

Groton Daily Independent

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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.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Saturday,, August 16

Boys Soccer at Hot Springs, 11 a.m.

Girls Soccer at Sioux Falls Christian, Noon

Sunday, August 17

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

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

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

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

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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.

Perplexity Eyes Chrome

AI startup Perplexity has made an unsolicited \$34.5B all-cash bid to acquire Google's Chrome browser, which boasts over 3 billion users worldwide. The bid comes as a federal court considers whether to force Google to divest key assets, including Chrome, after ruling last year that the company holds an illegal monopoly in search and digital advertising. A decision on potential remedies is expected this month. Google, which is appealing the ruling, has shown no willingness to sell.

Perplexity already offers Comet, an AI-powered browser that can perform tasks for users. Acquiring Chrome would vastly expand Perplexity's user base and strengthen its position against competitors. OpenAI, which is developing its own AI-enabled browser, has also expressed interest in buying Chrome.

Perplexity's bid includes \$3B in investments over two years for Chrome and Chromium, maintaining its open-source status and keeping Google Search as the default. The company says its all-cash offer—backed by investors and exceeding its own \$18B valuation—is designed to sidestep potential antitrust challenges.

A Continent of Heat

Wildfires in Europe killed at least three people yesterday—two in Spain and one in Albania. Thousands of people have been evacuated as blazes broke out across parts of Spain, France, Greece, Portugal, Turkey, and the Balkans.

In many places, the danger is compounded by a dayslong heat wave caused by a persistent high-pressure system pulling warm, dry air across the continent. France and Hungary have seen record-high temperatures, with parts of France placed under the country's highest-level heat alert. Albania, Montenegro, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the UK have also issued heat advisories. Parts of Spain this week witnessed temperatures above 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

Since the 1980s, Europe has outpaced other continents in warming, with temperatures increasing at twice the speed of the global average. That trend is partly attributed to reduced air pollution on the continent; efforts to crack down on aerosols have resulted in reduced cloud cover, enabling more solar radiation to reach land.

Crypto Founder Guilty

Cryptocurrency entrepreneur Kwon Do-hyung, better known as Do Kwon, pleaded guilty yesterday to federal conspiracy and wire fraud charges, three years after his company's collapse wiped out over \$40B in investor assets.

Kwon cofounded Terraform Labs in 2018, creating a digital currency he claimed was pegged to the US dollar—a type of stablecoin. That promise unraveled in May 2022, when a wave of withdrawals sent the currency's value to near zero within days. The federal government accused Kwon of misleading investors about the stability and value of Terraform's currency.

Under yesterday's plea deal, Kwon will forfeit \$19.3M and several properties. Prosecutors may also seek up to a 12-year prison sentence at his Dec. 11 sentencing. After serving half his time, the 33-year-old may be eligible to serve the rest in his native South Korea, where he faces further criminal charges. This deal is separate from a \$4.5B civil settlement Kwon and Terraform reached with the US government last year.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Taylor Swift announces her 12th studio album "The Life of a Showgirl"; Swift will appear on the "New Heights" podcast, cohosted by her boyfriend, Travis Kelce, tonight at 7 pm ET to discuss the album.

UFC CEO Dana White says a fight night will take place at the White House next year on the Fourth of July as part of the recent streaming deal with Paramount.

Los Angeles Dodgers star Shohei Ohtani and his agent are accused in lawsuit of "sabotaging" \$240M real estate project.

2025 Little League World Series kicks off today; see complete bracket and schedule.

Science & Technology

Elon Musk threatens lawsuit against Apple, claiming the company artificially boosts OpenAI's app in the App Store; Musk's xAI runs the Grok chatbot, a competitor to OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Seventy-year-old Parkinson's drug shows effectiveness in boosting the body's immune system against tuberculosis; the world's deadliest infectious disease, TB kills an estimated 1.3 million people per year.

Remains of Dennis Bell, an Antarctic researcher who disappeared in 1959, discovered by Polish team studying a receding glacier on King George Island.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +1.1%, Dow +1.1%, Nasdaq +1.4%), with S&P 500 and Nasdaq notching record highs.

US consumer price index held steady at 2.7% in July from a year earlier; core inflation—excluding food and energy—rose 3.1% year over year, above forecast of 3% and June's 2.9% annual rise.

Spirit Airlines warns it might not be able to survive without more cash; comes five months after emerging from Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Politics & World Affairs

DC National Guard troops arrest roughly two dozen people on first day of deployment to combat crime in the nation's capital; soldiers will not carry guns in most cases, per officials.

Mexico expels 26 high-ranking cartel figures wanted by US authorities in deal with Trump administration.

Gunman who targeted Centers for Disease Control and Prevention headquarters Friday died by suicide after shooting roughly 200 rounds at CDC buildings.

South Korea's former first lady Kim Keon Hee is arrested on corruption charges, including bribery; her husband, former President Yoon Suk Yeol, is jailed on insurrection charges after briefly declaring martial law in December.



The Life of Linda Lee (Ott) Fischer

Linda Lee Ott Fischer, 81, of Harrison, Arkansas, passed away Monday, June 2, 2025 at the Springs of Mt Vista in Harrison.

She was born October 27, 1943, in Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Clifford George and Mary Louise (Samuel) Ott. Linda was raised on the family farm near Verdon, South Dakota and was baptized and confirmed in her faith at West Hanson Lutheran Church near Stratford, SD. She proudly carried her rural upbringing throughout her life and often shared fond memories of driving grain trucks and working in the fields.

Linda attended grade school in Verdon and graduated from Conde High School in 1961. She earned her bachelor's degree from Northern State University in 1965 and later earned her master's degree from the University of Arkansas. She began her professional career teaching business classes at Watertown Vocation/Technical College in South Dakota. After marrying Gerald Eugene "Gerry" Fischer in 1967, the couple moved south, teaching in Iowa, and later working in Kansas City, before settling in Harrison. In Harrison, Linda continued her teaching career by instructing business classes at the Vo-Tech, which later became North Arkansas College. She also worked at Duncan Parking Meter Company until her retirement.

Linda loved spending time with her children and grandchildren. Though she made her home in Arkansas, her heart remained tied to South Dakota, and she rarely missed a family get-together. She was also a devoted member of her church, First Lutheran Church, until she was no longer physically able to attend. She was preceded in death by her parents; her brother, Loel Ott; a grandson, Joey Franklin McCutcheon; and the father of her children, Gerald Eugene Fischer.

She is survived by her children, Chloette McCutcheon and husband, Joey, of Mt Judea; Gerald Eugene "Gef" Fischer and wife Jennifer, of Ralph; Loel Fischer of Sedalia, Missouri; 12 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; her brother, Lari Ott and wife, Linda, of Pierre, South Dakota; her sister, Cheryl Hilgemann and husband, Jeff, of Nevis, Minnesota; and a host of nieces, nephew, and cousins.

A memorial service was held June 21, 2025 at First Luther Church of Harrison, Arkansas with Pastor Bob Herring officiating.

A service of internment will be held at the Groton Union Cemetery at 11am on August 15, 2025. There will be a lunch following the service at St. John's Lutheran Church in Groton, SD. Friends and family are invited to attend.

Memorial contributions may be made to the BrightFocus Foundation (Alzheimer Disease Research) 22512 Gateway Center Drive, Clarksburg, MD 20871 or to a charity of your choice.

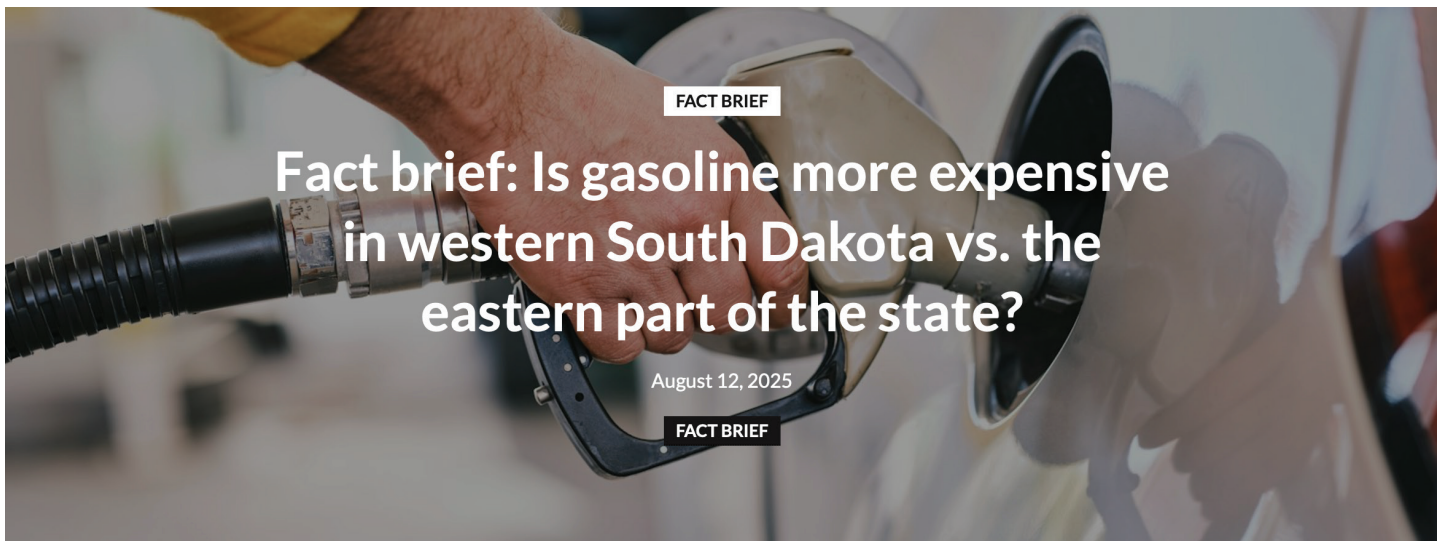
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**SOUTH DAKOTA
NEWS WATCH**

Inform. Enlighten. Illuminate.



Yes.

Rapid City and most places in western South Dakota have higher gasoline prices than Sioux Falls and other parts of the eastern part of the state.

Over the past 18 months, Sioux Falls' gas prices are typically 10 cents to 20 cents below the statewide average.

On Aug. 11, average prices in Rapid City were \$3.10 per gallon and in Sioux Falls, \$2.89 – a difference of 21 cents.

One year ago, Sioux Falls' price-per-gallon was 50 cents less on average than Rapid City.

There are several reasons for the disparity. The Sioux Falls market is more competitive, there's a major pipeline feeding Sioux Falls and the fuel comes from different regions, according to an expert from Gas Buddy.

Gas prices can vary even more wildly from state to state because of the differences in state taxes. Federal and state taxes make up about 15% of the cost of a gallon.

2025 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally Final Vehicle Counts

STURGIS, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation (SDDOT) provides daily traffic counts at nine locations for vehicles entering Sturgis for the 85th Annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally which ran from Aug. 1-10, 2025.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Friday, Aug. 8, 2025: 50,672 vehicles entered
Up 13.3% from the previous five-year average

Saturday, Aug. 9, 2025: 38,158 vehicles entered
Up 13.6 % from the previous five-year average

Sunday, Aug. 10, 2025: 22,754 vehicles entered
Up 10.9% from the previous five-year average

2025 Total to Date: (10-day Total Vehicles) 537,459 (Up 11.3%)
Previous Five-Year Average (2020-2024) 10-day total to date: 482,987 Vehicles

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

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

Trooper Clears I-90 of Wrong-Way Driver

What: Wrong-Way Driver

Where: I-90, mile marker 168, five miles east of Belvidere, SD

When: 4:06 p.m., Sunday, August 10, 2025

Driver 1: 63-year-old male from Midland, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 1: 2014 Chevrolet Silverado

Seat Belt Used: Yes

Charges Pending: Yes

Jackson County, S.D.- On Sunday afternoon a South Dakota Highway Patrol (SDHP) trooper observed a Chevrolet Silverado traveling westbound in the eastbound lanes of Interstate 90 near mile marker 168. The trooper activated their emergency lights and pursued the vehicle, tracking it from the adjacent westbound passing lane on I-90 in hopes of warning oncoming traffic and stopping the vehicle.

As the vehicle continued traveling in the wrong direction, the trooper crossed the median intending to make physical contact with the vehicle to stop it. After crossing the median and braking in front of the wrong-way driver, the pickup rear-ended the patrol car. After the collision the pickup then continued to travel westbound, and the trooper performed a precision immobilization technique (PIT) to force the truck into the median where it came to a stop.

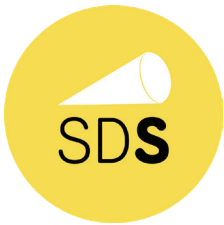
"Wrong-way drivers are one of the most dangerous events we see on the roadway. The trooper's quick action and exceptional bravery likely prevented a deadly head-on collision," said Col. Casey Collins, Superintendent of the SDHP.

Charges are pending against the driver. The driver was not injured from the contact. The trooper sustained minor injuries.

The name of the person involved has not been released.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the incident. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Traffic and injury accidents surged higher at 2025 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally

BY: SETH TUPPER - AUGUST 12, 2025 3:46 PM

Traffic and injury accidents were up while deaths and arrests were down during the recently concluded Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, according to data from state officials.

The 85th annual event began Aug. 1 and continued through Sunday. The increased traffic followed a trend of higher attendance in round-numbered anniversary years.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation's automated traffic counters at nine locations in Sturgis logged 537,459 vehicles entering the city during the rally, which was up 11% compared with last year, according to final numbers published Tuesday. It was also an 11% increase over the previous five-year average.

With the increased traffic came a shift toward greater accident severity. The overall number of traffic accidents reported by the Highway Patrol in the Sturgis and Rapid City areas during the rally was 93, only four more than last year, but the number of injury accidents increased from 35 to 66, while the number of non-injury accidents fell from 54 to 27.

The increased traffic was also accompanied by more tickets and warnings. There were 1,524 citations issued by the Highway Patrol this year, up from 1,455 last year, and 4,959 warnings, up from 4,445.

Meanwhile, drunken driving arrests by troopers fell from 155 to 119, misdemeanor drug arrests dropped from 281 to 266, and felony drug arrests declined from 163 to 104.

Searchlight asked Sturgis Mayor Kevin Forrester why arrests were down while traffic was up.

"I'd like to think it's people behaving," he said.

He added that he's also been told by law enforcement that lesser-attended rallies make it easier for law enforcement to move around and do police work, while the opposite can be true during better-attended rallies.

The number of traffic deaths in the state potentially attributable to this year's rally is at least six, according to a South Dakota Searchlight analysis, down from 12 last year. Searchlight counts any motorcycle-involved traffic death anywhere in the state, not only during the official dates but also during the days just before and after the rally.

That's different from the Highway Patrol, which only counts crashes on official rally dates and only in



A South Dakota Highway Patrol trooper makes a traffic stop during the 2025 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. (Courtesy of South

Dakota Highway Patrol)

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western South Dakota, and therefore typically undercounts rally-related deaths. Using those parameters, the Highway Patrol counted four deaths this year and three last year.

Neither method includes deaths that occur in other states while bikers are traveling to or from the rally, or deaths in nearby states such as Wyoming, where there are rally-themed events that attract bikers to ride back and forth across the state line. This year, the Wyoming Highway Patrol reported three motorcycle-involved crash deaths from the day before the rally's official start through the rally's end.

Recent motorcycle crash deaths in SD

The following six motorcycle-involved traffic deaths occurred in South Dakota during the days leading up to and including the 2025 Sturgis Motorcycle Rally. All information is from the state Department of Public Safety, which includes the Highway Patrol.

Thursday, July 31: Anthony Michalicki, 70, of Pompano Beach, Florida, died from injuries suffered when the Harley Davidson he was driving just east of Deadwood on U.S. Highway 14A left the road and entered the ditch, separating him from the bike.

Friday, Aug. 1: Manuel O. Acosta, 71, of Chicago, died from injuries he suffered when his westbound Harley Davidson began wobbling and fell down on Interstate 90 three miles east of Chamberlain, sending it into the ditch and separating him from the bike.

Saturday, Aug. 2: The 58-year-old male driver of a Harley Davidson (whose name has not yet been released) was traveling in the passing lane of U.S. Highway 16A in the Mount Rushmore area when he was unable to negotiate a curve and the bike tipped onto its side, slid and collided with three other motorcycles, killing the 58-year-old man and injuring the others.

Sunday, Aug. 3: Sturgis Police attempted to stop a 28-year-old man (whose name has not yet been released) on a Harley Davidson for exhibition driving near the Iron Horse Saloon, but the driver fled, resulting in a pursuit that ended when the motorcycle left the road and entered the ditch at mile marker 52 on U.S. Highway 14A, causing the man's death the next day from injuries suffered in the crash.

Monday, Aug. 4: A 60-year-old male driver (whose name has not yet been released) of a Harley Davidson on U.S. Highway 16A near mile marker 43 in the Black Hills slid into two other motorcycles while attempting to navigate a sharp corner, killing the 60-year-old and injuring his female passenger and the two other drivers.

Thursday, Aug. 7: The driver of a Toyota Tacoma pickup on state Highway 44 east of Rapid City made a left turn without seeing an approaching Honda CBR motorcycle, causing a crash that killed the motorcycle's 23-year-old male driver (whose name has not yet been released) but did not injure the driver of the pickup.

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.

Kratom faces increasing scrutiny from states and the feds

At least seven states, including SD, have considered bills to tighten regulations of the herbal supplement this year

BY: AMANDA HERNÁNDEZ - AUGUST 12, 2025 9:21 AM

For years, state lawmakers have taken the lead on regulating kratom — the controversial herbal supplement used for pain relief, anxiety and opioid withdrawal symptoms. Some states have banned it entirely. Others have passed laws requiring age limits, labeling and lab testing.

