

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday August 11

Senior Menu: Spanish Rice with hamburger, carrots, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

Community Blood Drive, 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m., Groton Community Center

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study

Senior Citizens Meet at Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, August 12

Senior Menu: Creamed chicken, Italian blend, au gratin, peaches, biscuit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship Committee Meeting, 5:15 p.m.; Church Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Wednesday, August 13

Senior Menu: Taco salad, Mexican rice with black beans, Mandarin oranges, whole wheat bread.

Groton Area Staff Development Day

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sunday School Teachers Meeting, 6 p.m.

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

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



Thursday, August 14

Senior Menu: Swiss steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

Friday, August 15

Senior Menu: Baked fish, au gratin, California blend, strawberry ambrosia, whole wheat bread.

Boys soccer at Custer, 5 p.m.

Saturday,, August 16

Boys Soccer at Hot Springs, 11 a.m.

Girls Soccer at Sioux Falls Christian, Noon

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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.

Trump-Putin Summit

President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are scheduled to meet in Alaska on Friday. The invitation marks the first time since 2007 that Putin has been invited to the US outside of UN-related functions. It will also be the first meeting between Trump and Putin since 2018.

The two leaders will discuss an end to Russia's three-year war with Ukraine, which has killed hundreds of thousands of people, most of them Russian soldiers. Russia controls roughly one-fifth of Ukrainian territory, over half of which was captured in the first weeks of the war. Putin is widely expected to require territorial concessions in exchange for a ceasefire. The meeting does not currently include Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who has vowed not to concede territory.

The meeting's location is notable as Alaska was part of the former Russian Empire. The US purchased the state in 1867 for \$7.2M—2 cents per acre.

CDC Attack Suspect

Authorities identified the suspect behind Friday's shooting at the Atlanta headquarters for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The suspect, 30-year-old Patrick Joseph White from nearby Kennesaw, reportedly claimed to have suffered physical ailments as a result of the COVID-19 vaccine. His father reported him as suicidal to law enforcement hours before the attack.

The gunman was allegedly refused entry to CDC buildings before he posted up at a CVS facing the buildings shortly before 5 pm. He killed a police officer, 33-year-old David Rose, and struck at least four CDC buildings, damaging windows and exterior walls but not injuring employees. The suspect was found dead with a gunshot wound on the pharmacy's second floor. It is not clear if he was killed by officers or died from a self-inflicted wound. Authorities found five guns at the scene of the crime, including at least one long gun.

The employees' union called on senior leadership to publicly denounce misinformation and to increase security at the facility.

'Ultramassive' Black Hole Discovered

A black hole roughly 36 billion times the mass of the sun has been discovered in the distant Cosmic Horseshoe galaxy, according to a new study. Astronomers said it is likely the largest black hole ever discovered and is almost 10,000 times bigger than Sagittarius A* at the center of the Milky Way.

Every galaxy in the universe is believed to be anchored by at least one massive black hole—the bigger the galaxy, the larger its black hole. The newly discovered object is dormant, no longer sucking in new material, and was detected by its effect on nearby stars and gravitational lensing, which occurs from warped spacetime.

The discovery was made by accident while the team was studying dark matter distribution in the galaxy. Researchers hope it will shed light on the behavior of large galaxies in their final stages of evolution.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Seventeen-year-old Olympic gold medalist Hezly Rivera wins US women's gymnastics all-around championship.

... and Asher Hong wins his second US men's title by a record margin.

Bobby Whitlock, keyboardist and cofounder of Derek and the Dominos, dies of cancer at age 77.

Two Japanese boxers die of brain injuries at same boxing event, but separate fights, in Tokyo.

Pennsylvania tops Indiana 1-0 to win the 2025 Little League Softball World Series.

Science & Technology

Health official Vinay Prasad reinstated as top vaccine regulator for the Food and Drug Administration; reversal comes two weeks after being dismissed from the role following criticism from right-wing activist Laura Loomer.

SpaceX's Crew-10 astronauts return to Earth after five months aboard the International Space Station; mission was NASA's first Pacific Ocean splashdown in 50 years.

Scientists develop platform allowing proteins to evolve thousands of times faster than in nature; approach expected to accelerate new drug discovery for a wide variety of diseases.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher Friday (S&P 500 +0.8%, Dow +0.5%, Nasdaq +1.0%), with Nasdaq closing at a record high.

Trump administration weighs public offering of government-controlled mortgage companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac later this year; aims to sell 5% to 15% of shares, raising upward of \$30B.

HeartFlow, AI-driven company focused on diagnosing coronary artery disease, closes first day of trading up 51.3% Friday, raising \$316.7M.

Politics & World Affairs

California's Gifford Fire along the central coast becomes state's largest wildfire in 2025, consuming over 114,000 acres; is roughly 20% contained as of this writing.

President Donald Trump nominates State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce as deputy representative of the United States to the United Nations.

William H. Webster, former head of the CIA and FBI, dies at age 101; Webster is the only person to spearhead both US agencies, leading the FBI for most of the 1980s before heading to the CIA for four years.

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The Minnesota Vikings opened the 2025 NFL season with a 20-10 pre-season win over the Houston Texans. There was plenty to like in the aftermath, along with a few areas the team will want to clean up as they build toward the regular season opener on September 8. As Kevin O'Connell noted in his post-game press conference, "when you're really not game planning a whole lot, it's just about execution." With that in mind, let's break down the game.

Before diving into the game itself, I have to give a quick shout-out to the crowd. I was lucky enough to attend in person thanks to my uncle Jack, who generously gave me and my son his season tickets (he didn't ask me to plug his business, but he owns MinDak Gold and Silver in Fargo, so if you're looking to buy or sell, give him a call!). The Vikings have the best fans in the NFL, and it showed in how passionate they were for a preseason game. The gameday atmosphere in Minnesota is always electric, and the preseason is the perfect time to bring the family. My son was in awe from start to finish, and it's a memory he won't forget anytime soon.

Now let's get into the game breakdown, starting with the offense.

The biggest storyline going into the game was second-year quarterback J.J. McCarthy, who took his first in-game reps since the first preseason game last season. McCarthy completed his first four passes, three to Jordan Addison and one to C.J. Ham. He also scampered for eight yards to convert a 4th down near midfield. The drive stalled after that, but Will Reichard nailed a 48-yard field goal to give the Vikings an early lead.

Most of the starters were pulled after that first drive, giving the backups an opportunity to showcase their skills. QB Sam Howell played the rest of the first half and completed 11 of 13 passes for 105 yards, plus a goal-line plunge for the team's only first-half touchdown. QB Brett Rypien started the second half but only completed one of four passes for six yards while also taking two sacks over the course of three drives. Rookie QB Max Brosmer finished the game with three drives of his own, completing five of eight passes for 47 yards and a touchdown. He clearly outplayed Rypien in the battle for the third spot on the depth chart, and could soon be ready to challenge Howell for the backup role.

Veteran running back Aaron Jones sat this game out, so Jordan Mason got the start and ran the ball four times for 20 yards on the opening drive. Ty Chandler was the next RB off the bench, getting five carries but only managing five yards, although he did have three catches for 20 yards. Xavier Scott, who is in competition for the RB3 spot, had seven carries for 40 yards and one catch for 11 yards. Tre Stewart finished the game, carrying the ball three times for 10 yards.

Superstar receiver Justin Jefferson is still dealing with an injury, so he didn't play in this game. Jordan Addison led the team with three catches for 33 yards (all on the first drive of the game). Twelve players caught a pass Saturday, including Lucky Jackson (three catches for 30 yards) and rookie 3rd-round pick Tai Felton (two catches for 14 yards).

On the defensive side of the ball, a few players stood out. Second-year outside linebacker Gabriel Murphy had a strong game, finishing with 1.5 sacks and a tackle for a loss. Kahlef Hailassie ended the Texans' last two drives of the game with interceptions to secure the victory, and Ambry Thomas added another INT.

Unfortunately for the Vikings, WR Rondale Moore was injured on his first punt return and is likely out for the season. Rookie center Zeke Correll was also injured, suffering an ankle fracture.

Looking ahead, the Vikings host the New England Patriots on Saturday. The two teams will have joint practices leading up to the game. I don't expect many starters will play in this game, giving the rest of the roster a chance to compete for a spot on the 2025 depth chart.

Running and Knee Pain: Debunking the Myths with Science

You've likely heard -- maybe even from a medical professional -- that "running is bad for your knees." But robust scientific evidence, including X-rays, MRIs, population surveys and long-term data, tells a different story: recreational running doesn't increase the risk of hip or knee osteoarthritis (OA). In fact, it may reduce it.

Debunking the Arthritis Myth

Despite popular belief, running isn't a cause of OA. A 2017 meta-analysis in the Journal of Sports and Orthopaedic Physical Therapy found lower OA rates among recreational runners compared to sedentary individuals. More recently, Hartwell et al. (2024) surveyed 3,804 marathon runners and found no increased OA rates, even among those with decades of high-mileage training. Impressively, 94% reported no diagnosis of hip or knee OA, and many with more years and higher mileage reported less joint pain overall.

The Osteoarthritis Initiative, a longitudinal study of nearly 4,800 individuals over eight years, adds further support. Runners showed no structural progression or narrowing in joint imaging, even among those with pre-existing OA. Interestingly, runners who continued to run were more likely to experience resolution of knee pain than those who didn't.

The Role of Metabolism in Joint Degeneration

OA is increasingly understood as a metabolic condition rather than a wear-and-tear issue. Risk factors like obesity, high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and insulin resistance, which are components of metabolic syndrome, can accelerate cartilage breakdown and raise the likelihood of requiring total knee arthroplasty (TKA).

A large Norwegian cohort study (HUNT data) linked to the Arthroplasty Register found those with metabolic syndrome were significantly more likely to undergo TKA, even when adjusting for lifestyle factors. Similarly, a 2025 case-control study found that 68% of OA patients who had TKA met criteria for metabolic syndrome -- nearly double the rate of those who avoided surgery.

Why Running Helps

Recreational running addresses key metabolic stressors that contribute to OA. It reduces body fat and inflammation by lowering levels of harmful adipokines, which are hormones released by fat cells that promote cartilage damage. Running also boosts insulin sensitivity and helps regulate blood sugar, reducing the low-grade inflammation associated with metabolic syndrome.

From a mechanical perspective, running supports joint integrity. Cartilage thrives on cyclical loading, and running supplies the ideal stimulus to help it stay nourished. Maintaining a healthy weight is also crucial; every extra pound of body weight adds roughly four pounds of compressive force to the knee with each step. Strengthening muscles and building bone density through running improves joint stability, reducing the risk of deterioration.

Smart Training = Injury Prevention

Running injuries are more often linked to training mistakes than to running itself. Sudden mileage in-



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creases, lack of strength support or ignoring warning signs are common culprits.

To minimize risk:

- Progress gradually. Avoid large changes in running.
- Incorporate strength training, especially for the glutes, quads, hamstrings and core.
- Tune into your body. Soreness is normal, but sharp or persistent pain warrants rest or adjustment.

Bottom Line

Far from being a joint hazard, running can be a powerful protector, especially for those managing metabolic risk factors. It strengthens supportive structures, counters inflammation and may delay or prevent OA and even TKA. With thoughtful training, running can help preserve joint health for decades to come.

Matt Dewald is a physical therapist who holds a position as an associate professor in the University of South Dakota's Department of Physical Therapy. He also serves as director of the Sanford Health and USD Sports Physical Therapy Residency, where he treats runners. His research focuses on running injuries, and he serves as education chair of the Running Special Interest Group within the American Academy of Sports Physical Therapy. A dedicated runner himself, Matt starts most mornings on the move outdoors. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Threads. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB), providing health information based on science, built on trust.

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

August 11, 2025 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.
2. Installation of incumbent board members Tigh Fliehs and TJ Harder.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approve of minutes of July 14 meeting as drafted.
2. Approve of July 2025 Financial Report, Custodial Accounts, and Investments.
3. Approve of July 2025 District bills for payment.
4. Approve of July 2025 School Lunch Report.
5. Approve of July 2025 School Transportation Report.
6. Approve of lane change for Brooke Torrence from BS to BS+15.
7. Approve Open Enrollment Applications #26-06, #26-07, #26-08.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Second Reading and Approval of Recommended Policy Changes: BBB School Board Elections (amendment), GCDB/GDDB Background Checks (amendment), GCDBC Background Checks – Volunteers and Employees of Contractors (new)
3. Consideration of 2025-2026 School Board Goals.
4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. First reading of recommended policy changes: ABAC Relations with Parents [Amendment], DLC Expense Reimbursements [Amendment], DLC-R Expense Reimbursements [Amendment], EEA-R Student Transportation Services: Chartered Transportation [New], JNB Delinquent Student Fees, Fines, and Charges [New]
2. Approve resignation of Lois Krueger, part-time Maintenance Team Member, effective August 18, 2025.
3. Approve work agreement for Anje Hinkelman, part-time Food Service Team Member/part-time Maintenance Team Member.
4. Approve amended school lunch prices for 2025-2026:

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Breakfast | K-5 - \$2.85; 6-12 - \$3.35; Adult - \$3.75 | Increase of \$0.25 |
| Lunch | K-5 - \$3.60; 6-12 - \$4.10; Adult \$5.00 | Increase of \$0.25 |
| Seconds Lunch | K-12; \$2.00 | No Change |
| Second Milk | \$0.50 | No Change |
5. Approve Fall 2025 Volunteer Coaches
 - a. Boys Soccer: Kelsie Roberts
 - b. Girls Volleyball: Jenna Strom, Carla Tracy
 - c. Boys Football: Dalton Locke, Quintin Biermann
6. Review list of surplus items, declare surplus at no value for disposal.

ADJOURN

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Highway Patrol Sturgis Rally Daily Information

Compiled from 6 a.m. Saturday, August 2, 2025, to 6 a.m. Sunday, August 10, 2025

| Item | Sturgis Zones | Rapid City Zones | District Totals | Last Year to Date |
|----------------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| DUI Arrests | 100 | 19 | 119 | 155 |
| Misd Drug Arrests | 208 | 58 | 266 | 281 |
| Felony Drug Arrests | 86 | 18 | 104 | 163 |
| Total Citations | 885 | 639 | 1,524 | 1,455 |
| Total Warnings | 3,341 | 1,618 | 4,959 | 4,445 |
| Cash Seized | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$0.00 | \$71,504.00 |
| Vehicles Seized | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| For Drug Poss. | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| For Serial No. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Non-Injury Accidents | 19 | 8 | 27 | 54 |
| Injury Accidents | 27 | 39 | 66 | 35 |
| Fatal Accidents | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| # of Fatalities | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 |

Fatal Crashes:
None

Injury Crashes:

At 6:17 a.m. Saturday, US Highway 16, mile marker 45: A 2018 Jeep Wrangler (Unit 1) was traveling east on US Highway 16 at approximately MM 45. Unit 1 left the roadway to the right into the ditch, continued eastbound in the ditch, vaulted slightly off a private driveway, hit a mailbox, and crashed through a couple highway signs before coming to a final rest in the ditch. Both driver and passenger were wearing seatbelts. The driver was transported to Rapid Monument to be evaluated for minor injuries. The passenger was not injured.

At 8:22 a.m. Saturday, US Highway 14A, mile marker 49: A 2024 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was traveling eastbound on US 14A near MM 49 when he failed to negotiate a right curve. The operator applied the brakes and laid the motorcycle down prior to striking the metal guardrail and post. The driver of Unit 1 was not wearing a helmet and was transported via personal vehicle to Monument Health in Sturgis with minor injuries.

At 10:50 p.m. Saturday, US Highway 14A, mile marker 51: A 2022 Harley Davidson motorcycle (Unit 1) was eastbound on US 14A near MM 51. A deer entered the roadway and was struck by Unit 1. The 2 occupants were separated from the motorcycle which slid into the left ditch. Both occupants were wearing helmets and received minor injuries.

All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: How are mangroves around the world doing these days and why are they so important to the ecology of coastal areas?

-- P.L., via email

Mangroves are trees and shrubs that grow along tropical and subtropical coastlines. They're extremely important. While often mistaken for swampy or unremarkable vegetation, they play an important role in coastal ecosystems. Additionally, they provide numerous environmental benefits.

So, how are they doing these days? The outlook is concerning. Some mangroves are relatively stable, but many are declining. According to the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), we've already lost around 20 percent of the world's mangroves since the 1980s. It's not like they're all disappearing overnight, but they're slowly getting chopped down, damaged, or just dying. A lot of this is because of farming, building resorts, or just climate stuff in general.

A major factor contributing to this decline is climate change. Climate cycles known as El Niño and La Niña have a significant impact on regional weather patterns and can stress mangrove ecosystems. A recent Environmental News Network article reported on a study showing how these climate swings can cause uneasiness. Some examples of uneasiness include extreme low tides, heat and drought that just wipes out huge sections of mangrove forest. During the 2015–2016 El Niño, thousands of hectares of mangroves died in places like Australia and Ecuador. The trees couldn't handle the stress.

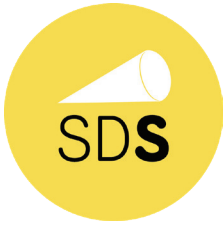
Also, when mangroves get cut down for shrimp farms or tourist development, they lose ground. And once they're gone, it's hard to bring them back. Pollution from runoff or plastics doesn't help either. It builds up and slowly chokes the ecosystem, hurting not just the trees but the fish, crabs and birds, too.

