in the northern state of Para say they have already been hit by tariffs imposed by the U.S. government, as a surplus of the berry without a clear destination starts to mount only days after the new economic scenario unfolded.

More powerful exporters, such as Sao Paulo-state based company Acai Tropicalia Mix, are also feeling the impact.

One of its owners, Rogério de Carvalho, told the AP that last year he exported to the U.S. about 270 tons of acai cream — an industrialized version of the berry — ready for consumption. As tariffs started to loom, he said, American importers steered away and clients suspended negotiations. Until the end of July, de Carvalho estimates that his company sold 27 tons to the U.S.

"That's 1.5 million Brazilian reais (\$280,000) that we lost," the businessman said. "We are confident there will be a deal between the two countries to allow not only our clients to return, but also getting some new ones."

Tariffs linked to Bolsonaro case

Trump has linked the higher tariffs on Brazil to the trial of former President Jair Bolsonaro, who is now under house arrest for his alleged role in leading an alleged coup plot to remain in office, despite his election loss to current leftist President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

And despite several Brazilian exports being exempted from the tariffs, acai berries aren't among them.

Brazil's industry ministry didn't reply to a request for comment on whether acai berries are among the items that remain on the negotiating table with U.S. trade representatives.

Flavor explosion

Nearly all of the acai consumed in the U.S. originates from Brazil, with the state of Para alone accounting for 90% of the country's total production. Several communities in the Amazon depend on its harvest.

The harvesting of acai is a physically demanding job that requires workers to climb tall trees with minimal safety equipment, and then sliding down branches full of berries to fill baskets and then place them carefully in crates. Analysts say its producers also help protect the rainforest from illegal loggers, miners and cattle ranchers.

The night markets of Belem, such as the Ver-o-Peso acai market, are a hub of activity where the freshly harvested berries are brought in by boat and prepared for sale.

The Brazilian Association of Fruit and Derivative Producers and Exporters estimates there was an explosive growth of acai exports from Para state, from less than one ton in 1999 to more than 61,000 tons in 2023. Another explosive rise was expected for this year, before the tariffs.

On Thursday, Brazil requested consultations at the World Trade Organization over tariffs imposed by the Trump administration against the South American nation that went into effect on Wednesday.

That could be too little too late for acai harvester Mikael Silva Trindade, who agrees that the future of the trade is at risk as higher U.S. tariffs can disrupt the delicate balance of supply and demand that holds the industry.

"There will be nowhere to market (the excess of acai)," Trindade told the AP as he picked berries in Para state. "The more you export, the more valuable it becomes. But if there's too much to sell, it will stay here and become cheap."

Lions-Falcons preseason game ends early after serious injury to Detroit's Morice Norris

By CHARLES ODUM AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Detroit Lions safety Morice Norris was in stable condition after he was attended to for about 20 minutes and taken off the field in an ambulance Friday night against Atlanta, with the preseason game ending early.

"Morice Norris is in stable condition and has feeling and movement in all his extremities," the Lions said in a statement. "He will remain at Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta overnight for observation. We would

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like to thank the Atlanta Falcons organization, the EMS team at Mercedes-Benz Stadium and the doctors and staff at Grady for their support."

Norris was hurt with 14:50 to go trying to tackle running back Nathan Carter. When play resumed, Falcons quarterback Emory Jones took a snap and held the ball as players from both teams stood at the line of scrimmage as the clock continued to run.

Finally, with 6:31 left, an official announced the game had been suspended "per New York" with Detroit up 17-10.

Lions coach Dan Campbell asked for prayers for the 24-year-old Norris.

"We're just praying for Mo and ask that everybody prays for him," Campbell said.

Campbell said Norris had his mother with him at the hospital.

Norris, the former Fresno State player listed as Detroit's second-team safety, hit Carter with his facemask facing the running back's midsection, and the defender's head snapped back after making the hit.

Lions quarterback Kyle Allen said it was immediately obvious the medical personnel saw this as a serious injury.

"Usually you see a couple trainers out there," Allen said. "It's never good when they bring out the stretchers. We just started praying for him and hoping for the best. When it's taking that long, with that many people and that many trainers around him, you're just hoping for the best."

Added Allen: "It's just awful. ... You sign up for football and you understand the risk, you understand the injury risk. You never think something like that is going to happen.

"At the end of the day we're all out here as football players. We may be on 32 different teams but we've all played football our whole lives and had our own injuries and been through it."

Campbell and Falcons coach Raheem Morris made the decision to not finish the game.

"Raheem Morris is a class act," Campbell said. "He's the ultimate class act. We agreed it just didn't feel right to finish that game."

Morris said it was "common courtesy" for the coaches to decide to not finish the game.

"It was tough to watch," Morris said. "It was tough for the other team to see getting a teammate hurt that way. It was the right thing to do for Dan and his crew and his team and everything we had going on right there, I thought that was the right thing.

"You never like to see anybody get hurt in any type of game or any type of way. It was a tough deal for those guys, a tough deal for us, a tough deal all across the board."

Allen said the decision to not finish the game was easy to make.

"I don't think anyone on that sideline wanted to play," Allen said. "We weren't part of that decision but you could look in anyone's eyes and see that."

Though the decision to not finish the game seemed dramatic, there were two precedents from preseason games in consecutive weeks in August 2023.

New England's game at Green Bay in Week 2 of the 2023 preseason was called off when Patriots cornerback Isaiah Bolden was carted off in the fourth quarter. Bolden appeared to collide with teammate Calvin Munson while attempting to make a hit on a pass completion to Malik Heath of the Packers.

Bolden was taken to a hospital and released the next day.

A week later, a game between Miami and Jacksonville was not completed after Dolphins receiver Daewood Davis was carted off in the fourth quarter. Davis was hurt when he ran a slant route and was attempting to catch a pass when he was hit by Jaguars linebacker Dequan Jackson.

Davis was released from the hospital a day later.

The two frightening injuries happened some eight months after Buffalo Bills safety Damar Hamlin went into cardiac arrest and had to be resuscitated on the field during a regular season game at Cincinnati in January 2023. Hamlin has enjoyed a remarkable recovery and resumed football the following season and spent last year as a Bills starter.

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Scherzer and Kershaw square off in rare duel of 3,000-strikeout club members

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Max Scherzer and Clayton Kershaw went toe-to-toe for six innings in a vintage duel Friday night between the two most recent additions to the 3,000-strikeout club.

The 41-year-old Scherzer, pitching for Toronto, made his 465th career start. Kershaw, 37, started his 443rd game — all for the Los Angeles Dodgers over 18 seasons.

"Probably a lineup card that I'll keep for my office," Blue Jays manager John Schneider said.

Once teammates in Los Angeles, both pitchers have won three Cy Young Awards and are likely headed to the Hall of Fame.

"Two great competitors," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said before the game. "I don't know if you're going to see this one again."

Kershaw (6-2) got the win, allowing one run and seven hits as Los Angeles earned a 5-1 victory. He struck out four and walked one on 74 pitches, 54 strikes. And he stuck around to watch his rival work when the Dodgers were batting.

"Scherz was throwing the ball great. He was throwing like 96 (mph)," Kershaw said. "It doesn't look like he's aged at all."

Scherzer (2-2) took the loss, giving up two runs and six hits. He struck out five and walked three on 98 pitches, 63 strikes.

"Max had really good stuff," Roberts said.

Kershaw exited with the Dodgers leading 2-1, thanks to a two-run homer by Mookie Betts in the fifth.

The left-hander was a model of efficiency in the first inning, retiring the Blue Jays on 11 pitches.

Los Angeles went right after Scherzer in the bottom half. Shohei Ohtani and Betts hit consecutive line-drive singles before Davis Schneider robbed Will Smith of a potential three-run homer with a catch against the Dodgers bullpen gate in left field. Scherzer walked Max Muncy to load the bases before striking out Teoscar Hernández to end the inning.

Scherzer retired the side in the second and third. Kershaw had traffic on the bases in the second, when Addison Barger's two-strike single scored Bo Bichette and gave Toronto a 1-0 lead.

With a runner at first, Dodgers rookie second baseman Alex Freeland raced into shallow right field to catch a blooper by Ernie Clement for the third out of the fifth. A relieved Kershaw smiled and pointed his index finger skyward.

It was the fourth time Scherzer and Kershaw faced each other, and Kershaw's teams lead their individual series 3-1. Kershaw has two wins and Scherzer one.

The first matchup was unexpected. Hall of Famers Randy Johnson of Arizona and Greg Maddux of the Dodgers were scratched on Sept. 7, 2008. Their replacements were rookies Scherzer, then 24, and Kershaw, then 20, who each got a no-decision.

"He's had a hell of a career," Scherzer said. "It's kind of a cool little milestone moment here where we're hooking it back up against each other. He's an awesome teammate as well. I've got all the respect in the world for what he does on and off the field."

Roberts managed Scherzer when the Dodgers traded for him in the second half of the 2021 season, when he became the 19th pitcher in MLB history to notch his 3,000th strikeout. Having Kershaw already in the fold helped prepare Roberts.

"Those guys are in very rare company, and when you have an opportunity to manage people like that and superstars, it does help you understand how they think, what makes them tick," he said.

Unlike Kershaw, Scherzer likes to talk "all the time," Roberts said.

"He's got a lot of answers, but they're valid answers because he's always thinking the game," Roberts said. "He'll talk to hitters, get in hitters' meetings. He's always trying to pick people's brains to get some type of edge, which as a coach, that's a good thing."

Kershaw became the 20th member of the 3,000-strikeout club in July at Dodger Stadium.

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"It's really cool that Scherz was the guy right before me to get to 3,000. I got to play with him, I got to compete against him, basically our whole careers," Kershaw said. "I don't know if it's our last year, but toward the end, for sure. It's been a fun ride."

Both pitchers are known for being extremely competitive. Where they differ is Scherzer is more demonstrative than Kershaw.

Roberts recalled the reaction he got for patting Scherzer on his rear end in the middle of a game in 2021. "I heard a curse word after I did it," he said. "That's pretty intense."

Montana bar shooting suspect is captured, ending weeklong search

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

A man suspected in a shooting at a Montana bar that left four people dead was captured Friday just a few miles from where the shooting happened after hundreds of law enforcement officers spent the past week scouring nearby mountainsides, authorities said.

Michael Paul Brown, 45, was taken into custody around 2 p.m. near the area where authorities had focused their search in the days following the Aug. 1 shooting at The Owl Bar in Anaconda, about 100 miles (190 kilometers) from Missoula.

Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen said during a news conference that about 130 law enforcement officers made a hard push Thursday after getting tips that helped verify they were looking in the right area.

"It's not someplace he'd been hiding. He was flushed out," Knudsen said.

Gov. Greg Gianforte first confirmed Brown's capture on social media Friday afternoon, saying it was the result of what he called a "Herculean effort" from law enforcement officers across the state.