At least half of the states — including South Dakota — and the District of Columbia have enacted some form of regulation on kratom or its components, building a patchwork of policies around a product largely unaddressed by the federal government.

But that may soon change. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is pushing to ban 7-hydroxymitragynine, or 7-OH — a powerful compound found in small amounts in kratom and sometimes concentrated or synthesized in products sold online, at smoke shops or behind gas station counters.

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Federal health officials announced last month that the compound poses serious public health risks and should be classified as a Schedule I controlled substance, alongside heroin and LSD.

The move marks a significant shift in how federal regulators are approaching kratom, which they attempted to ban in 2016. It also has sparked debate about how the change could impact the growing 7-OH industry and its consumers.

This year, at least seven states have considered bills to tighten kratom regulations, including proposals for bans, age restrictions and labeling requirements.

Kratom, which originates from the leaves of a tree native to Southeast Asia, can have a wide range of mental and bodily effects, according to federal officials, addiction medicine specialists and kratom researchers. Reports of fatal kratom overdoses have surfaced in recent years, though kratom is often taken in combination with other substances.

Kratom and 7-OH are distinct products with separate markets, but they are closely connected. 7-OH is a semi-synthetic compound derived from kratom and only emerged on the market in late 2023, while kratom itself has been available for decades.

Leading kratom researchers also say more research is needed to fully understand the long-term effects of using both substances.

"There's much we don't know, unfortunately, on all sides," said Christopher R. McCurdy, a professor of medicinal chemistry at the University of Florida. McCurdy is a trained pharmacist and has studied kratom for more than 20 years.

Research suggests kratom may help with opioid withdrawal and doesn't seem to cause severe withdrawal on its own. Smaller amounts seem to act as a stimulant, while larger doses may have sedative, opioidlike effects. Very little is known about the risks of long-term use in humans, according to McCurdy.

As for 7-OH, it shows potential for treating pain, but it hasn't been studied in humans, and it may carry a high risk of addiction. Researchers don't yet understand how much is safe to take or how often it should be used, McCurdy told Stateline.

While some leading kratom experts agree that kratom and 7-OH should be regulated, they caution that placing 7-OH under a strict Schedule I classification would make it much harder to study — and argue it should instead be classified as Schedule II like some other opioids.

A federal survey from 2023 estimated that about 1.6 million Americans age 12 and older used kratom in the year before the study. The American Kratom Association, a national industry lobbying group, estimated in 2021 that between 11 million and 16 million Americans safely consume kratom products each year.

Since gaining popularity in recent years, 7-OH has appeared in a growing number of products. Some researchers and addiction medicine specialists say many consumers, especially those new to kratom, sometimes don't understand the difference between products.

"It's a pure opioid that's available without a prescription, so it's akin to having morphine or oxycodone for sale at a smoke shop or a gas station," McCurdy said. "This is a public health crisis waiting to happen."



A variety of kratom and 7-OH products — including capsules, cartridges and wellness shots — are on display at a smoke shop in Buffalo, N.Y. States have led the way in regulating kratom, and now federal officials want to ban 7-OH, a powerful compound found in some kratom products. (Photo by Amanda Hernández/Stateline)

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Federal crackdown targets 7-OH, not kratom

In late July, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommended that the federal Drug Enforcement Administration place 7-OH in Schedule I, citing a high potential for abuse. The classification would not apply to kratom leaves or powders with naturally occurring 7-OH.

"We're not targeting the kratom leaf or ground-up kratom," FDA Commissioner Marty Makary said at a news conference. "We are targeting a concentrated synthetic byproduct that is an opioid."

Makary acknowledged that there isn't enough research or data to fully understand how widespread 7-OH's use or impact may be. Still, he said the Trump administration wants to be "aggressive and proactive" in addressing the issue before it grows into a larger public health problem.

While only small amounts of 7-OH occur naturally in the kratom plant, federal officials have raised concerns about U.S. products containing synthetic or concentrated forms of the compound because it's more potent than morphine and primarily responsible for kratom's opioidlike effects.

The FDA's recommendation to schedule 7-OH will now go to the DEA, which oversees the final steps of the process — including issuing a formal proposal and opening a public comment period.

If finalized, the rule could affect both companies selling enhanced kratom products and consumers in states where those products are currently legal.

The DEA backed off scheduling kratom compounds in 2016 after widespread public opposition.

Kirsten Smith, an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Johns Hopkins University who is studying kratom's effects in humans, said she was surprised by the FDA's push to schedule 7-OH.

"We don't really have a public health signal of a lot of adverse events for either kratom or for 7-OH at this time," she told Stateline. "I was, frankly, always surprised that kratom was pushed toward scheduling at an earlier time point. ... I don't know that we have data to support scheduling even now."

Still, some advocacy groups, including the Holistic Alternative Recovery Trust, argue the push to schedule 7-OH is driven more by corporate interests than public health, suggesting the kratom industry is trying to sideline competition from 7-OH products.

"We think that this is just happening because of the legacy kratom manufacturers losing market share and wanting to gin up a crisis with this," said Jeff Smith, the national policy director for the group, who said he has used 7-OH for sleep and pain management.

While his organization supports regulation and safe consumption, members worry the federal government's move could drive people to riskier substances or push the market underground.

"It's made a profound difference in my life," Smith said. "We think it would be tragic to cut it off based on such a paucity of data when there's so much potential for this product to help people."

Public health concerns

Federal health officials say a key concern is the growing use of kratom and 7-OH products among teens and young adults.

Some officials and addiction medicine specialists have pointed out that these products often come in flavors and packaging designed to appeal to younger buyers, with few controls over where or how they're sold. In some states without clear regulations, kratom and 7-OH products are available at gas stations or online, sometimes without any age verification.

"Whenever you go into a gas station and even though it's behind the glass, it's kind of eye level, and it has all of these bright colors — it has all of these things that really attract the visual of a kiddo," said Socorro Green, a prevention specialist with Youth180, a nonprofit focused on youth substance use prevention in Dallas.

Green added that kratom and 7-OH products may be even more accessible to young people in rural communities, where gas stations and convenience stores are often among the few available retailers.

Some researchers and experts say that certain products may not clearly or accurately disclose their 7-OH content and are sometimes marketed or mistaken for traditional kratom.

Some cities, counties and states have responded by banning kratom or raising the minimum purchase

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age to 18 or 21. But in many areas, enforcement remains inconsistent, and some addiction specialists say clearer federal and state guidance is needed — especially as more people are using kratom and 7-OH to manage pain, anxiety or withdrawal symptoms on their own.

"There needs to be some kind of oversight, including some way of maybe helping to ensure that people know what they're getting," said Terrence Walton, the executive director and chief executive officer of NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals.

State regulations, including South Dakota

At least seven states have considered or enacted legislation this year related to kratom — ranging from age restrictions and labeling requirements to outright bans.

In New York, lawmakers passed two bills: one requiring warning labels and prohibiting kratom products from being labeled as "all natural," and another raising the minimum purchase age to 21. Neither has been sent to the governor.

In Colorado, a new measure, which was signed into law in May, prohibits kratom from being sold in forms that resemble candy or appeal to children, increases labeling requirements, limits concentrations of 7-OH, and bans the manufacture and distribution of synthetic or semi-synthetic kratom.

A similar measure passed and signed into law in February in South Dakota limits concentrations of 7-OH, bans synthetic alterations or harmful additions to kratom products, and requires labeling with safety messages. The state had previously set the minimum age for kratom use at 21.

In Mississippi, a new law that took effect in July raised the minimum purchase age for kratom to 21. It also bans synthetic kratom extracts and products with high concentrations of 7-OH. Lawmakers in Montana and Texas introduced similar legislation this year, but neither proposal advanced.

Louisiana is the latest state to enact a kratom ban, which took effect Aug. 1. Meanwhile, in July, Rhode Island became the first state to reverse its ban. The new law establishes a regulatory framework for the manufacturing, sale and distribution of kratom products, set to take effect in April 2026.

As of this year, Washington, D.C., and seven states — Alabama, Arkansas, Indiana, Louisiana, Rhode Island (until April 2026), Vermont and Wisconsin — have banned kratom. At least half of U.S. states now regulate kratom or its components in some way.

Amanda Hernández covers criminal justice for Stateline. She has reported for both national and local outlets, including ABC News, USA Today and NBC4 Washington.

Trump taps economist from far-right foundation to head agency that tracks jobs numbers

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY - AUGUST 12, 2025 1:12 PM

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump nominated conservative economist E.J. Antoni to fill the top spot at the Bureau of Labor Statistics after abruptly firing the previous statistician following a disappointing jobs report earlier this month.

Trump announced the nominee late Monday on his Truth Social platform, stating that "Our Economy is booming, and E.J. will ensure that the Numbers released are HONEST and ACCURATE."

Antoni, an economist at the far-right Heritage Foundation, has harshly criticized the previous BLS commissioner, Erika McEntarfer, who was nominated by former President Joe Biden in 2023 and confirmed by the U.S. Senate 86-6 in January 2024. The bureau tracks national economic data, including employment figures.

Without providing evidence, Trump slammed the latest jobs report, released Aug. 1, as "RIGGED" and fired McEntarfer hours later.

The economy gained just 73,000 jobs in July, according to the monthly report. BLS also significantly adjusted May and June figures, to 33,000 for both months, down from the previously reported 291,000. Revisions to past reports often happen after the bureau receives updated data from businesses and fed-

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eral agencies.

U.S. economic data collection is often referred to as the "gold standard," as Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, a Trump appointee, said last month.

Trump faced backlash for firing McEntarfer, including from his own former BLS commissioner.

William Beach, whom Trump tapped in 2017 to lead BLS, told CNN McEntarfer's firing was "groundless."

BLS data is "more accurate now than they were 30 years ago," Beach said during the Aug. 3 interview.

In an Aug. 4 appearance on Steve Bannon's WarRoom podcast, Antoni said BLS data collection is "outdated."

"You need somebody who is willing to overhaul the entire thing," he told Bannon.

Shortly after Trump's November win, Antoni posted on X that "DOGE needs to take a chainsaw to BLS."

Kevin Roberts, Heritage Foundation's president, said Tuesday that Trump made a "stellar choice" in nominating Antoni.

"EJ Antoni is one of the sharpest economic minds in the nation—a fearless truth-teller who grasps that sound economics must serve the interests of American families, not globalist elites," Roberts said in a statement. "His leadership as chief economist at The Heritage Foundation has been instrumental in advancing our mission to protect American families and rebuild a resilient economy rooted in free enterprise."

Antoni contributed to the Heritage Foundation's Project 2025, a roughly 900-page far-right blueprint to overhaul government institutions published ahead of Trump's election win.

Antoni will need approval from the Senate, which currently has a 53-47 Republican majority.

Sen. Patty Murray, a senior member and former chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, slammed Antoni as an "unqualified right-wing extremist who won't think twice about manipulating BLS data and degrading the credibility of the agency to make Trump happy."

"Any Senator who votes to confirm this partisan hack is voting to shred the integrity of our nation's best economic and jobs data, which underpin our entire economy. If E.J. Antoni gets confirmed, I hope Republicans like playing make-believe, because that's all BLS data will become," the Washington state Democrat said in a statement Tuesday.

Sen. Bill Cassidy chairs the committee, which will be tasked with advancing Antoni's nomination to the full Senate. Cassidy, of Louisiana, did not have a statement on Antoni posted on his website or X feed as of Tuesday at 3 p.m. Eastern.

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



E.J. Antoni of the Heritage Foundation testifies before a U.S. Senate Judiciary subcommittee on Oct. 24, 2023. (Screenshot from C-SPAN)

Thune anticipates 'big fight' in September over potential government shutdown

US Senate majority leader speaks to audience at Sioux Falls event

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - AUGUST 12, 2025 5:39 PM

SIOUX FALLS — When South Dakota Republican John Thune delivered his first remarks as U.S. Senate majority leader in January, he pledged to restore "regular order" to the chamber, including "bringing appropriations bills to the floor for serious deliberation."

Tuesday, he said a stopgap spending bill will likely need to be negotiated with Democrats to avoid a government shutdown in October.

Congress didn't finish its 12 annual spending bills before its August recess and would have to sprint to approve them by Oct. 1, which is the deadline to avoid a shutdown.

"We're going to have a big fight at the end of September," Thune told an audience at the Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce Inside Washington luncheon.

He told reporters after the meeting that he hopes the spending extension would be for a short amount of time if Democrats don't "work with us in a constructive way" through the traditional appropriations process.

In May, President Donald Trump released a budget request proposing \$163 billion in spending cuts. Thune said the appropriations process would allow individual programs to be reviewed by members of Congress and potentially saved from cuts if "appropriators believe that they're getting a good return for the American taxpayer."

"I think that it's in everybody's best interests if the Appropriations Committee is able to do its work and then Congress, the House and Senate, pass appropriations bills and put them on the president's desk for him to sign into law," Thune said.

Thune also addressed Trump's imposition of higher tariffs. Before last year's presidential election, Thune criticized tariff proposals like Trump's as "a recipe for increased inflation." Tuesday, he offered a different take, referencing trade deals that have resulted from tariff negotiations.

"I do think that the ways in which they are using them, in my view, at least right now is yielding some results," Thune said of the White House's strategy.

Afterward, Thune took questions from reporters on topics including immigration.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed into law last month provides \$170 billion for immigration- and border-enforcement activities. Thune said the spending helps pay for "everything we need to keep the border secure and ensure we have an orderly way of processing people who are coming into the country, whether it's for refugee status or otherwise."

The next step, Thune said, should be to address workforce shortages with legal immigration policies. Thune said "it'd be nice" if Congress passed legislation so policies don't change "from one administration to the next."

South Dakota relies on immigrants, especially in agriculture and tourism. Growing workforce needs will force the immigration issue "to be front and center," he added.



U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, speaks at a Greater Sioux Falls Chamber of Commerce Inside Washington luncheon on Aug. 12, 2025. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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"It's an economic issue because of the impact that it has," Thune said. "If you can't find workers in our economy, that's a big problem."

The chamber's Inside Washington luncheons are annual events inviting South Dakota congressional delegates to speak about issues affecting the state and businesses. Rep. Dusty Johnson is set to speak at the next luncheon on Aug. 22, and Sen. Mike Rounds is set to speak on Aug. 28.

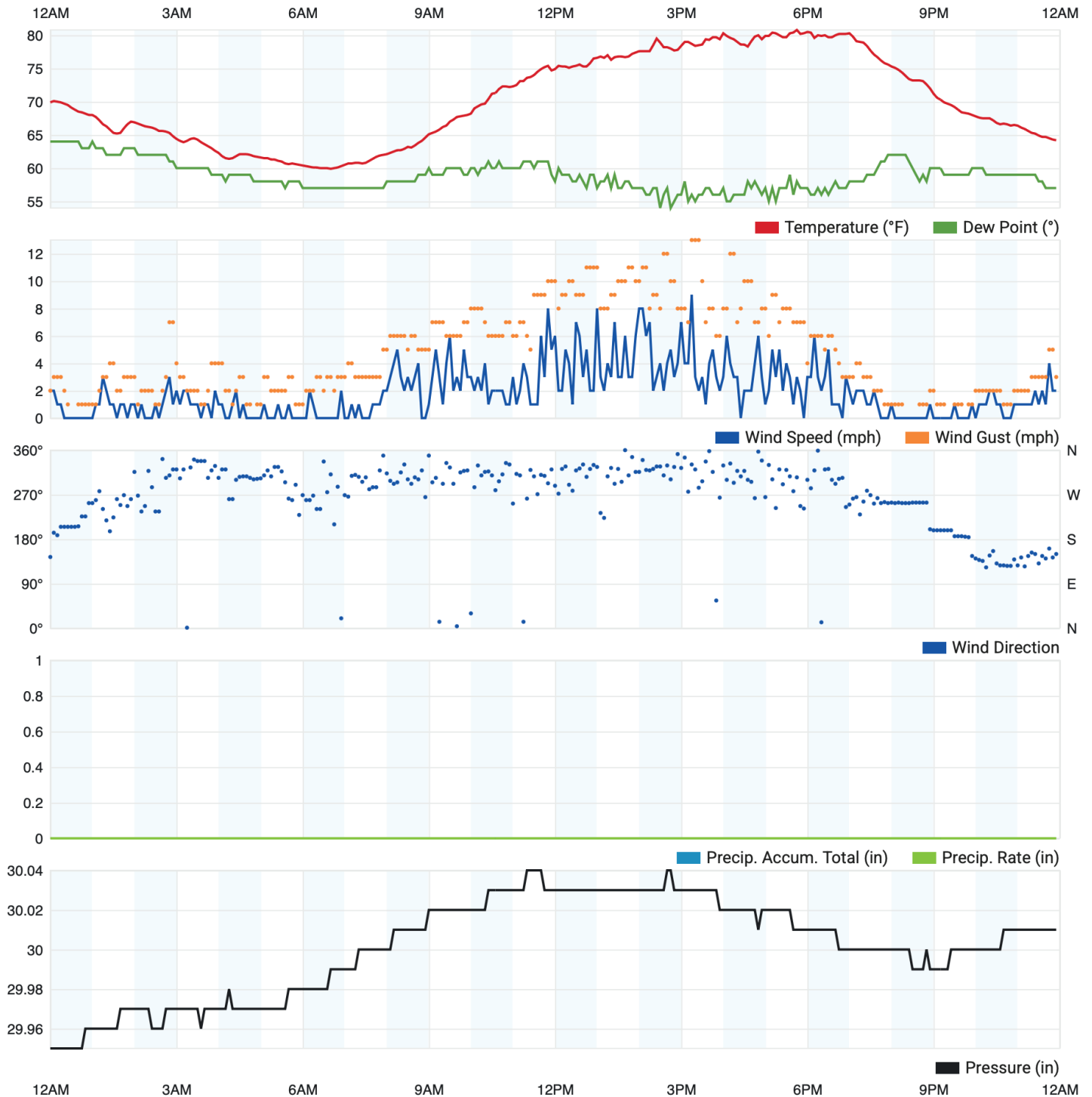
Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 12, 2025