It's not all doom and gloom. Some places are stepping up to protect mangroves. In Indonesia, local communities work with nonprofits to replant mangroves. And in Florida, groups are restoring damaged wetlands to help mangroves thrive again. UNEP says mangroves might store three-to-five times more carbon than regular forests.

Mangroves aren't just coastal plants. But they also protect against storms, save beaches from washing away, and support entire ecosystems. They even help fight climate change. They even help fight climate change. "The ocean must play a critical role in helping the world counter the climate crisis," says As Leticia Carvalho, head of UNEP's Marine and Freshwater Branch. As sea levels rise and coastal regions face increasing risks, preserving mangroves becomes even more urgent.



We've lost 20 percent of the world's mangroves since the 1980s and the health of coastal ecology might just be at stake... Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Let's be proud to prevent measles, not just to contain it

by Seth Tupper

It's not as bad as it could've been: That's the new bar for public health success in South Dakota.

The leader of the state Health Department, Melissa Magstadt, made that clear Thursday when she declared herself "so proud" of the state's measles response.

In an opinion piece she wrote and sent to the media, Magstadt summarized the state's efforts since measles cases surged earlier this year in other parts of the country and reached South Dakota in May.

Her staff identified at-risk counties, provided updated advice for health care providers, increased the state health lab's testing capacity, notified over 400 potentially exposed people, helped concerned patients review their vaccination records, and conducted pop-up immunization clinics.

There were some missteps, too, which we at South Dakota Searchlight pointed out in a recent news story that might have motivated Magstadt's piece.

In June, when the department announced a schedule of measles vaccination clinics in 11 cities, the announcement didn't say whether the clinics would be free — an important bit of information to share when trying to avert the rapid spread of a disease. The department eventually told us it provides immunizations "at no cost when insurance isn't an option."

It took us weeks to learn the results of the clinics, after the department initially claimed that disclosing numbers would violate patient confidentiality. When we finally pried the data free, the likely reason for the secrecy was apparent. At seven of the 11 announced locations, nobody got vaccinated for measles on the days of the special clinics, while a total of 14 measles immunizations were administered at the other four locations.

Although those clinics were largely a bust, the department said its other efforts have helped to push the number of measles vaccinations in the state past 6,000 this year, which is about 1,200 more than the same time last year.

The department deserves credit for that, and for helping to stop the spread of measles at 12 known cases so far. Magstadt said the absence of any new cases during the past four weeks is evidence that the state "has done remarkably well."

That's as it should be. When an infectious disease threatens South Dakotans, we should expect no less of our Department of Health than to do its job. We should've expected more of the department before the crisis arrived, and we should expect more of it going forward.

Magstadt didn't mention in her opinion piece that the state's kindergarten measles vaccination rate tumbled from 97% to 90% during the past 10 years, while she and other public health officials failed to effectively counter the false and conspiratorial narratives about vaccine safety and efficacy that drove the decline. Nor did she mention the role of falling vaccination rates in the return of measles after the disease was eliminated in the United States 25 years ago.

Magstadt seems uninterested in asking what went wrong, choosing instead to proclaim victory amid a still-unfolding situation and insisting that South Dakota did "so well" at limiting the spread of measles "because we were ready."

If scrambling to contain the predictable results of a decade-long drop in the vaccination rate is what passes for preparedness in South Dakota, maybe we need to set the bar for disease prevention a little higher.

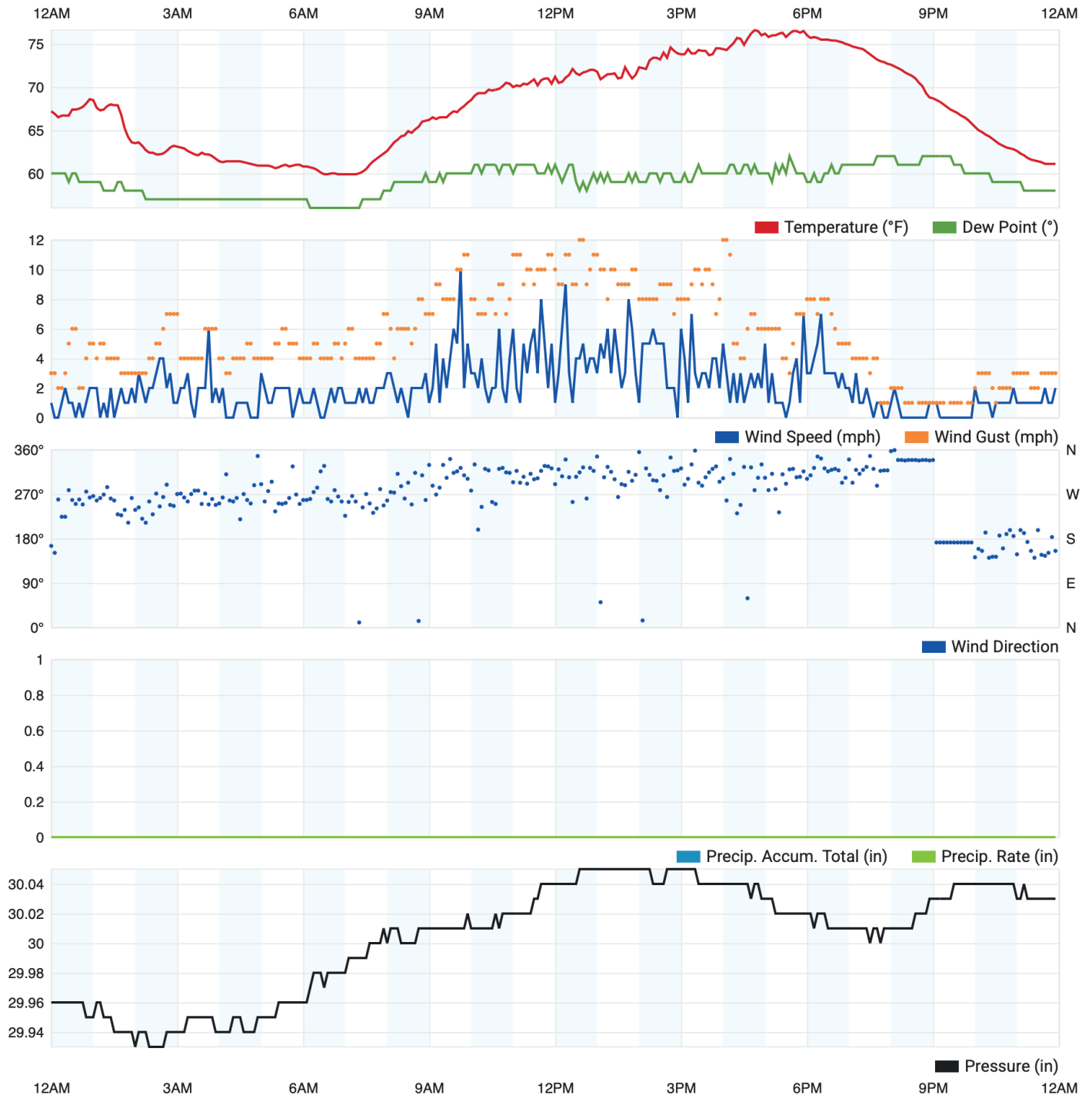
Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 10, 2025



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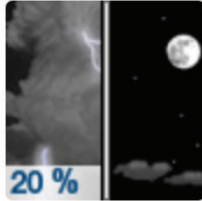
Today



High: 90 °F

Areas Smoke

Tonight



Low: 58 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 78 °F

Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 55 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 84 °F

Slight Chance
Showers

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated Severe Storms
Possible

This Afternoon and Evening

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS IN
EXCESS OF 60+
MPH

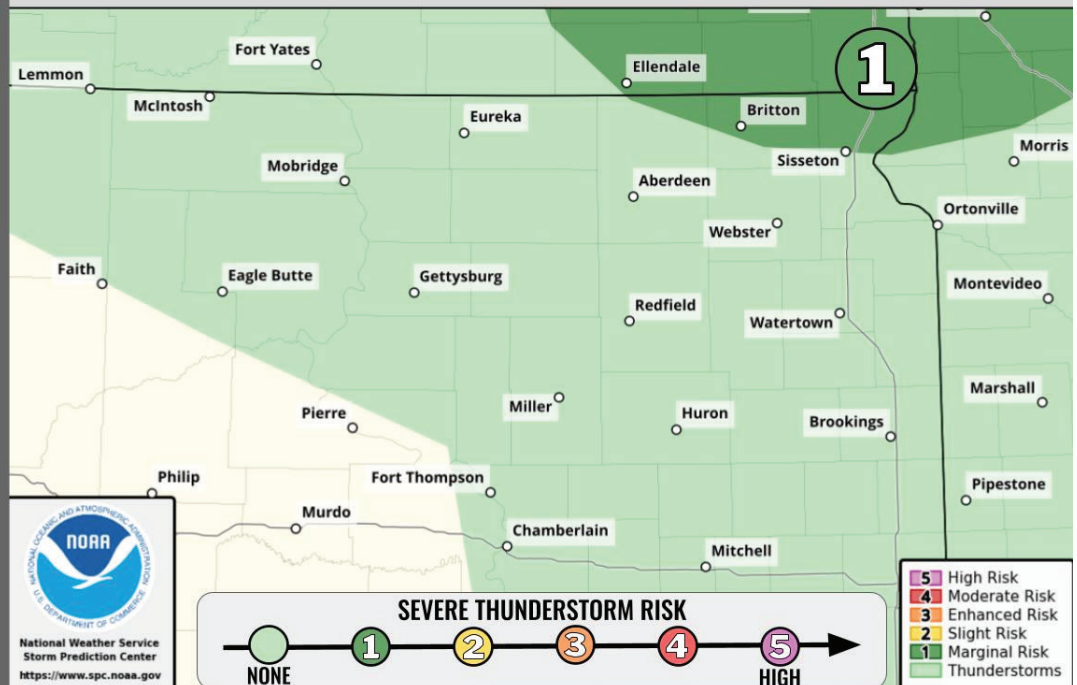


LARGE HAIL



National Weather Service
Storm Prediction Center
<https://www.spc.noaa.gov>

Marginal Risk For Severe Storms This Afternoon



An area of low pressure and a cold front could produce isolated to widely scattered afternoon and evening thunderstorms across north central and northeast South Dakota into west central Minnesota. The main threat with storms today is strong thunderstorm wind gusts, but a marginal hail threat also exists.

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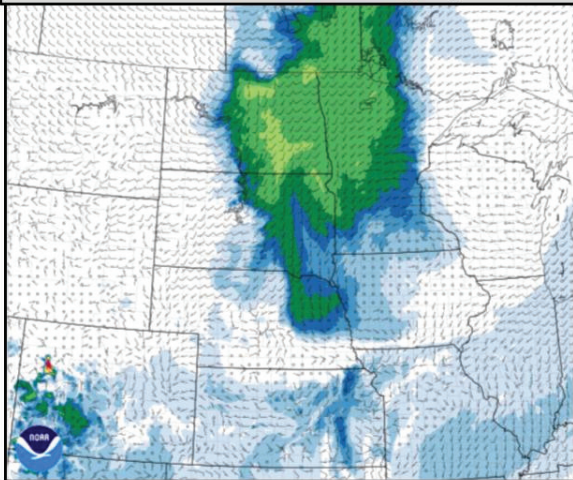
Improving Conditions Today

August 11, 2025
3:26 AM

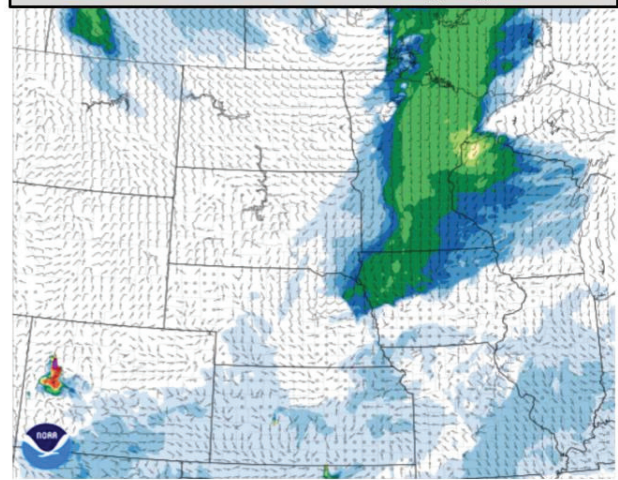
Smoke, aloft and near the surface, will move east out of the area today.

- Near surface smoke from Canada wildfires will continue to reduce visibility across the area this morning.
- However, by late this evening, these smoky conditions should be gone, as westerly winds blow it out of South Dakota.

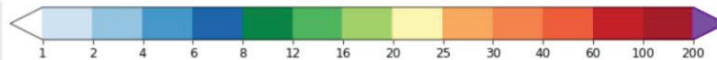
Near Surface Smoke 9 AM CDT Monday, August 11th



Near Surface Smoke 9 PM CDT Monday, August 11th



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

The wildfire smoke over the region this morning will get pushed out of the area by westerly winds today. Wildfire smoke at the surface can create unhealthy air quality and be dangerous for certain individuals. Keep an eye on the air quality and keep an eye on your health and breathing when outdoors. Current smoke concentrations as well as air quality index values in the area can be found at <https://fire.airnow.gov/#6.74/44.649/-99.117>

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated Severe Storms
Possible

Wednesday Afternoon
and Evening

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS IN
EXCESS OF 60+
MPH



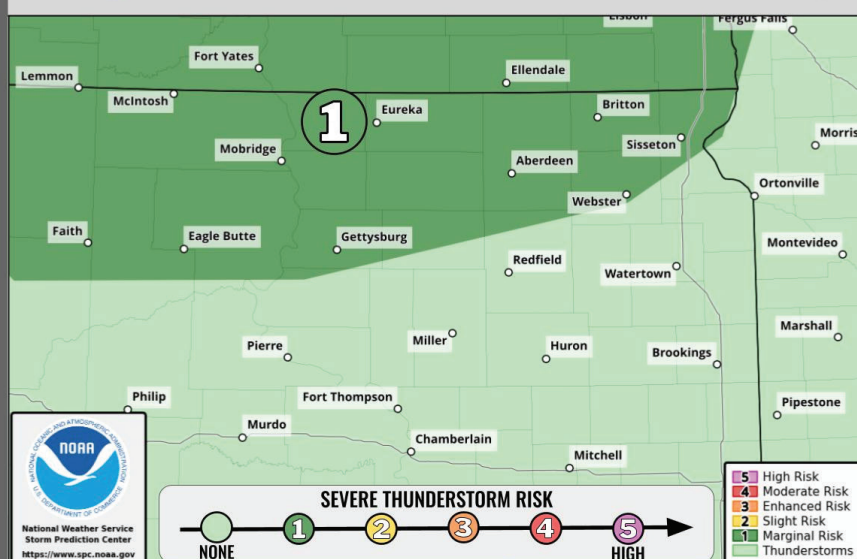
LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAINFALL

Marginal Risk For Severe Storms Wednesday



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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83 °F at 4:41 PM

Heat Index: 85 °F at 4:45 PM

Low Temp: 58 °F at 7:16 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 3:16 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 20 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 103 in 1988