The community finally would be able to sleep tonight, Anaconda-Deer Valley County Attorney Morgan Smith said, adding that the case is just the beginning for prosecutors who will be seeking to charge Brown with the killings.

It was not immediately clear if Brown had legal representation. Email and phone messages were left Friday with the Montana public defender's office.

State authorities have not said what sparked last week's shooting, which left a female bartender and three male patrons dead. The victims were identified as Nancy Laretta Kelley, 64; Daniel Edwin Baillie, 59; David Allen Leach, 70; and Tony Wayne Palm, 74.

Brown's niece, Clare Boyle, said Kelley worked previously as an oncology nurse and was a close family friend who helped Brown's mother when she was sick.

Bar owners from around the state have pledged to donate a portion of sales to a fund for each of the victims' families.

The shooting rattled the tight-knit town of about 9,000 people and prompted the closure of a 22-square-mile (57-square-kilometer) stretch of forest as authorities searched for Brown. He had fled from the shooting in a white pickup that he later ditched. Authorities say he later stole another white vehicle stocked with clothes, shoes and camping gear. Earlier in the week, Knudsen had said it didn't appear that Brown had broken into any homes in the area for food or additional supplies.

Lee Johnson, administrator of the Montana Division of Criminal Investigation, said search teams found Brown at a structure near The Ranch Bar and that he looked to be "in pretty good shape, physically." He was communicative and able to identify himself, Johnson said. Brown was taken to a hospital for treatment and was medically cleared earlier Friday.

Eric Hempstead, who owns The Ranch Bar, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) west of The Owl Bar, described an intense law enforcement presence in the densely wooded area over the last couple of days that involved search dogs and drones.

"The guy was never going to make it out in the open," he said, noting that he and his neighbors were armed and ready to protect themselves.

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Brown, who lived next door to The Owl Bar in Anaconda, served in the Army as an armor crewman from 2001 to 2005 and deployed to Iraq from early 2004 until March 2005. He also was in the Montana National Guard from 2006 to 2009.

Boyle told The Associated Press that her uncle has struggled with mental illness for years, and she and other family members repeatedly sought help for him.

Before Brown's father died in 2015, Boyle said Brown was "a good, loving uncle." Then, she and other family members noticed a slip in his mental state. Brown began experiencing delusions and often did not know who, when or where he was. He was an avid hunter and kept guns in his home.

Family members had requested wellness checks when they believed he was becoming a danger to himself, she said. Boyle said Brown would tell authorities he was fine.

The Anaconda-Deer Lodge County Law Enforcement Department did not respond this week to several email and phone messages requesting records of the wellness checks Boyle said they helped conduct on Brown in the years leading up to the shooting.

At the news conference, Knudsen said officials had no comment on whether police had performed wellness checks.

Montana is not among the states that have red flag laws allowing families to formally petition for guns to be removed from the homes of people who are deemed a danger to themselves or others. The state Legislature passed a bill this year banning local governments from enacting their own red flag gun laws. The governor signed it into law in May.

As federal takeover threats loom, the city of Washington waits for the White House to make its move

By ASHRAF KHALIL and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Around 2 a.m., noisy revelers emerging from clubs and bars packed the sidewalks of U Street in Washington, many of them seeking a late-night slice or falafel. A robust but not unusual contingent of city police cruisers lingered around the edges of the crowds. At other late-night hot spots, nearly identical scenes unfolded.

What wasn't apparent in Friday's earliest hours: any sort of security lockdown by a multiagency flood of uniformed federal law enforcement officers. That's what President Donald Trump had promised Thursday, starting at midnight, in the administration's latest move to impose its will on the nation's capital.

In short, Trump's promised law enforcement surge to take control of the streets of D.C. did not appear to unfold on schedule. A two-hour city tour, starting around 1 a.m. Friday, revealed no overt or visible law enforcement presence other than members of the Metropolitan Police Department, the city's police force.

That still might change in coming evenings as Trump puts into action his longstanding plans to "take over" a capital city he has repeatedly slammed as unsafe, filthy and badly run. According to his Thursday declaration, the security lockdown will run for seven days, "with the option to extend as needed."

On Friday night, a White House official said Thursday night's operations included arrests for possession of two stolen firearms, suspected fentanyl and marijuana. The official was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. The official said more than 120 members of various federal agencies — the Secret Service, the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service — would be on duty Friday night, upping the complement of federal officers involved.

"This is the first step in stopping the violent crime that has been plaguing the streets of Washington, D.C.," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement.

Mayor Muriel Bowser, who publicly faced off against Trump in 2020 when he called in a massive federal law enforcement response to disperse crowds of protesters, has not said a public word since Trump's declaration. The MPD has gone similarly silent.

A crackdown came after an assault

The catalyst for this latest round of D.C. takeover drama was the assault last weekend on a high-profile member of the Department of Government Efficiency by a group of teenagers in an attempted carjack-

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ing. The victim, Edward Coristine, nicknamed "Big Balls," was among the most visible figures of Trump's DOGE, which was tasked with slashing federal bureaucracy.

Police arrested two 15-year-olds and say they're still seeking other members of the group. Trump quickly renewed his calls for the federal government to seize control.

"If D.C. doesn't get its act together, and quickly, we will have no choice but to take Federal control of the City, and run this City how it should be run, and put criminals on notice that they're not going to get away with it anymore," Trump wrote in a post on Truth Social. He later doubled down on those comments, telling reporters he was considering everything from repealing Washington's limited "home rule" autonomy to "bringing in the National Guard, maybe very quickly."

The threats come at a time when Bowser's government can legitimately claim to have reduced the number of homicides and carjackings, both of which spiked in 2023. The number of carjackings overall dropped significantly the following year in 2024, from 957 to just under 500, and is on track to decline again this year, with less than 200 recorded so far more than halfway through the year.

The portion of juveniles arrested for carjacking, though, has remained above 50%, and Bowser's government has taken steps to reign in a new phenomenon of rowdy teenagers causing disarray and disturbances in public spaces. Emergency legislation passed by the D.C. Council earlier this summer imposed tighter youth curfew restrictions and empowered Police Chief Pamela Smith to declare temporary juvenile curfew zones for four days at a time. In those areas, a gathering of nine or more kids under the age of 18 is unlawful after 8 p.m.

This lies within presidential authority

Trump is completely within his powers in deploying federal law enforcement assets on D.C. streets. He could also deploy the National Guard, although they are not one of the dozen participating agencies listed in his declaration. The first Trump administration called in the National Guard during Black Lives Matter protests in 2020 and again on Jan. 6, 2021, when his supporters overran the Capitol Building.

But further steps, including taking over the police department, would require a declaration of emergency — something legal experts believe would most likely be challenged in court. That approach would fit the general pattern of Trump's second term in office; he has declared repeated states of emergency on issues ranging from border protection to economic tariffs and, in many cases, moved forward while the courts sorted them out.

These declarations have enabled his administration to govern via executive order. On Wednesday, Trump invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to declare new sanctions on Russia.

Imposing a full federal takeover of Washington would require a congressional repeal of the Home Rule Act of 1973. It's a step that Trump said lawyers are examining, but it could face pushback.

That law was specific to Washington, not other communities in the United States that have their own home rule powers but generally retain representation in their state legislatures, said Monica Hopkins, executive director for the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia.

Signed into law by President Richard Nixon, the measure allowed D.C. residents to elect their own mayor, council and local commissioners. The district had been previously run by federally appointed commissioners and members of Congress, some of whom balked at having to deal with potholes and other details of running a city of 700,000 residents.

So far, Trump's longstanding criticisms of Washington can be felt most directly in the actions of the National Park Service, which controls wide swaths of land throughout the capital. In Trump's second administration, the NPS has aggressively stepped up its clearing of homeless encampments on Park Service land and recently carried out a series of arrests of people smoking marijuana in public parks.

Earlier this week, the NPS announced that a statue of a Confederate military leader that was toppled by protesters in 2020 would be restored and replaced in line with an Executive Order.

Suspected gunman and police officer dead in shooting near the CDC and Emory University, police say

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — A man opened fire outside the headquarters of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta on Friday, leaving bullet marks in windows across the sprawling campus and killing a police officer before he was found dead in a nearby building, authorities said.

The attack, which unfolded near neighboring Emory University, prompted a massive law enforcement response to one of the nation's most prominent public health institutions, but no one else was reported to be injured.

At least four CDC buildings were hit, Director Susan Monarez said in a post on X. Images shared by employees showed multiple agency buildings with bullet-pocked windows, underscoring the breadth of the damage to a site where thousands of scientists and staff work on critical disease research.

The gunman was found on the second floor of a building across the street from the CDC campus and died at the scene, Atlanta Police Chief Darin Schierbaum said. He added that "we do not know at this time whether that was from officers or if it was self-inflicted."

The shooter was armed with a long gun, and authorities recovered three other firearms at the scene, according to a law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation.

The gunman's motive is still unknown this early in the investigation, Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens said.

Officer David Rose was killed in the gunfire, the DeKalb County Police Department said in a Facebook post. Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens said in a statement that Rose served in the Marine Corps and graduated from the DeKalb Police Academy in March, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported.

DeKalb County CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson struck at the emotions of the loss.

"This evening, there is a wife without a husband. There are three children, one unborn, without a father," Cochran-Johnson said.

When the shooting began, staff at a nearby restaurant hunkered down and said they heard a string of gunshots. "It sounded like fireworks going off, one right after the other," said Brandy Giraldo, the chief operating officer of The General Muir restaurant.

She then saw people running past her business. Two people paused to warn them of a shooter nearby.

When Anurag Mehta and his wife heard about the shooting, they tried to get to their 3-year-old son in a preschool near the CDC, but they were unable to approach.

"I was thinking that when I left for work this morning, was that the last time I saw my son?" said Mehta, who later learned his son was safe.

No CDC employees or visitors were harmed, Monarez said.

"As we navigate the aftermath of this event, we want to express our eternal gratitude to law enforcement personnel who were injured and share our deepest condolences to the family and friends of the Dekalb County Police Officer who was killed in the line of duty," she wrote in an email sent to employees.

Monarez said Monday would be a remote workday so the agency could conduct a security assessment before people return to their offices. In her X post, she called the shooting an "attack on our Roybal Campus," referring to the office complex.

The CDC and Emory's main campus are surrounded by affluent wooded neighborhoods in northeast Atlanta. All three institutions line up along Clifton Road. The area is hard to access, and notoriously traffic-choked, but on Friday few cars were in evidence as a warning siren blared.

Gov. Brian Kemp praised the efforts of first responders.

"Twice this week, deranged criminals have targeted innocent Georgians," Kemp said, referring to the shooting at Fort Stewart as well as the CDC campus. "Each time, brave first responders rushed toward the danger to subdue the shooter and save lives, reminding us of just how crucial they are."