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Today



High: 83 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Tonight



Low: 65 °F

Chance
T-storms

Thursday



High: 88 °F

Sunny

Thursday
Night



Low: 66 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 82 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated to Scattered Severe
Storms Possible

TIMING

**Wednesday Afternoon
and Evening**

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS IN
EXCESS OF 60+
MPH



LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS

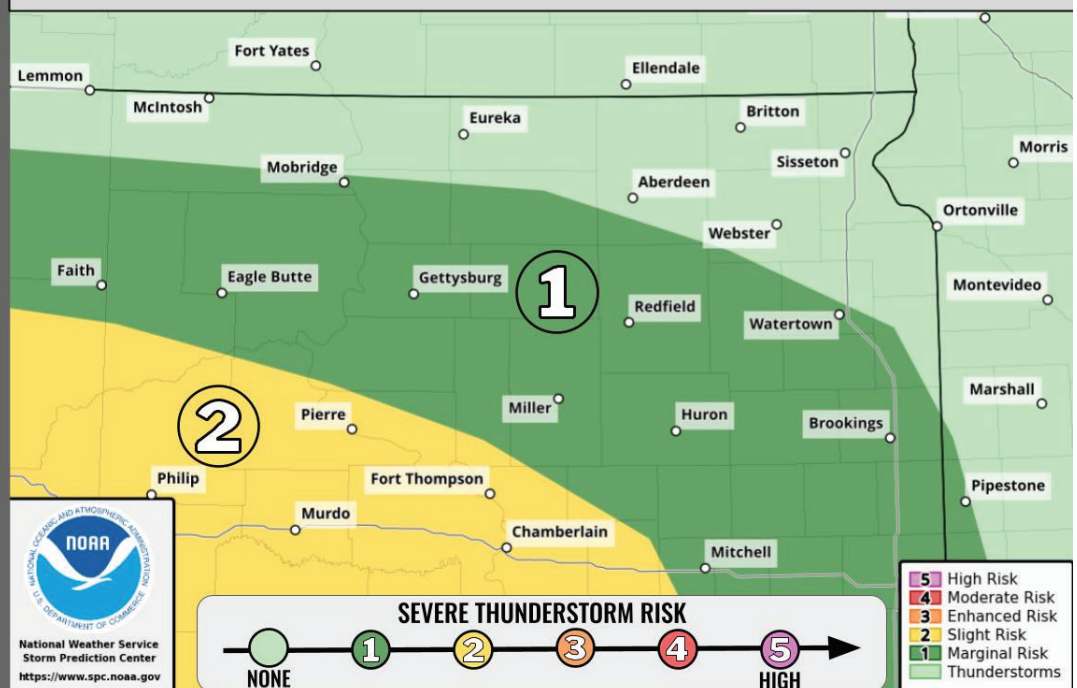


TORNADO(ES)
POSSIBLE



HEAVY
RAIN

Slight Risk For Severe Storms Today



A Slight risk for severe storms is in effect for late this afternoon and evening. Wind of 60+ mph and quarter size hail will be the main hazards, but tornadoes and flooding due to heavy rain cannot be ruled out. The greatest chance for severe storms will be over central South Dakota.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated to Scattered
severe storms *possible*.

TIMING

Early Evening into Early
Overnight

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS



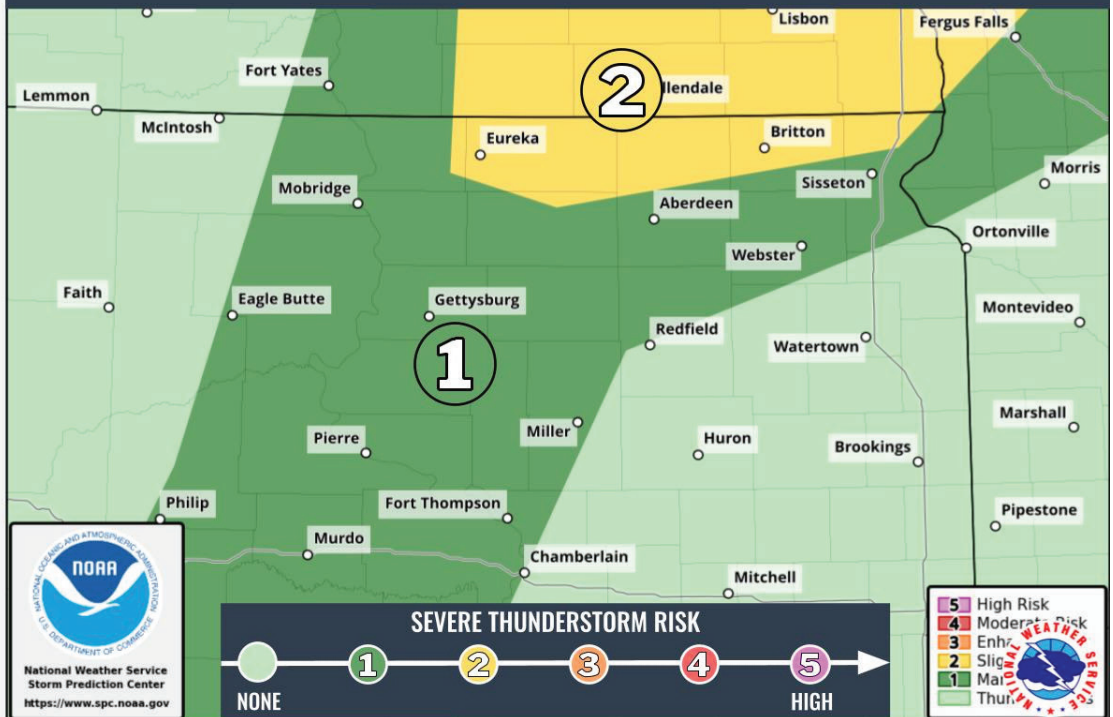
LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAINFALL

SEVERE STORMS POSSIBLE THURSDAY



Thursday evening into early overnight carries a second consecutive day of severe thunderstorm risk. The main risk area remains over far northeast South Dakota, where a Slight Risk, level 2 of 5, is in effect. Other parts of northeast, central and north central South Dakota are under a Marginal Risk, level 1 of 5. Storms will be capable of producing damaging wind gusts and large hail, and a tornado cannot be ruled out at this time.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated to Widely Scattered
severe storms *possible*.

TIMING

Early Evening into Early
Overnight

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS



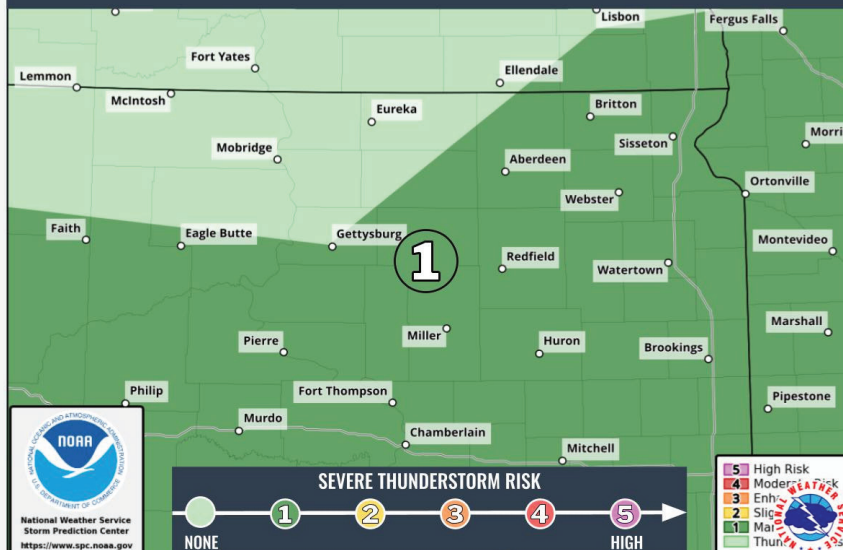
LARGE HAIL

SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAINFALL

SEVERE STORMS POSSIBLE FRIDAY



Friday evening into early overnight carries a third consecutive day of severe thunderstorm risk. A marginal risk, level 1 of 5, is over central into northeast South Dakota over into west central Minnesota. The primary threats with any severe storms will be damaging wind gusts and large hail, along with heavy rainfall.

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Heat Index Forecast Thursday

August 13, 2025
3:45 AM

→ Highest heat indices near or above 100°F over south central South Dakota

◆ Heat indices in the 90s across north central into portions of northeast South Dakota as well

→ Temperatures will moderate on Friday into the weekend

Staying Safe in the Heat

- ☀ Limit Outdoor Activities
- ☀ Drink Plenty of Water
- ☀ Avoid Alcohol
- ☀ Wear Light Clothing
- ☀ Wear Sunscreen
- ☀ Work Outdoors Early or Very Late in the Day

weather.gov/heat

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

Maximum Heat Index Forecast (°F)

	8/14 Thu																
	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm	7pm	8pm	9pm	10pm	11pm	Maximum
Aberdeen	67	71	75	77	83	85	88	91	94	93	93	91	86	82	77	75	94
Britton	68	71	75	77	83	85	87	90	91	90	89	88	83	77	74	73	91
Chamberlain	70	73	77	84	89	93	96	98	99	102	100	100	95	91	86	83	102
Clark	66	68	70	73	76	79	83	86	88	86	87	85	79	77	75	74	88
Eagle Butte	64	68	74	79	84	89	90	91	93	92	92	91	86	82	77	74	93
Eureka	65	69	72	76	82	87	89	91	93	92	93	92	87	79	74	72	93
Gettysburg	65	68	73	77	82	87	89	92	94	93	93	92	87	83	77	74	94
McIntosh	64	68	75	79	85	88	90	91	93	91	90	88	83	78	74	71	93
Milbank	67	69	71	74	76	79	83	86	88	86	86	86	78	76	74	73	88
Miller	67	71	75	78	84	88	90	93	96	95	95	93	88	84	78	77	96
Mobridge	66	69	75	79	84	88	90	92	94	93	93	92	87	82	76	73	94
Murdo	66	70	76	82	86	90	92	94	96	95	96	94	90	86	83	81	96
Pierre	69	72	78	85	89	94	96	98	100	99	100	98	93	89	86	83	100
Redfield	67	70	74	77	83	87	90	91	94	93	94	92	88	83	77	76	94
Sisseton	67	70	73	76	78	84	85	87	89	88	88	86	79	76	74	73	89
Watertown	66	67	70	73	76	79	85	86	89	88	87	86	79	77	75	74	89
Webster	67	69	72	74	77	79	83	85	87	87	86	86	79	76	74	73	87
Wheaton	67	69	72	74	76	78	79	84	86	85	84	83	78	76	74	73	86

-68-66-64-62-60-58-56-54-52-50-48-46-44-42-40-38-36-34-32-30-28-26-24-22-20-18-16-14-12-10-8-6-4-2-0-2-4-6-8-10-12-14-16-18-20-22-24-26-28-30-32-34-36-38-40-42-44-46-48-50-52-54-56-58-60-62-64-66-68

Maximum Heat Index Forecast (°F)

Created: 3 am CDT Wed 8/13/2025 | Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

With Thursday potentially being the warmest day of the week, including high temperatures at or above the century mark, heat index values are expected to climb into the mid 90s to lower 100s Thursday afternoon, especially from south central up through north central South Dakota.

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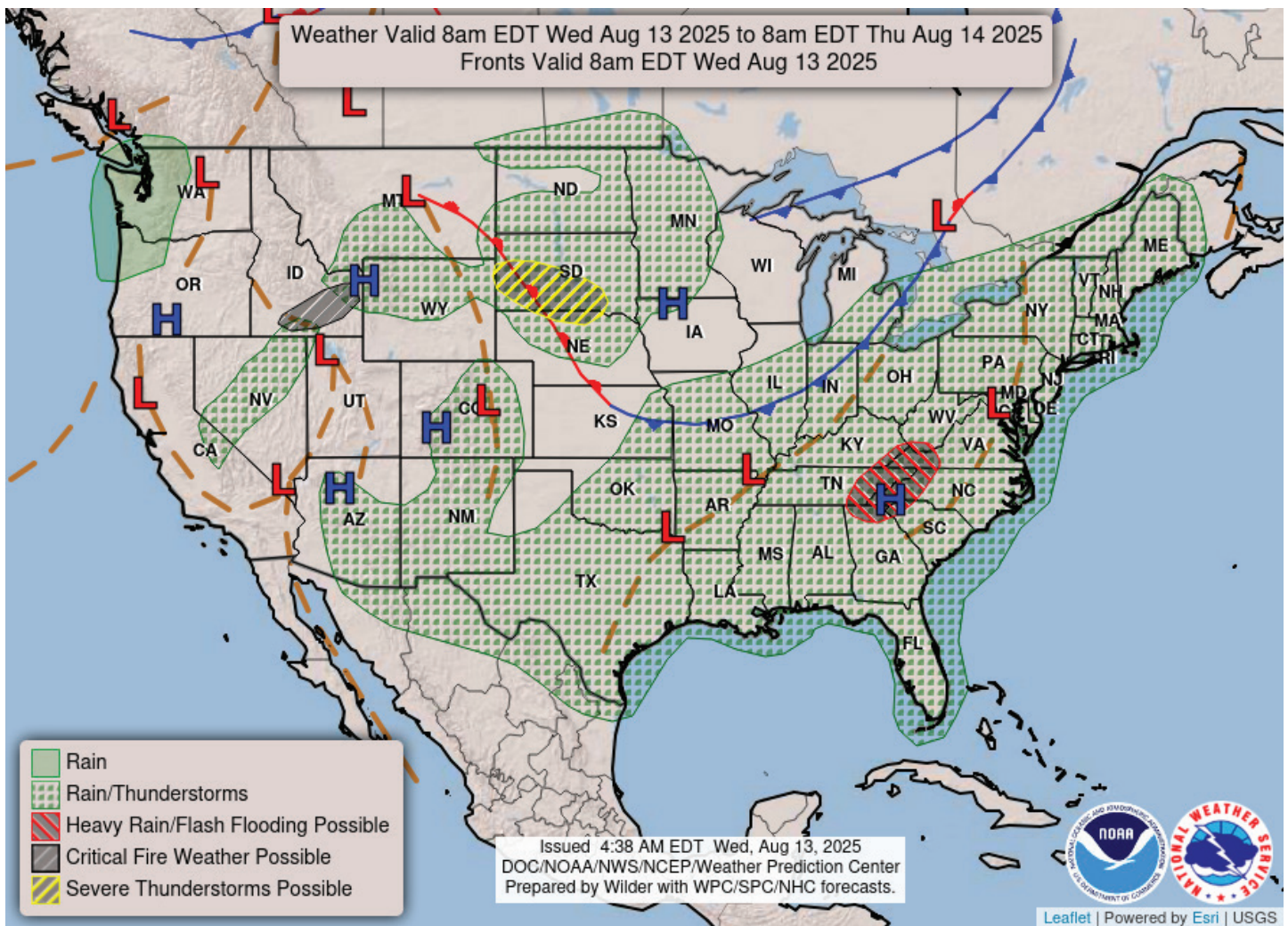
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 81 °F at 5:44 PM
Heat Index: 81 °F at 5:45 PM
Low Temp: 60 °F at 6:41 AM
Wind: 13 mph at 3:14 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 14 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 112 in 1965
Record Low: 35 in 1964
Average High: 84
Average Low: 57
Average Precip in August.: 0.95
Precip to date in August: 1.43
Average Precip to date: 15.04
Precip Year to Date: 16.49
Sunset Tonight: 8:44:24 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:31:09 am



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Today in Weather History

August 13, 2000: A thunderstorm set numerous prairie fires in Harding County. Over a thousand acres burned by the end of the day.

1831: The Great Barbados Hurricane was an intense Category 4 hurricane that left cataclysmic damage across the Caribbean and Louisiana in 1831. From August 11 through the 13, Bermudians were amazed to see the sun with a decidedly blue appearance, giving off an eerie blue light when it shone into rooms and other enclosed places. Ships at sea as far west as Cape Hatteras reported that "their white sails appeared a light blue colour." A month later it was learned that the astounding blue sunlight had coincided with a terrible hurricane that caused 1,477 people to lose their lives. It was assumed that the hurricane was intensive enough to cause an unusual disturbance in the higher atmospheric strata, and refraction, diffraction or absorption of light rays, to produce the blue reflection. Because the sun appeared bluish-green, Nat Turner took this as the final signal and began a slave rebellion a week later on August 21.

1919 - High winds and heavy rain struck the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. In New Jersey, winds gusted to 60 mph at Atlantic City, and nine inches of rain fell at Tuckerton. The wind and rain leveled crops and stripped trees of fruit causing several million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1980 - The afternoon high at New York City was just 89 degrees. But there were fifteen days of 90 degree heat during the month, their hottest August of record. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - Hail larger than golf balls, driven by 70 mph winds, moved down crops, stripped trees, and broke windows, near Logan KS. Road graders cleared three foot drifts of hail on Kansas Highway 9 east of Logan. (The Weather Channel)

1987: A succession of thunderstorms produced rainfall that was unprecedented in 116 years of precipitation records at Chicago, Illinois during an 18 hour period from the evening of the 13th to the early afternoon of the 14th. The resulting flash flood was the worst ever to strike the Chicago metropolitan area, causing three deaths and water damage that amounted to 221 million dollars. O'Hare International Airport received an event total of 9.35 inches of rain in 18 hours, shattering the previous 24-hour record of 6.24 inches. For about 24 hours, the airport was only accessible from the air as all roads were blocked by high water, including the Kennedy Expressway.