Record Low: 34 in 1902

Average High: 84

Average Low: 58

Average Precip in August.: 0.80

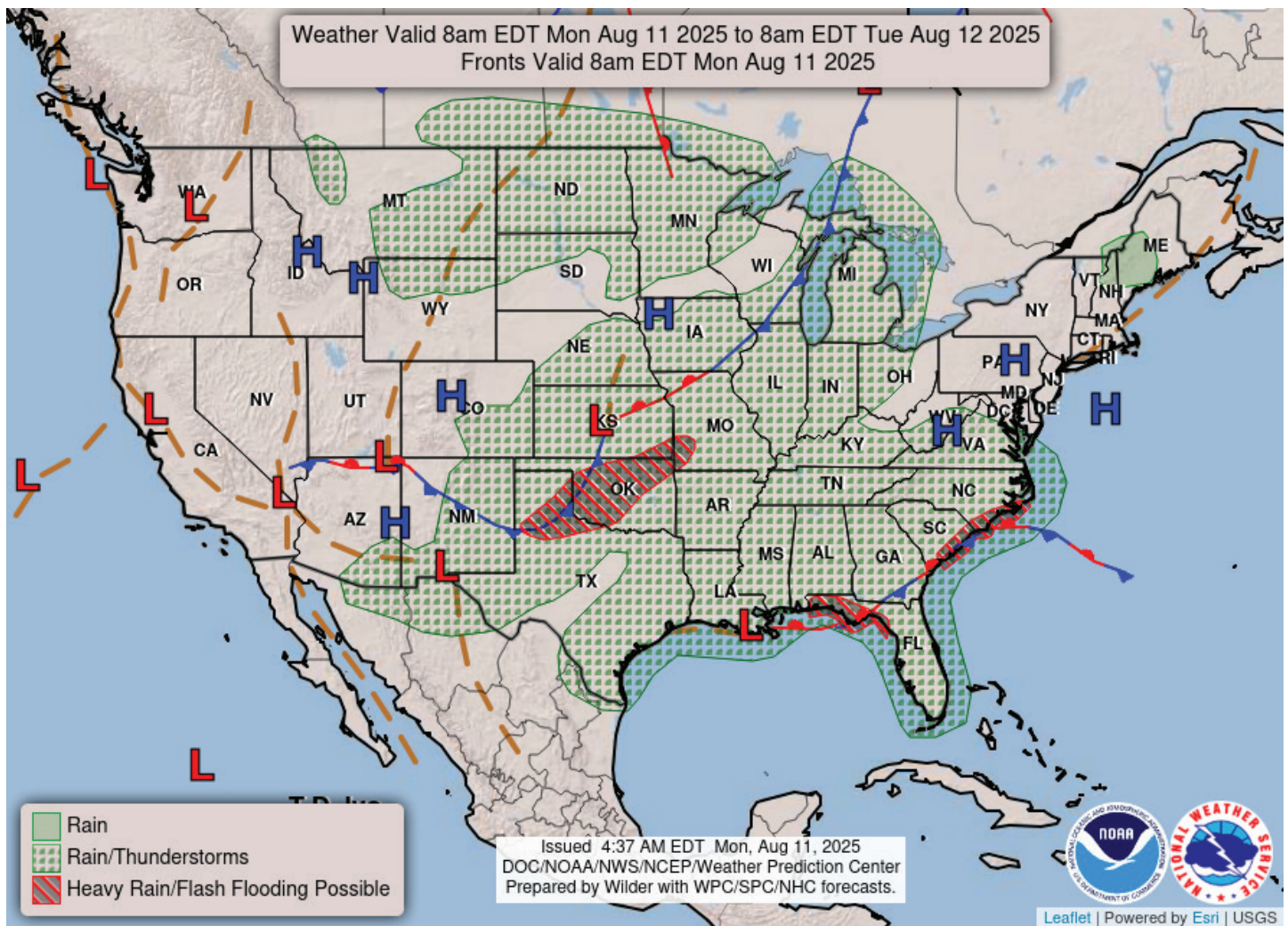
Precip to date in August: 1.43

Average Precip to date: 14.90

Precip Year to Date: 16.49

Sunset Tonight: 8:47:32 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:28:44 am



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Today in Weather History

August 11, 1975: A line of thunderstorms raced across portions of central and eastern South Dakota during the early morning hours. Winds gusted to 70 mph, causing considerable damage to trees. At Canton, in Lincoln County, the winds were estimated as high as 70 mph. In Sioux Falls, the peak wind gust measured 69 mph. Wind damage was also reported in Miller and Ree Heights in Hand County, as well as in Selby and Mobridge in Walworth County.

August 11, 1985: Lightning set off eleven fires in the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation area. Twenty acres of grassland were burned two miles northeast of Bear Creek. About 600 acres of grassland were burned 8 miles southwest of Lantry. About 3,000 acres of grassland burned near Eagle Butte.

August 11, 2011: Severe thunderstorms brought hail up to the size of ping pong balls and damaging winds up to 90 mph to parts of central South Dakota. Jones and Lyman Counties received the brunt of the strong winds with eighty mph winds downing several grain bins along with knocking a few semis off of Interstate-90 near Murdo. The winds also downed some power lines and poles along with destroying a hanger. The two planes in the hanger were damaged at the Murdo Airport. Near Kennebec in Lyman County, eighty mph winds took shingles off the house and also damaged the deck. A barn was also destroyed with a horse being injured. Many tree branches were also downed.

1940: A Category 2 hurricane struck the Georgia and South Carolina coast. A 13-foot storm tide was measured along the South Carolina coast, while over 15 inches of rain fell across northern North Carolina. Significant flooding and landslides struck Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia during the system's slow trek as a weakening tropical storm, and then as an extratropical cyclone, through the Southeast. The landslides which struck North Carolina were considered a once in a century event. Damages relating to the storm totaled \$13 million (1940 USD), and 50 people perished.

1944 - The temperature at Burlington, VT, soared to an all-time record high of 101 degrees. (The Weather Channel) The Dog Days officially come to an end on this date, having begun the third day in July. Superstition has it that dogs tend to become mad during that time of the year. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Clouds and moisture from Hurricane Allen provided a brief break from the torrid Texas heatwave, with daily highs mostly in the 70s to lower 90s. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - An early evening thunderstorm in Wyoming produced hail up to two inches in diameter from Alva to Hulett. Snow plows had to be used to clear Highway 24 south of Hulett, where hail formed drifts two feet deep. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Moisture from what remained of Tropical Storm Beryl resulted in torrential rains across eastern Texas. Twelve and a half inches of rain deluged Enterprise TX, which was more than the amount received there during the previous eight months. Philadelphia PA reported a record forty-four days of 90 degree weather for the year. Baltimore MD and Newark NJ reported a record fourteen straight days of 90 degree heat. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - One of the most severe convective outbreaks of record came to a climax in southern California after four days. Thunderstorms deluged Benton CA with six inches of rain two days in a row, and the flooding which resulted caused more than a million dollars damage to homes and highways. Thunderstorms around Yellowstone Park WY produced four inches of rain in twenty minutes resulting in fifteen mudslides. Thunderstorms over Long Island NY drenched Suffolk County with 8 to 10 inches of rain. Twenty-three cities in the southeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. It was, for some cities, the fourth straight morning of record cold temperatures. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999 - An F2 tornado touched down in the metropolitan area of Salt Lake City. The tornado lasted ten minutes and killed one person, injured more than 80 people, and caused more than \$170 million in damages. It was the most destructive tornado in Utah's history and awakened the entire state's population to the fact that the Beehive State does experience tornadoes.

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EXCLUDING GOD

Nations, like individuals, are destined to live or die. And both face the same choice: do what is right or accept the consequences. Right choices lead to eternal life and the wrong choices that are not consistent with God's Word and His teachings, lead to death.

The Bible very clearly, carefully, and consistently distinguishes the difference between right and wrong, righteousness and unrighteousness. And this distinction applies to cities as well as to citizens.

Individuals like Abel, Moses, Daniel, and Paul took the right way. Men like Cain, Pharaoh, Herod, and Judas took the wrong way.

Cities like Sodom and Gomorrah took the wrong way and perished. And the "international graveyards" of Ancient Rome, Babylon, Media, Persia, and Ancient Greece also provide historical proof of the fact that: "Righteousness exalts a nation, and sin is a reproach to any people."

The desolation, destruction, and death of cities and nations are recorded in the pages of history. The evidence provided by archeologists to prove this fact is powerful and plentiful. Yet, many refuse to see and acknowledge the hand of God and the lessons from God that He has planted in the "sands of time."

However, to deny a fact will not make it go away nor will ignoring it excuse any person, city, or nation from its consequences. Punishment for sin is awaiting those who refuse to accept the love, mercy, grace, and salvation of God. But those who trust in and live for the Lord will be saved.

Prayer: Father, whether we like it or not, accept it or not, believe it or not, we will be judged by Your Word. May we turn to You and be saved! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The wicked will go down to the grave. This is the fate of all the nations who ignore God. Psalm 9:17

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.08.25

2 6 8 14 49 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$182,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 52 Mins
10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.09.25

1 9 24 37 40 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,050,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 7 Mins 10
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.10.25

6 11 25 40 46 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 22 Mins 9
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.09.25

12 16 18 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$88,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 22
Mins 10 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.09.25

5 22 26 29 40 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 51 Mins 10
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.09.25

7 14 23 24 60 14

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$501,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 51 Mins 10
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

Ukrainian drone strike kills 1 in as fighting rages ahead of a planned Trump-Putin summit

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Ukrainian drone attack killed one person and wounded two more in Russia's Nizhny Novgorod, the region's governor said Monday, as fighting continued ahead of a planned summit meeting in which Russian President Vladimir Putin hopes to persuade his U.S. counterpart to back a peace deal locking in Moscow's gains.

Nizhny Novgorod Gov. Gleb Nikitin said in an online statement that drones targeted two "industrial zones" that caused unspecified damage along with the three casualties.

A Ukrainian official said at least four drones launched by the country's security services, or SBU, struck a plant in the city of Arzamas that produced components for the Khinzal 32 and Khinzal 101 missiles.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss operations, said the Plandin plant produces gyroscopic devices, control systems and on-board computers for the missiles and is an "absolutely legitimate target" because it is part of the Russian military-industrial complex that works for the war against Ukraine.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses intercepted and destroyed a total of 39 Ukrainian drones overnight and Monday morning over several Russian regions as well as over the Crimean peninsula that Russia annexed in 2014.

The summit, which U.S. President Donald Trump will host in Alaska later this week, sees Putin unwavering on his maximalist demands to keep all the Ukrainian territory his forces now occupy but also to prevent Kyiv from joining NATO with the long-term aim to keep the country under Moscow's sphere of influence.

Putin believes he enjoys the advantage on the ground as Ukrainian forces struggle to hold back Russian advances along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front.

But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy insists he will never consent to any Russian annexation of Ukrainian territory nor give up his country's bid for NATO membership. European leaders have rallied behind Ukraine, saying peace in the war-torn nation can't be resolved without Kyiv.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz also spoke with Trump on Sunday, Merz's spokesman said Monday, but didn't disclose the contents of the talks.

Spokesman Steffen Meyer reiterated that the German government "has always emphasized that borders must not be shifted by force" and that Ukraine should decide its own fate "independently and autonomously."

Meanwhile on the front lines, few Ukrainian soldiers believe there's an end in sight to the war, other than a brief respite before Moscow resumes its attacks with even greater might.

Flooding cancels last day of Wisconsin State Fair as severe storms knock out power and close roads

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Flash flooding canceled the final day of the Wisconsin State Fair on Sunday as continued heavy rainfall in half a dozen Midwest states forced motorists to abandon their vehicles, cut power to thousands of households and closed busy roadways.

Organizers of the Wisconsin State Fair said they were scrapping the final day of the 11-day event after rains flooded the fairgrounds in West Allis, which is just outside Milwaukee.

"We are saddened we cannot deliver this final day of the Wisconsin State Fair, but know that this is the best decision with current conditions and the forecast ahead," organizers said in a statement.

The National Weather Service issued flood watches and warnings for parts of Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois and Wisconsin. After rainfall began on Saturday in some areas forecasters predicted "repeated rounds of heavy rain," along with hail, damaging winds and isolated tornadoes into Monday.

Among the worst hit was the Milwaukee area, where up to 14 inches (36 centimeters) of rain had fallen in some areas by Sunday, according to the National Weather Service, which also noted river flooding in

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Milwaukee and Waukesha counties. Some motorists left their stranded cars on roads. Nearly 18,000 customers of We Energies in southeast Wisconsin were without power late Sunday. In the suburban village of Wauwatosa, an overflowing and fast-moving Menomonee River submerged a popular playground.

"Really unfortunately, it's just a really bad overlap of circumstances in terms of how all this rain fell but then fell over such a populated area," said Andrew Quigley, a National Weather Service meteorologist.

Firefighters responded to over 600 calls including for gas leaks, flooded basements, electrical outages and water rescues, according to the Milwaukee Fire Department. Meanwhile, crews worked to clear surface water, and the Red Cross opened two shelters in the city for displaced residents.

"We're still in the middle of it," Fire Chief Aaron Lipski told reporters Sunday. "We're still catching up right now."

USA Triathlon canceled its Sprint and Paratriathlon National Championships in Milwaukee, where thousands of athletes were expected to participate. The Brewers and Mets played at American Family Field even as the parking lot remained inaccessible to traffic.

"We will not be able to guarantee parking for all fans, even those who purchased parking in advance," the Brewers said in a statement before the game.

City officials warned residents to avoid driving or walking in the standing waters.

"It remains dangerous," the City of Milwaukee Department of Public Works said in a statement.

On Saturday, strong winds led to the death of one person in eastern Nebraska after a tree fell on a woman's car. In the state capital of Lincoln, the storms damaged two housing units at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, displacing 387 prisoners, the state Department of Correctional Services said. The agency said all staff and incarcerated individuals were safe and accounted for.

Trump is promising new steps to tackle homelessness and crime in Washington

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is promising new steps to tackle homelessness and crime in Washington, prompting the city's mayor to voice concerns about the potential use of the National Guard to patrol the streets in the nation's capital.

Trump wrote in a social media post that he would hold a White House news conference on Monday to discuss his plans to make the District of Columbia "safer and more beautiful than it ever was before."

"The Homeless have to move out, IMMEDIATELY," Trump wrote Sunday. "We will give you places to stay, but FAR from the Capital. The Criminals, you don't have to move out. We're going to put you in jail where you belong."

Last week, the Republican president directed federal law enforcement agencies to increase their presence in Washington for seven days, with the option "to extend as needed."

On Friday night, federal agencies including the Secret Service, the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service assigned more than 120 officers and agents to assist in Washington.

Trump said last week that he was considering ways for the federal government to seize control of Washington, asserting that crime was "ridiculous" and the city was "unsafe," after the recent assault of a high-profile member of the Department of Government Efficiency.

The moves Trump said he was considering included bringing in the D.C. National Guard.

Mayor Muriel Bowser, a Democrat, questioned the effectiveness of using the Guard to enforce city laws and said the federal government could be far more helpful by funding more prosecutors or filling the 15 vacancies on the D.C. Superior Court, some of which have been open for years.

Bowser cannot activate the National Guard herself, but she can submit a request to the Pentagon.

"I just think that's not the most efficient use of our Guard," she said Sunday on MSNBC's "The Weekend," acknowledging it is "the president's call about how to deploy the Guard."

Bowser was making her first public comments since Trump started posting about crime in Washington last week. She noted that violent crime in Washington has decreased since a rise in 2023. Trump's weekend

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posts depicted the district as "one of the most dangerous cities anywhere in the World."

For Bowser, "Any comparison to a war-torn country is hyperbolic and false."

Police statistics show homicides, robberies and burglaries are down this year when compared with this time in 2024. Overall, violent crime is down 26% compared with this time a year ago.

Trump offered no details in Truth Social posts over the weekend about possible new actions to address crime levels he argues are dangerous for citizens, tourists and workers alike. The White House declined to offer additional details about Monday's announcement.

The police department and the mayor's office did not respond to questions about what Trump might do next.

The president criticized the district as full of "tents, squalor, filth, and Crime," and he seems to have been set off by the attack on Edward Coristine, among the most visible figures of the bureaucracy-cutting effort known as DOGE. Police arrested two 15-year-olds in the attempted carjacking and said they were looking for others.

"This has to be the best run place in the country, not the worst run place in the country," Trump said Wednesday.

He called Bowser "a good person who has tried, but she has been given many chances."

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. It could face steep pushback.

Bowser acknowledged that the law allows the president to take more control over the city's police, but only if certain conditions are met.

"None of those conditions exist in our city right now," she said. "We are not experiencing a spike in crime. In fact, we're watching our crime numbers go down."

Southwest France swelters under a heat wave as fire crews guard smoldering vineyards

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A blistering heatwave gripped southwest France on Monday, sending thermometers soaring to 43 degrees Celsius (109.4 Fahrenheit) in parts of the Charente and Aude.

In Aude, a patchwork of vineyards and Mediterranean scrubland, hundreds of firefighters remained on the hillsides guarding the edges of a massive blaze that scorched 16,000 hectares last week. Officials say the flames are under control, but warn the fire will not be fully extinguished for weeks, with hot spots still smoldering.

The national weather authority, Météo-France, placed 12 departments on red alert, France's highest heat warning, anticipating exceptional heat stretching from the Atlantic coast to the Mediterranean plains. Forty-one other departments were under lower-level orange alerts, as was the neighboring microstate of Andorra, between France and Spain.

Social media images showed shuttered streets in Valence, residents shielding windows with foil to reflect the light, and tourists huddling under umbrellas along the Garonne in Toulouse. Across the south, café terraces stood empty as people sought cooler corners indoors.

The red alert has been issued only eight times since it was created in 2004 after a deadly summer the year before. It is reserved for extreme, prolonged heat with major health risks and the potential to disrupt daily life. The designation gives local officials powers to cancel outdoor events, close public venues and alter school or summer camp schedules.

The heatwave, France's second of the summer, began Friday and is expected to last all week, carrying into the Aug. 15 holiday weekend. It is already pushing northward, with 38 C (100.4 F) forecast in the Centre-Val de Loire region and up to 34 C (93.2 F) in Paris.

Australia will recognize a Palestinian state, Prime Minister Albanese says

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Australia will recognize a Palestinian state, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Monday, joining the leaders of France, Britain and Canada in signaling they would do so.

His remarks followed weeks of urging from within his Cabinet and from many in Australia to recognize a Palestinian state and amid growing criticism from officials in his government over suffering in Gaza, which Albanese on Monday referred to as a “humanitarian catastrophe.”

Australia’s government has also criticized plans announced in recent days by Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu for a sweeping new military offensive in Gaza.

Albanese says conditions must be met for Palestine recognition

Albanese told reporters after a Cabinet meeting Monday that Australia’s decision to recognize a Palestinian state will be formalized at the United Nations General Assembly in September. The acknowledgement was “predicated on commitments Australia has received from the Palestinian Authority,” Albanese said.

Those commitments included no role for Hamas in a Palestinian government, demilitarization of Gaza and the holding of elections, he said.