California's Newsom, Pelosi back Texas Democrats as GOP warns of more escalations over walkout

By JIM VERTUNO, SOPHIE AUSTIN and MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California Gov. Gavin Newsom and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi appeared shoulder-to-shoulder Friday with Texas Democratic lawmakers in a show of support for their nearly weeklong walkout, which has blocked a vote on congressional redistricting maps sought by President Donald Trump in a widening national battle over U.S. House control.

Texas has been the epicenter of Trump's push to gerrymander congressional maps to shore up Republicans' narrow House majority before next year. But the standoff is threatening to spill into other states — including California, New York, Florida and Indiana — in an emerging proxy war for control of Congress in 2026.

California is moving toward a special election in November that Democrats hope could slash five Republican-held House seats in the liberal-leaning state, in direct response to the maneuvering in Texas.

"We are trying to defend democracy, as opposed to see it destroyed district by district," Newsom said amid the crowd of lawmakers at the governor's mansion. "There are no rules for Donald Trump."

Pelosi defended the Texas walkout, calling it "self-defense for our democracy."

She said Democrats will not let Trump "pave over" free and fair elections in the country.

Newsom, Pelosi spotlight high-stakes in battle over House lines

The appearance of nationally prominent Democrats Newsom — a potential 2028 presidential candidate — and Pelosi underscored the increasingly high stakes for a deeply divided Washington.

Earlier Friday the Texas House failed to meet a quorum for the third time this week as Democratic lawmakers continued to stay away from Austin.

Texas Republicans had warned they would escalate efforts to end the walkout if defiant Democrats do not return to the Capitol. But the lawmakers who bolted for points across the country Aug. 3 still were not back for Friday's scheduled House floor vote.

Frustrated Republican leaders continued to ratchet up the pressure, including new and expanding efforts to try to remove Democratic lawmakers from office and seeking help from the FBI to assist state troopers trying to find them.

"We have all hands on deck, we are continuing to explore" options to force Democrats home, Speaker Dustin Burrows said after the chamber failed to reach a quorum. "We will keep pressing forward until the job is done. ... Each one of you knows eventually you will come back."

A court setback — though temporary, for now — for Texas Democrats

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton sued former U.S. Rep. Beto O'Rourke, who ran unsuccessfully for governor and Senate, in state district court, alleging that his political group, Powered by People, improperly gave money to cover costs for the absent Democrats and continued to raise more for them.

In an initial win for Republicans, Paxton said Friday that he had been granted a temporary restraining order halting the spending and fundraising while the case continues.

In a response on the social platform X, O'Rourke wrote, "They want to make examples out of those who fight so that others won't."

A Texas road show gets national attention

The news conference in Sacramento came several days after Texas Democrats appeared in Illinois with Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who said he supported the walkout "because they don't want to live in a country where the president rigs elections for his side. That's not democracy."

One of the lawmakers in California, Texas State Rep. Ann Johnson, alluded to the national implications of the dispute, saying, "We recognize this is not just about Texas. This is about ensuring that the voters get to determine the outcome of their next election."

As California Democrats privately prepare a proposal for new House district lines that would go to voters, Assembly member Isaac Bryan said, "This is not a turn-the-other-cheek moment while they continue to send blow after blow to the foundations of democracy."

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The Texas House is scheduled to reconvene Monday, but the dozens of Democrats who left the state have shown no signs of buckling.

Mounting legal threats

Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton filed a lawsuit directly to the all-Republican state Supreme Court on Friday seeking to have 13 of the Democratic lawmakers immediately removed from office, or at least given a 48-hour warning that they must return or have their offices declared vacated.

The lawsuit argues that the lawmakers have effectively “abandoned” their office and duties, and they were singled out for making public statements that they left for the purpose of blocking the vote and disrupting House business.

“Their out-of-state rebellion cannot go unchecked, and the business of Texas must go on,” Paxton said.

Paxton’s lawsuit includes Rep. Gene Wu, chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, who also faces a similar lawsuit filed by Gov. Greg Abbott. Wu’s legal team argued that the state constitution allows House members to be removed only by a two-thirds vote of the chamber, not the courts.

Wu said this week that quorum-breaking is not an abandonment of office but a legitimate form of dissent.

Republicans vow to end up victorious

Abbott promised that he’s willing to play the long game to get the bill passed.

“We have an agenda to pass priorities critical to Texans, and we will get it done. I’ll call special session after special session—no matter how long it takes—until the job is finished,” Abbott said on X.

The current special session ends Aug. 19, and the missing lawmakers already face mounting fines for every day they are gone and civil arrest warrants issued by the state House.

The widening battle beyond Texas

Trump wants five more seats out of Texas to potentially avoid a repeat of the 2018 midterms, when Democrats reclaimed the U.S. House and proceeded to thwart his agenda and impeach him twice.

The dynamics could embroil the 2026 midterm campaign in legislative and court battles testing Trump’s power over the Republican Party, Democrats’ ability to mount opposition and the durability of the U.S. system of federalism that balances power between Washington and the states.

Trump says he will meet Putin next Friday in Alaska to discuss ending the Ukraine war

By WILL WEISSERT and VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said he will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin next Friday in Alaska to discuss ending the war in Ukraine, a potential breakthrough after weeks of expressing frustration that more was not being done to quell the fighting.

The Kremlin has not yet confirmed the details, which Trump announced on social media, but both nations had said they expected a meeting could happen as soon as next week.

Such a summit may prove pivotal in a war that began more than three years ago when Russia invaded its western neighbor and has led to tens of thousands of deaths — although there’s no guarantee it will stop the fighting since Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on their conditions for peace.

In comments to reporters at the White House before his post confirming the date and place, Trump suggested that any agreement would likely involve “some swapping of territories,” but he gave no details. Analysts, including some close to the Kremlin, have suggested that Russia could offer to give up territory it controls outside of the four regions it claims to have annexed.

Trump said his meeting with Putin would come before any sit-down discussion involving Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Trump also previously agreed to meet with Putin even if the Russian leader would not meet with Zelenskyy. That stoked fears in Europe that Ukraine could be sidelined in efforts to stop the continent’s biggest conflict since World War II.

Trump’s announcement that he planned to host one of America’s adversaries on U.S. soil broke with expectations that they’d meet in a third country. The gesture gives Putin validation after the U.S. and its allies had long sought to make him a pariah over his war against Ukraine.

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Early in Putin's tenure, he regularly met with his U.S. counterparts. That dropped off and the tone became icier as tensions mounted between Russia and the West after Moscow illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and faced allegations of meddling in the 2016 U.S. elections.

Putin's last visit to the U.S. was in 2015, when he attended the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York. The meeting in Alaska would be the first U.S.-Russia summit since 2021, when former President Joe Biden met Putin in Geneva.

After announcing Friday a framework aimed at ending decades of conflict elsewhere in the world — between Armenia and Azerbaijan — Trump said he would meet with Putin "very shortly." His subsequent post said "the highly anticipated meeting" would happen Aug. 15 in Alaska and more details would follow.

'Swapping territories'

Trump had told reporters that the summit would have been sooner, "but I guess there's security arrangements that unfortunately people have to make."

Trump said, "President Putin, I believe, wants to see peace, and Zelenskyy wants to see peace." He said that, "In all fairness to President Zelenskyy, he's getting everything he needs to, assuming we get something done."

Trump said a peace deal would likely mean Ukraine and Russia would swap some territory they each control.

"Nothing easy," the president said. "But we're gonna get some back. We're gonna get some switched. There'll be some swapping of territories, to the betterment of both."

Pressed on if this was the last chance to make a major peace deal, Trump said, "I don't like using the term last chance," and said that, "When those guns start going off, it's awfully tough to get 'em to stop."

Exasperated that Putin did not heed his calls to stop bombing Ukrainian cities, Trump almost two weeks ago moved up his ultimatum to impose additional sanctions on Russia and introduce secondary tariffs targeting countries that buy Russian oil if the Kremlin did not move toward a settlement.

The deadline was Friday. But the White House did not answer questions that evening about the state of possible sanctions after Trump's announcement of an upcoming meeting with Putin.

Prior to Trump announcing the meeting with Putin, his efforts to pressure Russia into stopping the fighting had delivered no progress. The Kremlin's bigger army is slowly advancing deeper into Ukraine at great cost in troops and armor while it relentlessly bombards Ukrainian cities. Russia and Ukraine are far apart on their terms for peace.

Ukrainian troops say they are ready to keep fighting

Ukrainian forces are locked in intense battles along the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) front line that snakes from northeast to southeast Ukraine. The Pokrovsk area of the eastern Donetsk region is taking the brunt of the punishment as Russia seeks to break out into the neighboring Dnipropetrovsk region. Ukraine has significant manpower shortages.

Intense fighting is also taking place in Ukraine's northern Sumy border region, where Ukrainian forces are engaging Russian soldiers to prevent reinforcements being sent from there to Donetsk.

In the Pokrovsk area of Donetsk, a commander said he believes Moscow isn't interested in peace.

"It is impossible to negotiate with them. The only option is to defeat them," Buda, a commander of a drone unit in the Spartan Brigade, told The Associated Press. He used only his call sign, in keeping with the rules of the Ukrainian military.

"I would like them to agree and for all this to stop, but Russia will not agree to that. It does not want to negotiate. So the only option is to defeat them," he said.

In the southern Zaporizhzhia region, a howitzer commander using the call sign Warsaw said troops are determined to thwart Russia's invasion.

"We are on our land, we have no way out," he said. "So we stand our ground, we have no choice."

Putin makes a flurry of phone calls

The Kremlin said Friday that Putin had a phone call with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, during which he informed Xi about the results of his meeting earlier this week with Trump envoy Steve Witkoff. Kremlin

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officials said Xi “expressed support for the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis on a long-term basis.”

Putin is due to visit China next month. China, along with North Korea and Iran, have provided military support for Russia’s war effort, the U.S. says.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on X that he also had a call with Putin to speak about the latest Ukraine developments. Trump signed an executive order Wednesday to place an additional 25% tariff on India for its purchases of Russian oil, which the American president says is helping to finance Russia’s war.

Putin’s calls followed his phone conversations with the leaders of South Africa, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Belarus, the Kremlin said.

The calls suggested to at least one analyst that Putin perhaps wanted to brief Russia’s most important allies about a potential settlement that could be reached at a summit with Trump.

“It means that some sort of real peace agreement has been reached for the first time,” said Sergei Markov, a pro-Kremlin Moscow-based analyst.

Analysts say Putin is aiming to outlast the West

Putin said in a previous statement that he hoped to meet with Trump as early as next week, possibly in the United Arab Emirates.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said in an assessment Thursday that “Putin remains uninterested in ending his war and is attempting to extract bilateral concessions from the United States without meaningfully engaging in a peace process.”