1987 - Thunderstorms deluged the Central Gulf Coast States with torrential rains. Thunderstorms in Mississippi drenched Marion County with up to 15 inches of rain during the morning hours, with 12.2 inches reported at Columbia. Floodwaters swept cars away in the Lakeview subdivision of Columbia when the the Lakeview Dam broke. Flash flooding caused more than three million dollars damage in Marion County. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A dozen cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Lansing MI reported a record 35 days of 90 degree weather for the year, Detroit MI reported a record 37 days of 90 degree heat for the year, and Williamsport PA reported a record 38 days of 90 degree weather for the year. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing in a tropical airmass over the northeastern U.S. soaked Connecticut and Massachusetts with four to eight inches of rain over the weekend, between the 11th and 13th of the month. Hartford CT received 7.70 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1991 - Stockton, California received 0.05 inch of rainfall on this day. Since 1949, this is the only measured rainfall in Stockton on August 13th.

2003: A string of days in Paris France with temperatures from the 4th to the 12th above 95°F ends when the day's high drops to 90°F. During the long, hot summer which began 25 July and has registered several days above 100°F, an estimated 14,800 have died from heat-related causes, the French government admits.

2014 - An official, New York State 24 hour precipitation record was set at Islip, NY on August 12-13 when 13.57" of rain fell.



PRAYER: FORCE OR FOOLISHNESS

Prayer, for some, is a force that enables them to approach God in worship and wonder or in times of need for the necessities of life. For others, prayer is utter and complete foolishness because they believe it is foolish and a waste of time.

In the life of David, it was a dominant force. Whenever harmful words hurt him, or he received a wound from a battle or had a need that was beyond his limitations, he turned to God in prayer. Listen carefully to his words: "I am a man of prayer."

It is always interesting to listen carefully to someone introduce themselves: "I am a doctor...I am the CEO of...I am a sales representative at...I work for...I am the one who...I set a record by...I am the owner of." We seem to want others to recognize us for what we are doing, what we have done, and not who we are.

But with all his power and prestige, wealth and wisdom, David wanted others to recognize him as someone who was entirely dependent on God: "I am a man of prayer."

Prayer was a force in the life of David. As we read his prayer in the Psalms, we discover that he had no definite time of prayer, no specific place to pray, no particular position he assumed when he prayed, and it seems as though most of the time when he prayed, he was alone.

David realized that prayer was a force in his life. It brought forgiveness when he sinned, peace when he was anxious, victory when he was embattled and constant joy.

Prayer: Father, help us see the need for prayer in our lives when we look at the results of prayer in the life of others. We need You, and we do need prayer. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today:— Give us aid against the enemy, for the help of man is worthless. Psalm 108:12

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.12.25

1 8 31 56 67 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$198,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 22 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.11.25

1 9 23 25 42 3

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,100,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 15 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.12.25

1 11 18 29 34 15

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 52 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.09.25

12 16 18 30 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$88,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 52 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.11.25

9 10 17 29 65 5

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 21 Mins 14 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.11.25

6 16 33 40 62 2

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$526,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 21 Mins 14 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 Associated Press

What to know about Trump's potential change in federal marijuana policy

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

President Donald Trump is taking a new look at reclassifying marijuana as a less dangerous drug in a move that could nudge the federal government closer to an approach already embraced in many states.

Trump said Monday that he hopes to decide in the coming weeks about whether to support changes to the way marijuana is regulated. The renewed focus on marijuana comes more than a year after former President Joe Biden's administration formally proposed reclassifying marijuana. No decision was made before Biden left office.

Meanwhile, many states have already gone further than the federal government by legalizing the recreational use of marijuana for adults or allowing it for medical purposes.

What's the federal policy on marijuana?

Possessing marijuana remains a federal crime punishable by fines and prison time. Selling or cultivating marijuana is a more serious offense, punishable by prison sentences of five years to life, depending on the quantity of the drug.

The Justice Department last year proposed to reclassify marijuana from a Schedule I drug, alongside heroin and LSD, to a less dangerous Schedule III substance, which includes such things as ketamine and some anabolic steroids. But that switch involved a lengthy bureaucratic process.

Nearly 43,000 public comments were submitted to the federal government about the proposed change. The Drug Enforcement Administration was still in the review process when Trump succeeded Biden in January, triggering a re-examination of policies across the federal government.

What would reclassifying marijuana mean?

Reclassifying marijuana would not make it legal for recreational use by adults nationwide. Rather, it would change the way it's regulated and taxed.

Federal income tax deductions for business expenses aren't available to enterprises involved in "trafficking" any Schedule I or II drug. Changing marijuana to a Schedule III drug could mean significant tax savings for businesses licensed to sell marijuana in states where it is legal.

It also could make it easier to research marijuana, since it's very difficult to conduct authorized clinical studies on Schedule I substances.

Due to the potential for federal penalties, many banks and financial institutions don't provide debit or credit services, loans or other common banking products to marijuana businesses authorized under state laws. That's unlikely to change merely by rescheduling marijuana under the federal Controlled Substances Act, according to a Congressional Research Service report.

What is there for Trump to consider?

Trump is weighing the pros and cons of a marijuana policy change, noting it's a "very complicated subject." "I've heard great things having to do with medical" use of marijuana and "bad things having to do with just about everything else," Trump said Monday.

Marijuana advocacy groups have long pushed for the federal government to soften its stance. As a candidate, Trump appeared open to relaxed regulation, posting on his social media platform last year that he would "focus on research to unlock the medical uses of marijuana to a Schedule 3 drug."

But reclassification faces resistance from some conservatives and law enforcement groups. The National Sheriffs' Association was among those submitting written opposition, highlighting prior determinations that marijuana has a "high abuse potential" and pointing to cases of "extreme intoxication" and fatal vehicle crashes.

What's happening in the states?

The medical use of marijuana is already allowed in 40 states and the District of Columbia. Over the past

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dozen years, the number of jurisdictions legalizing recreational marijuana for adults rose rapidly to 24 states and the District of Columbia.

But the movement suffered some recent setbacks.

Ballot measures to legalize recreational marijuana failed last fall in Florida, North Dakota and South Dakota. Florida's measure received a majority vote, which would have been sufficient in most states, but fell short of the 60% threshold needed to approve amendments to the state constitution.

Idaho lawmakers this year referred a proposed constitutional amendment to the ballot that would forbid citizen initiatives to legalize marijuana and instead leave such decisions only to the Legislature.

Initiatives continue elsewhere to try to place recreational marijuana on the ballot, including in Oklahoma, where voters defeated a measure in 2023.

What does the data say about marijuana use?

About 6 in 10 voters across the country said they favor legalizing recreational use nationwide, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of more than 120,000 U.S. voters conducted during last year's election.

Polling from Gallup shows support for marijuana legalization has grown significantly, from just 36% support in 2005 to 68% last year.

Marijuana use has also increased. More than 64 million Americans age 12 and older — or 22.3% of people — used marijuana during the past year, according to a 2024 national survey released recently by the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. That was up from 19% of people in 2021.

The growth in marijuana use was driven by adults aged 26 and older, according to the survey. However, people ages 18-25 remained the most likely to partake in marijuana, with 35% reporting use during the past year.

European leaders to speak with Trump ahead of his Friday summit with Putin

By STEFANIE DAZIO and LORNE COOK Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will join German Chancellor Friedrich Merz in Berlin on Wednesday for talks with European and U.S. leaders ahead of a Trump-Putin summit later this week, the German government said.

Merz has convened a series of virtual meetings for Wednesday in an attempt to have the voice of European and Ukraine's leaders heard ahead of the summit in Alaska, where President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin are expected to discuss a path toward ending Moscow's war in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy and the leaders of European countries have all been sidelined from that summit.

Zelenskyy is due to meet with European leaders first, in preparation for a virtual call with Trump and Vice President JD Vance about an hour later. A call between leaders of countries involved in the "coalition of the willing" — those who are prepared to help police any future peace agreement between Moscow and Kyiv — will take place last.

When Zelenskyy last visited Berlin in late May, Merz pledged to help Ukraine develop its own long-range missile systems that would be free of any Western-imposed limitations on their use and targets as the Kyiv government fights to repel Russia's invasion.

The Ukrainian leader on Wednesday said his government has had over 30 conversations and consultations with partners ahead of the summit in Alaska, but reiterated his doubt that Putin would negotiate in good faith to end the war.

Writing on his official Telegram channel, Zelenskyy said there was "currently no sign that the Russians are preparing to end the war," and urged Ukraine's partners in the United States and Europe to coordinate efforts and "force Russia to peace."

"Pressure must be applied on Russia for an honest peace. We must take the experience of Ukraine and our partners to prevent deception by Russia," Zelenskyy said.

The stakes for Europe

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Trump has said he wants to see whether Putin is serious about ending the war, now in its fourth year, describing Friday's summit as "a feel-out meeting" where he can assess the Russian leader's intentions.

Yet Trump has disappointed allies in Europe by saying Ukraine will have to give up some Russian-held territory. He has also said Russia must accept land swaps, although it was unclear what Putin might be expected to surrender.

European allies have pushed for Ukraine's involvement in any peace talks, fearful that discussions that exclude Kyiv could otherwise favor Moscow.

Trump on Monday ducked repeated chances to say that he would push for Zelenskyy to take part in his discussions with Putin, and was dismissive of Zelenskyy and his need to be part of an effort to seek peace. Trump said that following Friday's summit, a meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian leaders could be arranged, or that it could also be a meeting with "Putin and Zelenskyy and me."

The Europeans and Ukraine are wary that Putin, who has waged the biggest land war in Europe since 1945 and used Russia's energy might to try to intimidate the European Union, might secure favorable concessions and set the outlines of a peace deal without them.

The overarching fear of many European countries is that Putin will set his sights on one of them next if he wins in Ukraine.

Land concessions a non-starter for Kyiv

Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw from the remaining 30% of the Donetsk region that it still controls as part of a ceasefire deal, a proposal the leader categorically rejected.

Zelenskyy reiterated that Ukraine would not give up any territory it controls, saying that would be unconstitutional and would serve only as a springboard for a future Russian invasion.

He said diplomatic discussions led by the U.S. focusing on ending the war have not addressed key Ukrainian demands, including security guarantees to prevent future Russian aggression and including Europe in negotiations.

Three weeks after Trump returned to office, his administration took the leverage of Ukraine's NATO membership off the table — something that Putin has demanded — and signaled that the EU and Ukraine must handle security in Europe now while America focuses its attention elsewhere.

Trump has also routinely threatened and cajoled his NATO allies over defense spending, and has shown little mercy in trade talks by hiking tariffs on most EU imports to 15%, ostensibly for U.S. national security reasons.

Senior EU officials believe that Trump may be satisfied with simply securing a ceasefire in Ukraine, and is probably more interested in broader U.S. geostrategic interests and great power politics, aiming to ramp up business with Russia and rehabilitate Putin.

The Russian leader on Tuesday spoke to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to "share information in the context of planned talks with U.S. President Donald Trump," the Kremlin said in a statement. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov also had a phone call with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio to discuss "certain aspects" of preparations for the Friday meeting in which "both parties confirmed their striving for a successful summit," according to the foreign ministry.

In his words: Trump's rhetoric about Zelenskyy and Putin has evolved

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump repeatedly said during his successful campaign for a second term that he could end the war in Ukraine "in 24 hours." But since his Jan. 20 inauguration, the road to a peace deal has been fraught with changing dynamics among Trump, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

A summit between Trump and Putin set for Friday in Alaska could now be a pivotal moment in the 3 1/2-year-old war.

"At the end of that meeting, probably the first two minutes, I'll know exactly whether or not a deal can

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be made," Trump said Monday.

Trump's rhetoric toward both Zelenskyy and Putin has evolved this year.

At the start of his second term, Trump was conciliatory toward Putin, for whom he has long shown admiration. But as Putin remained intransigent and rejected an unconditional truce proposed by Trump, the Republican leader has expressed increasing exasperation with the Russian leader, criticizing him for his unbudging stance on U.S.-led peace efforts and for prolonging the war.

Until recently, Trump repeatedly said Russia seemed more willing than Ukraine to get a deal done.

Trump appears to have softened toward Zelenskyy after a February confrontation in the Oval Office. And, in a reversal, he promised at some point to provide Ukraine with badly needed Patriot air defense missiles under a deal that would see NATO allies in Europe deliver them from their stock, to be replaced by future U.S. supplies.

Russia's bigger army is pressing on parts of the 620-mile (1,000-kilometer) front line, where thousands of soldiers on both sides have died since the Kremlin ordered the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

June brought the highest monthly civilian casualties in the past three years, with 232 people killed and 1,343 wounded in Ukraine, the U.N. human rights mission in Ukraine said Thursday.

A look at what Trump has said so far during his second term:

Jan. 31

"We want to end that war. That war would have not started if I was president."

Trump says his new administration has already had "very serious" discussions with Russia and that he and Putin could soon take "significant" action toward ending the conflict.

Feb. 19

"A Dictator without Elections, Zelenskyy better move fast or he is not going to have a Country left."

Trump's harsh words for Zelenskyy on his Truth Social platform drew criticism from Democrats and even some Republicans in the United States, where defending Ukraine from Russian aggression has traditionally had bipartisan support. Zelenskyy said Trump was falling into a Russian disinformation trap — and he was quickly admonished by Vice President JD Vance about the perils of publicly criticizing the president.

Feb. 28

"You're gambling with World War III. And what you're doing is very disrespectful to the country, this country that's backed you far more than a lot of people said they should have."

Trump and Vance berated Zelenskyy, accusing him of not showing gratitude after he challenged Vance on the question of diplomacy with Putin. The Oval Office argument, broadcast globally, led to the rest of Zelenskyy's White House visit being canceled and called into question U.S. support for Ukraine. A few days later, Trump temporarily paused military aid to Ukraine to pressure Zelenskyy to seek peace.

March 30

"I don't think he's going to go back on his word. You're talking about Putin. I don't think he's going to go back on his word. I've known him for a long time. We've always gotten along well."

Speaking aboard Air Force One, Trump said he trusts Putin to hold up his end of a potential peace deal. The comments were among the last positive remarks he made about the Kremlin leader this year.

April 24

"I am not happy with the Russian strikes on KYIV. Not necessary, and very bad timing. Vladimir, STOP! 5000 soldiers a week are dying. Lets get the Peace Deal DONE!"

In a Truth Social post, Trump was reacting to Russia attacking Kyiv with a barrage of missiles and drones. It was the first of his rare criticisms of Putin amid increased Russian attacks on Ukraine.

April 29

"A lot of his people are dying. They're being killed, and I feel very badly about it."

Trump addressed the toll on Ukrainians during an interview with ABC News after he met with Zelenskyy on the sidelines of Pope Francis' funeral. It was the first time the leaders had met since the Oval Office spat and signaled a shift in Trump's attitude toward the Ukrainian president.

May 25

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"I've always had a very good relationship with Vladimir Putin of Russia, but something has happened to him. He has gone absolutely CRAZY!"

Trump's Truth Social post made it clear he was losing patience with Putin as Moscow pounded Kyiv and other cities with drones and missiles in stepped-up aerial attacks.

June 25

"He was very nice actually. We had a little rough times, sometimes. He was ... Couldn't have been nicer. I think he'd like to see an end to this, I do."

Trump had a closed-door meeting with Zelenskyy during a NATO summit in The Hague. Trump's comments to reporters later also opened the possibility of sending Patriot air-defense missiles to Ukraine.

July 8

"We get a lot of bull—— thrown at us by Putin, if you want to know the truth. He's very nice all the time, but it turns out to be meaningless."

Trump also said he's "not happy" with Putin and that Moscow's war in Ukraine is "killing a lot of people" on both sides. Trump's comments during a Cabinet meeting came a day after he said the U.S. would send more weapons to Ukraine. It was a dramatic reversal after earlier announcing a pause in delivering previously approved firepower to Kyiv, a decision made amid concerns that U.S. military stockpiles had declined too much.

July 13

"I am very disappointed with President Putin, I thought he was somebody that meant what he said. He'll talk so beautifully and then he'll bomb people at night. We don't like that."

Trump's remarks to reporters came as Russia intensified aerial attacks on Ukraine.

July 14

"I don't want to say he's an assassin, but he's a tough guy. It's been proven over the years. He's fooled a lot of people before."

Trump pushed harder against Putin during an Oval Office meeting with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte. He said if there was no deal to end the war within 50 days, the U.S. would impose "secondary tariffs," targeting Russia's trading partners to try to isolate Moscow.

Trump and Rutte also discussed a rejuvenated pipeline for U.S. weapons. European allies plan to buy military equipment for transfer to Ukraine.

Aug. 11

"I get along with Zelenskyy, but, you know, I disagree with what he's done, very, very severely, disagree. This is a war that should have never happened."

Trump dismissed the idea of Zelenskyy joining the summit with Putin, declaring the Ukrainian president had been to "a lot of meetings" without managing to halt a war that Russia started.

He also lashed out at Zelenskyy for saying Ukraine's constitution bans giving up any land.

"I was a little bothered by the fact that Zelenskyy was saying, 'Well, I have to get constitutional approval.' I mean, he's got approval to go into war and kill everybody, but he needs approval to do a land swap? Because there'll be some land swapping going on."

Trump also noted that "I thought it was very respectful that the president of Russia is coming to our country as opposed to us going to his country or even a third party place."

A UFC fight at the White House?