“A two-state solution is humanity’s best hope to break the cycle of violence in the Middle East and to bring an end to the conflict, suffering and starvation in Gaza,” Albanese said.

“The situation in Gaza has gone beyond the world’s worst fears,” he said. “The Israeli government continues to defy international law and deny sufficient aid, food and water to desperate people, including children.”

Netanyahu rebuked Australia before the announcement

Ahead of Albanese’s announcement, Netanyahu on Sunday criticized Australia and other European countries that have moved to recognize a Palestinian state.

“To have European countries and Australia march into that rabbit hole ... this canard, is disappointing and I think it’s actually shameful,” the Israeli leader said.

Australia has designated Hamas a terrorist entity and Albanese repeated Monday his government’s calls for the group to return Israeli hostages held since Oct. 7, 2023.

The Australian leader last week spoke to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose authority administers parts of the occupied West Bank, supports a two-state solution and cooperates with Israel on security matters. Abbas has agreed to conditions with Western leaders, including Albanese, as they prepared to recognize a Palestinian state.

“This is an opportunity to deliver self-determination for the people of Palestine in a way that isolates Hamas, disarms it and drives it out of the region once and for all,” Albanese said. He added that Hamas did not support a two-state solution.

Recognition is growing, but is largely symbolic without the U.S.

Nearly 150 of the 193 members of the United Nations have already recognized Palestinian statehood, most of them decades ago. The United States and other Western powers have held off, saying Palestinian statehood should be part of a final agreement resolving the decades-old Middle East conflict.

Recognition announcements are largely symbolic and are rejected by Israel, and by the United States — the only country with any real leverage over Netanyahu. Israel’s leader said this month that he would not accept Palestinian Authority involvement in a government for Palestine.

A two-state solution would see a state of Palestine created alongside Israel in most or all of the occupied West Bank, the war-ravaged Gaza Strip and annexed east Jerusalem, territories Israel seized in the 1967 Mideast war that the Palestinians want for their state.

Albanese dismissed suggestions Monday that the move was solely symbolic.

“This is a practical contribution towards building momentum,” he said. “This is not Australia acting alone.”

Albanese had discussed Australia’s decision with the leaders of Britain, France, New Zealand and Japan, he said. He also had a “long discussion” with Netanyahu this month, he added.

In neighboring New Zealand, Foreign Minister Winston Peters said Monday his government "will carefully weigh up its position" on recognizing a Palestinian state before making a formal decision in September.

"New Zealand has been clear for some time that our recognition of a Palestinian state is a matter of when, not if," Peters said in a statement.

Australian Jewish and Palestinian groups criticized the move

After Albanese's announcement Monday, Israel's envoy to Australia said the move undermined Israel's security.

"By recognising a Palestinian state now, Australia elevates the position of Hamas, a group it acknowledges as a terrorist organisation," Amir Maimon posted to X.

"This commitment removes any incentive or diplomatic pressure for the Palestinians to do the things that have always stood in the way of ending the conflict," spokesperson for the Executive Council of the Australian Jewry Alex Rychin said in a statement.

Meanwhile, President of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network Nasser Mashni decried Albanese's recognition as too late and "completely meaningless" while the country continues to trade with Israel.

He told reporters in Melbourne on Monday that the move would do nothing to end the "ongoing genocide in Gaza which has been live streamed for the entire world for two years."

Israel targets and kills Al Jazeera correspondent Anas al-Sharif as toll worsens on Gaza journalists

By SAM METZ and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's military targeted an Al Jazeera correspondent with an airstrike Sunday, killing him, another network journalist and at least six other people, all of whom were sheltering outside Gaza City's largest hospital complex.

Officials at Shifa Hospital said those killed included Al Jazeera correspondents Anas al-Sharif and Mohamed Qreiqeh. The strike also killed four other journalists and two other people, hospital administrative director Rami Mohanna told The Associated Press. The strike also damaged the entrance to the hospital complex's emergency building.

Both Israel and hospital officials in Gaza City confirmed the deaths, which press advocates described as retribution against those documenting the war in Gaza. Israel's military later Sunday described al-Sharif as the leader of a Hamas cell — an allegation that Al Jazeera and al-Sharif had previously dismissed as baseless.

The incident marked the first time during the war that Israel's military has swiftly claimed responsibility after a journalist was killed in a strike.

It came less than a year after Israeli army officials first accused al-Sharif and other Al Jazeera journalists of being members of the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad. In a July 24 video, Israel's army spokesperson Avichay Adraee attacked Al Jazeera and accused al-Sharif of being part of Hamas' military wing.

Al Jazeera calls strike 'assassination'

Al Jazeera called the strike "targeted assassination" and accused Israeli officials of incitement, connecting al-Sharif's death to the allegations that both the network and correspondent had denied.

"Anas and his colleagues were among the last remaining voices from within Gaza, providing the world with unfiltered, on-the-ground coverage of the devastating realities endured by its people," the Qatari network said in a statement.

Apart from rare invitations to observe Israeli military operations, international media have been barred from entering Gaza for the duration of the war. Al Jazeera is among the few outlets still fielding a big team of reporters inside the besieged strip, chronicling daily life amid airstrikes, hunger and the rubble of destroyed neighborhoods.

The network has suffered heavy losses during the war, including 27-year-old correspondent Ismail al-Ghoul and cameraman Rami al-Rifi, killed last summer, and freelancer Hossam Shabat, killed in an Israeli

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airstrike in March.

Like al-Sharif, Shabat was among the six that Israel accused of being members of militant groups last October.

Funeral-goers call to protect journalists

Hundreds of people, including many journalists, gathered Monday to mourn al-Sharif, Qureiqa and their colleagues. The bodies lay wrapped in white sheets at Gaza City's Shifa Hospital complex. Ahed Ferwana of the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate said reporters were being deliberately targeted and urged the international community to act.

Al-Sharif reported a nearby bombardment minutes before his death. In a social media post that Al Jazeera said was written to be posted in case of his death, he bemoaned the devastation and destruction that war had wrought and bid farewell to his wife, son and daughter.

"I never hesitated for a single day to convey the truth as it is, without distortion or falsification," the 28-year-old wrote.

The journalists are the latest to be killed in what observers have called the deadliest conflict for journalists in modern times. The Committee to Protect Journalists said on Sunday that at least 186 have been killed in Gaza, and Brown University's Watson Institute in April said the war was "quite simply, the worst ever conflict for reporters."

Al-Sharif began reporting for Al Jazeera a few days after war broke out. He was known for reporting on Israel's bombardment in northern Gaza, and later for the starvation gripping much of the territory's population. Qureiqa, a 33-year-old Gaza City native, is survived by two children.

Both journalists were separated from their families for months earlier in the war. When they managed to reunite during the ceasefire earlier this year, their children appeared unable to recognize them, according to video footage they posted at the time.

In a July broadcast al-Sharif cried on air as woman behind him collapsed from hunger.

"I am taking about slow death of those people," he said at the time.

Al Jazeera is blocked in Israel and soldiers raided its offices in the occupied West Bank last year, ordering them closed.

Al-Sharif's death comes weeks after a U.N. expert and the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said Israel had targeted him with a smear campaign.

Irene Khan, the U.N. Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression, on July 31 said that the killings were "part of a deliberate strategy of Israel to suppress the truth, obstruct the documentation of international crimes and bury any possibility of future accountability."

The Committee to Protect Journalists said on Sunday that it was appalled by the strike.

"Israel's pattern of labeling journalists as militants without providing credible evidence raises serious questions about its intent and respect for press freedom," Sara Qudah, the group's regional director, said in a statement.

Netanyahu defends new military offensive in Gaza and says it will be wider than announced

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAM METZ and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday defended a new military offensive in Gaza that's more sweeping than previously announced, declaring in the face of growing condemnation at home and abroad that Israel "has no choice but to finish the job and complete the defeat of Hamas."

Even as more Israelis express concern over the 22-month war, Netanyahu said the security Cabinet last week instructed the dismantling of Hamas strongholds not only in Gaza City but also in the "central camps" and Muwasi. A source familiar with the operation, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media, confirmed that Israel plans it in both areas.

The camps — sheltering well over a half-million displaced people, according to the U.N. — had not been

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part of Israel's announcement Friday. It was not clear why, though Netanyahu faced criticism this weekend within his ruling coalition that targeting Gaza City was not enough. Netanyahu said there would be "safe zones," but such designated areas have been bombed in the past.

Late Sunday, heavy bombardment was reported in Gaza City. Shortly before midnight local time, broadcaster Al Jazeera said correspondent Anas al-Sharif was killed in a strike. Rami Mohanna, administrative director at the nearby Shifa Hospital, said the strike hit a tent for Al Jazeera journalists outside the hospital's walls. Along with al-Sharif, three other journalists and a driver were killed.

Israel's military confirmed it, asserting al-Sharif had "posed as a journalist" and alleging he was with Hamas. Al-Sharif had denied having any political affiliations. The Committee to Protect Journalists last month said it was gravely concerned for his safety and said he was a "targeted by an Israeli military smear campaign."

Netanyahu spoke with Trump about plan

Netanyahu's office late Sunday said he had spoken with U.S. President Donald Trump about the plan and thanked him for his "steadfast support."

Rejecting starvation in Gaza as well as a "global campaign of lies," Netanyahu spoke to foreign media just before an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, a platform for outrage but little action on the war.

"Our goal is not to occupy Gaza, our goal is to free Gaza," Netanyahu asserted. The goals, he said, include demilitarizing the territory, the Israeli military having "overriding security control" and a non-Israeli civilian administration in charge.

Israel wants to increase the number of aid distribution sites in Gaza, he said, but in a later briefing to local media, he asserted: "There is no hunger. There was no hunger. There was a shortage, and there was certainly no policy of starvation."

Netanyahu also said he has directed Israel's military to "bring in more foreign journalists" — which would be a striking development, as they haven't been allowed into Gaza beyond military embeds during the war.

He again blamed many of Gaza's problems on the Hamas militant group, including civilian deaths, destruction and aid shortages. "Hamas still has thousands of armed terrorists," he asserted, adding that Palestinians are "begging" to be freed from them.

Hamas responded with a lengthy statement that summed up Netanyahu's remarks as "blatant lies."

U.S. defends Israel at Security Council meeting

The United States defended Israel, saying it has the right to decide what's best for its security. It called allegations of genocide in Gaza false.

The U.S. has veto power at the council and can block proposed actions there.

Other council members, and U.N. officials, expressed alarm. China called the "collective punishment" of people in Gaza unacceptable. Russia warned against a "reckless intensification of hostilities."

"This is no longer a looming hunger crisis; this is starvation," said Ramesh Rajasingham with the U.N. humanitarian office. "Humanitarian conditions are beyond horrific. We have frankly run out of words to describe it."

Israel faces growing action even by its closest allies. Netanyahu said Chancellor Friedrich Merz of Germany had "buckled under" the growing international criticism by stopping exports of military equipment to Israel that could be used in Gaza. Merz, for his part, told public broadcaster ARD that Germany and Israel were talking "very critically" but Berlin's overall policies of friendship haven't changed.

More Palestinians killed as they seek aid

At least 31 Palestinians were killed while seeking aid in Gaza, hospitals and witnesses said. The Associated Press spoke to witnesses of gunfire in the Israeli-controlled Morag and Netzarim corridors and the Teina area in the south. All accused Israeli forces of firing at crowds trying to reach food distributions or waiting for convoys.

Fifteen people were killed while waiting for trucks near the Morag corridor that separates the southern cities of Rafah and Khan Younis, according to Nasser hospital.

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The situation is a "death trap," said Jamal al-Laweh, who said Israeli forces opened fire there. "But I have no other choice to feed the kids."

Six were killed while waiting for aid in northern Gaza near the Zikim crossing, according to Gaza's Health Ministry and Shifa hospital.

In central Gaza, witnesses said they heard warning shots before fire was aimed toward crowds trying to reach a distribution site operated by the Israeli-backed and U.S.-funded Gaza Humanitarian Foundation. The AP could not independently confirm who fired. Awda hospital said four people were killed by Israeli gunfire.

Six other aid-seekers were killed while trying to reach GHF sites in Khan Younis and Rafah, Nasser hospital said.

The GHF sites opened in May as an alternative to the U.N.-run aid system, but operations have been marred by deaths and chaos.

Responding to AP inquiries, the GHF media office said: "There were no incidents at or near our sites today." Israel's military said there were no incidents involving troops near central Gaza aid sites.

Hunger death toll among children hits 100

Israel's air and ground offensive has displaced most Palestinians and pushed the territory toward famine. Two Palestinian children died of malnutrition-related causes on Saturday, bringing the toll among children to 100 since the war began.

At least 117 adults have died of malnutrition-related causes since June, when the ministry started to count them.

The hunger toll is in addition to the ministry's war toll of 61,400 Palestinians. The ministry, part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals, doesn't distinguish between fighters or civilians, but says around half of the dead have been women and children. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties.

On the front lines in eastern Ukraine, peace feels far away

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

DONETSK REGION, Ukraine (AP) — In a dugout where each nearby blast sends dirt raining from the ceiling and the black plastic lining the walls slipping down, Ukrainian soldiers say peace talks feel distant and unlikely to end the war. Explosions from Russian weapons — from glide bombs to artillery shells — thunder regularly overhead, keeping them underground except when they fire the M777 howitzer buried near their trench.

Nothing on the Eastern Front suggests the war could end soon.

Diplomatic peace efforts feel so far removed from the battlefield that many soldiers doubt they can bring results. Their skepticism is rooted in months of what they see as broken U.S. promises to end the war quickly.

Recent suggestions by U.S. President Donald Trump that there will be some "swapping of territories" — as well as media reports that it would involve Ukrainian troops leaving the Donetsk region where they have fought for years defending every inch of land — have stirred confusion and rejection among the soldiers.

Few believe the current talks can end the war. More likely, they say, is a brief pause in hostilities before Russia resumes the assault with greater force.

"At minimum, the result would be to stop active fighting — that would be the first sign of some kind of settlement," said soldier Dmytro Loviniukov of the 148th Brigade. "Right now, that's not happening. And while these talks are taking place, they (the Russians) are only strengthening their positions on the front line."

Long war, no relief

On one artillery position, talk often turns to home. Many Ukrainian soldiers joined the army in the first days of the full-scale invasion, leaving behind civilian jobs. Some thought they would serve only briefly. Others didn't think about the future at all — because at that moment, it didn't exist.

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In the years since, many have been killed. Those who survived are in their fourth year of a grueling war, far removed from the civilian lives they once knew. With mobilization faltering and the war dragging on far longer than expected, there is no one to replace them as the Ukrainian army struggles with recruiting new people.

The army cannot also demobilize those who serve without risking the collapse of the front.

That is why soldiers wait for even the possibility of a pause in hostilities. When direct talks between Russia and Ukraine were held in Istanbul in May, the soldiers from 148th brigade read the news with cautious hope, said a soldier with the call sign Bronson, who once worked as a tattoo artist.

Months later, hope has been replaced with dark humor. On the eve of a deadline that U.S. President Donald Trump reportedly gave Russia's Vladimir Putin — one that has since vanished from the agenda amid talk of a meeting in Alaska — the Russian fire roared every minute for hours. Soldiers joked that the shelling was because the deadline was "running out."

"We are on our land. We have no way back," said the commander of the artillery group, Dmytro Lovinukov. "We stand here because there is no choice. No one else will come here to defend us."

Training for what's ahead

Dozens of kilometers from Zaporizhzhia region, north to the Donetsk area, heavy fighting grinds on toward Pokrovsk — now the epicenter of fighting.

Once home to about 60,000 people, the city has been under sustained Russian assault for months. The Russians have formed a pocket around Pokrovsk, though Ukrainian troops still hold the city and street fighting has yet to begin. Reports of Russian saboteurs entering the city started to appear almost daily, but the military says those groups have been neutralized.

Ukrainian soldiers of the Spartan brigade push through drills with full intensity, honing their skills for the battlefield in the Pokrovsk area.

Everything at the training range, only 45 kilometers (28 miles) from the front, is designed to mirror real combat conditions — even the terrain. A thin strip of forest breaks up the vast fields of blooming sunflowers stretching into the distance until the next tree line appears.

One of the soldiers training there is a 35-year-old with the call sign Komrad, who joined the military only recently. He says he has no illusions that the war will end soon.

"My motivation is that there is simply no way back," he said. "If you are in the military, you have to fight. If we're here, we need to cover our brothers in arms."

Truce doesn't mean peace

For Serhii Filimonov, commander of the "Da Vinci Wolves" battalion of the 59th brigade, the war's end is nowhere in sight, and current news doesn't influence the ongoing struggle to find enough resources to equip the unit that is fighting around Pokrovsk.

"We are preparing for a long war. We have no illusions that Russia will stop," he said, speaking at his field command post. "There may be a ceasefire, but there will be no peace."

Filimonov dismisses recent talk of exchanging territory or signing agreements as temporary fixes at best.

"Russia will not abandon its goal of capturing all of Ukraine," he said. "They will attack again. The big question is what security guarantees we get — and how we hit pause."

A soldier with the call sign Mirche from the 68th brigade said that whenever there is a new round of talks, the hostilities intensify around Pokrovsk — Russia's key priority during this summer's campaign.