“Putin continues to believe that time is on Russia’s side and that Russia can outlast Ukraine and the West,” it said.

Justice Department escalates scrutiny of Trump foes with probes of Letitia James and Adam Schiff

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department is escalating efforts to scrutinize perceived adversaries of President Donald Trump with investigations into New York Attorney General Letitia James and U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff.

The Justice Department has subpoenaed James for records related to a lawsuit the Democrat filed against Trump over alleged fraud in his personal business dealings, according to a person familiar with the matter. It’s part of an investigation into whether James violated Trump’s civil rights, another person said. Another subpoena seeks records related to a lawsuit involving the National Rifle Association and its longtime leader Wayne LaPierre.

The people could not publicly discuss details of the investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on Friday on the condition of anonymity.

Attorney General Pam Bondi this week also named Ed Martin as a special prosecutor to help conduct separate mortgage fraud investigations into James and Democratic U.S. Sen. Adam Schiff of California, one of the people said. James and Schiff have denied any wrongdoing and have called the claims politically motivated.

The moves are among the most serious yet the Justice Department has taken against political foes of the president, who vowed on the campaign trail to seek retribution against his opponents. Schiff and James are both vocal critics of Trump, and James has sued Trump and his Republican administration dozens of times over his policies as president and over how he conducted his private business empire.

News of the subpoenas comes as the Justice Department advances an investigation into the Trump-Russia probe that shadowed Trump for much of his first term as president and as the administration has engaged in a widespread purge from the workforce of law enforcement officials who had been involved in examining the activities of Trump and his supporters.

A spokesperson for James’ office, Geoff Burgan, declined to confirm the subpoenas but issued a statement that said, “Any weaponization of the justice system should disturb every American. We stand strongly behind our successful litigation against the Trump Organization and the National Rifle Association, and we

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will continue to stand up for New Yorkers' rights."

In a separate statement, James' personal attorney, Abbe D. Lowell, called the subpoenas "improper."

"Investigating the fraud case Attorney General James won against President Trump and his businesses has to be the most blatant and desperate example of this administration carrying out the president's political retribution campaign," Lowell said. "Weaponizing the Department of Justice to try to punish an elected official for doing her job is an attack on the rule of law and a dangerous escalation by this administration."

A spokesperson for the Justice Department, Natalie Baldassarre, declined to comment.

FBI Director Kash Patel in May confirmed the existence of a separate investigation into James after a Trump administration official accused her of mortgage fraud. James' lawyer has said that accusation was a lie based on a purposeful misreading of documents in a lawful real estate transaction.

Martin, who was named special prosecutor to help conduct that probe, has been leading the department's Weaponization Working Group since his nomination for District of Columbia U.S. attorney was pulled amid Republican lawmakers' concerns about his scant prosecutorial experience and support for Jan. 6 rioters.

Martin is also involved in a separate investigation into Schiff, whom Trump has called to be prosecuted over mortgage fraud allegations related to a property in Maryland.

Schiff's attorney called the allegations "transparently false, stale, and long debunked."

"Mr. Martin is a January 6-defending lawyer who has repeatedly pursued baseless and politically-motivated investigations to fulfill demands to investigate and prosecute perceived enemies," said Preet Bharara, a former U.S. attorney in New York who is representing the senator. "Any supposed investigation led by him would be the very definition of weaponization of the justice process."

Trump is appealing a \$454 million judgment James won against him in a lawsuit alleging he and his companies defrauded banks and other lenders by giving them financial statements that inflated the value of his properties, including his golf clubs and his penthouse in Trump Tower.

Trump says that his financial statements actually understated his wealth and that any mistakes in the documents were harmless errors that played no role in banks' lending decisions. He and his lawyers have repeatedly accused James of engaging in "lawfare" for political purposes — a claim she has denied.

In her role as a regulator of charities and nonprofit groups registered in New York, James also sued the NRA and LaPierre. A jury last year found that LaPierre mispent millions of dollars of the organization's money and used the funds to pay for an extravagant lifestyle, while the NRA itself failed to properly manage its assets and violated whistleblower protections.

James had sought to dissolve the powerful gun advocacy organization altogether, though a judge ruled that the allegations did not warrant a "corporate death penalty." LaPierre announced his resignation from the NRA on the eve of the trial, and the NRA later said it had fresh board members and a new compliance team.

The James subpoenas were earlier reported by The New York Times.

Israel's plan to take over Gaza City stirs fears for civilians and hostages

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAM METZ and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel said Friday it will intensify its 22-month war with Hamas by taking over Gaza City, stirring fears for Palestinian civilians and Israeli hostages still held in Gaza, and renewing international pressure for an end to the conflict.

Israel's air and ground war has killed tens of thousands of people in Gaza, displaced most of the population, destroyed vast areas and pushed the territory toward famine. The timing of another major ground operation is unclear. It will likely require mobilizing thousands of troops and forcibly evacuating civilians, almost certainly worsening Gaza's humanitarian crisis.

An official familiar with the plans to take over Gaza City said the operation would be "gradual" and that there is no start date. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

The U.N. Security Council announced an emergency meeting on Israel's plans was rescheduled to 10

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a.m. EDT on Sunday after originally being scheduled to take place at 3 p.m. EDT on Saturday.

The U.N. Mission of Panama, which holds the council presidency this month, provided no details, but Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath and Israel is certain to want to speak at the meeting.

Mediators from Egypt and Qatar are preparing a new framework that will include the release of all hostages — dead and alive — in one go, in return for an end of the war in Gaza and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the strip, two Arab officials told The Associated Press.

Before Israel's Security Cabinet approved the plan to take over Gaza City, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had outlined more sweeping plans Thursday in an interview with Fox News, saying Israel planned to take control of all of Gaza. Israel already controls around three-quarters of the territory.

Hamas rejected Israel's plans. "Expanding of aggression against our Palestinian people will not be a walk in the park," the group said in a statement.

Netanyahu had signaled plans for even broader war

International powers, including Israeli allies France, Britain and Canada, have stepped up criticism of the war amid mounting shock over media reports showing starvation.

Germany said Friday it would not authorize the export of military equipment that could be used in Gaza until further notice.

Tensions could rise further if Netanyahu follows through on the more sweeping plans to take control of the entire territory, two decades after Israel's unilateral withdrawal.

Israel's new plan may be aimed in part at pressuring Hamas to accept a ceasefire on Israel's terms.

It may also reflect the reservations of Israel's military chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, who reportedly warned that expanding operations would endanger the remaining 20 or so living hostages held by Hamas and further strain Israel's army after nearly two years of regional wars.

The military "will prepare to take control of Gaza City while providing humanitarian aid to the civilian population outside the combat zones," Netanyahu's office said in a statement after the Security Cabinet meeting.

Amir Avivi, a retired brigadier general and chairman of Israel's Defense and Security Forum, estimated it would take less than three months to mobilize some 30,000 troops, evacuate Palestinian civilians and take over Gaza City.

Hamas-led militants triggered the war when they stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 251 people. Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals but 50 remain inside Gaza. Israel believes around 20 of them to be alive.

Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed over 61,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians. The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals.

The United Nations and independent experts view the ministry's figures as the most reliable estimate of casualties. Israel has disputed them without offering a toll of its own.

Mediators try again to end the war

The efforts for a new ceasefire have the backing of major Arab Gulf monarchies, according to two officials who spoke anonymously due to the sensitivity of the discussions. One is involved directly in the deliberations and the second was briefed on the efforts. The monarchies are concerned about further regional destabilization if Israel fully reoccupies Gaza, the officials said.

The yet-to-be finalized framework aims to address the contentious issue of what to do with Hamas' weapons, with Israel seeking full disarmament and Hamas refusing. The official directly involved in the efforts said discussions are underway about "freezing arms," which may involve Hamas retaining but not using its weapons. It also calls for the group to relinquish power in the strip.

A Palestinian-Arab committee would run Gaza and oversee the reconstruction efforts until the establishment of a Palestinian administration with a new police force, trained by two U.S. allies in the Middle East, to take over the strip, the official said. It is unclear what role the Western-backed Palestinian Authority would play.

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The second official said the U.S. administration has been briefed on the broad lines of the framework. A senior Hamas official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to brief the media, said the group has yet to receive details on the latest efforts to revive ceasefire talks.

AP reached out to the governments in Qatar, Egypt and Israel as well as the White House for comment. Wishes for an end to the war

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff told hostage families during his recent visit that Israel was shifting its approach to pursue a comprehensive "all-or-nothing" deal aimed at ending the war and securing the release of hostages, a person who attended the meeting told the AP, speaking on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to speak about the private meeting.

Israelis united behind the war in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attack, but dissent has steadily grown as hostages have languished in captivity. Some families of the hostages and their supporters have staged large protests calling for a ceasefire with Hamas that would bring their loved ones home.

"All of Israel wants a comprehensive deal and an end to the war," Einav Zangauker, mother of hostage Matan Zangauker, said in a statement on Friday. "For the State of Israel to guarantee the security of its citizens, we must end this injustice that has been done to our loved ones for 22 months."

'There is nothing here to occupy'

Israel has repeatedly bombarded Gaza City and carried out numerous raids there, only to return to neighborhoods again and again as militants regrouped. Today, it is one of the few areas in Gaza that hasn't been turned into an Israeli buffer zone or placed under evacuation orders.

Umm Youssef from Gaza City said she had left the city for over 16 months before returning to her home.

'The area is all rubble. Rubble is an overstatement, it is a sandpile. There is nothing here to occupy. There is no life here,' she said.

A major ground operation there could displace tens of thousands of people and further disrupt efforts to deliver food to the hunger-stricken territory.

At least six Palestinians were shot dead and more than 140 were wounded on Friday at the Israeli-run Zikim Crossing in northern Gaza, where U.N. aid convoys enter, according to Dr. Mohamed Abu Selmiya, the director of Shifa Hospital, which received the dead and wounded. He said all six were killed by Israeli gunfire. There was no immediate comment from the Israeli military.

It's unclear how many people are still in Gaza City. Hundreds of thousands fled under evacuation orders in the opening weeks of the conflict, but many returned during a ceasefire earlier this year.

Apollo 13 moon mission leader James Lovell dies at 97

By DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — James Lovell, the commander of Apollo 13 who helped turn a failed moon mission into a triumph of on-the-fly can-do engineering, has died. He was 97.

Lovell died Thursday in Lake Forest, Illinois, NASA said in a statement on Friday.

"Jim's character and steadfast courage helped our nation reach the Moon and turned a potential tragedy into a success from which we learned an enormous amount," NASA said. "We mourn his passing even as we celebrate his achievements."

One of NASA's most traveled astronauts in the agency's first decade, Lovell flew four times — Gemini 7, Gemini 12, Apollo 8 and Apollo 13 — with the two Apollo flights riveting the folks back on Earth.