Dana White says it's happening as part of deal with Paramount

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

Hours after Paramount and UFC announced a billion-dollar rights deal, Dana White said he had yet to hear from his friend, President Donald Trump, on his thoughts about the fight company's new streaming home.

That was fine with White. The UFC CEO was set to travel to Washington on Aug. 28 to meet with Trump and his daughter, Ivanka, to catch up and discuss logistics on the proposed Fourth of July fight card next

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year at the White House.

Trump said last month he wanted to stage a UFC match on the White House grounds with upwards of 20,000 spectators to celebrate 250 years of American independence.

"It's absolutely going to happen," White told The Associated Press. "Think about that, the 250th birthday of the United States of America, the UFC will be on the White House south lawn live on CBS."

The idea of cage fights at the White House would have seemed improbable when the Fertitta brothers purchased UFC for \$2 million in 2001 and put White in charge of the fledgling fight promotion.

White helped steer the company into a \$4 billion sale in 2016 and broadcast rights deals with Fox and ESPN before landing owner TKO Group's richest one yet — a seven-year deal with Paramount starting in 2026 worth an average of \$1.1 billion a year, with all cards on its streaming platform Paramount+ and select numbered events also set to simulcast on CBS.

ESPN, Amazon and Netflix and other traditional sports broadcast players seemed more in play for UFC rights — White had previously hinted fights could air across different platforms — but Paramount was a serious contender from the start of the negotiating window.

The Paramount and UFC deal came just days after Skydance and Paramount officially closed their \$8 billion merger — kicking off the reign of a new entertainment giant after a contentious endeavor to get the transaction over the finish line. White said he was impressed with the vision Skydance CEO David Ellison had for the the global MMA leader early in contract talks and how those plans should blossom now that Ellison is chairman and CEO of Paramount.

"When you talk about Paramount, you talk about David Ellison, they're brilliant businessmen, very aggressive, risk takers," White said. "They're right up my alley. These are the kind of guys that I like to be in business with."

The \$1.1 billion deals marks a notable jump from the roughly \$550 million that ESPN paid each year for UFC coverage today. But UFC's new home on Paramount will simplify offerings for fans — with all content set to be available on Paramount+ (which currently costs between \$7.99 and \$12.99 a month), rather than various pay-per-view fees.

Paramount also said it intends to explore UFC rights outside the U.S. "as they become available in the future."

UFC matchmakers were set to meet this week to shape what White said would be a loaded debut Paramount card. The UFC boss noted it was still too early to discuss a potential main event for the White House fight night.

"This is a 1-of-1 event," White said.

There are still some moving parts to UFC broadcasts and other television programming it has its hands in as the company moves into the Paramount era. White said there are still moving parts to the deal and that includes potentially finding new homes for "The Ultimate Fighter," "Road To UFC," and "Dana White's Contender Series." It's not necessarily a given the traditional 10 p.m. start time for what were the pay-per-view events would stand, especially on nights cards will also air on CBS.

"We haven't figured that out yet but we will," White said.

And what about the sometimes-contentious issue of fighter pay? Some established fighters have clauses in their contracts that they earn more money the higher the buyrate on their cards. Again, most of those issues are to-be-determined as UFC and Paramount settle in to the new deal — with \$1.1 billion headed the fight company's way.

"It will affect fighter pay, big time," White said. "From deal-to-deal, fighter pay has grown, too. Every time we win, everybody wins."

Boxer Jake Paul wrote on social media the dying PPV model — which was overpriced for fights as UFC saw a decline in buys because of missing star power in many main events — should give the fighters an increased idea of their worth.

"Every fighter in the UFC now has a clear picture of what the revenue is...no more PPV excuses," Paul wrote. "Get your worth boys and girls."

White also scoffed at the idea that the traditional PPV model is dead.

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There are still UFC cards on pay-per-view the rest of the year through the end of the ESPN contract and White and Saudi Arabia have teamed to launch a new boxing venture that starts next year and could use a PPV home. White, though, is part of the promotional team for the Canelo Álvarez and Terence Crawford fight in September in Las Vegas that airs on Netflix.

"It's definitely not run its course," White said. "There were guys out there who were interested in pay-per-view and there were guys out there that weren't. Wherever we ended up, that's what we're going to roll with."

White said UFC archival footage "kills it" in repeat views and those classic bouts also needed a new home once the ESPN deal expires.

Just when it seems there's little left for UFC to conquer, White says, there's always more. Why stop at becoming the biggest fight game in the world? Why not rewrite the pecking order in popularity and riches and go for No. 1 in all sports?

"You have the NFL, the NBA, the UFC, and soccer globally," White said. "We're coming. We're coming for all of them."

Typhoon Podul makes landfall in Taiwan

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Typhoon Podul made landfall in Taiwan on Wednesday, where authorities closed schools and government offices as heavy rain threatened more damage to agriculture in the island's southeast.

The storm hit Taitung county on the east coast shortly after noon, moving across the southern third of the island at about 36 kilometers (22 miles) per hour, at which rate it would head out to the Taiwan Strait and China by late afternoon, according to the Central Weather Administration.

It was unclear how serious the storm would be, with high waves and winds seen across much of the southeast but no major rain as of yet, according to the agency.

Such storms typically hit the east coast hard before losing speed and strength as they pass over the Central Mountain Range before continuing toward the Chinese coast. Podul measured 120 kilometers (75 miles) across and was expected to broaden even while losing strength as the storm moved westward across the Taiwan Strait.

The areas affected are well south of the capital, Taipei, along with Taiwan's main international airport and high-tech industrial base. Around a dozen flights that would have traveled south toward the path of the storm were delayed or canceled.

The counties and cities of Tainan, Kaohsiung, Chiayi, Yunlin, Pingtung and Hualien on the east coast and the island group of Penghu in the Taiwan Strait were taking the brunt of the storm.

Along with flooding, typhoons routinely damage fruit and other cash crops and bring landslides through the island's center. Much of central and southern Taiwan was badly hit by heavy rains in recent weeks that caused severe damage to crops but minimal casualties, while also knocking out electricity to rural areas that took weeks to repair.

Recovery crews are on alert.

Asian shares charge higher after US stocks rally to records on hopes for interest rate cuts

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares charged higher Wednesday in Asia after the U.S. stock market rallied to records when data showed inflation across the United States improved slightly last month.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei 225 added to its record set a day earlier. Shares in Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia also gained more than 1%.

The recent rally in share prices has been driven partly by relief over an extended truce in President Donald Trump's trade war with China, and partly by persisting hopes the Federal Reserve will cut interest

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rates. Those were reinforced by a moderation in the consumer price index in July.

"Asia woke up in full risk-on mode, riding the coattails of a U.S. session that looked like someone hit the 'infinite bid' button after CPI didn't blow the inflation doors off," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

China and the U.S. agreed to extend by 90 days the pause in drastically higher tariff rates to allow more time for talks on a broad trade agreement. Although uncertainty over what the negotiations will yield remains, the truce has relieved pressure on companies and countries across Asia that rely heavily in supply chains routed through China.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng surged 2.5% to 25,596.90, while the Shanghai Composite index added 0.5% to 3,683.46.

In Japan, relief over the Trump administration's confirmation that its exports will face a flat 15% U.S. import duty has driven strong buying of computer chip-related companies and other exporters.

The Nikkei 225 gained 1.3% to 43,274.67.

Elsewhere in Asia, South Korea's Kospi advanced 1.1% to 3,224.37. In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.6% to 8,827.10.

Taiwan's Taix was up 0.9% and the Sensex in India gained 0.4%. In Bangkok, the SET climbed 1%.

On Tuesday, the S&P 500 rose 1.1% to top its all-time high set two weeks ago. It closed at 6,445.76.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 1.1% to 44,458.61, while the Nasdaq composite jumped 1.4% to set its own record of 21,681.90.

Intel's stock rose 5.6% after Trump said its CEO has an "amazing story," less than a week after he had demanded Lip-Bu Tan's resignation.

Circle Internet Group, the company behind the popular USDC cryptocurrency that tracks the U.S. dollar, climbed 1.3% despite reporting a larger loss for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It said its total revenue and reserve income grew 53% in its first quarter as a publicly traded company, which topped forecasts.

The better-than-expected report on inflation raised hopes the Federal Reserve will have the leeway to cut interest rates at its next meeting in September.

Tuesday's report said U.S. consumers paid prices for groceries, gasoline and other costs of living that were overall 2.7% higher in July than a year earlier. That's the same inflation rate as June's, and it was below the 2.8% that economists expected.

Lower rates would give a boost to investment prices and to the economy by making it cheaper for U.S. households and businesses to borrow to buy houses, cars or equipment. President Donald Trump has angrily been calling for cuts to help the economy, often insulting the Fed's chair personally while doing so.

The Fed has hesitated, worried that Trump's tariffs could make inflation much worse.

The Fed will get one more report on inflation and another on the U.S. job market, before its next meeting, which ends Sept. 17. The most recent jobs report was a stunner, coming in much weaker than economists expected.

Critics say the broad U.S. stock market is looking expensive after its surge from a bottom in April. That's putting pressure on companies to deliver continued growth in profit.

In other dealings early Wednesday, U.S. benchmark crude oil dropped 26 cents to \$62.89 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, declined 21 cents to \$65.92 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar fell to 147.52 Japanese yen from 147.84 yen. The euro climbed to \$1.1710 from \$1.1677.

Vietnam wants to be the next Asian tiger and it's overhauling its economy to make it happen

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Beneath red banners and a gold bust of revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi's central party school, Communist Party chief To Lam declared the arrival of "a new era of development" late last year. The speech was more than symbolic— it signaled the launch of what could be

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Vietnam's most ambitious economic overhaul in decades.

Vietnam aims to get rich by 2045 and become Asia's next "tiger economy" — a term used to describe the earlier ascent of countries like South Korea and Taiwan.

The challenge ahead is steep: Reconciling growth with overdue reforms, an aging population, climate risks and creaking institutions. There's added pressure from President Donald Trump over Vietnam's trade surplus with the U.S., a reflection of its astounding economic trajectory.

In 1990, the average Vietnamese could afford about \$1,200 worth of goods and services a year, adjusted for local prices. Today, that figure has risen by more than 13 times to \$16,385.

Vietnam's transformation into a global manufacturing hub with shiny new highways, high-rise skylines and a booming middle class has lifted millions of its people from poverty, similar to China. But its low-cost, export-led boom is slowing and it faces a growing obstacle to its proposed reforms — expanding private industries, strengthening social protections and investing in technology and green energy — from climate change.

"It's all hands on deck. . . . We can't waste time anymore," said Mimi Vu of the consultancy Raise Partners. The export boom can't carry Vietnam forever.

Investment has soared, driven partly by U.S.-China trade tensions, and the U.S. is now Vietnam's biggest export market. Once-quiet suburbs have been replaced with industrial parks where trucks rumble through sprawling logistics hubs that serve global brands.

Vietnam ran a \$123.5 billion trade surplus with the U.S. trade in 2024, angering Trump, who threatened a 46% U.S. import tax on Vietnamese goods. The two sides appear to have settled on a 20% levy, and twice that for goods suspected of being transshipped, or routed through Vietnam to avoid U.S. trade restrictions.

During negotiations with the Trump administration, Vietnam's focus was on its tariffs compared to those of its neighbors and competitors, said Daniel Kritenbrink, a former U.S. ambassador to Vietnam. "As long as they're in the same zone, in the same ballpark, I think Vietnam can live with that outcome," he said. But he added questions remain over how much Chinese content in those exports might be too much and how such goods will be taxed.

Vietnam was preparing to shift its economic policies even before Trump's tariffs threatened its model of churning out low-cost exports for the world, aware of what economists call the "middle-income trap," when economies tend to plateau without major reforms.

To move beyond that, South Korea bet on electronics, Taiwan on semiconductors, and Singapore on finance, said Richard McClellan, founder of the consultancy RMAC Advisory.

But Vietnam's economy today is more diverse and complex than those countries were at the time and it can't rely on just one winning sector to drive long-term growth and stay competitive as wages rise and cheap labor is no longer its main advantage.

It needs to make "multiple big bets," McClellan said.

Vietnam's game plan

Following China's lead, Vietnam is counting on high-tech sectors like computer chips, artificial intelligence and renewable energy, providing strategic tax breaks and research support in cities like Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Danang.

It's also investing heavily in infrastructure, including civilian nuclear plants and a \$67 billion North-South high-speed railway, that will cut travel time from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City to eight hours.

Vietnam also aspires to become a global financial center. The government plans two special financial centers, in bustling Ho Chi Minh City and in the seaside resort city of Danang, with simplified rules to attract foreign investors, tax breaks, support for financial tech startups, and easier ways to settle business disputes.

Underpinning all of this is institutional reform. Ministries are being merged, low-level bureaucracies have been eliminated and Vietnam's 63 provinces will be consolidated into 34 to build regional centers with deeper talent pools.

Private business to take the lead

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Vietnam is counting on private businesses to lead its new economic push — a seismic shift from the past. In May, the Communist Party passed Resolution 68. It calls private businesses the “most important force” in the economy, pledging to break away from domination by state-owned and foreign companies.

So far, large multinationals have powered Vietnam’s exports, using imported materials and parts and low cost local labor. Local companies are stuck at the low-end of supply chains, struggling to access loans and markets that favored the 700-odd state-owned giants, from colonial-era beer factories with arched windows to unfashionable state-run shops that few customers bother to enter.

“The private sector remains heavily constrained,” said Nguyen Khac Giang of Singapore’s ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute.

Again emulating China, Vietnam wants “national champions” to drive innovation and compete globally, not by picking winners, but by letting markets decide. The policy includes easier loans for companies investing in new technology, priority in government contracts for those meeting innovation goals, and help for firms looking to expand overseas. Even mega-projects like the North-South High-Speed Rail, once reserved for state-run giants, are now open to private bidding.

By 2030, Vietnam hopes to elevate at least 20 private firms to a global scale. But Giang warned that there will be pushback from conservatives in the Communist Party and from those who benefit from state-owned firms.

A Closing Window from climate change

Even as political resistance threatens to stall reforms, climate threats require urgent action.

After losing a major investor over flood risks, Bruno Jaspaert knew something had to change. His firm, DEEP C Industrial Zones, houses more than 150 factories across northern Vietnam. So it hired a consultancy to redesign flood resilience plans.

Climate risk is becoming its own kind of market regulation, forcing businesses to plan better, build smarter, and adapt faster. “If the whole world will decide it’s a priority...it can go very fast,” said Jaspaert.

When Typhoon Yagi hit last year, causing \$1.6 billion in damage, knocking 0.15% off Vietnam’s GDP and battering factories that produce nearly half the country’s economic output, roads in DEEP C industrial parks stayed dry.

Climate risks are no longer theoretical: If Vietnam doesn’t take strong action to adapt to and reduce climate change, the country could lose 12–14.5% of its GDP each year by 2050, and up to one million people could fall into extreme poverty by 2030, according to the World Bank.

Meanwhile, Vietnam is growing old before it gets rich.

The country’s “golden population” window — when working-age people outnumber dependents — will close by 2039 and the labor force is projected to peak just three years later. That could shrink productivity and strain social services, especially since families — and women in particular — are the default caregivers, said Teerawichitchainan Bussarawan of the Centre for Family and Population Research at the National University of Singapore.

Vietnam is racing to pre-empt the fallout by expanding access to preventive healthcare so older adults remain healthier and more independent. Gradually raising the retirement age and drawing more women into the formal workforce would help offset labor gaps and promote “healthy aging,” Bussarawan said.

Musk says he plans to sue Apple for not featuring X or Grok among its top apps

By The Associated Press undefined

Billionaire SpaceX, Tesla and X owner Elon Musk says he plans to sue Apple for not featuring X and its Grok artificial intelligence chatbot app in its top recommended apps in its App Store.

Musk posted the comments on X late Monday, saying, “Hey @Apple App Store, why do you refuse to put either X or Grok in your ‘Must Have’ section when X is the #1 news app in the world and Grok is #5 among all apps? Are you playing politics? What gives? Inquiring minds want to know.”

Grok is owned by Musk’s artificial intelligence startup xAI.

Musk went on to say that "Apple is behaving in a manner that makes it impossible for any AI company besides OpenAI to reach #1 in the App Store, which is an unequivocal antitrust violation. xAI will take immediate legal action."

He gave no further details.

In an emailed statement, Apple defended the fairness of its App Store.

"The App Store is designed to be fair and free of bias," it said. "We feature thousands of apps through charts, algorithmic recommendations, and curated lists selected by experts using objective criteria. Our goal is to offer safe discovery for users and valuable opportunities for developers, collaborating with many to increase app visibility in rapidly evolving categories."

The company has faced various allegations of antitrust violations in recent years.

A federal judge recently found that Apple violated a court injunction in an antitrust case filed by Fortnite maker Epic Games.

Regulators of the 27-nation European Union fined Apple 500 million euros in April for breaking competition rules by preventing app makers from pointing users to cheaper options outside its App Store.

Last year, the EU fined the U.S. tech giant nearly \$2 billion for unfairly favoring its own music streaming service by forbidding rivals like Spotify from telling users how they could pay for cheaper subscriptions outside of iPhone apps.

As of early Tuesday, the top app in Apple's App Store was TikTok, followed by Tinder, Duolingo, YouTube and Bumble. Open AI's ChatGPT was ranked 7th.

Wife of South Korea's jailed ex-President Yoon arrested over corruption allegations

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The wife of South Korea's jailed former President Yoon Suk Yeol has been arrested as investigators seek to charge her over various suspected crimes, including bribery, stock manipulation and meddling in the selection of a candidate.

In granting a special prosecutor's request for an arrest warrant late Tuesday, the Seoul Central District Court said Kim Keon Hee posed a risk of destroying evidence.