Whenever peace talks begin, "things on the front get terrifying," he said.

Marcos says the Philippines will be pulled into any war over Taiwan, despite China's protest

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Monday his country would inevitably be drawn “kicking and screaming” into any war over Taiwan due to its proximity to the self-ruled island and the presence of large numbers of Filipino workers there, despite China’s strong protest over such remarks.

Marcos also told a news conference that the Philippines’ coast guard, navy and other vessels defending its territorial interests in the South China Sea would never back down and would stand their ground in the contested waters after the Chinese coast guard on Monday staged dangerous blocking maneuvers and used a powerful water cannon to try to drive away Philippine vessels from the hotly disputed Scarborough Shoal.

It’s the latest flare-up of long-simmering territorial disputes in the busy waterway, a key global trade route, where overlapping claims between China and the Philippines have escalated in recent years. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also lay claims to parts of the contested waters.

Relations between China and the Philippines have been severely strained after Marcos, who took office in mid-2022, and his administration emerged as some of the most vocal critics in Asia of China’s increasingly aggressive actions in the South China Sea. The Marcos administration deepened its treaty alliance engagements with the United States and started broadening security alliances with other Western and Asian countries like Japan, Australia, India and some EU member states to strengthen deterrence against Beijing’s assertiveness.

China protested last week and accused Marcos of interfering in its domestic affairs and violating its “One China” policy when he told reporters on the sidelines of a visit to India that there was no way the Philippines could stay out of a possible war in Taiwan because of his country’s proximity to it and the presence of about 200,000 Filipino workers on the self-ruled island. China claims Taiwan as its own territory and has repeatedly threatened to annex it, by force if necessary.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry then said through a spokesperson that “‘geographic location’ and a ‘large volume of Filipinos’ in Taiwan should not be used as pretexts to interfere in the internal and sovereign affairs of other countries” and urged the Philippines “to earnestly abide by the One China principle” and “refrain from playing fire on issues bearing on China’s core interests.”

Asked to comment on China’s protest, Marcos said he was perplexed and could not understand Beijing’s concern.

“I don’t know what they’re talking about, playing with fire? I was just stating facts. We do not want to go to war, but I think if there is a war over Taiwan, we will be drawn, we will be pulled in whether we like it or not, kicking and screaming,” Marcos said. “We will be drawn and dragged into that mess. I hope it doesn’t happen, but, if it does, we have to plan for it already.”

Separately, Philippine Coast Guard Commodore Jay Tarriela said Chinese coast guard ships chased and staged dangerous blocking maneuvers on Monday against Philippine coast guard and fishing vessels in the Scarborough Shoal, a rich fishing atoll in the South China Sea off the northwestern Philippines. A Philippine coast guard ship managed to evade being hit by a Chinese coast guard water cannon during the melee, he said.

While chasing a Philippine coast guard vessel, a Chinese coast guard ship accidentally collided with a Chinese navy ship, Tarriela said. The Chinese coast guard ship sustained “substantial damage” and the Philippine coast guard offered to provide help, including medical assistance, to the Chinese side, he said.

There was no immediate comment from Chinese officials on Tarriela’s statements.

Asked if the Philippine vessels would be instructed to withdraw from the disputed shoal, Marcos said his government would never back away from any fight.

“There is no silver bullet that if you fire it, all our problems would be solved,” Marcos said. “What will happen is, we will continue to be present, we will continue to defend our territory, we will continue to exercise our sovereign rights and despite any opposition from anyone, we will continue to do that as we have done in the past three years.”

'Weapons' horror film scores a box office victory

By ITZEL LUNA Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's August, and horror and humor came to play.

In a month that's long been known to let edgier movies thrive, Zach Cregger's highly anticipated horror film "Weapons" did not disappoint, topping the box office during its debut weekend with \$42.5 million domestically from 3,202 theaters. It made \$70 million internationally.

The film's success also handed its distributor, Warner Bros. Pictures, the seventh No. 1 opening of the year, and became the studio's sixth film in a row to debut with over \$40 million domestically.

"Freakier Friday," Disney's chaotic sequel to the 2003 classic, "Freaky Friday," took the second spot during its premiere weekend, earning \$29 million in 3,975 North American theaters. Lindsay Lohan and Jamie Lee Curtis return, this time for a double body-swapping between the mother-daughter duo and Lohan's teen daughter and soon-to-be stepdaughter.

Viral marketing tactics, coupled with strong social media word-of-mouth, boded well for both films' success, said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for the data firm Comscore.

"The top two films could not be more different, and that's what makes this weekend so appealing for moviegoers," Dergarabedian said. "Both are perfectly tailored for their audiences to react in real time over the weekend to these films and then post on social media."

"Weapons" transports audiences to the small town of Maybrook, where 17 kids up and leave their homes at 2:17 a.m., leaving bewildered parents in their wake. The town is left to navigate the lingering effects of trauma through horror, paranoia and a touch of existential humor.

The film is Cregger's follow-up to his solo directorial debut with the 2022 genre-bending horror, "Barbarian." That critically-acclaimed film had a slower start and smaller budget, but still topped the charts during its premiere with \$10 million domestically and made a splash in the genre.

"Weapons" generated a lot of buzz for its strong reviews (95% on Rotten Tomatoes).

"The internet's exploding right now between Friday and today. You just see that people are having a great time with it," said Jeffrey Goldstein, president of global distribution for Warner Bros. "It starts with an exceptional movie, an exceptional marketing campaign, and the date was exceptional too."

The success of the comedy-horror double premiere meant "The Fantastic Four: First Steps" surrendered its two-week run in the top spot and landed in the third position, bringing in \$15.5 million domestically. The superhero movie enjoyed a strong \$118 million debut, but stumbled in its second weekend.

"The Bad Guys 2," which got a healthy start at the No. 2 spot during its premiere weekend, came in fourth place, earning \$10.4 million domestically. "The Naked Gun" had a similar fate, reaching the fifth position with \$8.4 million in North American theaters.

"Jurassic World Rebirth," which came in seventh this week, is expected to hit \$800 million globally by Monday, according to NBC Universal, following a successful run in theaters.

Warner Bros. started off slow this year, but made a comeback with the box-office hit, "A Minecraft Movie," which opened with \$157 million domestically. Since then, movies like "Sinners," "Superman" and now, "Weapons," have found success.

The studio set "a blueprint to how to create a perfect summer lineup," Dergarabedian said.

"Weapons" also joins a stream of successful horror movies this year, its opening numbers coming in just behind "Final Destination: Bloodlines" and "Sinners."

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Weapons," \$42.5 million.
2. "Freakier Friday," \$29 million.
3. "The Fantastic Four: First Steps," \$15.5 million.
4. "The Bad Guys 2," \$10.4 million.
5. "The Naked Gun," \$8.4 million.

6. "Superman," \$7.8 million.
7. "Jurassic World Rebirth," \$4.7 million.
8. "F1: The Movie," \$2.9 million.
9. "Together," \$2.6 million.
10. "Sketch," \$2.5 million.

Migrants returning to Venezuela face debt and harsh living conditions

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

MARACAIBO, Venezuela (AP) — The hands of Yosbelin Pérez have made tens of thousands of the aluminum round griddles that Venezuelan families heat every day to cook arepas. She takes deep pride in making the revered "budare," the common denominator among rural tin-roofed homes and city apartments, but she owns nothing to her name despite the years selling cookware.

Pérez, in fact, owes about \$5,000 because she and her family never made it to the United States, where they had hoped to escape Venezuela's entrenched political, social and economic crisis. Now, like thousands of Venezuelans who have voluntarily or otherwise returned to their country this year, they are starting over as the crisis worsens.

"When I decided to leave in August, I sold everything: house, belongings, car, everything from my factory — molds, sand. I was left with nothing," Pérez, 30, said at her in-laws' home in western Venezuela. "We arrived in Mexico, stayed there for seven months, and when President (Donald Trump) came to power in January, I said, 'Let's go!'"

She, her husband and five children returned to their South American country in March.

COVID-19 pandemic pushed migrants to the U.S.

More than 7.7 million Venezuelans have migrated since 2013, when their country's oil-dependent economy unraveled. Most settled in Latin America and the Caribbean, but after the COVID-19 pandemic, migrants saw the U.S. as their best chance to improve their living conditions.

Many Venezuelans entered the U.S. under programs that allowed them to obtain work permits and shielded them from deportation. But since January, the White House has ended immigrants' protections and aggressively sought their deportations as U.S. President Donald Trump fulfills his campaign promise to limit immigration to the U.S.

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro had long refused to take back deported Venezuelans but changed course earlier this year under pressure from the White House. Immigrants now arrive regularly at the airport outside the capital, Caracas, on flights operated by either a U.S. government contractor or Venezuela's state-owned airline.

The U.S. government has defended its bold moves, including sending more than 200 Venezuelans to a prison in El Salvador for four months, arguing that many of the immigrants belonged to the violent Tren de Aragua street gang. The administration did not provide evidence to back up the blanket accusation. However, several recently deported immigrants have said U.S. authorities wrongly judged their tattoos and used them as an excuse to deport them.

Maduro declared 'economic emergency'

Many of those returning home, like Pérez and her family, are finding harsher living conditions than when they left as a currency crisis, triple-digit inflation and meager wages have made food and other necessities unaffordable, let alone the vehicle, home and electronics they sold before migrating. The monthly minimum wage of 130 bolivars, or \$1.02 as of Monday, has not increased in Venezuela since 2022. People typically have two, three or more jobs to cobble together money.

This latest chapter in the 12-year crisis even prompted Maduro to declare an "economic emergency" in April.

David Rodriguez migrated twice each to Colombia and Peru before he decided to try to get to the U.S. He left Venezuela last year, crossed the treacherous Darien Gap on foot, made it across Central America

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and walked, hopped on a train and took buses all over Mexico. He then turned himself in to U.S. immigration authorities in December, but he was detained for 15 days and deported to Mexico.

Broke, the 33-year-old Rodriguez worked as a mototaxi driver in Mexico City until he saved enough money to buy his airplane ticket back to Venezuela in March.

"Going to the United States ... was a total setback," he said while sitting at a relative's home in Caracas. "Right now, I don't know what to do except get out of debt first."

He must pay \$50 a week for a motorcycle he bought to work as a mototaxi driver. In a good week, he said, he can earn \$150, but there are others when he only makes enough to meet the \$50 payment.

Migrants seek loan sharks

Some migrants enrolled in beauty and pastry schools or became food delivery drivers after being deported. Others already immigrated to Spain. Many sought loan sharks.

Pérez's brother-in-law, who also made aluminum cookware before migrating last year, is allowing her to use the oven and other equipment he left at his home in Maracaibo so that the family can make a living. But most of her earnings go to cover the 40% monthly interest fee of a \$1,000 loan.

If the debt was not enough of a concern, Pérez is also having to worry about the exact reason that drove her away: extortion.

Pérez said she and her family fled Maracaibo after she spent several hours in police custody in June 2024 for refusing to pay an officer \$1,000. The officer, Pérez said, knocked on her door and demanded the money in exchange for letting her keep operating her unpermitted cookware business in her backyard.

She said officers tracked her down upon her return and already demanded money.

"I work to make a living from one day to the next ... Last week, some guardsmen came. 'Look, you must support me,'" Pérez said she was told in early July.

"So, if I don't give them any (money), others show up, too. I transferred him \$5. It has to be more than \$5 because otherwise, they'll fight you."

Tourist from US mainland who flew to Puerto Rico for Bad Bunny concert was fatally shot, police say

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — A tourist from the U.S. mainland who was visiting Puerto Rico for Bad Bunny's residency was fatally shot early Sunday at La Perla, a popular seaside shantytown, police said.

The victim was identified as Kevin Mares, a 25-year-old who lived in New York, according to a police statement.

The shooting happened in the predawn hours at a nightspot called "Refuge for Mistreated Men" in La Perla, a coastal community that has struggled to shed its dark reputation.

Homicide detective Sgt. Arnaldo Ruiz said in a phone interview that the shooting took place when several people near Mares began arguing and one pulled out a gun and shot at least three people, including Mares. A brother and a sister in their mid-40s who live in La Perla were injured and remain hospitalized.

Ruiz said Mares was an innocent bystander. He was with three other friends who told police they were in Puerto Rico for one of Bad Bunny's 30 concerts, which have attracted tens of thousands of visitors to the U.S. territory.

Mares was shot on the left side of his abdomen and was taken to Puerto Rico's largest public hospital, where he died, authorities said.

Ruiz said police don't yet know what the people were arguing about and don't have a description of the shooter. "We have very little information," he said.

Ruiz added that Mares' three friends also were from New York. He didn't have their hometowns.

San Juan Mayor Miguel Romero told reporters Sunday that he would share footage from security cameras in the area, adding that Mares' partner had opted not to visit la Perla with him.

Police said the incident occurred at 4:13 a.m., even though a municipal code approved in 2023 states

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that authorized businesses in San Juan can only serve or sell alcohol from 6 a.m. to 1 a.m. from Sunday to Thursday, and up to 2 a.m. on Friday and Saturday, and on Sunday if Monday is a holiday.

La Perla is located on the outskirts of a historic district popular with tourists known as Old San Juan. A couple hundred people live in the shantytown, which once served as Puerto Rico's biggest distribution point for heroin and was known for its violence.

Police used to avoid the community, which used to have a sign proclaiming, "Not open to visitors. Do not enter."

But violence eased when hundreds of federal agents raided the slum in 2011 and arrested dozens of people, including a well-known community leader who was later convicted.

The neighborhood became even safer and more welcoming after Puerto Rican singers Luis Fonsi and Daddy Yankee featured it in their hit, "Despacito."

But isolated violence persists.

In February 2023, three tourists were stabbed after police said a person told them to stop filming inside the community.

Then in April 2024, a 24-year-old tourist from Delaware was killed and his body set on fire after police said he and a friend were attacked following a drug purchase. Police said the victims were trying to take pictures of La Perla after being warned not to do so.

The island of 3.2 million people has reported 277 killings so far this year, compared with 325 killings in the same period last year.

Whitmer told Trump in private that Michigan auto jobs depend on a tariff change of course

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer met privately in the Oval Office with President Donald Trump to make a case he did not want to hear: The automotive industry he said he wants to save was being hurt by his tariffs.

The Democrat came with a slide deck to make her points in a visual presentation. Just getting the meeting Tuesday with the Republican president was an achievement for someone viewed as a contender for her party's White House nomination in 2028.

Whitmer's strategy for dealing with Trump highlights the conundrum for her and other Democratic leaders as they try to protect the interests of their states while voicing their opposition to his agenda. It's a dynamic that Whitmer has navigated much differently from many other Democratic governors.

The fact that Whitmer had "an opening to make direct appeals" in private to Trump was unique in this political moment, said Matt Grossman, a Michigan State University politics professor.

It was her third meeting with Trump at the White House since he took office in January. This one, however, was far less public than the time in April when Whitmer was unwittingly part of an impromptu news conference that embarrassed her so much she covered her face with a folder.

On Tuesday, she told the president that the economic damage from the tariffs could be severe in Michigan, a state that helped deliver him the White House in 2024. Whitmer also brought up federal support for recovery efforts after an ice storm and sought to delay changes to Medicaid.

Trump offered no specific commitments, according to people familiar with the private conversation who were not authorized to discuss it publicly and spoke only on condition of anonymity to describe it.

Whitmer is hardly the only one sounding the warning of the potentially damaging consequences, including factory job losses, lower profits and coming price increases, of the import taxes that Trump has said will be the economic salvation for American manufacturing.

White House spokesman Kush Desai said no other president "has taken a greater interest in restoring American auto industry dominance than President Trump." Trade frameworks negotiated by the administration would open up the Japanese, Korean and European markets for vehicles made on assembly lines

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in Michigan, Desai said.

But the outreach Trump has preferred tends to be splashy presentations by tech CEOs. In the Oval Office on Wednesday, Apple CEO Tim Cook gave the president a customized glass plaque with a gold base as Cook promised \$600 billion in investments. Trump claims to have brought in \$17 trillion in investment commitments, although none of those numbers has surfaced yet in economic data.

Under his series of executive orders and trade frameworks, U.S. automakers face import taxes of 50% on steel and aluminum, 30% on parts from China and a top rate of 25% on goods from Canada and Mexico not covered under an existing 2020 trade agreement. That puts America's automakers and parts suppliers at a disadvantage against German, Japanese and South Korean vehicles that only face a 15% import tax negotiated by Trump last month.

On top of that, Trump this past week threatened a 100% tariff on computer chips, which are an integral part of cars and trucks, though he would exclude companies that produce chips domestically from the tax.

Whitmer's two earlier meetings with Trump resulted in gains for Michigan. But the tariffs represent a significantly broader request of a president who has imposed them even more aggressively in the face of criticism.

Materials in the presentation brought by Whitmer to the meeting and obtained by The Associated Press noted how trade with Canada and Mexico has driven \$23.2 billion in investment to Michigan since 2020.

General Motors, Ford, and Stellantis operate 50 factories across the state, while more than 4,000 facilities support the auto parts supply chain. Altogether, the sector supports nearly 600,000 manufacturing jobs, forming the backbone of Michigan's economy.

Whitmer outlined the main points of the materials to Trump and left copies with his team.