Lovell and fellow astronauts Fred Haise and Jack Swigert received renewed fame with the retelling of the Apollo 13 mission in the 1995 movie "Apollo 13" where actor Tom Hanks — portraying Lovell — famously said, "Houston, we have a problem."

In 1968, the Apollo 8 crew of Lovell, Frank Borman and William Anders was the first to leave Earth's orbit and the first to fly to and circle the moon. They could not land, but they put the U.S. ahead of the Soviets in the space race. Letter writers told the crew that their stunning pale blue dot photo of Earth from the moon, a world first, and the crew's Christmas Eve reading from Genesis saved America from a tumultuous 1968.

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The Apollo 13 mission had a lifelong impact on Lovell

But the big rescue mission was still to come. That was during the harrowing Apollo 13 flight in 1970. Lovell was supposed to be the fifth man to walk on the moon. But Apollo 13's service module, carrying Lovell and two others, experienced a sudden oxygen tank explosion on its way to the moon. The astronauts barely survived, spending four cold and clammy days in the cramped lunar module as a lifeboat.

"The thing that I want most people to remember is (that) in some sense it was very much of a success," Lovell said during a 1994 interview. "Not that we accomplished anything, but a success in that we demonstrated the capability of (NASA) personnel."

A retired Navy captain known for his calm demeanor, Lovell told a NASA historian that his brush with death affected him.

"I don't worry about crises any longer," he said in 1999. Whenever he has a problem, "I say, 'I could have been gone back in 1970. I'm still here. I'm still breathing.' So, I don't worry about crises."

Lovell had ice water in his veins like other astronauts, but he didn't display the swagger some had, just quiet confidence, said Smithsonian Institution historian Roger Launius. He called Lovell "a very personable, very down-to-earth type of person, who says 'This is what I do. Yes, there's risk involved. I measure risk.'"

Lovell spent about 30 days in space across 4 missions

In all, Lovell flew four space missions — and until the Skylab flights of the mid-1970s, he held the world record for the longest time in space with 715 hours, 4 minutes and 57 seconds.

"He was a member of really the first generation of American astronauts and went on to inspire multiple generations of Americans to look at the stars and want to explore," said Bruce McClintock, who leads the RAND Corp. Space Enterprise Initiative.

Aboard Apollo 8, Lovell described the oceans and land masses of Earth. "What I keep imagining, is if I am some lonely traveler from another planet, what I would think about the Earth at this altitude, whether I think it would be inhabited or not," he remarked.

That mission may be as important as the historic Apollo 11 moon landing, a flight made possible by Apollo 8, Launius said.

"I think in the history of space flight, I would say that Jim was one of the pillars of the early space flight program," Gene Kranz, NASA's legendary flight director, once said.

Lovell was immortalized by Tom Hanks' portrayal

But if historians consider Apollo 8 and Apollo 11 the most significant of the Apollo missions, it was during Lovell's last mission that he came to embody for the public the image of the cool, decisive astronaut.

The Apollo 13 crew of Lovell, Haise and Swigert was on the way to the moon in April 1970, when an oxygen tank from the spaceship exploded 200,000 miles from Earth.

That, Lovell recalled, was "the most frightening moment in this whole thing." Then oxygen began escaping and "we didn't have solutions to get home."

"We knew we were in deep, deep trouble," he told NASA's historian.

Four-fifths of the way to the moon, NASA scrapped the mission. Suddenly, their only goal was to survive. Lovell's "Houston, we've had a problem," a variation of a comment Swigert had radioed moments before, became famous.

What unfolded over the next four days captured the imagination of the world.

With Lovell commanding the spacecraft, Kranz led hundreds of flight controllers and engineers in a furious rescue plan.

The plan involved the astronauts moving from the service module, which was hemorrhaging oxygen, into the cramped, dark and frigid lunar lander while they rationed their dwindling oxygen, water and electricity. Using the lunar module as a lifeboat, they swung around the moon, aimed for Earth and raced home.

"There is never a guarantee of success when it comes to space," McClintock said. Lovell showed a "leadership role and heroic efforts in the recovery of Apollo 13."

By coolly solving the problems under the most intense pressure imaginable, the astronauts and the crew on the ground became heroes. In the process of turning what seemed routine into a life-and-death

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struggle, the entire flight team had created one of NASA's finest moments.

"They demonstrated to the world they could handle truly horrific problems and bring them back alive," said Launius.

He regretted never being able to walk on the moon

The loss of the opportunity to walk on the moon "is my one regret," Lovell said in a 1995 interview with The Associated Press.

President Bill Clinton agreed when he awarded Lovell the Congressional Space Medal of Honor in 1995. "While you may have lost the moon ... you gained something that is far more important perhaps: the abiding respect and gratitude of the American people," he said.

Lovell once said that while he was disappointed he never walked on the moon, "The mission itself and the fact that we triumphed over certain catastrophe does give me a deep sense of satisfaction."

And Lovell clearly understood why this failed mission afforded him far more fame than had Apollo 13 accomplished its goal.

"Going to the moon, if everything works right, it's like following a cookbook. It's not that big a deal," he told the AP in 2004. "If something goes wrong, that's what separates the men from the boys."

James A. Lovell was born March 25, 1928, in Cleveland. He attended the University of Wisconsin before transferring to the U.S. Naval Academy, in Annapolis, Maryland. On the day he graduated in 1952, he and his wife, Marilyn, were married.

A test pilot at the Navy Test Center in Patuxent River, Maryland, Lovell was selected as an astronaut by NASA in 1962.

Lovell retired from the Navy and from the space program in 1973, and went into private business. In 1994, he and Jeff Kluger wrote "Lost Moon," the story of the Apollo 13 mission and the basis for the film "Apollo 13." In one of the final scenes, Lovell appeared as a Navy captain, the rank he actually had.

He and his family ran a now-closed restaurant in suburban Chicago, Lovell's of Lake Forest.

His wife, Marilynn, died in 2023. Survivors include four children.

In a statement, his family hailed him as their "hero."

"We will miss his unshakeable optimism, his sense of humor, and the way he made each of us feel we could do the impossible," his family said. "He was truly one of a kind."

Judge weighs Trump administration's request to end protections for immigrant children

By VALERIE GONZALEZ Associated Press

McALLEN, Texas (AP) — A judge on Friday was considering a Trump administration request to end a decades-old policy on protections for immigrant children in federal custody that the government says is inhibiting its immigration crackdown.

The administration asked U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee in Los Angeles during a hearing to dissolve the policy, which limits how long Customs and Border Protection can hold immigrant children and requires them to be kept in safe and sanitary conditions.

Gee, who oversees what is known as the Flores agreement, expressed skepticism at the government's request but did not immediately issue a ruling. It was not clear how soon she will rule.

The judge pressed government attorney Joshua McCroskey on why President Donald Trump's administration was holding children at the border for longer than the 72 hours laid out in the agreement when border arrests have reached record lows. She said it seems like conditions should be improving but they "are deteriorating."

"It seems counterintuitive that should happen unless it's willful," said Gee, who was nominated to the court by President Barack Obama.

McCroskey said some children are being held for longer because Trump as part of his crackdown ended the Biden administration's policy that allowed expedited releases of immigrants. McCroskey also pointed to logistical challenges that resulted from the closure of temporary facilities that were set up under President

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Joe Biden to handle an influx of immigrants.

In May, CBP held 46 children over a week, including six children held for over two weeks and four children held 19 days, according to data revealed in a court filing. In March and April, CPB reported that it had 213 children in custody for more than 72 hours. That included 14 children, including toddlers, who were held for over 20 days in April.

Advocates for immigrant children asked the judge to keep protections and oversight in place and submitted accounts from immigrants in Texas family detention centers who described adults fighting children for clean water, despondent toddlers and a child with swollen feet who was denied a medical exam. The advocates also want the judge to expand independent monitoring.

"I have met children who have spent days in jail cells with barely more than ramen noodles to eat, lights on day and night, no sunlight or access to the outside world and the indignity of using the restroom in front of guards. On top of that trauma — then to be flown to family detention and locked up with no end in sight? It is truly shameful," Leecia Welch, the deputy legal director at Children's Rights, said in an interview after the hearing.

The Flores agreement, named for a teenage plaintiff, was the result of over a decade of litigation between attorneys representing the rights of immigrant children and the U.S. government over widespread allegations of mistreatment in the 1980s. It governs the conditions for all immigrant children in U.S. custody, including those traveling alone or with their parents.

In its written motion, the Trump administration said the government has made substantial changes since the agreement was formalized in 1997, creating standards and policies governing the custody of immigrant children that conform to legislation and the agreement.

The administration is looking to expand immigration detention space, including by building more centers like one in Florida dubbed "Alligator Alcatraz," where a lawsuit alleges detainees' constitutional rights are being violated. In court, an attorney for the government, Tiberius Davis, acknowledged that the agreement hampers the administration's efforts, even though Trump's tax and spending bill provided billions to build new immigration facilities.

Davis said the bill gives the government authority to hold families in detention indefinitely. "But currently under the Flores settlement agreement, that's essentially void," he said.

The Biden administration successfully pushed to partially end the agreement last year. Gee ruled that special court supervision may end when the children are transferred from CPB custody to the Department of Health and Human Services. But she carved out exceptions for certain types of facilities for children with more acute needs.

Wall Street clocks another winning week

By DAMIAN J. TROISE and ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writers

U.S. stocks closed higher Friday, capping a choppy week of trading with the market's third winning week in the last four and another milestone.

The S&P 500 rose 0.8%, finishing just shy of the record it set last week. The benchmark index also wiped out its losses from a slide last week.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.5%, and the Nasdaq composite added 1% to the all-time high it set a day earlier.

Technology companies, with their hefty stock values, did much of the heavy lifting for the market. Nvidia rose 1.1% and Apple gained 4.2%.

Gilead Sciences jumped 8.3% for one of the market's biggest gains. It reported financial results that easily beat analysts' forecasts, while also raising its earnings forecast for the year. Expedia Group rose 4.1% after also reporting encouraging financial results.

They are among the final big batch of companies within the S&P 500 to report mostly strong financial results for the second quarter. Still, many have warned that current tariffs could cut into their profits.

Financial sector stocks also helped drive the market higher. Bank of America gained 2.4% and Master-

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card rose 2.3%.

Elsewhere in the market, entertainment giant Paramount Skydance slid 10.5% a day after the company was created by the closing of an \$8 billion merger of Skydance and Paramount. Shares in rival Warner Bros. Discovery sank 8%.

The main focus throughout the week has been on President Donald Trump's trade war and its potential impact on the U.S. economy, as well as the Federal Reserve's interest rate policy. Trump began imposing higher import taxes on dozens of countries Thursday.

Still, the market appeared to largely shrug off the latest tariff escalation.