The investigation into Kim is one of three special prosecutor probes launched under Seoul's new liberal government targeting the presidency of Yoon, a conservative who was removed from office in April and rearrested last month over his brief imposition of martial law in December.

While Yoon's self-inflicted downfall extended a decades-long run of South Korean presidencies ending badly, he and Kim are the first former presidential couple to be jailed simultaneously over criminal allegations.

Yoon's surprising yet poorly planned power grab on Dec. 3 came amid a seemingly routine standoff with the liberals, who he described as "anti-state" forces abusing their legislative majority to block his agenda. Some political opponents have questioned whether Yoon's actions were at least partly motivated by growing allegations against his wife, which hurt his approval ratings and gave political ammunition to his rivals.

Kim did not speak to reporters as she arrived at the Seoul court Tuesday for an hours-long hearing on the warrant request. She is being held at a detention center in southern Seoul, separate from the facility holding Yoon. She is expected to face further questioning on Thursday by investigators, who can extend her detention for up to 20 days before formally filing charges.

The investigation team led by Special Prosecutor Min Joong-ki, who was appointed in June by new liberal President Lee Jae Myung, initially questioned Kim for about seven hours on Wednesday last week before deciding to seek her arrest.

Kim spoke briefly to reporters as she appeared for last week's questioning, issuing a vague apology for causing public concern but also hinting that she would deny the allegations against her, portraying herself as "someone insignificant."

Investigators suspect that Kim and Yoon exerted undue influence on the conservative People Power Party

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to nominate a specific candidate in a 2022 legislative by-election, allegedly at the request of election broker Myung Tae-kyun. Myung faces accusations of conducting free opinion surveys for Yoon using manipulated data that possibly helped him win the party's presidential primaries before his election as president.

Kim is separately linked to multiple corruption allegations, including claims that she received luxury gifts via a fortuneteller acting as an intermediary for a Unification Church official seeking business favors, and possible involvement in a stock price manipulation scheme tied to a local BMW dealership company.

Min's investigation team arrested one of Kim's close associates earlier Tuesday following his arrival from Vietnam, as they look into suspicions that he used his connection to the former first lady to secure millions of dollars in business investments for his financially struggling company.

The investigators also raided a construction company on Monday over allegations that its chairman purchased a luxury necklace reportedly worth \$43,000, which they believe was the same one Kim wore while accompanying Yoon on a 2022 trip to Europe. Investigators suspect that the necklace was possibly linked to the chairman's son-in-law's hiring as the chief of staff of then-Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, Yoon's No. 2, shortly before the presidential trip. Kim has reportedly denied the accusations, claiming that the necklace she wore in Europe was not an authentic piece but a borrowed fake.

While in office, Yoon dismissed calls to investigate his wife as baseless political attacks and vetoed multiple bills from the liberal-led legislature seeking independent probes into the allegations.

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

Yoon's martial law decree lasted only hours, after a quorum of lawmakers managed to break through a blockade of heavily armed soldiers and voted to revoke the measure. He was impeached by lawmakers on Dec. 14 and was formally removed from office by the Constitutional Court in April.

Yoon, who was sent back to prison last month following a March release and faces a high-stakes trial on rebellion and other charges, has repeatedly resisted investigators' attempts to compel him to answer questions about his wife.

What newly released videos and records reveal about the Uvalde school shooting

By JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Anguished pleas from parents. Confused police officers. The horrifying scene that emergency crews found when they first got inside the classrooms at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

Newly released records surrounding the May 2022 massacre, including hundreds of pages of files and hours of body camera video, show in greater detail the heartbreak and failures of one of the worst school shootings in U.S. history. Nineteen children and two teachers were killed.

The documents offer a deeper portrait of the teenage gunman and actions of hundreds of law enforcement officers who rushed to the rural South Texas campus. They're the final batch of records local authorities had withheld during a yearslong legal battle over public access. Family members of the victims were among those pushing for their release.

Although state and federal investigations over the past three years have extensively examined the shooting, the batches of records provide new glimpses of the panic and indecision by law enforcement officials as they waited more than an hour to confront the shooter.

Parents are heard begging police to stop the gunman

The official narrative that police quickly rushed to confront and kill 18-year-old gunman Salvador Ramos had been quickly dismissed by parents who stood outside the school begging for officers to go inside or let them get to their children. Audio released Tuesday detailed their desperation.

"Whose class is he in?" one parent can be heard asking on a deputy's body camera. Another comes up

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and yells, "Come on man, my daughter is in there!"

Their pleas continued.

"Either you go in or I'm going in bro," one parent says, adding seconds later, "My kids are in there, bro. ... Please!"

Some officers urged quick action. One deputy, who first responded to reports of Ramos shooting his grandmother moments before the school attack, rushed to campus after the first gunshots there. As he donned his ballistics vest, a voice says, "Something needs to be done, ASAP."

After some children run from the school and officers report finding an AR-15 rifle, one officer can be heard saying, "We need to get in there, fast."

It would be another hour before law enforcement breached the classroom and killed Ramos.

Gunman's mother told deputies she was scared of son months before attack

Law enforcement records showed sheriff's deputies were called to a physical disturbance at the home of Ramos' mother, Adriana Reyes, a few months before the attack. She told deputies that he became angry and kicked a wireless modem after she turned off the internet. She had to hold him down to calm him, according to an incident report.

She told deputies Ramos never hit her, but they made a note in their report: "Ms Reyes stated she was scared of Salvador and wanted help." Ramos' grandmother took him to her house and deputies took no further action.

Ramos would end up shooting his grandmother before attacking the school. She survived.

School records, meanwhile, showed a pattern of spiraling trouble that emerged at a young age.

Ramos was described as a "motivated thinker and learner" in kindergarten, but by middle school he was getting suspended or disciplined for harassment and bullying. He also failed to meet minimum statewide testing standards.

In October 2021 — seven months before the shooting — Ramos withdrew from high school because of "poor academic performance, lack of attendance." Records showed he failed nearly all his classes.

Video shows officers unsure of shooter's location

Some officers were initially unsure about just where Ramos was, how they might get to him and whether children might be trapped or hiding. Some tried finding a way in but also knew Ramos was heavily armed.

Crouched behind the school building sizing up an assault on the classroom from the outside, an officer says, "I just don't want to be crawling and he's just looking down on me."

Former school police chief Pete Arredondo, who has been described as the incident commander, can be heard shouting to Ramos, asking him put down his weapon. "These are innocent children. We don't want anyone else hurt. Please talk to me," but there is no response.

Once police realized there were children hiding in other classrooms, Arredondo is heard telling officers crouched around him they want to clear those rooms before breaching the classroom where Ramos is holed up.

"We don't know if there are kids in there," Arredondo says. "We're gonna save the lives of the other ones."

What comes next

The law enforcement response included local, state and federal officers, but Arredondo and former school district police officer Adrian Gonzales are the only two to face criminal charges. Both face multiple counts of child endangerment and abandonment and have pleaded not guilty.

Arredondo has said he has been wrongly scapegoated as the one to blame for mistakes that day. The indictment against Arredondo contends that he didn't follow his active shooter training and made critical decisions that slowed the police response while the gunman was "hunting" victims.

Trial is set for October. Gonzales on Monday requested that his trial be moved out of Uvalde County, arguing he cannot receive a fair trial in the community.

You really can see Russia from Alaska, and other things to know ahead of Friday's Trump-Putin summit

By MARK THIESSEN and GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — When U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin meet in Alaska on Friday, it will be the latest chapter in the 49th state's long history with Russia — and with international tensions.

Siberian fur traders arrived from across the Bering Sea in the first part of the 18th century, and the imprint of Russian settlement in Alaska remains. The oldest building in Anchorage is a Russian Orthodox church, and many Alaska Natives have Russian surnames.

The nations are so close — Alaska's Little Diomed Island in the Bering Strait is less than 3 miles (5 kilometers) from Russia's Big Diomed — that former Gov. Sarah Palin was right during the 2008 presidential race when she said, "You can actually see Russia from land here in Alaska," though the comment prompted jokes that that was the extent of her foreign policy experience.

Alaska has been U.S. territory since 1867, and it has since been the location of the only World War II battle on North American soil, a focus of Cold War tensions and the site of occasional meetings between U.S. and world leaders.

Here's a look at Alaska's history with Russia and on the international stage:

Russian trappers and Seward's Folly

The fur traders established hubs in Sitka and on Kodiak Island. The Russian population in Alaska never surpassed about 400 permanent settlers, according to the Office of the Historian of the U.S. State Department.

Russian settlers brutally coerced Alaska Natives to harvest sea otters and other marine mammals for their pelts, said Ian Hartman, a University of Alaska Anchorage history professor.

"It was a relationship that the Russians made clear quite early on was not really about kind of a longer-term pattern of settlement, but it was much more about a short-term pattern of extraction," Hartman said.

Meanwhile, Russian Orthodox missionaries baptized an estimated 18,000 Alaska Natives.

By 1867 the otters had been hunted nearly to extinction and Russia was broke from the Crimean War. Czar Alexander II sold Alaska to the U.S. for the low price of \$7.2 million — knowing Russia couldn't defend its interests in Alaska if the U.S. or Great Britain tried to seize it.

Skeptics referred to the purchase as "Seward's Folly," after U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward. That changed when gold was discovered in the Klondike in 1896.

World War II and the Cold War

The U.S. realized Alaska's strategic importance in the 20th century. During World War II the island of Attu — the westernmost in the Aleutian chain and closer to Russia than to mainland North America — was captured by Japanese forces. The effort to reclaim it in 1943 became known as the war's "forgotten battle."

During the Cold War, military leaders worried Soviets might attack via Alaska, flying planes over the North Pole to drop nuclear weapons. They built a chain of radar systems connected to an anti-aircraft missile system.

The military constructed much of the infrastructure in Alaska, including roads and some communities, and its experience building on permafrost later informed the private companies that would drill for oil and construct the trans-Alaska pipeline.

Last year the Pentagon said the U.S. must invest more to upgrade sensors, communications and space-based technologies in the Arctic to keep pace with China and Russia, and it sent about 130 soldiers to a desolate Aleutian island amid an increase in Russian military planes and vessels approaching U.S. territory.

Past visits by dignitaries

Putin will be the first Russian leader to visit, but other prominent figures have come before him.

Japanese Emperor Hirohito stopped in Anchorage before heading to Europe in 1971 to meet President Richard Nixon, and in 1984 thousands turned out to see President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II

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meet at the airport in Fairbanks.

President Barack Obama visited in 2015, becoming the first sitting U.S. president to set foot north of the Arctic Circle, on a trip to highlight the dangers of climate change.

Gov. Bill Walker welcomed Chinese President Xi Jinping at the airport in Anchorage in 2017 and then took him on a short tour of the state's largest city.

Four years later Anchorage was the setting for a less cordial meeting as top U.S. and Chinese officials held two days of contentious talks in their first face-to-face meeting since President Joe Biden took office two months earlier.

Critics say Alaska is a poor choice for the summit

Sentiment toward Russia in Alaska has cooled since Putin invaded Ukraine in 2022. The Anchorage Assembly voted unanimously to suspend its three-decade-long sister city relationship with Magadan, Russia, and the Juneau Assembly sent its sister city of Vladivostok a letter expressing concern.

The group Stand Up Alaska has organized rallies against Putin on Thursday and Friday.

Dimitry Shein, who ran unsuccessfully for Alaska's lone seat in the U.S. House in 2018, fled from the Soviet Union to Anchorage with his mother in the early 1990s. He expressed dismay that Trump has grown increasingly authoritarian.

Russia and the U.S. "are just starting to look more and more alike," he said.

Many observers have suggested that holding the summit in Alaska sends a bad symbolic message.

"It's easy to imagine Putin making the argument during his meetings with Trump that, 'Well, look, territories can change hands,'" said Nigel Gould-Davies, former British Ambassador to Belarus and senior fellow at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. "We gave you Alaska. Why can't Ukraine give us a part of its territory?"

Massive rescue effort led to pulling workers from debris of Pennsylvania steel plant explosion

By MARC LEVY, MICHAEL CASEY and PETER SMITH Associated Press

CLAIRTON, Pa. (AP) — Moments after an explosion erupted at a U.S. Steel plant outside Pittsburgh, company firefighters, local responders and employees raced in to rescue people from the smoldering wreckage.

They were able to free one injured worker who was whisked to a hospital. But one more was still missing, and the area was too unstable to continue working, according to Matthew Brown, chief of Allegheny County Emergency Services.

A Pittsburgh-based crew from Pennsylvania Urban Search & Rescue was called in to help, some of whose members were already responding through their affiliations with local fire departments, Brown said. The team stabilized a wall at the plant and used an advanced camera to detect the missing employee. They pulled away the rubble and were able to extract the body of the worker, who died.

Monday's explosion, which was powerful enough to shake nearby homes, killed two workers and injured more than 10 others. Five people ranging in age from 27 to 74 remained hospitalized Tuesday including the rescued worker, who was in critical but stable condition, according to the Allegheny County Police Department. Three were at UPMC Mercy, the region's only level-one trauma and burn center.

The massive plant along the Monongahela River in Clairton converts coal to coke, a key component in the steelmaking process. The facility is considered the largest coking operation in North America and is one of four major U.S. Steel plants in Pennsylvania.

To make coke, coal is baked in special ovens for hours at high temperatures to remove impurities that could otherwise weaken steel. The process creates what's known as coke gas — a lethal mix of methane, carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide.

U.S. Steel's chief manufacturing officer, Scott Buckiso, said workers were conducting routine operations at the time of the accident.

Two loud booms that followed the initial blast were initially thought to be subsequent explosions, but

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Buckiso said they were from the activation of two relief pressure valves — a safety mechanism that operated as expected.

The cause of the explosion remained under investigation, and Democratic Gov. Josh Shapiro told reporters Tuesday that workers deserve an “answer for what happened.”

“We owe them the answers to their questions, and we owe them to never forget the sacrifices that occurred here yesterday,” Shapiro said. Before arriving at a news conference, he met with family members of a worker who died.

Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato told reporters she had assurances from U.S. Steel that it would continue to cooperate fully with investigators.

“We all share a common goal. We want to get to the bottom of what happened, and we want to prevent it from happening ever again,” Innamorato said.

Remembering the dead

Shapiro also used the news conference to pay tribute to the workers who died. The county medical examiner’s office identified one as Timothy Quinn, 39. and the other was not identified, with his family requesting privacy.

Shapiro described Quinn as a devoted father of three known to his friends as “TQ.” He served as a mentor and leader to other workers and was known for cracking jokes. A second-generation steelworker, he followed in his father’s footsteps and was a “mama’s boy” who, after working long shifts, would take care of his mother and look after his children and his girlfriend’s two children.

“His life was cut too short because of what happened here at this plant,” Shapiro said. “We have a responsibility to remember his legacy, to make sure his memory lives on. ... We will make sure his children know his dad was a special man, a good man and a man who helped build this community with his hands the way his father did.”

CEO David Burritt called it an “extraordinarily difficult day” for a U.S. Steel family that has “suffered heartbreaking losses.” According to the company, the plant has approximately 1,400 workers.

The company, he said, is working closely with local, state and federal authorities. He would not speculate about the cause of the explosion.

“We will share as much as we can, as soon as we can, and we will take every step necessary to keep our people safe,” Burritt said.

Deanna Forkey was working behind the counter at the nearby Hometown Burgers & Deli, which her family owns, when she heard the explosion and the restaurant door popped open.

“When I looked out, all you could see was black smoke,” Forkey said. “Explosions over there aren’t really uncommon. We hear them a lot. But that one obviously was much worse.”

She said many plant workers are regulars at the restaurant.

“You start to build a little bit of a relationship,” Forkey said. “So it kind of pulls a little harder at the heartstrings.”

Plant has seen explosions in the past

In September 2009, a maintenance worker was killed in a blast. And in July 2010, another explosion injured 14 employees and six contractors.

According to online OSHA records of workplace fatalities, the last death at the plant was in 2014, when a worker was burned and died after falling into a trench.

After the 2010 explosion, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration fined U.S. Steel and a subcontractor \$175,000 for safety violations. U.S. Steel appealed its citations and fines, which were later reduced under a settlement agreement.

A problem with a battery in February led to a “buildup of combustible material” that ignited, causing an audible boom, officials said. Two plant workers received first aid but were not seriously injured.

Richard Lattanzi, who retired from another nearby U.S. Steel plant and is now mayor of Clairton, recalled that the company once sought to ensure that workers “go home the way they came in.”

“Apparently it’s not happening right now, so we’ve got to get better,” Lattanzi said. “We have to rally around this plant right now.”

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Pittsburgh attorney John Gismondi represented the widow of the worker who was killed in the 2009 explosion and three men who were badly burned in the 2010 blast. In a phone interview Tuesday, Gismondi said his immediate thought the previous day was, "Oh my God, not again at Clairton."

Both lawsuits were settled out of court for "significant" amounts, he said.

"There's a lot of gas on the premises. That's fine, it's part and parcel of what they do," he said. "But gas is a dangerous substance, and you need to make sure safety protocols are being followed."

Trump's takeover of Washington law enforcement begins as National Guard troops arrive

By ASHRAF KHALIL and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The new picture of law enforcement in the nation's capital began taking shape Tuesday as some of the 800 National Guard members deployed by the Trump administration began arriving. The city's police and federal officials, projecting cooperation, took the first steps in an uneasy partnership to reduce crime in what President Donald Trump called — without substantiation — a lawless city.

The influx came the morning after the Republican president announced he would be activating the guard members and taking over the District's police department, something the law allows him to do temporarily. He cited a crime emergency — but referred to the same crime that city officials stress is already falling noticeably.

By evening, the administration was saying that National Guard members were expected to be on the streets starting Tuesday night, according to a White House official who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. The Army said there were no specifics on the locations they will be patrolling, according to an official who spoke on condition of anonymity for the same reason.