To Grossman, the Michigan State professor, a key question is whether voters who expected to be helped by tariffs would react if Trump's import taxes failed to deliver the promised economic growth.

"Everyone's aware that Michigan is a critical swing state and the auto industry has outsized influence, not just directly, but symbolically," Grossman said.

AP VoteCast found that Trump won Michigan in 2024 largely because two-thirds of its voters described the economic conditions as being poor or "not so good." Roughly 70% of the voters in the state who felt negatively about the economy backed the Republican. The state was essentially split over whether tariffs were a positive, with Trump getting 76% of those voters who viewed them favorably.

The heads of General Motors, Ford and Stellantis have repeatedly warned the administration that the tariffs would cut company profits and undermine their global competitiveness. Their efforts have resulted in little more than a temporary, monthlong pause intended to give companies time to adjust. The reprieve did little to blunt the financial fallout.

In the second quarter alone, Ford reported \$800 million in tariff-related costs, while GM said the import taxes cost it \$1.1 billion. Those expenses could make it harder to reinvest in new domestic factories, a goal Trump has championed.

"We expect tariffs to be a net headwind of about \$2 billion this year, and we'll continue to monitor the developments closely and engage with policymakers to ensure U.S. autoworkers and customers are not disadvantaged by policy change," Ford CEO Jim Farley said on his company's earning call.

Since Trump returned to the White House, Michigan has lost 7,500 manufacturing jobs, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Smaller suppliers have felt the strain, too.

Detroit Axle, a family-run auto parts distributor, has been one of the more vocal companies in Michigan about the impact of the tariffs. The company initially announced it might have to shut down a warehouse and lay off more than 100 workers, but later said it would be able to keep the facility open, at least for now.

"Right now it's a market of who is able to survive, it's not a matter of who can thrive," said Mike Musheiness, owner of Detroit Axle.

European leaders rally behind Ukraine ahead of Trump-Putin meeting

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — European nations have rallied behind Ukraine, saying peace in the war-torn nation can't be resolved without Kyiv, ahead of an upcoming meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin in Alaska.

Trump said next Friday's meeting with his Russian counterpart on U.S. soil would focus on ending the war, now in its fourth year.

In response, Zelenskyy thanked European allies in a post on X, writing Sunday: "The end of the war must be fair, and I am grateful to everyone who stands with Ukraine and our people."

Trump-Putin meeting spikes worries

Saturday's statement by top European leaders came after the White House confirmed the U.S. president was willing to grant Putin the one-on-one meeting Russia has long pushed for, and suggestions from Trump that a peace deal could include "some swapping of territories." That raised fears that Kyiv may be pressured into giving up land or accepting other curbs on its sovereignty.

A White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they aren't allowed to speak publicly, told The Associated Press that Trump remained open to a trilateral summit with both the Russian and Ukrainian leaders, but for now, he will have a bilateral meeting requested by Putin.

In an interview with Fox News taped on Thursday but aired on Sunday, U.S. Vice President JD Vance said Trump had got Putin to agree to meet with Zelenskyy and it was now only a matter of scheduling before a meeting would take place. The Kremlin has previously said that Putin and Zelenskyy should meet only when an agreement negotiated by their delegations is close. A request to the White House for clarification has not immediately been answered.

Trump previously said he would meet with Putin regardless of whether the Russian leader agreed to meet with Zelenskyy.

The Trump-Putin meeting 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.

Calls for a lasting peace deal

Saturday's statement, signed by the president of the European Union and leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Finland and the UK, stressed the need for a "just and lasting peace" for Kyiv, including "robust and credible" security guarantees.

"Ukraine has the freedom of choice over its own destiny. Meaningful negotiations can only take place in the context of a ceasefire or reduction of hostilities," the statement said.

"The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine. We remain committed to the principle that international borders must not be changed by force," the Europeans added.

The European statement follows a meeting between Vance and top European and Ukrainian officials at the British Foreign Secretary's weekend residence to discuss how to end the war.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday that a good deal would mean preventing an emboldened Russia, and aggressors elsewhere, from trying to once again redraw borders by force.

A Trump ally and Russia hawk, Graham nevertheless said that "you can't end a war without talking."

"I do hope that Zelenskyy can be part of the process. I have every confidence in the world that (President Trump) is going to go to meet Putin from a position of strength, that he's going to look out for Europe and Ukrainian needs to end this war honorably," he said.

He argued that "Ukraine is not going to evict every Russian" soldier, but said the West should give Kyiv robust security guarantees, keep some of its forces on the ground "as trip wires," and keep arming Ukraine "so that Russia will be deterred by the most lethal army on the continent of Europe."

A fruitless push toward a truce

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A monthlong U.S.-led push to achieve a truce in Ukraine has so far proved fruitless, with Kyiv agreeing in principle while the Kremlin has held out for terms more to its liking.

Trump also moved up an 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. The White House did not answer questions Saturday about possible sanctions.

The Kremlin earlier this week reiterated demands that Ukraine give up territory, abandon its bid to join NATO, and accept limits on its military, in exchange for a withdrawal of Russian troops from the rest of the country. Particularly galling for Kyiv is Moscow's insistence that it cede pockets of eastern and southern Ukraine the Kremlin claims to have annexed, despite lacking full military control.

Mark Galeotti, a British expert in Russian politics who heads the Mayak Intelligence consultancy, says Moscow's tactic of encircling towns in eastern Ukraine has brought a string of territorial gains for Russia, and Putin "does not appear to feel under pressure."

For the Kremlin, "further delaying any more serious U.S. action and the optics of a meeting with the U.S. president will already be wins," Galeotti argued in an analysis published Sunday by the UK's Sunday Times newspaper.

Zelenskyy rules out giving up territory

Zelenskyy said Saturday that Ukraine "will not give Russia any awards for what it has done" and that "Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier."

Ukrainian officials previously told the AP privately that Kyiv would be amenable to a peace deal that would de facto recognize Ukraine's inability to regain lost territories militarily. But Zelenskyy on Saturday insisted that formally ceding land was out of the question.

Galeotti argued that any deal that involves Ukraine abandoning territory would be "agonising" and politically dangerous for Zelenskyy.

Pushing for sanctions

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Sunday that European leaders are "intensively preparing" ahead of the Alaska summit, while they "hope and expect" that Zelenskyy will be invited.

Merz told Germany's public broadcaster ARD that he has for weeks been encouraging Washington to toughen sanctions against Russia, adding that "Putin only acts under pressure."

Mikhail Kasyanov, Putin's first prime minister and later a political opponent, similarly told the BBC Sunday that the Kremlin would be more willing to negotiate seriously and make some concessions when sanctions have further strained Russia's economy.

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on Sunday praised Washington for taking steps such as allowing more military equipment to flow to Ukraine and imposing secondary sanctions on India for purchasing Russian oil, saying Trump "clearly is putting pressure on Putin."

"Next Friday will be important because it will be about testing Putin — how serious he is — on bringing this terrible war to an end," Rutte said in an interview with ABC's "This Week."

6.1 earthquake hits Turkey's Balikesir province, killing 1 and collapsing buildings

ISTANBUL (AP) — A magnitude 6.1 earthquake struck Turkey's northwestern province of Balikesir on Sunday, killing at least one person and causing more than a dozen buildings to collapse, officials said. At least 29 people were injured.

The earthquake, with an epicenter in the town of Sindirgi, sent shocks that were felt some 200 kilometers (125 miles) to the north in Istanbul - a city of more than 16 million people.

An elderly woman died shortly after being pulled out alive from the debris of a collapsed building in Sindirgi, Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya told reporters. Four other people were rescued from the building.

Yerlikaya said a total of 16 buildings collapsed in the region - most of them derelict and unused. Two mosque minarets also tumbled down, he said.

None of the injured were in serious condition, the minister said.

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Television footage showed rescue teams asking for silence so they can listen for signs of life beneath the rubble.

Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Agency said the earthquake was followed by several aftershocks, including one measuring 4.6, and urged citizens not to enter damaged buildings.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan issued a statement wishing all affected citizens a speedy recovery.

"May God protect our country from any kind of disaster," he wrote on X.

Turkey sits on top of major fault lines and earthquakes are frequent.

In 2023, a magnitude 7.8 earthquake killed more than 53,000 people in Turkey and destroyed or damaged hundreds of thousands of buildings in 11 southern and southeastern provinces. Another 6,000 people were killed in the northern parts of neighboring Syria.

Russia and Ukraine hold fast to their demands ahead of a planned Putin-Trump summit

By The Associated Press undefined

The threats, pressure and ultimatums have come and gone, but Russian President Vladimir Putin has maintained Moscow's uncompromising demands in the war in Ukraine, raising fears he could use a planned summit with U.S. President Donald Trump in Alaska to coerce Kyiv into accepting an unfavorable deal.

The maximalist demands reflect Putin's determination to reach the goals he set when he launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

Putin sees a possible meeting with Trump as a chance to negotiate a broad deal that would not only cement Russia's territorial gains but also keep Ukraine from joining NATO and hosting any Western troops, allowing Moscow to gradually pull the country back into its orbit.

The Kremlin leader believes time is on his side as the exhausted and outgunned Ukrainian forces are struggling to stem Russian advances in many sectors of the over 1,000-kilometer (over 600-mile) front line while swarms of Russian missiles and drones batter Ukrainian cities.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy also has stood firm in his positions, agreeing to a ceasefire proposed by Trump while reaffirming the country's refusal to abandon seeking NATO membership and rejecting acknowledgment of Russia's annexation of any of its regions.

European leaders, meanwhile, rallied behind Ukraine, saying peace in the war-torn nation can't be resolved without Kyiv. Zelenskyy thanked European allies in a post on X, writing Sunday: "The end of the war must be fair, and I am grateful to everyone who stands with Ukraine and our people."

A look at Russian and Ukrainian visions of a peace deal and how a Putin-Trump summit could evolve:

Russia's position

In a memorandum presented at talks in Istanbul in June, Russia offered Ukraine two options for establishing a 30-day ceasefire. One demanded Ukraine withdraw its forces from Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson — the four regions Moscow illegally annexed in September 2022 but never fully captured.

As an alternate condition for a ceasefire, Russia made a "package proposal" for Ukraine to halt mobilization efforts, freeze Western arms deliveries and ban any third-country forces on its soil. Moscow also suggested Ukraine end martial law and hold elections, after which the countries could sign a comprehensive peace treaty.

Once there's a truce, Moscow wants a deal to include the "international legal recognition" of its annexations of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the four regions in 2022.

Russia says a peace treaty should have Ukraine declare its neutral status between Russia and the West, abandon its bid to join NATO, limit the size of its armed forces and recognize Russian as an official language on par with Ukrainian — conditions reflecting Putin's earliest goals.

It also demands Ukraine ban the "glorification and propaganda of Nazism and neo-Nazism" and dissolve nationalist groups. Since the war began, Putin has falsely alleged that neo-Nazi groups were shaping Ukrainian politics under Zelenskyy, who is Jewish. They were fiercely dismissed by Kyiv and its Western allies.

In Russia's view, a comprehensive peace treaty should see both countries lift all sanctions and restric-

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tions, abandon any claims to compensation for wartime damage, resume trade and communications, and reestablish diplomatic ties.

Asked Thursday whether Moscow has signaled any willingness to compromise to make a meeting with Trump possible, Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov responded that there haven't been any shifts in the Russian position.

Ukraine's position

The memorandum that Ukraine presented to Moscow in Istanbul emphasized the need for a full and unconditional 30-day ceasefire to set stage for peace negotiations.

It reaffirmed Ukraine's consistent rejection of Russian demands for neutral status as an attack on its sovereignty, declaring it is free to choose its alliances and adding that its NATO membership will depend on consensus with the alliance.

It emphasized Kyiv's rejection of any restrictions on the size and other parameters of its armed forces, as well as curbs on the presence of foreign troops on its soil.

Ukraine's memorandum also opposed recognizing any Russian territorial gains, while describing the current line of contact as a starting point in negotiations.

The document noted the need for international security guarantees to ensure the implementation of peace agreements and prevent further aggression.

Kyiv's peace proposal also demanded the return of all deported and illegally displaced children and a total prisoner exchange.

It held the door open to gradual lifting of some of the sanctions against Russia if it abides by the agreement.

Trump's positions

Trump has often spoken admiringly of Putin and even echoed his talking points on the war. He had a harsh confrontation with Zelenskyy in the Oval Office on Feb. 28, but later warmed his tone. As Putin resisted a ceasefire and continued his aerial bombardments, Trump showed exasperation with the Kremlin leader, threatening Moscow with new sanctions.

Although Trump expressed disappointment with Putin, his agreement to meet him without Zelenskyy at the table raised worries in Ukraine and its European allies, who fear it could allow the Russian to get Trump on his side and strong-arm Ukraine into concessions.

Trump said without giving details that "there'll be some swapping of territories, to the betterment of both" Russia and Ukraine as part of any peace deal that he will discuss with Putin when they meet Friday.

Putin repeatedly warned Ukraine will face tougher conditions for peace if it doesn't accept Moscow's demands as Russian troops forge into other regions to build what he described as a "buffer zone." Some observers suggested Russia could trade those recent gains for the territories of the four annexed by Moscow still under Ukrainian control.

"That is potentially a situation that gives Putin a tremendous amount of leeway as long as he can use that leverage to force the Ukrainians into a deal that they may not like and to sideline the Europeans effectively," Sam Greene of King's College London said. "The question is, will Trump sign up to that and will he actually have the leverage to force the Ukrainians and the Europeans to accept it?"

Putin could accept a temporary truce to win Trump's sympathy as he seeks to achieve broader goals, Greene said.

"He could accept a ceasefire so long as it's one that leaves him in control, in which there's no real deterrence against renewed aggression somewhere down the line," he said. "He understands that his only route to getting there runs via Trump."

In a possible indication he thinks a ceasefire or peace deal could be close, Putin called the leaders of China, India, South Africa and several ex-Soviet nations in an apparent effort to inform these allies about prospective agreements.

Tatiana Stanovaya of the Carnegie Russia and Eurasia Center argued Putin wouldn't budge on his goals.

"However these conditions are worded, they amount to the same demand: Ukraine stops resisting, the West halts arms supplies, and Kyiv accepts Russia's terms, which effectively amount to a de facto capitula-

tion," she posted on X. "The Russian side can frame this in a dozen different ways, creating the impression that Moscow is open to concessions and serious negotiation. It has been doing so for some time, but the core position remains unchanged: Russia wants Kyiv to surrender."

She predicted Putin might agree to meet Zelenskyy but noted the Kremlin leader would only accept such a meeting "if there is a prearranged agenda and predetermined outcomes, which remains difficult to imagine."

"The likely scenario is that this peace effort will fail once again," she said. "This would be a negative outcome for Ukraine, but it would not deliver Ukraine to Putin on a plate either, at least not in the way he wants it. The conflict, alternating between open warfare and periods of simmering tension, appears likely to persist for the foreseeable future."

UK police say more than 500 people arrested in pro-Palestinian events over weekend

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — London police said Sunday that 532 people were arrested the previous day when supporters of a pro-Palestinian group recently outlawed as a terrorist organization intentionally broke the law to test the government's ability to enforce the ban.

The Metropolitan Police Service released the updated figures as protesters demanding the immediate release of the remaining Israeli hostages in Gaza held their own march through central London on Sunday afternoon.

The vast majority of those detained on Saturday were arrested for displaying placards declaring their support for the group known as Palestine Action. Police updated their earlier totals and said 522 people were arrested for supporting a proscribed organization in violation of anti-terror laws. Another 10 people were arrested on a variety of charges, including assaulting and obstructing police officers.

Backers of Palestine Action staged the protest to underscore their belief that the government is illegally restricting freedom of expression by banning a direct action organization that has challenged its policies.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper, who oversees law enforcement in Britain, rejected that characterization, saying Palestine Action was banned after committing serious attacks involving violence, significant injuries and extensive criminal damage.

"The right to protest is one we protect fiercely but this is very different from displaying support for this one specific and narrow, proscribed organization," Cooper said in a statement. "Many people may not yet know the reality of this organization, but the assessments are very clear, this is not a nonviolent organization," she added.

Police released updated information on the Palestine Action protest after the front pages of Sunday newspapers featured photos of elderly protesters being carted off by officers.

One of those was La Pethick, an 89-year-old retired psychotherapist, who told the Times of London that she had the support of her five grandchildren. "We are having our right to peaceful protest being taken away," she said.

Almost half of those arrested were over the age of 60, according to figures released by the Met.

Police said the process of deciding whether to file charges against those arrested is likely to take weeks as officers from the Met's Counter Terrorism Command put together case files and seek approval from prosecutors, and in some cases the attorney general.

Parliament voted to ban Palestine Action after activists broke into a Royal Air Force base and damaged two tanker planes to protest British support for the war in Gaza. Palestine Action had previously targeted Israeli defense contractors and other sites in Britain that they believe have links with the Israeli military.

Supporters of Palestine Action are challenging the ban in court, arguing that the government has violated human rights laws by in declaring the group a terrorist organization.

CDC shooter blamed COVID vaccine for depression; union demands statement against misinformation

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

A Georgia man who had blamed the COVID-19 vaccine for making him depressed and suicidal has been identified as the shooter who opened fire late Friday on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters, killing a police officer.