"The S&P 500's rebound this week may highlight the extent to which the market is becoming numb to tariff headlines," said Daniel Skelly, head of Morgan Stanley's Wealth Management Market Research & Strategy Team.

The unknown path of the economy amid an unpredictable tariff policy has been the key reason for the Fed to hold its benchmark interest rate steady.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell, though, has been under increasing pressure from Trump to cut interest rates. Policy decisions aren't made solely by the Fed chair. All 12 members of the Federal Open Market Committee vote on interest rate changes.

Trump has an opportunity to exert more control over the Fed following his nomination of Stephen Miran to a vacancy on the Fed's board of governors. Miran is a top economic adviser to Trump and is a near-certain vote in support of lower interest rates.

The Fed's last decision to hold interest rates steady included two votes to lower interest rates. Its next meeting is in September, and Wall Street is overwhelmingly betting that the central bank will cut interest rates by a quarter of a percentage point.

Treasury yields edged higher. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.28% from 4.25% late Thursday. The yield on the two-year Treasury which more closely tracks expectations for Fed actions, rose to 3.76% from 3.73% late Thursday.

The expectation for an interest rate cut follows a series of signals last week that the economy could be weakening. That included reports showing that inflation edged higher in June and employers in the U.S. hit the brakes on hiring in July.

Both are key concerns for the Fed, which has been trying to cool inflation down to its target rate of 2% while also fulfilling its "full employment" mandate.

Lower interest rates can give the economy and investment prices a boost, though the downside is that they can also push inflation higher. Concerns about inflation reheating could be overshadowed by worries about a weakening employment market.

Wall Street and the Fed will get more insight next week on inflation's temperature and the economy. The government will release updates on inflation at both the consumer and wholesale levels, along with a report on retail sales.

"We believe stocks will stay supported amid solid fundamentals, but fresh headlines in the coming week may challenge investor sentiment that remains vulnerable to tariff, economic, and geopolitical risks," said Ulrike Hoffmann-Burchardi, chief investment officer for the Americas and global head of equities at UBS Global Wealth Management.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 49.45 points to 6,389.45. The Dow rose 206.97 points to 44,175.61, and the Nasdaq rose 207.32 points to finish at 21,450.02.

Asian markets closed mostly lower except in Tokyo, where the Nikkei rose 1.9% after Japan's main trade envoy said the U.S. had agreed to correct a problem over tariffs that will apply to exports to the U.S.

European markets were mixed.

Trump executive order gives politicians control over all federal grants, alarming researchers

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — An executive order signed by President Donald Trump late Thursday aims to give political appointees power over the billions of dollars in grants awarded by federal agencies. Scientists say it threatens to undermine the process that has helped make the U.S. the world leader in research and development.

The order requires all federal agencies, including FEMA, the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health, to appoint officials responsible for reviewing federal funding opportunities and grants, so that they “are consistent with agency priorities and the national interest.”

It also requires agencies to make it so that current and future federal grants can be terminated at any time — including during the grant period itself.

Agencies cannot announce new funding opportunities until the new protocols are in place, according to the order.

The Trump administration said these changes are part of an effort to “strengthen oversight” and “streamline agency grantmaking.” Scientists say the order will cripple America’s scientific engine by placing control over federal research funds in the hands of people who are influenced by politics and lack relevant expertise.

“This is taking political control of a once politically neutral mechanism for funding science in the U.S.,” said Joseph Bak-Coleman, a scientist studying group decision-making at the University of Washington.

The changes will delay grant review and approval, slowing “progress for cures and treatments that patients and families across the country urgently need,” said the Association of American Medical Colleges in a statement.

The administration has already terminated thousands of research grants at agencies like the NSF and NIH, including on topics like transgender health, vaccine hesitancy, misinformation and diversity, equity and inclusion.

The order could affect emergency relief grants doled out by FEMA, public safety initiatives funded by the Department of Justice and public health efforts supported by the Centers for Disease Control. Experts say the order is likely to be challenged in court.

AP investigation shows chaos of deadly Texas floods through emergency recordings and videos

By CLAUDIA LAUER, GENE JOHNSON, JAMIE STENGLE and MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

Cries for help came from the pitch-black woods, from rooftops and from attics that shifted unsteadily as the water rose. Firefighters and police raced to help, having little guidance on where or how. Top emergency leaders were asleep or out of town.

Using recordings of first responder communications, weather service warnings, survivor videos and official testimony, The Associated Press has assembled a chronology of the chaotic rescue effort as a flash flood barreled east through the Hill Country of Central Texas before dawn on July 4.

The flooding killed at least 136 people — including more than two dozen children and counselors at Camp Mystic, a century-old summer camp for girls that was among the first areas inundated. The victims ranged in age from 1 to 91 and although most were from Texas, some who died were from Alabama, California and Florida, according to a list released by Kerr County officials. Two victims were still listed as missing on Friday.

Here are some of the harrowing moments:

12:30 to 1:15 a.m. CDT

In a Slack chat, a National Weather Service forecaster tells emergency managers, meteorologists and news media that the agency is monitoring Kerr County, but so far there has been little rain. Within 40 minutes, two weather cells combine, creating a dramatically more dangerous situation. A flash flood warn-

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ing goes out at 1:14 a.m.

With the storm making already spotty cellphone service worse, some people report receiving the first National Weather Service notification on their phones, while others say they never received it.

2 to 3 a.m.

The water rises quickly at Camp Mystic. A spokesperson for the camp would later say staff began evacuating campers and counselors between 2 and 2:30 a.m. The girls leave their cabins and try to wade to safety. None of the emergency communications between midnight and 6 a.m. reviewed by the AP were about responses to the camp.

3:30 to 4 a.m.

Kerr County emergency dispatchers request the first water rescue at 3:35 a.m. Emergency calls come in for homes flooding along Highway 39.

"Caller's house flooded," a dispatcher radios. "All the residents are on their house."

A later call from Camp La Junta staff reports dozens of boys are in the water after a cabin flooded.

Several volunteer fire departments and other law enforcement officers respond to areas around the Guadalupe River after realizing the severity of the situation. Frantic calls would come from people on rooftops and in attic rafters who say they felt the cabins moving under them. Calls would also come from people who scrambled up trees after it was too late to leave by car.

4:16 a.m.

A U.S. Geological Survey river gauge about a half mile (0.8 km) east of Hunt is already recording almost 24 feet (7.3 meters) of water – considered major flood stage for the Guadalupe River. As the water rises in a home near the river, Jane Towler captured video on her phone of the muddy water in the kitchen.

"Everything in our yard has floated away," she told her son and a family friend. "I want us to be prepared to go up in the attic." They wound up surviving the night on the roof.

Kerr County's "CodeRed" alert system, which allows the county to send cellphone alerts, would become a point of contention after the flood. Residents and others ask why county officials didn't use the alerts at the height of the emergency. Fire rescuers had asked for a "CodeRed" alert as early as 4:22 a.m.

East of Hunt, the swell of water overtakes an area full of out-of-town campers.

4:35 a.m.

A fire rescuer calls out that there are children trapped in the water at the RV parks behind Howdy's restaurant on the western edge of Kerrville.

"We're trying to keep people out of the water but they're trying to go in on their own to get those children," she reports. "We need some law enforcement down here, now!"

Rescuers work to evacuate the RV parks as several of the vehicles are swept away, some with families still inside. Interviews with family members and others would later reveal that more than 40 people staying in the area died.

4:45 a.m.

A crew of rescuers from San Antonio arrive to help, but with no command center established, they wait for instructions in a fast food parking lot — less than 2 river miles (3.2 km) from the RV park. The rising water overtakes their trucks and strands their boats for hours.

Radio traffic shows that an official command center wouldn't be set up until after 6 a.m.

Other out-of-town crews rely on word of mouth to determine where and how to help. Many rescuers on the banks can't reach people in the swollen river.

4:59 a.m.

A firefighter runs along the river trying to find people he can hear in the water but cannot see.

Volunteer firefighters are forced to think on their feet in a scenario many have never experienced before. They move teams to bridges and river crossings, trying to find places they can pull people from the water without boats.

"If you could, see if Kerrville's got a crew that they could set up at Bear Creek off Arcadia and see if they could pick up any of the people that are washing by us," one asks a dispatcher.

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5:09 a.m.

Screams sound in the distance as waters rise at an RV park along the Guadalupe River in Kerrville.

Testimony from Kerr County leaders at a legislative hearing at the end of July would confirm that the county's top official was out of town, the sheriff was asleep and the emergency management coordinator was sick in bed when the floods and the emergency response began.

5:32 a.m.

Additional rescuers from state task forces and neighboring counties continue to rely on others in the field for direction.

"Sir, we don't have an incident command right now," a dispatcher tells one crew.

"Received," the responder says. "Please advise when you have an assignment for us."

6 to 6:30 a.m.

As daylight breaks, emergency personnel are able to see the catastrophic scope of the flooding from the air, but rescuers keep struggling to find and reach survivors. They scan the water from bridges and crossings.

"I have multiple people in backyards hanging onto trees yelling at us, but we can't see them," a rescuer tells dispatch.

8:33 a.m.

As the morning stretches on, dispatchers start getting calls from people spotting possible survivors.

"We've been contacted by a passerby," a Kerr County dispatcher tells rescuers. "There's a person flashing a signal light in the trees in the vicinity of Tranquility Island. I believe they're summoning rescue."

Rescues, including by helicopter, continue into the afternoon. Crews also begin recovering bodies. For many families holding out hope of having their loved ones returned, it would take days or weeks due to the massive amount of debris and the widespread search area along the Guadalupe River.

In the following days

The death toll would grow to at least 136; three people remain missing.

Residents along the Guadalupe River and the families of victims have questioned why they had no notice of the impending flood. The waters rose quickly in the middle of the night, and hard-hit Kerr County lacked an updated flood warning system; state and local agencies had missed opportunities to finance one.

Local officials told Texas lawmakers who visited the area weeks later that they also need better communications systems and broadband. Questions have also been raised about why top emergency officials weren't involved sooner. Lawmakers say they are intent on learning lessons from the catastrophe.

Trump orders increased federal law enforcement presence in Washington to 'make DC safe again'

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said Thursday night that there will be increased presence of federal law enforcement in the nation's capital to combat crime for at least the next week, amid President Donald Trump's suggestions that his administration could fully take over running the city.

"Washington, DC is an amazing city, but it has been plagued by violent crime for far too long," White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said in a statement. "President Trump has directed an increased presence of federal law enforcement to protect innocent citizens."

She added that the increased federal presence means "there will be no safe harbor for violent criminals in D.C."

Trump has repeatedly suggested that the rule of Washington could be returned to federal authorities. Doing so would require a repeal of the Home Rule Act of 1973 in Congress, a step Trump said lawyers are examining — but could face steep pushback.