Mayor Muriel Bowser pledged to work alongside the federal officials Trump has tasked with overseeing the city's law enforcement, while insisting the police chief remained in charge of the department and its officers.

"How we got here or what we think about the circumstances — right now we have more police, and we want to make sure we use them," she told reporters.

The tone was a shift from the day before, when Bowser said Trump's plan to take over the Metropolitan Police Department and call in the National Guard was not a productive step and argued his perceived state of emergency simply doesn't match the declining crime numbers. Still, the law gives the federal government more sway over the capital city than in U.S. states, and Bowser said her administration's ability to push back is limited.

Attorney General Pam Bondi posted on social media that the meeting was productive.

The law allows Trump to take over the D.C. police for up to 30 days, though White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt suggested it could last longer as authorities later "reevaluate and reassess." Extending federal control past that time would require Congressional approval, something likely tough to achieve in the face of Democratic resistance.

About 850 officers and agents fanned out across Washington on Monday and arrested 23 people overnight, Leavitt said. The charges, she said, included homicide, drunk driving, gun and drug crimes and subway fare evasion. She didn't immediately provide further information on the arrests.

The U.S. Park Police has also removed 70 homeless encampments over the last five months, she said. People who were living in them can leave, go to a homeless shelter or go into drug addiction treatment, Leavitt said. Those who refuse could face fines or jail time.

The city and Trump have had a bumpy relationship

While Trump invokes his plan by saying that "we're going to take our capital back," Bowser and the MPD maintain that violent crime overall in Washington has decreased to a 30-year low after a sharp rise in 2023. Carjackings, for example, dropped about 50% in 2024 and are down again this year. More than half of those arrested, however, are juveniles, and the extent of those punishments is a point of contention for the Trump administration.

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Resident Jeraod Tyre, who's lived in Washington for 15 years, said he does see crime slowing down. He's wary of the National Guard troops, who don't have the same local knowledge as the city's regular police force. "I feel safe walking through the city each and every day. The police are doing a mighty fine job," he said.

Bowser, a Democrat, spent much of Trump's first term in office openly sparring with the Republican president. She fended off his initial plans for a military parade through the streets and stood in public opposition when he called in a multi-agency flood of federal law enforcement to confront anti-police brutality protesters in summer 2020. She later had the words "Black Lives Matter" painted in giant yellow letters on the street about a block from the White House.

In Trump's second term, backed by Republican control of both houses of Congress, Bowser has walked a public tightrope for months, emphasizing common ground with the Trump administration on issues such as the successful effort to bring the NFL's Washington Commanders back to the District of Columbia.

She watched with open concern for the city streets as Trump finally got his military parade this summer. Her decision to dismantle Black Lives Matter Plaza earlier this year served as a neat metaphor for just how much the power dynamics between the two executives had evolved.

Now that fraught relationship enters uncharted territory as Trump has followed through on months of what many D.C. officials had quietly hoped were empty threats. The new standoff has cast Bowser in a sympathetic light, even among her longtime critics. "It's a power play and we're an easy target," said Clinique Chapman, CEO of the D.C. Justice Lab and a frequent Bowser critic.

Where the power actually lies

Bowser contends that all the power resides with Trump and that local officials can do little other than comply and make the best of it. As long as Washington remains a federal enclave with limited autonomy under the 1973 Home Rule Act, she said, it will remain vulnerable to such takeovers.

Trump is the first president to use the law's Section 740 to take over Washington's police for up to 30 days during times of emergencies.

For Trump, the effort to take over public safety in D.C. reflects an escalation of his aggressive approach to law enforcement. The District of Columbia's status as a congressionally established federal district gives him a unique opportunity to push his tough-on-crime agenda, though he has not proposed solutions to the root causes of homelessness or crime.

Trump's declaration of a state of emergency fits the general pattern of his second term in office. He has declared states of emergency on issues ranging from border protection to economic tariffs, enabling him to essentially rule via executive order. In many cases, he has moved forward while the courts sorted them out.

Bowser's claims about successfully driving down violent crime rates received backing earlier this year from an unlikely source. Ed Martin, Trump's original choice for U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, issued a press release in April hailing a 25% drop in violent crime rates from the previous year.

Tom Power, resident of the hip Logan Circle neighborhood for over a decade, said he occasionally hears about shootings or car break-ins, but he's never been a victim himself. "I never felt threatened, I've never given much thought to it," he said.

Washington native Sheina Taylor said the troops are putting her on edge. "It's more fearful now because even though you're a law abiding citizen, here in D.C., you don't know, especially because I'm African-American," she said.

Trump's newly confirmed top federal prosecutor for Washington, onetime judge and former Fox News host Jeanine Pirro, argued that violent crime remains high and a significant issue for victims, despite recent decreases. "These were vibrant human beings cut down because of illegal guns," she said.

Zelenskyy says Putin wants the rest of Ukraine's Donetsk region as part of a ceasefire

By LORNE COOK and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw from the remaining 30% of the Donetsk region that it controls as part of a ceasefire deal, a proposal the leader categorically rejected.

Zelenskyy reiterated that Ukraine would not withdraw from territories it controls, saying that would be unconstitutional and would serve only as a springboard for a future Russian invasion.

He said diplomatic discussions led by the U.S. focusing on ending the war have not touched on security guarantees for Ukraine to prevent future Russian aggression and that meeting formats currently being discussed do not include Europe's participation, both key demands of Kyiv.

Meanwhile, Russian forces on the ground have been closing in on a key territorial grab around the city of Pokrovsk.

Zelenskyy said the necessity of territorial concessions was conveyed to him by U.S. officials ahead of a summit Friday between U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, and in further meetings at the level of national security officials.

It remained unclear whether Ukraine would take part in the Friday summit. European Union leaders also have been sidelined from the meeting, and they appealed to Trump on Tuesday to protect their interests.

Zelenskyy says Ukraine will not withdraw from the Donbas

Zelenskyy said Putin wants the remaining 9,000 square kilometers (3,500 square miles) of Donetsk under Kyiv's control, where the war's toughest battles are grinding on, as part of a ceasefire plan, in a press briefing on Tuesday in Kyiv.

Doing so would hand Russia almost the entirety of the Donbas, a region comprising Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland that Putin has long coveted.

Zelenskyy learned of Russia's position after holding a call with Trump and special envoy Steve Witkoff, after the latter's bilateral meeting with Putin. Witkoff told Zelenskyy that Russia was ready to end the war and that there should be territorial concessions from both sides. Some European partners were also part of the call.

"And that, probably, Putin wants us to leave Donbas. That is, it didn't sound like America wants us to leave," he said, recounting the call.

Zelenskyy reiterated that withdrawing from Ukraine-controlled territory was out of the question, especially as the question of security guarantees for Ukraine, were not being discussed.

"We will not leave Donbas. We cannot do this. Everyone forgets the first part - our territories are illegally occupied," Zelenskyy told reporters at a briefing on Tuesday. "Donbas for the Russians is a springboard for a future new offensive."

Zelenskyy said this is what occurred in 2014 when Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula.

Seeking Trump's ear before the summit

Trump has said he wants to see whether Putin is serious about ending the war, now in its fourth year.

The U.S. president has disappointed allies in Europe by saying Ukraine will have to give up some Russian-held territory. He also said Russia must accept land swaps, although it was unclear what Putin might be expected to surrender.

The Europeans and Ukraine are wary that Putin, who has waged the biggest land war in Europe since 1945 and used Russia's energy might to try to intimidate the EU, might secure favorable concessions and set the outlines of a peace deal without them.

Referring to the format for ceasefire talks, Zelenskyy said on Tuesday that the U.S. proposed a bilateral meeting, between the U.S. and Russia, and then a trilateral meeting that would include Ukraine. Zelenskyy said the presence of Europe was important for Kyiv because these were the only partners offering security guarantees, including funding the Ukrainian army.

European countries' overarching fear is that Putin will set his sights on one of them next if he wins in

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Ukraine.

Their leaders said Tuesday they “welcome the efforts of President Trump towards ending Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine.” But, they underlined, “the path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine” and “international borders must not be changed by force.”

The Europeans on Wednesday will make a fresh attempt to rally Trump to Ukraine’s cause at virtual meetings convened by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz. Trump did not confirm whether he would take part but did say “I’m going to get everybody’s ideas” before meeting with Putin.

Russia holds shaky control over four of the country’s regions, two in the country’s east and two in the south.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to the chief of Zelenskyy’s office, said anything short of Russia’s strategic defeat would mean that any ceasefire deal would be on Moscow’s terms, erode international law and send a dangerous signal to the world.

A ‘profoundly alarming moment for Europe’

Trump’s seemingly public rehabilitation of Putin — a pariah in most of Europe — has unnerved Ukraine’s backers.

The summit in Alaska is a “profoundly alarming moment for Europe,” said Nigel Gould-Davies, senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

According to Gould-Davies, Putin might persuade Trump to try to end the war by “accepting Russian sovereignty” over parts of Ukraine, even beyond areas that it currently occupies. Trump also could ease or lift sanctions which are causing “chronic pain” to the Russian economy.

That would provoke a “really serious split in the transatlantic alliance,” he said.

The war isn’t about Russia’s territorial expansion but about Putin’s goal of subordinating Ukraine, which would create the opportunity to threaten other parts of Europe, Gould-Davies said.

It was unclear whether the Europeans also were unsettled by Trump mistakenly saying twice he would be traveling to Russia on Friday to meet Putin. The summit is taking place in the U.S. state of Alaska, which was colonized by Russia in the 18th century until Czar Alexander II sold it to the U.S. in 1867.

Tuesday’s European joint statement was meant to be a demonstration of unity. But Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, who is Putin’s closest ally in Europe and has tried to block EU support for Ukraine, was the only one of the bloc’s 27 leaders who refused to endorse it.

Russia closes in on Pokrovsk

Russia appeared closer to taking an important city in the Donetsk region, Pokrovsk.

Military analysts using open-source information to monitor the battles said the next 24-48 hours could be critical. Losing Pokrovsk would hand Russia an important victory ahead of the summit. It also would complicate Ukrainian supply lines to the Donetsk region, where the Kremlin has focused the bulk of military efforts.

“A lot will depend on availability, quantity and quality of Ukrainian reserves,” Pasi Paroinen, an analyst with the Finland-based Black Bird Group, wrote on social media late Monday.

Ukraine’s military said its forces are fending off Russian infantry units trying to infiltrate their defensive positions in the Donetsk region. The region’s Ukrainian military command on social media Monday acknowledged that the situation remains “difficult, unpleasant and dynamic.”

Elsewhere in Ukraine, a Russian missile attack on a military training facility left one soldier dead and 11 others wounded, the Ukrainian Ground Forces posted on social media.

Mexico transfers 26 cartel figures wanted by US authorities in deal with Trump administration

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mexico sent 26 high-ranking cartel figures to the United States Tuesday in the latest major deal with the Trump administration as American authorities ratchet up pressure on criminal

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networks smuggling drugs across the border.

Those handed over to U.S. custody include Abigael González Valencia, a leader of "Los Cuinis," a group closely aligned with notorious cartel Jalisco New Generation or CJNG. Another defendant, Roberto Salazar, is wanted in connection to the 2008 killing of a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy. Other prominent figures have ties to the Sinaloa Cartel and other violent drug trafficking groups.

The transfers are a milestone for the Trump administration, which is made dismantling dangerous drug cartels a key Justice Department priority. It's the second time in months that Mexico has expelled cartel figures accused of narcotics smuggling, murder and other crimes amid mounting pressure from the Trump administration to curb the flow of drugs onto American streets.

"These 26 men have all played a role in bringing violence and drugs to American shores — under this Department of Justice, they will face severe consequences for their crimes against this country," Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement. "We are grateful to Mexico's National Security team for their collaboration in this matter."

The cartel figures were put on planes to the U.S. after the Justice Department agreed not to seek the death penalty against any of the defendants or against any cartel leaders and members sent to the U.S. in February. That transfer was of 29 cartel figures, including drug lord Rafael Caro Quintero, who was behind the killing of a U.S. DEA agent in 1985.

"This transfer is yet another example of what is possible when two governments stand united against violence and impunity," U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ronald Johnson said in a statement. "These fugitives will now face justice in U.S. courts, and the citizens of both of our nations will be safer from these common enemies."

The February transfers came as Mexican officials were trying to head off the Trump administration's threat of imposing tariffs on Mexican imports. Late last month, President Donald Trump spoke with Mexico President Claudia Sheinbaum and agreed to put off threatened 30% tariffs for another 90 days to allow for negotiations.

Sheinbaum has shown a willingness to cooperate more on security than her predecessor, specifically being more aggressive in pursuit of Mexico's cartels. But she has drawn a clear line when it comes to Mexico's sovereignty, rejecting suggestions by Trump and others of intervention by the U.S. military.

Also included in the group expelled Tuesday was Servando Gómez Martínez, also known as "La Tuta," a former school teacher who became one of Mexico's most-wanted drug lords as head of the Knights Templar cartel. He was captured in 2015 and sentenced to 55 years in a Mexican prison in June 2019.

Gomez led the quasi-religious criminal group that once exercised absolute control over Michoacan and he liked to appear in interviews and videos. The cartel orchestrated politics, controlled commerce, dictated rules and preached a code of ethics around devotion to God and family, even as it murdered and plundered.

Abigael González Valencia is the brother-in-law of CJNG leader Nemesio Rubén "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes, a top target of the U.S. government. Abigael González Valencia was arrested in February 2015 in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco and had been fighting extradition to the United States since then. The U.S. government has offered a reward of up to \$15 million for information leading to "El Mencho's" arrest or conviction.

Alongside his two brothers, Abigael González Valencia led "Los Cuinis," which financed the the founding and growth of the CJNG, one of the most powerful and dangerous cartels in Mexico. CJNG traffics hundreds of tons of cocaine, methamphetamine, and fentanyl into the United States and other countries and is known for extreme violence, murders, torture, and corruption.

One of his brothers, José González Valencia, was sentenced in Washington's federal court in June to 30 years in a U.S. prison after pleading guilty to international cocaine trafficking. Jose González Valencia was arrested in 2017 under the first Trump administration at a beach resort in Brazil while vacationing with his family under a fake name.

Some Juneau residents urged to evacuate as Alaska's Mendenhall Glacier releases floodwater

By CEDAR ATTANASIO Associated Press

Residents in some parts of Juneau prepared to evacuate ahead of what could be a record surge of flooding as rainwater and snowmelt in a huge basin dammed by Alaska's Mendenhall Glacier started to flow downstream toward the capital city.

Officials in recent days have been warning people in the flood zone to be ready to evacuate. On Tuesday morning they confirmed water had started escaping the ice dam, with flooding expected into late Wednesday. They advised people in the city's flood zone to leave.

One couple said they're encouraging their neighbors to evacuate, but plan to stay put after sending their kids outside the flood zone. Their three daughters, aged 11, 10, and 8, were sent to a friend's house at higher ground Tuesday to make absolutely sure they're safe.

"The girls are having sleepovers outside the flood zone," said Sam Hatch, a civilian Coast Guard vessel safety regulator. "A friend from work has three daughters as well so we shoved them all in one house and they're having a six-girl epic four-day right-before-school-starts sleepover. I really owe my friend for taking them."

The Mendenhall Glacier is about 12 miles (19 kilometers) from Juneau, population 30,000, and is a popular tourist attraction due to its proximity to Alaska's capital city and easy access on walking trails. Homes on the city's outskirts are within miles of Mendenhall Lake, which sits below the glacier, and many front the Mendenhall River.

The water that's being released in the glacial outburst is flowing into the river, putting homes that are closest to the river at risk. The National Weather Service said it expected flooding to peak at 4 p.m. local time Wednesday.

"This will be a new record, based on all of the information that we have," Nicole Ferrin, a weather service meteorologist, told a news conference Tuesday.

Basin flooding is an annual concern

Flooding from the basin has become an annual concern since 2011, and in recent years has swept away houses and swamped hundreds of homes. Government agencies installed temporary barriers this year in hopes of protecting several hundred homes in the inundation area from widespread damage.

The flooding happens because a smaller glacier near Mendenhall Glacier retreated — a casualty of the warming climate — and left a basin that fills with rainwater and snowmelt each spring and summer. When the water creates enough pressure, it forces its way under or around the ice dam created by the Mendenhall Glacier and enters Mendenhall Lake and eventually the Mendenhall River, as it did Tuesday.

Before the basin reached the limit of its capacity and began overtopping, the water level was rising rapidly — as much as 4 feet (1.22 meters) per day during especially sunny or rainy days, according to the National Weather Service.

The city saw successive years of record flooding in 2023 and 2024, with the river last August cresting at 15.99 feet (4.9 meters), about 1 foot (0.3 meters) over the prior record set a year earlier, and flooding extending farther into the Mendenhall Valley. This year's flooding was predicted to crest at between 16.3 and 16.8 feet (4.96 to 5.12 meters).

Last year, nearly 300 residences were damaged.

A large outburst can release some 15 billion gallons of water, according to the University of Alaska Southeast and Alaska Climate Adaptation Science Center. That's the equivalent of nearly 23,000 Olympic-size swimming pools. During last year's flood, the flow rate in the rushing Mendenhall River was about half that of Niagara Falls, the researchers say.

Hatch and his wife saw floodwaters lap at their floorboards in 2023, inspiring them to lift their entire house by around 3-4 feet (1 meter). Last year, their neighbors' homes flooded by around 1 to 4 feet (0.3-1.2 meters).