The 30-year-old suspect, who died during the incident, had also tried to get into the CDC's headquarters in Atlanta but was stopped by guards before driving to a pharmacy across the street and opening fire, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press on Saturday.

The man, identified as Patrick Joseph White, was armed with five guns, including at least one long gun, the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the investigation.

A union representing workers at the CDC said the incident was not random and "compounds months of mistreatment, neglect, and vilification that CDC staff have endured." It demanded federal officials condemn vaccine misinformation, saying it was putting scientists at risk.

Here's what to know about the shooting and the continuing investigation:

An attack on a prominent public health institution

Police say White opened fire outside the CDC headquarters in Atlanta on Friday, leaving bullet marks in windows across the sprawling campus. At least four CDC buildings were hit, Director Susan Monarez said on X.

DeKalb County Police Officer David Rose was mortally wounded while responding. Rose, 33, a former Marine who served in Afghanistan, had graduated from the police academy in March.

White 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 Georgia Bureau of Investigations said the crime scene was "complex" and the investigation would take "an extended period of time."

CDC union calls for condemnation of vaccine misinformation and tighter security

The American Federation of Government Employees, Local 2883, said the CDC and leadership of the Department of Health and Human Services must provide a "clear and unequivocal stance in condemning vaccine disinformation."

Such a public statement by federal officials is needed to help prevent violence against scientists, the union said in a news release.

"Their leadership is critical in reinforcing public trust and ensuring that accurate, science-based information prevails," the union said.

Fired But Fighting, a group of laid-off CDC employees, has said HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is directly responsible for the villainization of CDC's workforce through "his continuous lies about science and vaccine safety, which have fueled a climate of hostility and mistrust."

Kennedy reached out to staff on Saturday, saying "no one should face violence while working to protect the health of others."

Thousands of people who work on critical disease research are employed on the campus. The union said some staff were huddled in various buildings until late at night, including more than 90 young children who were locked down inside the CDC's Clifton School.

The union said CDC staff should not be required to immediately return to work after experiencing such a traumatic event. In a statement released Saturday, it said windows and buildings should first be fixed and made "completely secure."

"Staff should not be required to work next to bullet holes," the union said. "Forcing a return under these conditions risks re-traumatizing staff by exposing them to the reminders of the horrific shooting they endured."

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The union also called for "perimeter security on all campuses" until the investigation is fully completed and shared with staff.

Shooter had fixation on COVID-19 vaccine

White's father, who contacted police and identified his son as the possible shooter, said White had been upset over the death of his dog and also had become fixated on the COVID-19 vaccine, according to the law enforcement official.

A neighbor of White told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that White "seemed like a good guy" but spoke with her multiple times about his distrust of COVID-19 vaccines in unrelated conversations.

"He was very unsettled, and he very deeply believed that vaccines hurt him and were hurting other people," Nancy Hoalst, told the Atlanta newspaper. "He emphatically believed that."

But Hoalst said she never believed White would be violent: "I had no idea he thought he would take it out on the CDC."

Feel sticky this summer? That's because it's been record muggy East of the Rockies

By SETH BORENSTEIN and M.K. WILDEMAN Associated Press

More than 70 million Americans sweated through the muggiest first two months of summer on record as climate change has noticeably dialed up the Eastern United States' humidity in recent decades, an Associated Press data analysis shows.

And that meant uncomfortably warm and potentially dangerous nights in many cities the last several weeks, the National Weather Service said.

Parts of 27 states and Washington, D.C., had a record amount of days that meteorologists call uncomfortable — with average daily dew points of 65 degrees Fahrenheit or higher — in June and July, according to data derived from the Copernicus Climate Service.

And that's just the daily average. In much of the East, the mugginess kept rising to near tropical levels for a few humid hours. Philadelphia had 29 days, Washington had 27 days and Baltimore had 24 days where the highest dew point simmered to at least 75 degrees, which even the the weather service office in Tampa calls oppressive, according to weather service data.

Dew point is a measure of moisture in the air expressed in degrees that many meteorologists call the most accurate way to describe humidity. The summer of 2025 so far has had dew points that average at least 6 degrees higher than the 1951-2020 normals in Washington, Baltimore, Pittsburgh, Richmond, Columbus and St. Louis, the AP calculations show. The average June and July humidity for the entire country east of the Rockies rose to more than 66 degrees, higher than any year since measurements started in 1950.

"This has been a very muggy summer. The humid heat has been way up," said Bernadette Woods Placky, chief meteorologist at Climate Central.

Twice this summer climate scientist and humidity expert Cameron Lee of Kent State University measured dew points of about 82 degrees at his home weather station in Ohio. That's off the various charts that the weather service uses to describe what dew points feel like.

"There are parts of the United States that are experiencing not only greater average humidity, especially in the spring and summer, but also more extreme humid days," Lee said. He said super sticky days are now stretching out over more days and more land.

High humidity doesn't allow the air to cool at night as much as it usually does, and the stickiness contributed to multiple nighttime temperature records from the Ohio Valley through the Mid-Atlantic and up and down coastal states, said Zack Taylor, forecast operations chief at the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center. Raleigh, Charlotte, Nashville, Virginia Beach, Va., and Wilmington, N.C., all reached records for the hottest overnight lows. New York City, Columbus, Atlanta, Richmond, Knoxville, Tennessee and Concord, New Hampshire came close, he said.

"What really impacts the body is that nighttime temperature," Taylor said. "So if there's no cooling at night or if there's a lack of cooling it doesn't allow your body to cool off and recover from what was prob-

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ably a really hot afternoon. And so when you start seeing that over several days, that can really wear out the body, especially of course if you don't have access to cooling centers or air conditioning."

An extra hot and rainy summer weather pattern is combining with climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas, Woods Placky said.

The area east of the Rockies has on average gained about 2.5 degrees in summer dew point since 1950, the AP analysis of Copernicus data shows. In the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and part of the 1990s, the eastern half of the country had an average dew point in the low 60s, what the weather service calls noticeable but OK. In four of the last six years that number has been near and even over the uncomfortable line of 65.

"It's huge," Lee said of the 75-year trend. "This is showing a massive increase over a relatively short period of time."

That seemingly small increase in average dew points really means the worst ultra-sticky days that used to happen once a year, now happen several times a summer, which is what affects people, Lee said.

Higher humidity and heat feed on each other. A basic law of physics is that the atmosphere holds an extra 4% more water for every degree Fahrenheit (7% for every degree Celsius) warmer it gets, meteorologists said.

For most of the summer, the Midwest and East were stuck under either incredibly hot high pressure systems, which boosted temperatures, or getting heavy and persistent rain in amounts much higher than average, Taylor said. What was mostly missing was the occasional cool front that pushes out the most oppressive heat and humidity. That finally came in August and brought relief, he said.

Humidity varies by region. The West is much drier. The South gets more 65-degree dew points in the summer than the North. But that's changing.

University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd said uncomfortable humidity is moving further north, into places where people are less used to it.

Summers now, he said, "are not your grandparents' summers."

Frederick Richard is taking his fight to make gymnastics 'cool' to a new front: His uniform

By WILL GRAVES AP National Writer

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Frederick Richard is taking the fight to make men's gymnastics matter to a new front: his wardrobe.

The charismatic 21-year-old Olympic bronze medalist switched out the stirrup pants that have long been a staple of the men's uniform for shorts with compression leggings at the U.S. Championships this weekend, firm in his belief that the three-tenths (0.3) deduction he receives every day of competition that he breaks the rules is worth it if it makes his sport more accessible.

Even when those tenths add up, Richard edged Fuzzy Benas by less than a quarter of a point for second place behind two-time national champion Asher Hong. If Richard had worn the traditional uniform, his margin over Benas could have been a little more comfortable.

Yet asked if the statement he is trying to make — that it's time for men's gymnastics to modernize its uniforms — is worth the risk to his potential placement during a given meet, he didn't hesitate.

"It's 1,000% worth it," Richard said. "If you look at these kids in the crowd, I'm thinking about them and I'm thinking about when I was younger."

Finding an alternative

While Richard quickly fell in love with gymnastics as a kid growing up in the Boston area, the stirrup pants worn by the guys on pommel horse, still rings, parallel bars, and high bar were another matter.

"If I left the gym to go to the gas station, I didn't want anybody to see me in my pommel horse pants," Richard said. "Kids would say, 'Do you do gymnastics?' I'd say 'Yeah.' But I didn't want them to search 'gymnast' and see the uniform. I didn't feel like it was cool."

His solution was to design an alternative. With the help of the apparel company Turn, Richard debuted

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the look earlier this year and “refined” it ahead of nationals.

During the opening night of competition on Thursday, the rising Michigan junior wore maize-and-blue colored zebra-patterned leggings with (almost) matching blue shorts. On Saturday, Richard swapped the maize and blue for gray.

Both times, there was a “ND -0.3” next to Richard’s score on the first event in which the traditional pants were required. Yet Richard wasn’t as focused on the ribbon board where his score was posted, but on the young boys in the stands below them.

“(I want them to) see this, and they’re like, ‘This is cool. I want to wear this. This kid is trying to make the sport cool, he looks cool,’” Richard said. “And that’s the stuff that gets kids into the sport, that’s stuff that keeps kids in the sport.”

Even if it’s a largely American conversation.

Fighting for relevance

While the popularity of men’s gymnastics in the U.S. has declined for decades (though there is optimism that the bronze medal Richard and his teammates captured at the 2024 Olympics could help stem the tide), there are no such issues overseas.

They’re not talking about stirrup pants in China. Or Japan. Or Russia. Places with dominant programs whose stars become champions and national heroes in the process.

The challenges men’s gymnastics faces in the U.S. are many. The number of Division I programs that offer it as a scholarship sport is a fraction of what it was decades ago. And the impact of the recent House settlement could make opportunities at a level that has long served as a feeder system to the U.S. national team even scarcer.

At the Olympic level, the men have long competed in the shadow of the star-studded (and highly successful) women’s program.

Richard has long understood this. He’s seen the attrition firsthand. While the uniform didn’t stop him from pressing on, he believes he might be the exception, not the rule.

Countless young boys dabble in multiple sports growing up, gymnastics included. Richard thinks tweaking the uniform requirements into something he considers more modern could remove what he thinks might be a roadblock to sticking with it for some.

“It does add to what makes a 12-year-old boy decide, ‘Do I want to keep doing this sport? Or should I play football or soccer, because my friends think I’m cool when I play with them?’” he said.

The rules do allow for a little latitude. Some German female gymnasts opted for full-body unitards at each of the last two Olympics, though the design does not run afoul of FIG regulations.

What Richard is doing does.

Pushing the limits

And while he stressed he would never wear his outlawed uniform in a team competition — he wore regulation pants while helping lead Michigan to the NCAA championship this spring — that might not be the case the next time he competes internationally.

“We’ll see about the world stage,” Richard said. “We’ll have to talk and see what they allow, but I want to keep pushing it. I’m having fun. I feel more free.”

He’ll have some time to think about it. When the six-man roster for the 2025 World Championships was announced late Saturday night, Richard’s name wasn’t on it. The decision had nothing to do with Richard’s uniform but the uniqueness of this year’s world meet, which does not include a team event and is largely designed for event specialists.

At his best, Richard is one of the top all-arounders on the planet. Yet even he admitted he was at about “80%” at nationals following a whirlwind stretch that included traveling to places like Uganda. Richard is partnering with the African nation to open a facility for boys there interested in acrobatics.

The joy he felt during the trip was palpable. So has the criticism he’s received back home for his uniform choice, with some telling him if he wants to look like a basketball player, maybe he should go play basketball.

While Richard’s modified look wouldn’t look out of place on the court, pommel horse specialist Stephen

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Nedoroscik — who won a pair of bronze medals in Paris and became a breakout star in the process (all while wearing stirrup pants) last summer — agrees with his Olympic teammate that there “should be a certain level of flexibility” when it comes to uniforms, though he also pointed out that having everyone wear identical outfits is designed to help the judges do their jobs.

“So like, you can’t wear like super baggy clothes, obviously,” Nedoroscik said. “But I do like there should be maybe a little bit of wiggle room.”

That’s all Richard says he is asking for, though it seems highly unlikely the FIG would eliminate the deduction for a uniform violation anytime soon. That is not going to stop Richard from pressing on.

“I’ll wear it for the next 10 years if I have to,” he said. “So eventually, if I keep succeeding and winning, and eventually on the international stage do the same thing and keep winning, (the FIG) will see how people like it (and) the younger kids will start wearing it ... and the trend is going to grow.”

Nepal’s LGBTQ+ community holds first Pride rally since US funding cuts

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Members of the Nepal’s LGBTQ+ community and supporters rallied in the capital Sunday in the annual pride rally, which was the first since a major cut in funding after the U.S. government ceased financial aid.

Hundreds of people took part in the rally through the heart of Kathmandu, playing music and dancing in the Gai Jatra festival, which is celebrated to remember family members who have passed away during the year. But it has long drawn colorful parades by bringing in sexual minorities to join in on the festivities.

Nepal’s LGBTQ+ campaign has been hit after U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration began dismantling the U.S. Agency for International Development, which was responsible for humanitarian aid.

Most of the support centers for Nepal’s LGBTQ+ community have been closed because of a lack of funds.

In the past few years, Nepal’s LGBTQ+ community made rapid advancements in securing their rights. The nation became one of the first in Asia to allow same-sex marriage. The constitution adopted in 2015 explicitly stated there can be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

The U.S. was among the biggest donors for the LGBTQ+ rights campaign.

Over the years, USAID and others stepped in and partnered with help centers to support initiatives like HIV prevention and care, and safe-sex counselling. The U.S. funds were vital for running the centers and clinics that helped with distributing free condoms, screenings and follow-up treatment for people with HIV. Now the USAID office in Nepal is closed.

“Because of the cut in funding many of the services we have been providing to the community have been hit badly, but we are not discouraged but are hopeful we will get alternative sources and fundings to help us restart those services,” said Simran Sherchan, a LGBTQ+ rights activist in the rally.

Taliban investigating death threats against United Nations’ Afghan female staff, report says

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The Taliban are investigating explicit death threats against dozens of Afghan women working for the United Nations, according to a report published Sunday.

In its latest update on the human rights situation in Afghanistan, the U.N. mission to the country said that dozens of female national staff were subjected to explicit death threats in May.

The threats come against a backdrop of severe restrictions placed on women since the Taliban seized power in Afghanistan in 2021.

The U.N. report said the threats came from unidentified individuals related to their work with the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, or UNAMA, other agencies, funds, and programs, “requiring the U.N. to implement interim measures to protect their safety.”

It said that the Taliban told the U.N. mission that their personnel were not responsible for the threats.

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An Interior Ministry investigation is underway, the report added.

The Interior Ministry spokesman, Abdul Mateen Qani, said no such threats had been made.

"This is completely incorrect," Qani said. "The ministry has an independent department for this, and we have a strategic plan for protection and security so there is no threat to them in any area, nor can anyone threaten them, nor is there any threat to them."

Qani did not answer questions about an investigation.

The Taliban barred Afghan women from working at domestic and foreign nongovernmental organizations in December 2022, extending this ban to the U.N. six months later, and then threatening to shut down agencies and groups still employing women. Some women have nonetheless stayed on in key sectors, such as health care and urgent humanitarian assistance, where aid agencies say the needs are great.

Humanitarian agencies say the Taliban have hampered or interfered with their operations, allegations denied by authorities.

The U.N. report is the first official confirmation of death threats against Afghan women working in the sector. The report also highlighted other areas affecting women's personal freedoms and safety.

In Herat, inspectors from the Vice and Virtue Ministry began requiring women to wear a chador, a full-body cloak covering the head. Dozens of women deemed "not in compliance" were barred from entering markets or using public transportation. Several women were detained until relatives brought them a chador, the report said.

In Uruzgan, women were arrested for wearing a hijab — a headscarf — rather than a burqa covering the entire body and face.

Women have also been denied access to public areas, in line with laws banning them from such spaces. In Ghor province, police forced several families to leave a recreational area. They warned the families against visiting outdoor picnic sites with women.

In Herat, Vice and Virtue inspectors stopped family groups with women and girls from accessing an open recreational area, only allowing all-male groups.

Nobody from the Vice and Virtue Ministry was immediately available to comment on the Ghor, Herat and Uruzgan incidents, which the U.N. said happened in May.

In Kandahar, the Public Health Department instructed female health care workers to be accompanied to work by male guardians with an identification card proving that they were related to the woman by blood or marriage.

It wasn't immediately clear if the card is specific to Kandahar or will be rolled out across Afghanistan.

"The process to apply for a mahram (male guardian) identification card is reportedly cumbersome and can take up to several weeks as it requires the de facto Department for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice and a member of the local community (e.g. malik, imam or village elder) to verify the relationship," the U.N. report said.

A Congolese refugee's 8-year struggle to reunite with her family in the US

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The Congolese woman's search for safety sent her on a terrifying trek of nearly 2,300 miles (3,700 kilometers) through southern Africa on foot when she was just 15.

Reuniting with her family has been a more difficult journey. For eight years, she clung to hope through delays and setbacks as she navigated a U.S. program that reconnects refugees with family members already in the country, and her dream of seeing them again seemed close to becoming a reality.

But President Donald Trump signed an executive order halting the refugee program just hours after he took office on Jan. 20, leaving her and thousands of other refugees stranded.