"We have a capital that's very unsafe," Trump told reporters at the White House this week. "We have to run D.C."

The White House said the increased law enforcement would "make D.C. safe again" and would be pres-

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ent on the streets starting at midnight — led by U.S. Park Police following an 11 p.m. Thursday roll call at an established command center.

The push will last the next seven days with the option to extend “as needed,” under the authority of Trump’s previous executive order establishing the Making DC Safe and Beautiful Task Force. The added federal officials will be identified, in marked units and highly visible, the White House said.

Participating law enforcement include personnel from the U.S. Capitol Police, Homeland Security Investigations, the Federal Protective Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Enforcement and Removal Operations, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service and the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia.

The police forces for Amtrak and the city’s Metro rail service are also involved.

However a two-hour tour of the D.C. streets, starting around 1 a.m. Friday, revealed no evidence of the sort of multi-agency flood of uniformed personnel described in Trump’s announcement. There was a robust, but not unusual, Metropolitan Police Department presence in late-night hot spots like 14th Street and along Florida Avenue. But there was no overt or visible law enforcement presence other than the MPD.

Trump has long suggested crime and violence is on the rise in Washington, and has lately begun to criticize things like litter and graffiti. But the catalyst for the order to increase police presence was the assault last weekend on a high-profile member of the Department of Government Efficiency by a group of teenagers in an attempted carjacking.

The victim, Edward Coristine, nicknamed “Big Balls,” was among the most visible figures of DOGE, which was tasked with cutting jobs and slashing the federal bureaucracy. Police arrested two 15-year-olds and say they’re still looking for other members of the group.

“If D.C. doesn’t get its act together, and quickly, we will have no choice but to take Federal control of the City, and run this City how it should be run, and put criminals on notice that they’re not going to get away with it anymore,” Trump posted on Truth Social earlier this week.

The president subsequently said he was considering repealing Washington’s limited Home Rule autonomy or “bringing in the National Guard, maybe very quickly.”

Thursday’s announcement comes as Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser’s government can claim to have reduced the number of homicides and carjackings — both of which spiked citywide in 2023.

Carjackings in Washington overall dropped significantly the following year in 2024, from 957 to just under 500, and the number is on track to decline again this year — with less than 200 recorded so far more than halfway through 2025.

Boar’s Head plans to reopen troubled deli meat plant, but reports of sanitation problems persist

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

The Boar’s Head deli meat plant at the heart of last year’s deadly food poisoning outbreak is set to reopen in the coming months, company officials said.

But recent inspections at Boar’s Head sites in three states documented sanitation problems similar to those that led to the listeria contamination that killed 10 people and sickened dozens.

The Jarratt, Virginia, plant was shut down in September when U.S. Agriculture Department officials suspended operations and withdrew the federal marks of inspection required to operate, saying the company “failed to maintain sanitary conditions.” Boar’s Head permanently stopped making liverwurst and recalled more than 7 million pounds of deli products.

USDA officials this week said they had “thoroughly reviewed” the plant and lifted the forced suspension on July 18.

“The facility is in full compliance of the guidelines and protocols set for the safe handling and production of food and the serious issues that led to suspension have been fully rectified,” officials with the USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service said in an email Wednesday.

And yet, documents obtained by The Associated Press through a freedom of information request show

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that Boar's Head plants in Arkansas, Indiana and elsewhere in Virginia were flagged for the same kinds of sanitation problems that led to the outbreak, with the most recent report in June.

In the past seven months, government inspectors reported problems that include instances of meat and fat residue left on equipment and walls, drains blocked with meat products, beaded condensation on ceilings and floors, overflowing trash cans, and staff who didn't wear protective hairnets and plastic aprons — or wash their hands.

The records, which included USDA noncompliance reports logged by inspectors from Jan. 1 through July 23, raise new questions about the company's promises to address systemic problems and about federal oversight of listeria contamination in plants that make ready-to-eat foods.

"If there is evidence that food safety problems are continuing, the government needs to make sure the company fixes them," said Sandra Eskin, a former USDA official who now heads STOP Foodborne Illness, a consumer group focused on food safety.

Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins last month announced plans to bolster efforts that combat foodborne germs, including listeria.

Jobs posted in Virginia

Officials at Boar's Head, the 120-year-old company based in Sarasota, Florida, have posted job openings for two dozen positions, including a food safety quality analyst, at the Jarratt site.

The company convened a panel of expert advisers last fall and hired a chief food safety officer in May. The advisers include Frank Yiannas, a former U.S. Food and Drug Administration official, and Mindy Brashears, President Donald Trump's nominee for USDA's undersecretary for food safety.

Boar's Head last year said they "regret and deeply apologize" for the contamination and that "comprehensive measures are being implemented to prevent such an incident from ever happening again."

But company officials refused to discuss the problems found this year. They canceled a scheduled AP interview with Natalie Dyenson, the new food safety officer. And they declined to allow Yiannas to detail the investigation he led into the contamination's cause.

Brashears, who now directs a food safety center at Texas Tech University, did not respond to requests for comment about the Boar's Head problems. An automatic email reply said the USDA nominee was traveling out of the country until Aug. 25. She remains on the company's food safety board.

"Boar's Head has an unwavering commitment to food safety and quality. That commitment is reflected in recent enhancements to our practices and protocols" described on the company's website, Boar's Head said in an emailed statement.

"We have also been working with the USDA in developing a plan to reopen our Jarratt facility in a measured, deliberate way in the coming months," the statement said.

Inadequate sanitation practices

The 35 pages of new inspection findings cover Boar's Head sites in Forrest City, Arkansas; New Castle, Indiana; and Petersburg, Virginia.

They surprised outside food safety advocates, who said that factory conditions should have improved in the year since the outbreak was first identified.

"You would have expected after all they went through that they would put themselves in a place where you could essentially eat deli meat off the factory floor," said Brian Ronholm, director of food policy for Consumer Reports, an advocacy group.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro called the findings "appalling."

"This is a pattern of negligence — cutting corners to protect the company's bottom line at the expense of consumers and these conditions show a complete disregard for food safety and for the public health of the American people," the Connecticut Democrat said in a statement.

The findings echo the "inadequate sanitation practices" that USDA officials said contributed to the outbreak. Key factors included product residue, condensation and structural problems in the buildings, a January report concluded.

At the Jarratt plant, state inspectors working in partnership with USDA had documented mold, insects, liquid dripping from ceilings, and meat and fat residue on walls, floors and equipment, the AP previously

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reported.

While no instances of insects were documented in this year's inspection reports, there were repeated reports of "dried fat and protein from the previous day's production" on equipment, stairs and walls. In April, an inspector at the Petersburg plant reported finding discarded meat underneath equipment, including "5-6 hams, 4 large pieces of meat and a large quantity of pooling meat juice."

Other reports detailed beaded condensation "directly over the food contact surfaces of tables and conveyor belts." Additional reports documented rusting meat racks, doors that failed to close completely and staff who ignored required handwashing stations.

The reports point to a "food safety culture problem," said Barbara Kowalczyk, who directs a food safety and nutrition security center at George Washington University.

"What jumped out to me is there is an organizational culture issue that needs to be changed," she said. "Usually that culture has to start at the top."

In the meantime, she advised consumers to think carefully about deli meat consumption. Older people and those who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems are especially vulnerable to serious illness from listeria infections.

"I think they need to be aware that there are issues at this organization that still are not completely under control, apparently," Kowalczyk said.

Boar's Head faced multiple lawsuits from people who fell ill or from the families of those who died. Several survivors declined to comment publicly on the new problems, citing financial settlements with the company that included nondisclosure agreements.

Germany halts military exports to Israel for use in Gaza amid outcry over Netanyahu plan

By FANNY BRODERSEN and SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany won't authorize any exports of military equipment to Israel that could be used in Gaza "until further notice," Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Friday, in a strikingly quick response by one of Israel's strongest international backers to a decision by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Cabinet to take over Gaza City.

The move by Germany, which has previously stopped short of tougher lines against Israel's government taken by some of its European Union allies, appeared likely to further isolate Israel in the wake of the military takeover plan that has been decried by the United Nations, aid and human rights groups, and supporters of Israeli hostages still held in Gaza, among others.

Germany, along with the United States and Italy, is among the top foreign suppliers of equipment used by Israel's military. The pause adds to action taken by European countries — including economic, military and diplomatic measures — against Israel in recent months out of concern over its government's conduct in the nearly two-year war in Gaza.

Merz said in a statement that Israel "has the right to defend itself against Hamas' terror" and that the release of Israeli hostages and purposeful negotiations toward a ceasefire are "our top priority." He said that Hamas mustn't have a role in the future of Gaza.

"The even harsher military action by the Israeli army in the Gaza Strip, approved by the Israeli Cabinet last night, makes it increasingly difficult for the German government to see how these goals will be achieved," he said. "Under these circumstances, the German government will not authorize any exports of military equipment that could be used in the Gaza Strip until further notice."

Netanyahu spoke with Merz Friday and expressed disappointment with the arms decision, according to an Israeli government statement. Germany is rewarding Hamas and failing to support Israel's "just war" against the group, the statement said.

It wasn't immediately clear which military equipment from Germany would be affected. Asked by The Associated Press for details, the German government declined to comment.

Germany has led efforts among the EU's 27 member nations to block collective criticism of or efforts to

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stop Israel's blockade of Gaza and military campaign in the coastal enclave.

Alongside Hungary and the Czech Republic, Germany has argued against calls from Spain, Ireland and the Netherlands to scrap a bilateral agreement with Israel, sanction settlers, and enact an arms embargo.

Weight of responsibility

The German government remains deeply concerned about the suffering of civilians in Gaza, Merz said.

"With the planned offensive, the Israeli government bears even greater responsibility than before for providing for their needs," he said.

Merz called on Israel to allow comprehensive access for aid deliveries — including for U.N. organizations and other nongovernmental organizations — and said that Israel "must continue to comprehensively and sustainably address the humanitarian situation in Gaza."

The move has particular weight because Germany has been seen as one of Israel's strongest supporters — arguably surpassed only by the United States. Germany has maintained a strongly pro-Israel stance for decades largely because of its historical responsibility for the Holocaust, which has shaped its postwar foreign policy around ensuring Israel's security and combating antisemitism.

Merz's government didn't join announcements by French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer that their governments plan to formally recognize a Palestinian state in September.

The reluctance so far of Germany, the EU's biggest economic power, to take a tougher line on the actions of Netanyahu's government clouded the prospects that international pressure might have an impact on Israel's decisions.

Israel's air and ground war has already killed tens of thousands of people in Gaza, displaced most of the population, destroyed vast areas and pushed the territory toward famine. The campaign was triggered when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing around 1,200 people and abducting 251 people.

Merz also called on Israel's government "not to take any further steps toward annexing the West Bank."

A 'big deal' but not decisive

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, last year, Germany was the No. 2 supplier of arms to Israel after the United States.

German companies provide 30% of Israel's defense imports, mostly naval armaments, according to data analyzed by Zain Hussain, an arms transfers researcher at SIPRI. He suggested the German pullback would be temporary.

"This is going to be a limited measure," Hussain said. "Germany has been committed to providing Israel with arms, especially with ships.

Germany, which has stood firmly with Israel, "is openly admitting that it is uncomfortable with Israel's actions and limiting some arms transfers, and for Germany this is a huge deal," he said. "However, I don't think this alone will stop Israel's operations in Gaza, and Israel still has the USA as a committed arms supplier."

German-made engines can be fitted in Israeli Merkava tanks and Namer armored personnel carriers, which are actively deployed in Gaza. Sa'ar corvettes — small warships festooned with sophisticated radar equipment and cannons — from Germany have been used to shell targets in Gaza during the war, Hussain said.

The German news agency DPA, citing figures from the Germany Economy Ministry, in early June reported that the government had approved 485 million euros (about \$565 million) worth of arms exports to Israel between Oct. 7, 2023 and May 13 this year.

Other European officials express concern

In a post on X, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Israel's extension of military operations in Gaza "must be reconsidered," in her strongest criticism yet during the war. She called again for Israel to let in more aid.

The foreign ministers of the Netherlands and Denmark called Israel's decision to intensify the operation "wrong" and expressed concerns for civilians and the humanitarian situation in Gaza. Czech Foreign Minister

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Jan Lipavský told the CTK news agency his country considers Israel's plan "a risky step."

Last week, even before the Gaza City takeover plan, Slovenia announced that it would ban the import, export and transit of all weapons to and from Israel in response to the country's actions in Gaza — saying it was the first EU member country to do so.

Last month, two dozen mostly European countries condemned Israel's restrictions on aid shipments into Gaza and the killings of hundreds of Palestinians trying to reach food.

Last year, the U.K. suspended exports of some weapons to Israel over concerns they could be used to break international law, but it was a move with limited military impact. The decision related to about 30 of 350 existing export licenses for equipment that could be used in Gaza, including parts for military planes, helicopters and drones.

Outrage over Israel's actions in Gaza has grown in Europe as images of suffering Palestinians have driven protests in London, Berlin, Brussels and other capitals. More recently, almost-daily killings of Palestinians while seeking aid have tested the EU's friendly relationship with Israel like never before.

The Israeli decision, taken after a late-night meeting of top officials, came despite mounting international calls to end the war and protests by many in Israel who fear for the remaining hostages held by Hamas. Tens of thousands of Palestinians are bracing to once again be forced from their homes, while families of the hostages fear their loved ones won't return.

Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals but 50 remain inside Gaza. Israel believes around 20 of them to be alive.

The timing of another major Israeli ground operation remains unclear since it will likely hinge on mobilizing thousands of troops and forcibly evacuating civilians, almost certainly exacerbating the humanitarian catastrophe.

Appeals court tosses judge's contempt finding against Trump administration in prison deportations

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A split appeals court panel tossed out a judge's contempt finding against President Donald Trump's administration on Friday in a case over deportations to an El Salvador prison.

The decision comes after planes carrying Venezuelan migrants landed at the prison even after U.S. District Judge James E. Boasberg said in court they must return to the United States.

Boasberg found probable cause to hold the Trump administration in criminal contempt of court. The ruling marked a dramatic battle between the judicial and executive branches of government.

But the divided three-judge panel in the nation's capital found that Boasberg had exceeded his authority and intruded on the executive branch's foreign affairs powers.

Judges Gregory Katsas and Neomi Rao, both of whom were nominated by Trump in his first term in the White House, agreed with the unsigned majority opinion.

"The district court's order attempts to control the Executive Branch's conduct of foreign affairs, an area in which a court's power is at its lowest ebb," Rao wrote.

Judge Cornelia Pillard, who was appointed by President Barack Obama, dissented. "The majority does an exemplary judge a grave disservice by overstepping its bounds to upend his effort to vindicate the judicial authority that is our shared trust," she wrote.

The 250 migrants have since been released back to their home country in a prisoner swap with the U.S. after months at the mega-prison known as the Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT.

Boasberg had accused Trump administration officials of rushing deportees out of the U.S. under the Alien Enemies Act before they could challenge their removal in court and then willfully disregarding his order that planes already in the air should return.

The Trump administration has denied any violation, saying the judge's directive to return the planes was made verbally in court but not included in his written order.

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Last month, the Justice Department filed an unusual judicial misconduct complaint against Boasberg over comments he allegedly made at a closed-door meeting of judges as well as his actions in the deportations case. The complaint calls for the case to be taken away from Boasberg while an investigation proceeds.

Attorney General Pam Bondi celebrated the appeals court ruling, calling it a "MAJOR victory defending President Trump's use of the Alien Enemies Act" in a social media post and vowing to "continue fighting and WINNING in court."

Lee Gelernt, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney who represented the migrants, said there was "zero ambiguity" in Boasberg's order about the planes.

"We strongly disagree with today's decision regarding contempt and are considering all options going forward," he said.

Flash floods kill at least 10 people and leave 33 missing in northwestern China

BEIJING (AP) — Heavy rains in northwestern China caused flash flooding that killed at least 10 people and left 33 missing in Yuzhong County area of Gansu province, Chinese state media reported Friday.

The rains also caused at least one landslide in mountainous areas near the city of Lanzhou, according to state broadcaster CCTV. The downpour knocked out power and telecommunications services in the Xinglong Mountain area, stranding more than 4,000 people across four villages.

Three people were missing after a landslide in the village of Maliantan in Yuzhong County late Thursday. Maximum rainfall in the area had reached 195 millimeters (7.7 inches) by early Friday, according to Lanzhou local authorities.

Chinese President Xi Jinping urged all-out rescue and flood prevention efforts.

Several parts of China are being battered by heavy rains. In the southern metropolis of Guangzhou, seven people died and seven others were injured after a flood-triggered landslide buried homes in the city's northern Baiyun district Wednesday.

In Zhengzhou, the capital of the central Henan province, local authorities shut down schools, offices and factories and closed traffic in parts of the city, which saw catastrophic floods that killed at least 292 people in 2021.

New lawsuit on Epstein case seeks records of Trump administration communications

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A legal organization challenging President Donald Trump's administration on multiple fronts filed a new lawsuit on Friday seeking the release of records detailing the handling of the sex trafficking investigation into Jeffrey Epstein.

The group Democracy Forward sued the Justice Department and the FBI for senior administration officials' communication about Epstein documents and any regarding correspondence between him and Trump.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court in Washington, appears to be the first of its kind. The group says it submitted requests under the Freedom of Information Act for the records related to communications about the case in late July that have not yet been fulfilled.

"The court should intervene urgently to ensure the public has access to the information they need about this extraordinary situation," said Skye Perryman, the president and CEO of the Democratic-aligned group, in a statement. The federal government often shields records related to criminal investigations from public view.

The Justice Department did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

Democracy Forward has filed dozens of lawsuits against Trump's Republican administration, challenging policies and executive orders in areas including education, immigration and health care.

The Epstein case has been subject to heightened public focus since the Justice Department said last month it would not release additional documents from the case, despite assurance from Attorney General

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Pam Bondi.

The decision sparked frustration and anger among online sleuths, conspiracy theorists and elements of Trump's base who had hoped to see proof of a government cover-up.

The Trump administration has sought to unseal grand jury transcripts, though that has been denied by a judge in Florida. U.S. District Judge Robin Rosenberg in West Palm Beach said the request to release grand jury documents from 2005 and 2007 did not meet any of the extraordinary exceptions under federal law that could make them public.

A similar request for the work of a different grand jury is pending in New York.

The House Oversight Committee has also subpoenaed the Justice Department for files on the investigation, part of a congressional probe that lawmakers believe may show links to Trump and other former top officials.

Since Epstein's 2019 death in a New York jail cell as he awaited trial for sex trafficking charges, conservative conspiracists have stoked theories about what information investigators gathered on the wealthy financier and who else knew about his sexual abuse of teenage girls.

Trump has denied prior knowledge of Epstein's crimes and says he cut off their relationship long ago, and he has repeatedly tried to move past the Justice Department's decision not to release a full accounting of the investigation. But lawmakers from both major political parties have refused to let it go.

Today in History: August 9, U.S. bombs Nagasaki

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 9, the 221st day of 2025. There are 144 days left in the year.

On Aug. 9, 1945, three days after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, Japan, a U.S. B-29 Superfortress dropped a nuclear device over Nagasaki; the bombing and subsequent radiation poisoning killed an estimated 74,000 people.

In 1173, construction began on the campanile of Pisa Cathedral—better known as the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

In 1854, Henry David Thoreau's "Walden," which described Thoreau's experiences while living near Walden Pond in Massachusetts, was first published.

In 1936, Jesse Owens won his fourth gold medal at the Berlin Olympics as the United States took first place in the 400-meter relay.

In 1969, actor Sharon Tate and four other people were found murdered at Tate's Los Angeles home; cult leader Charles Manson and a group of his followers were later convicted of the crime.

In 1974, Gerald Ford took the oath of office to become US president after Richard Nixon's resignation; in a speech following, Ford declared that "our long national nightmare is over."

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan nominated Lauro Cavazos to be secretary of education; Cavazos became the first Hispanic to serve in the Cabinet.

In 2014, Michael Brown Jr., a Black 18-year-old, was shot to death by a police officer following an altercation in Ferguson, Missouri; Brown's death led to sometimes-violent protests in Ferguson and other U.S. cities, helping fuel a national "Black Lives Matter" movement.

Today's Birthdays: Basketball Hall of Famer Bob Cousy is 97. Tennis Hall of Famer Rod Laver is 87. Jazz musician Jack DeJohnette is 83. Comedian-director David Steinberg is 83. Actor Sam Elliott is 81. Singer Barbara Mason is 78. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player John Cappelletti is 73. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Doug Williams is 70. Actor Melanie Griffith is 68. Actor Amanda Bearse is 67. Rapper Kurtis Blow is 66. Republican Sen. Roger Marshall of Kansas is 65. Hockey Hall of Famer Brett Hull is 61. TV host Hoda Kotb (KAHT'-bee) is 61. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Deion Sanders is 58. Actor Gillian Anderson is 57. Actor Eric Bana is 57. Producer-director McG (aka Joseph McGinty Nichol) is 57. NHL player-turned-coach Rod Brind'Amour is 55. Actor Thomas Lennon is 55. Actor Nikki Schieler Ziering is 54. Latin rock singer Juanes is 53. Actor Liz Vassey is 53. Actor Kevin McKidd is 52. Actor Jessica Capshaw is 49. Actor Ashley Johnson is 42. Actor Anna Kendrick is 40.