"It was horrible. I would never wish for anyone to go through that, ever. When I think about it, I just ..." she said, pausing to take a long breath. "Honestly, I had given up. I told my mom maybe it was just not meant for us to see each other again."

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During a brief block on the order, the woman made it into the U.S., one of only about 70 refugees to arrive in the country since Trump took office. She asked that her name not be used because she fears retaliation.

"It's been a really devastating roller coaster for those families, to be stuck in this limbo of not knowing whether their hope of being resettled in the United States will ever come true," said Melissa Keaney, an attorney with the International Refugee Assistance Project.

The woman was an infant when her mother fled the Democratic Republic of Congo's civil war in 1997, seeking shelter at Tanzania's Nyarugusu refugee camp. When the camp grew too dangerous, she fled for South Africa. She built a modest life there, always hoping she would rejoin her family, even after they were resettled in the U.S. For a time, that seemed likely, thanks to the "follow to join" program.

The refugee program had bipartisan support for decades, allowing people displaced by war, natural disaster or persecution to legally migrate to the U.S. and providing a pathway to citizenship.

But Trump's executive order halting the program said communities didn't have the ability to "absorb large numbers of migrants, and in particular, refugees."

Organizations like the International Refugee Assistance Project and some refugees, including the Congolese woman and her mother, sued over Trump's order in February. They said resettlement agencies were forced to lay off hundreds of workers and some refugees were left in dangerous places.

"I had a small business and told everyone, 'I'm out now,'" she said. "It felt like this door had just been opened, and I was running toward it when — boom! — they push it shut right in front of me."

A difficult choice: Family or safety?

Looking back on her time in the Nyarugusu refugee camp, she remembers teaching her little brother to ride a bike and whispering with her sister late at night. She remembers hunger and fear as attacks on refugees foraging outside the camp increased.

"You see someone hanged, and that brings fear," she said. "You don't know if you'll be next. You don't know if they're waiting for you."

By 2012, the camp was especially dangerous for teen girls, who were at risk of being kidnapped or assaulted. With little hope of a viable future, her mother made a plan: The 15-year-old would walk to South Africa, where she would have a better chance of finishing school and building a life. Her siblings were too young to make the journey, so she would have to go alone.

She didn't know the way, so joined other travelers, often going without food during the six-week journey.

The crossing from Mozambique into Zimbabwe was deep in a forest. The group she was following had hired a guide, but he abandoned them in the middle of the night. Under the thin moonlight, the group walked toward a cellphone tower in the distance, hoping to find civilization.

"How we made it to the other side was only God," she said.

A family, worlds apart

In Durban, South Africa, she finished school, started a tailoring business, joined a church and volunteered helping homeless people.

Then in 2016, the 19-year-old got unexpected news: Her family was being resettled in the United States, without her.

"It happened so fast," she said. "When I left, the idea of them going to be resettled was never in the mind at all."

Her family settled in Boise, Idaho, and her mother signed her up for the "follow to join" program in 2017.

The program often takes years and requires strict vetting with interviews, medical exams and documentation. At the start of 2020, the woman was asked to provide a DNA sample, typically one of the final steps.

Then the COVID pandemic hit. For the next several years, her case foundered. A social worker would send her to the local consulate, where she'd be told to go back to the social worker.

"It went on and on," she said. Last year, her case was handed over to lawyers volunteering their time "and that's when we started seeing some light."

A roller coaster of hope and despair

By January, she had her travel documents and gave up her home. But her plane ticket wasn't issued

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before Trump took office. Within hours, he suspended the refugee program, and the consulate told the woman she could no longer have her passport and visa.

"That was the worst moment of my life," she said.

Nearly 130,000 refugees had conditional approval to enter the U.S. when Trump halted the program, the administration said in court documents. At least 12,000 of them were about to travel.

The aid groups' lawsuit asks a judge to declare Trump's executive order illegal. A federal judge granted a nationwide injunction temporarily blocking the order in late February. An appeals court blocked most of the injunction weeks later.

But that brief legal window was enough: A group of refugee advocates donated funds to cover the woman's flight to the U.S.

Her family met her at the airport in March — a joyful reunion more than a dozen years in the making.

"They made a feast, and there were drinks and songs and we'd dance," she said, smiling.

The appeals court ordered the government to admit thousands more conditionally accepted refugees, but the administration has created new roadblocks, Keaney said, including decreasing the time refugees' security screenings are valid to 30 days — down from three years.

"It causes cascades in delays, setting people back months or more," Keaney said. Plaintiffs in the lawsuit are waiting for the courts to decide what the government must do to comply with the ruling.

Rebuilding relationships

The Congolese woman, now 28, is still getting to know her youngest brothers, who were children when she left for South Africa. One is now a father.

"It's been a long time and a lot has changed, you know, on my side and on their side," she said. "I'm still on that learning journey. We are getting to bond again."

Boise is friendly, but she hasn't escaped the worries she hoped to leave behind. She fears being exposed as the plaintiff in a lawsuit against the Trump administration will turn her family into targets for harassment.

"Home is where my family is. If me being known can bring any kind of negative impact ... I don't want to even imagine that happening," she said.

What to know about how Trump's judicial picks could reshape abortion rights for decades

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A review by The Associated Press shows that several of President Donald Trump's nominees to the federal courts have revealed anti-abortion views, been associated with anti-abortion groups or defended abortion restrictions.

Several have helped defend their state's abortion restrictions in court and some have been involved in cases with national impact, including on access to medication abortion.

While Trump has said issues related to abortion should be left to the states, the nominees, with lifetime appointments, would be in position to roll back abortion rights long after Trump leaves the White House.

Trump has been inconsistent on abortion

Trump has repeatedly shifted his messaging on abortion, often giving contradictory or vague answers.

In the years before his most recent presidential campaign, Trump had voiced support for a federal ban on abortion on or after 20 weeks in pregnancy and said he might support a national ban around 15 weeks. He later settled on messaging that decisions about abortion access should be left to the states.

Throughout his campaign, Trump has alternated between taking credit for appointing the Supreme Court justices who helped overturn *Roe v. Wade* and striking a more neutral tone. That's been an effort to navigate the political divide between his base of anti-abortion supporters and the broader public, which largely supports access to abortion.

Many nominees have anti-abortion backgrounds

One Trump nominee called abortion a "barbaric practice" while another referred to himself as a "zealot" for the anti-abortion movement. A nominee from Tennessee said abortion deserves special scrutiny be-

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cause "this is the only medical procedure that terminates a life."

One from Missouri spread misinformation about medication abortion, including that it "starves the baby to death in the womb" in a lawsuit aiming to challenge the Food and Drug Administration's approval of the abortion pill mifepristone.

Legal experts and abortion rights advocates warn of a methodical remaking of the federal courts in a way that could pose enduring threats to abortion access nationwide.

Bernadette Meyler, a professor of constitutional law at Stanford University, said judicial appointments "are a way of federally shaping the abortion question without going through Congress or making a big, explicit statement."

"It's a way to cover up a little bit what is happening in the abortion sphere compared to legislation or executive orders that may be more visible, dramatic and spark more backlash," she said.

The nominees represent Trump's 'promises' to Americans, White House says

Harrison Fields, a White House spokesperson, said "every nominee of the President represents his promises to the American people and aligns with the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling."

"The Democrats' extreme position on abortion was rejected in November in favor of President Trump's commonsense approach, which allows states to decide, supports the sanctity of human life, and prevents taxpayer funding of abortion," Fields said in a statement to the AP.

Trump focused primarily on the economy and immigration during his 2024 campaign, the issues that surveys showed were the most important topics for voters.

Anti-abortion groups, abortion rights advocates respond

Anti-abortion advocates say it's premature to determine whether the nominees will support their objectives but that they're hopeful based on the names put forth so far.

"We look forward to four more years of nominees cut from that mold," said Katie Glenn Daniel, director of legal affairs for the national anti-abortion organization SBA Pro-Life America.

Abortion rights advocates said Trump is embedding abortion opponents into the judiciary one judge at a time

"This just feeds into this larger strategy where Trump has gotten away with distancing himself from abortion, saying he's going to leave it to the states, while simultaneously appointing anti-abortion extremists at all levels of government," said Mini Timmaraju, president of the national abortion rights organization Reproductive Freedom for All.

Trump has said abortion is a state issue. His judicial picks could shape it nationally for decades

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — One called abortion a "barbaric practice." Another referred to himself as a "zealot" for the anti-abortion movement. Several have played prominent roles in defending their state's abortion restrictions in court and in cases that have had national impact, including on access to medication abortion.

As President Donald Trump pushes the Senate to confirm his federal judicial nominees, a review by The Associated Press shows that roughly half of them have revealed anti-abortion views, been associated with anti-abortion groups or defended abortion restrictions.

Trump has offered shifting positions on the issue while indicating he wants to leave questions of abortion access to the states. But his court nominees will have lifetime appointments and be in position to roll back abortion access long after the Republican president leaves the White House.

Bernadette Meyler, a professor of constitutional law at Stanford University, said judicial nominations "are a way of federally shaping the abortion question without going through Congress or making a big, explicit statement."

"It's a way to cover up a little bit what is happening in the abortion sphere compared to legislation or executive orders that may be more visible, dramatic and spark more backlash," she said.

Trump is having an enduring impact on the federal courts

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Of the 17 judicial nominees so far in Trump's second term, at least eight have argued in favor of abortion restrictions or against expanded abortion access. No such records could be found for the other nine, nor did the AP review find evidence that any of Trump's judicial nominees support increased access to abortion.

"Every nominee of the President represents his promises to the American people and aligns with the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling," a White House spokesman, Harrison Fields, said in a statement that referenced the 2022 decision overturning the constitutional right to abortion established in *Roe v. Wade*. "The Democrats' extreme position on abortion was rejected in November in favor of President Trump's commonsense approach, which allows states to decide, supports the sanctity of human life, and prevents taxpayer funding of abortion."

Trump's first term also had an enduring impact on the courts, appointing 234 judges. By the end of that term, more than one-quarter of active federal judges were nominated by Trump, including three Supreme Court justices who helped overturn *Roe v. Wade*.

Challenging abortion care, medication, Planned Parenthood

In his second term, all but five of his 17 nominees are from states that went for Trump in 2024 and where Republicans have pushed severe abortion restrictions. Among them, four nominees are from Missouri and five are from Florida.

Here is a look at the nominees who have tried to reduce abortion access or have advocated for restrictions. They did not respond to requests for comment:

— Whitney Hermandorfer, who has been confirmed to the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, has built much of her relatively short career as a lawyer around challenging former President Joe Biden's policies related to abortion and transgender rights. She challenged a federal law requiring employers to provide workers with reasonable accommodations to get abortion care, as well as Title X regulations that required providers who receive funding through the program to give information about abortions to patients if asked.

Hermandorfer defended Tennessee's abortion ban, one of the strictest in the country, in court and tried to dismiss a lawsuit from doctors seeking clarification on exemptions to the ban. She said abortion deserves special scrutiny because "this is the only medical procedure that terminates a life."

— Maria Lanahan, a district court nominee in Missouri, helped write the state's complaint in a lawsuit that had sweeping national implications for access to medication abortion. The case challenged the FDA approval of the abortion pill mifepristone despite decades of evidence showing the drug is safe and effective.

The lawyer supported Missouri's effort to strip Planned Parenthood of state Medicaid funding and defended the state's abortion ban after a group of clergy sued, arguing it violated the state constitution's protections for religious freedom.

— Jordan Pratt, a nominee for the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, called abortion a "barbaric practice" and "one of the most severe invasions of personal rights imaginable" in an amicus brief supporting Florida's 15-week abortion ban. The state now bans the procedure at six weeks.

In 2025, Pratt struck down a Florida law that created a judicial waiver program for minors seeking to have abortions without parental consent. The lawyer also worked for the Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal organization that opposes abortion and has sued to reverse the FDA approval of mifepristone.

— John Guard, also nominated to fill for the same district, defended Florida's then-15-week abortion ban in court as the state's chief deputy attorney general.

— Joshua Divine, a deputy solicitor general of Missouri who is nominated to be a district judge in the state, is currently representing Missouri in a case challenging the FDA approval of mifepristone. Divine co-authored the lawsuit, which includes misinformation about medication abortion, including that it "starves the baby to death in the womb."

In his college newspaper, Divine described himself as a "zealot" for the anti-abortion movement, referred to abortion as "the killing of an innocent, genetically unique human being" and argued that life begins at fertilization.

He also stepped into a prominent role in the fight over abortion rights in the state after Missouri voters approved an abortion rights amendment in 2024. That amendment did not immediately override state laws. It left it up to abortion rights groups to ask courts to knock down abortion restrictions they believed

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were now unconstitutional. During the ensuing legal battles, Divine represented the state in defending a host of abortion restrictions.

— Chad Meredith, Trump's nominee to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky, defended the state's abortion ban and other restrictions while he was the state's chief deputy general counsel. That included a law requiring doctors to perform ultrasounds and describe images to abortion patients.

— Bill Mercer, a Republican state lawmaker in Montana who is nominated for a U.S. District Court judgeship in the state, has repeatedly supported anti-abortion bills. Those include ones that sought to ban abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy; require a 24-hour waiting period and mandatory ultrasounds for abortion patients; require parental notification for minors to get an abortion; prohibit the use of state funding for abortions; prohibit certain insurance policies from covering abortions; and restrict what types of medical professionals can dispense medication abortion.

— Jennifer Mascott, a lawyer in the White House Counsel's Office and a Trump nominee to the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, has spoken repeatedly about abortion law in panels and interviews.

After the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, Mascott in an interview on "Fox News Live" disagreed with the argument that the decision undermined the court's legitimacy. She said abortion issues are "more appropriately decided" by the states, elected officials in Congress and people in their local communities.

Anti-abortion groups are optimistic based on Trump's early nominees

Anti-abortion groups said it is premature to make broad conclusions about whether the nominees would help carry out their policy goals but that they were optimistic based on the names they have seen so far.

"We look forward to four more years of nominees cut from that mold," said Katie Glenn Daniel, director of legal affairs for the national anti-abortion organization SBA Pro-Life America.

Kristi Hamrick, spokesperson for Students for Life, said she was hopeful the administration will continue nominating those "who will respect the rule of law."

Abortion rights advocates said Trump is embedding abortion opponents into the judiciary one judge at a time.

Mini Timmaraju, president of the national abortion rights organization Reproductive Freedom for All, said the courts, until now, have largely been an effective option for advocates to challenge state abortion bans and restrictions.

"This just feeds into this larger strategy where Trump has gotten away with distancing himself from abortion — saying he's going to leave it to the states while simultaneously appointing anti-abortion extremists at all levels of government," she said.

Today in History: August 11, first prisoners reach Alcatraz

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Aug. 11, the 223rd day of 2025. There are 142 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 11, 1934, the first federal prisoners arrived at Alcatraz Island, a former military prison, in San Francisco Bay; the island would be home to more than 1,500 prisoners over the next three decades, including gangsters Al Capone and James "Whitey" Bulger, before closing in 1963.

Also on this date:

In 1919, Germany's Weimar Constitution was signed by President Friedrich Ebert.

In 1929, Babe Ruth became the first baseball player to reach 500 career home runs with a homer at Cleveland's League Park.

In 1949, President Harry S. Truman nominated General Omar N. Bradley to become the first chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

In 1952, Hussein bin Talal was proclaimed King of Jordan, beginning a reign lasting nearly 47 years.

In 1956, abstract painter Jackson Pollock died in an automobile accident on Long Island, New York at age 44.

In 1965, rioting that claimed 34 lives and lasted six days broke out in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles.

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Angeles.

In 1972, the last U.S. ground combat troops in South Vietnam left to return to the United States.

In 1973, at a house party in the Bronx, 18-year-old DJ Kool Herc began extending the musical breaks of the records he was playing and speaking over the beat, marking the (unofficial) birth of hip-hop music.

In 1992, the Mall of America, the nation's largest shopping and entertainment center, opened in Bloomington, Minnesota.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton made the first use of the historic line-item veto, rejecting three items in spending and tax bills. (The U.S. Supreme Court later struck down the veto as unconstitutional.)

In 2012, more than 300 people were killed and more than 3,000 injured after earthquakes struck near Tabriz, Iran.

In 2014, Academy Award-winning actor and comedian Robin Williams died in Tiburon, California at age 63.

Today's Birthdays: Magazine columnist Marilyn Vos Savant is 79. Country music singer John Conlee is 79. Computer scientist and Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak is 75. Musician Joe Jackson is 71. Playwright David Henry Hwang is 68. Journalist/commentator David Brooks is 64. Actor Viola Davis is 60. Actor Embeth Davidtz is 60. Actor-host Joe Rogan is 58. Actor Anna Gunn is 57. Actor Sophie Okonedo (oh-koh-NAY'-doh) is 57. Rock guitarist Charlie Sexton is 57. Hip-hop artist Ali Shaheed Muhammad (A Tribe Called Quest) is 55. Actor Will Friedle is 49. Rock singer Ben Gibbard is 49. Actor Merritt Wever is 45. Actor Chris Hemsworth is 42. Rapper Asher Roth is 40. Political commentator Tomi Lahren is 33. Actor Alyson Stoner is 32.