A temporary levee is installed

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City officials responded to concerns from property owners this year by working with state, federal and tribal entities to install a temporary levee along roughly 2.5 miles (4 kilometers) of riverbank in an attempt to guard against widespread flooding. The 10,000 "Hesco" barriers are essentially giant sandbags designed to protect the neighborhoods completely during an 18-foot (5.5 meter) flood event, said emergency manager Ryan O'Shaughnessy. The barriers are intended to protect more than 460 properties.

But Hatch fears that if the water crest exceeds predictions, or somehow seeps through, it will actually make flooding at his home worse.

"If it gets around the barriers, like, upriver, and flows down, we basically become a bathtub," Hatch said, adding that he'll stay behind to move valuables. "My wife just bought a new mixer. So I'm not going to leave a \$400 mixer downstairs, I'll just carry it up and put it in somebody's bedroom."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is at the start of what's expected to be a yearslong process of studying conditions in the region and examining options for a more permanent solution such as a levee. The timeline has angered some residents, who say it's unreasonable.

Outburst floods are expected to continue as long as the Mendenhall Glacier acts as an ice dam to seal off the basin, which could span another 25 to 60 years, according to the university and science center researchers.

The Latest: Mexico expels 26 high-ranking cartel figures to US in deal with Trump administration

By The Associated Press undefined

Mexico is expelling 26 high-ranking cartel figures to the United States in the latest major deal with the President Donald Trump's administration, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The cartel leaders and other prominent figures were being flown from Mexico to the U.S. on Tuesday, the person said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the operation that was still ongoing.

Mexico's Attorney General's Office and Security ministry confirmed the transfers, which were carried out after a promise from the U.S. Justice Department that U.S. officials would not seek the death penalty in any of the cases.

Here's the latest:

DC officials say they are making additional beds available at shelters

Officials in the nation's capital say they have made additional shelter space available after Trump said federal agents would remove homeless people in the city.

Kevin Donahue, the city administrator for the District of Columbia, says outreach workers were stopping at homeless encampments to do outreach work on Tuesday. He said the city also has a building available that could house as many as 200 people, if needed.

Donahue made the comments Tuesday evening during a conversation with community advocates and Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser. The conversation was broadcast on the social platform X.

He said the outreach would continue through the week with a "greater level of urgency."

Bowser said that when Trump sees homeless encampments in the city it "triggers something in him that has him believing our very beautiful city is dirty, which it is not."

Expelled cartel figures include leader of group aligned with notorious cartel CJNG

Those being handed over to U.S. custody include Abigael González Valencia, the brother-in-law of CJNG leader Nemesio Rubén "El Mencho" Oseguera Cervantes, a top target of the U.S. government. He was arrested in February 2015 in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, and had been fighting extradition to the United States since then.

Alongside his two brothers, Valencia led "Los Cuinis," which financed the founding and growth of the CJNG, one of the most powerful and dangerous cartels in Mexico. CJNG traffics hundreds of tons of cocaine, methamphetamine and fentanyl into the United States and other countries and is known for extreme

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violence, murders, torture and corruption.

Another person, Roberto Salazar, is accused of participating in the 2008 killing of a Los Angeles County sheriff's deputy, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The Trump administration made dismantling dangerous drug cartels a key priority, designating CJNG and seven other Latin American organized crime groups foreign terrorist organizations.

Transfers of cartel leaders come ahead of US tariffs on Mexico

The transfers come days before 25% tariffs on Mexican imports are to take effect. Late last month, Trump spoke with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum and agreed to put off threatened 30% tariffs for another 90 days to allow for negotiations.

Sheinbaum has shown a willingness to cooperate more on security than her predecessor, specifically being more aggressive in pursuit of Mexico's cartels.

But she has drawn a clear line when it comes to Mexico's sovereignty, rejecting suggestions by Trump and others of intervention by the U.S. military.

DC National Guard still awaiting mission assignment

As National Guard troops begin to report to the armory in eastern Washington, D.C., officials say they are still waiting to be assigned a mission.

An Army spokesperson who spoke on condition of anonymity to freely describe ongoing operations said Tuesday that, so far, what troops have been told "clearly and distinctly" is that they will be in a support role to law enforcement.

What form that support will take remains to be determined.

The Army spokesperson also said they are expecting the process of mobilizing up to 800 National Guard troops to take until the end of the week, meaning that whatever mission they are ultimately assigned will likely not begin until early next week.

Appeals court sides with Trump administration in fight over DOGE access

A federal appeals court says a lower court was wrong to block billionaire Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency from accessing people's private data at the Education Department, the Treasury Department and the Office of Personnel Management.

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said in a 2-1 decision Tuesday that the lower court's preliminary injunction ruling "miscalculated" the likelihood that the plaintiffs' lawsuit would succeed. The appeals court had already put the block on hold, so Tuesday's ruling will not have any practical effect.

Led by the American Federation of Teachers, the plaintiffs alleged the Trump administration violated federal privacy law when it gave DOGE access to systems with personal information on tens of millions of Americans without their consent.

An email to a spokesperson for the union was not immediately returned.

The appeals court said the privacy law at issue "does not prohibit sharing information with those whose jobs give them good reason to access it."

Mexico expels cartel figures wanted by US authorities in deal with Trump

Mexico is expelling 26 high-ranking cartel figures to the United States in the latest major deal with the Trump administration, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The cartel leaders and other prominent figures were being flown from Mexico to the U.S. on Tuesday, the person said. They spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the operation that was still ongoing.

It's the second time in months Mexico has expelled cartel figures accused of narcotics smuggling, murder and other crimes amid mounting pressure from the Trump administration to curb the flow of drugs across the border.

DC residents criticize federal takeover

Residents emphasized reductions in crime in recent years and concerns over the removal of homeless encampments in interviews Tuesday criticizing the federal takeover of the city's police department.

Jeraod Tyre, who's lived in the city for 15 years, said "crime has been slowing down lately" and argued

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that federal troops would only escalate tensions because they don't have "relationships with the people in the community" like local police do.

Sheiena Taylor, 36, said she's more fearful as a result of the presence of federal forces in D.C., where she was born and raised.

Taylor said she's seen federal officers around her home and on the subway and worries about their targeting of young people and people experiencing homelessness.

"Being homeless isn't a crime," she said, emphasizing the need for solutions to the root causes of homelessness or crime rather than policing.

State Department spokesperson wraps up briefings to take up UN role

State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce has conducted her final press briefing after just six months in the job following Trump's nomination of her to be deputy U.S. ambassador to the United Nations.

Bruce thanked Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, her colleagues at the State Department and the press corps for their professionalism as she wrapped up her tenure as the face of the administration's America First foreign policy.

"You've kept me sharp, grounded and on more than a few occasions, laughing," she said. "The relationship between the spokesperson and the press is a unique one, and I'm grateful that I know all of you."

Bruce, a former Fox News personality who had no government or foreign policy experience before taking the role, had a somewhat contentious relationship with reporters and had cut back the number of press briefings from four or five per week to just two.

DEA administrator says feds will be 'embedded' with DC police

Terry Cole, administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, said federal officers will be "embedded with the Metropolitan Police Department" starting Tuesday night.

"You will see federal agents working hand-in-hand on patrol with the Metropolitan Police Department," he said in an interview with Fox News on Tuesday. "You will also see an increase of patrol activity in certain sectors to go after the violent criminal offenders that are the drivers of this crime."

Cole said the city's police chief has been "very accommodating" and applauded intel sharing between federal forces and local law enforcement.

His remarks continue a tone of cooperation that contrasted with D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser's initial reactions to the federal takeover of the city's police department.

Cole did not offer specific details on what will change in the chain of command amid the federal takeover, only saying that the move "brings so much power to allow the police officers to do their job."

He also blamed the D.C. City Council for not previously empowering city law enforcement, arguing that the federal government is helping rectify "concerning" dynamics for police officers created by the council.

Senior Democrat calls on Republicans to hold confirmation hearing for Trump's new BLS pick

Sen. Patty Murray, a senior Democrat, is calling for Republicans to hold a confirmation hearing for E.J. Antoni, whom Trump has nominated to lead the agency that compiles the nation's employment and inflation figures.

Murray in a statement slammed Antoni as "an unqualified right-wing extremist" and demanded that the GOP chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, hold a confirmation hearing for him.

Some Senate Republicans were critical after Trump fired the previous director of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Erika McEntarfer, and have said they want someone in the job who can reliably compile and report data on the nation's economy. But they have also mostly gone along with Trump's Cabinet picks.

Trump's choice of Antoni, who was the chief economist at the conservative Heritage Foundation and often made overtly political arguments, sets up a key test for GOP senators and their willingness to go along with the president.

Philadelphia DA says Trump's seizure of policing in DC is unjustified

Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner said during a Tuesday news conference with faith leaders

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that Trump's effort to seize policing in Washington, D.C., is unjustified and will be resisted if it comes to Pennsylvania's largest city.

Krasner said crime is actually down in many major cities, including Philadelphia and the nation's capital. He described Trump's declaration of federal control of D.C. police, and threat to do so elsewhere, as a "bogus" attempt to assert authority.

"What we have going on in Philadelphia and elsewhere is actually good news, but that's not the news that Donald Trump needs," he said.

He said Trump's threat to send members of the National Guard to Washington, D.C., and other cities could bring chaos in a time of relative peace.

Trump administration cuts down human rights reports

The Trump administration released human rights reports for countries worldwide that eliminate mentions of discrimination faced by LGBTQ+ people and reduce a previous focus on reproductive rights.

The reports, which cover 2024 before Trump took office, also criticize restrictions on political speech by U.S. allies in Europe that American officials believe target right-wing politicians.

They offer a glimpse into the administration's view of dire human rights conditions in countries like Eswatini, South Sudan and Rwanda that have agreed to accept migrants deported from the United States under Trump's immigration crackdown.

South Africa also was singled out for its human rights situation "significantly worsening." The report pointed to unfair treatment of white Afrikaners, a minority that ran the country's apartheid government.

US attorney for DC says, 'There is a whole community that is suffering'

Pirro argued during a Tuesday press briefing that violent crime in the nation's capital is significant and causing suffering throughout the community.

She displayed poster boards that she said showed teenagers who were shot and killed in D.C. in 2024 and 2025 so far. She said anyone who argues crime is down or an emergency designation is not needed should "talk to the loved ones and the family members of these individuals, all shot and killed long before their time."

As she backed the Trump administration's argument for placing the city's police department under federal control, Pirro pointed to violent crime rates that spiked in the nation's capital in 2023.

"I don't need any more statistics," she said.

A recent Department of Justice report shows that violent crime is down 35% since 2023, returning to the previous trend of decreasing crime that puts the district's violent crime rate at its lowest in 30 years.

Officials brief the media on the indictment of a Haitian gang leader

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeanine Pirro and other federal officials briefed the media on Tuesday's unsealed indictment of Jimmy "Barbecue" Cherizier, whom many consider Haiti's most powerful gang leader.

The State Department is offering a reward of up to \$5 million for information that leads to Cherizier's arrest or conviction, the officials said.

Pirro said Haiti is a "hotspot" where "incredible violence" is taking place right now.

Health secretary, after the shooting at CDC, criticizes agency's pandemic response

Trump's Health Secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., refused to directly answer when asked during an interview with Scripps News on Monday what message he had for CDC employees who are worried about the culture of misinformation and skepticism around vaccines.

Although law enforcement officials have made clear the shooter was targeting the public health agency over the COVID-19 vaccine, Kennedy said in the interview that not enough was known about his motives.

He described political violence as "wrong" and said his job is to protect employees.

He went on to criticize the public health agency's actions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"One of the things that we saw during COVID is that the government was overreaching in its efforts to persuade the public to get vaccinated and they were saying things that are not always true," Kennedy said.

White House not ruling out 'future plans' for Trump to travel to Russia

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Leavitt said Trump will be traveling to Alaska on Friday and meeting one-on-one with Putin -- even amid lingering questions about whether Zelenskyy will be involved.

But asked if Trump might then head to Russia -- or go there in the future -- Leavitt was less committal. "Perhaps there are plans in the future to travel to Russia," she said.

Business as usual in Chinatown

The intersection of 7th and H street in Chinatown is one of the more high-profile battlegrounds in the effort to bring down crime rates in Washington D.C.

Residents and business owners have long complained about the open drug dealing, aggressive panhandlers and 24/7 marijuana smell around the Metro exit, one block from Capitol One Arena.

Folks on the street corner — none of whom would give their names — said federal law enforcement officers swept through the area Sunday night, but there's disagreement if it was FBI or DEA or both.

On Tuesday afternoon, the corner was relatively tranquil. But two young men did offer to sell marijuana to a reporter as soon as they were introduced.

Another man, sitting in a wheelchair and rolling a joint, predicted that any crackdown would just temporarily push illegal activity down the block.

"They're never going to stop crime," he said. "You know why? Because crime gets people paid."

White House says monthly jobs report will continue

The White House press secretary said the government will continue to issue the monthly jobs report, which includes the nation's unemployment rate, despite comments by an administration's nominee that suggested suspending it.

"I believe that is the plan and that's the hope," Leavitt said.

On Aug. 4, E.J. Antoni, a conservative economist at the Heritage Foundation, said on Fox News Digital that the agency should pause the issuance of the reports while it works to improve its data collection. Antoni a week later was nominated by Trump to head the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the agency that compiles the jobs data as well as monthly inflation report.

The jobs report is closely watched by Wall Street and many businesses around the country, and suspending it would be unprecedented.

Trump slammed the last report Aug. 1 after it showed hiring weakened in July and was much lower in May and June than originally reported, then fired the BLS commissioner, Erika McEntarfer.

Leavitt says DC homeless will face fines or jail if they refuse shelter or treatment

Leavitt says people living in Washington homeless encampments will be offered space in a homeless shelter or treatment for addiction. She says those who refuse will face fines or jail time.

With Trump taking control of law enforcement in the nation's capital, Leavitt said authorities will enforce anti-homelessness laws that she says have been ignored.

The National Park Service has removed 70 homeless encampments from parks controlled by the federal agency, she said.

"We want to make DC safe and beautiful," and that requires removing "mentally disturbed individuals" and homeless encampments, Leavitt said in the White House briefing room.

Army leaders visit DC National Guard as troops report in

Two top Army leaders made a visit to the Washington, D.C., National Guard armory Tuesday morning as activated guard members began reporting for duty to support law enforcement in the capital.

An Army spokesperson confirmed to The Associated Press that Secretary Driscoll, the Army's top civilian official, and Gen. James Mingus, the service's second highest ranking officer, visited the armory this "to visit with Soldiers and leaders."

"Secretary Driscoll wanted the D.C. National Guard Soldiers to know first-hand that they have support from the very top of the Army and that we have every confidence in their skill, discipline, and professionalism to support our law enforcement partners and accomplish this mission," Lt. Colonel Jeff Tolbert said in an email.

White House says Trump is 'considering' lawsuit against Fed Chair Jerome Powell

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White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt expanded on Trump's social media post indicating that a lawsuit might be forthcoming on the Federal Reserve's \$2.5 billion renovation project.

Leavitt said at the Tuesday news briefing that Trump is weighing whether he as president should sue the U.S. central bank.

"The president is considering a lawsuit against the Fed, and I will leave it to him to comment further on it," Leavitt said.

DC police takeover may last longer than 30 days

The federal takeover of the District of Columbia's police department could last longer than 30 days.

During a press briefing, the White House press secretary said the administration would "reevaluate and reassess and make further decisions" after the 30-day period is over.

The White House would need approval from both House and Senate in order to extend the takeover of the police department.

Trump remains "very much engaged" with Ukraine, Europe, Leavitt says

Leavitt said Trump has "deep respect for all parties involved" in the war between Russia and Ukraine.

She said that the president continues to be "very much engaged" with Ukrainians and allies in Europe.

Trump is expected to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin this Friday in Alaska.

White House calls judge's ruling on Maxwell grand jury testimony 'unfortunate'

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt says a judge denying the Trump administration's motion to unseal grand jury testimony from the criminal case against Ghislaine Maxwell "unfortunate."

"We think that decision is unfortunate," Leavitt said, adding that the information should be unsealed because Trump has said he wanted it released.

Those comments came a day after U.S. District Judge Paul Engelmayer of the Southern District of New York criticized the Department of Justice for using "demonstrably false" reasoning to justify the release of grand jury testimony.

Maxwell is currently serving a 20-year prison sentence for sex trafficking and other crimes in connection with Jeffrey Epstein.

Putin meeting is 'a listening exercise' for Trump, Leavitt says

Leavitt says Trump's goal for his meeting with Putin this week is "to walk away with a better understanding of how we can end this war."

The White House press secretary downplayed the president's aims for the summit on Friday in Alaska. She described the meeting as "a listening exercise for the president" that he agreed to after Putin requested a meeting.

Leavitt declined to discuss Trump's conversations with Zelenskyy but said Trump has "deep respect" for all parties.

White House says federal officers arrested 23 in DC

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt says approximately 850 federal law enforcement officers were deployed in Washington and made 23 arrests overnight.

Leavitt says the arrests include charges of homicide, gun and drug crimes, reckless driving, fare evasion and drunken driving. Leavitt said six illegal handguns were seized.

"This is only the beginning," she said, pledging that federal authorities would continue policing in the nation's capital for a month.

"President Trump will not be deterred by soft on crime democrats and media activists," Leavitt said.

California Gov. Newsom mimics Trump's social media style

"THIS IS YOUR SECOND-TO-LAST WARNING!!!" Newsom's press office wrote Tuesday in a X post urging the president to back off efforts to redraw congressional maps.

California Democrats are planning to introduce new partisan maps on Friday to counter efforts to help GOPs in 2026 in Texas.

"STAND DOWN NOW OR CALIFORNIA WILL COUNTER-STRIKE (LEGALLY!) TO DESTROY YOUR ILLEGAL CROOKED MAPS IN RED STATES," the post reads.

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The new maps in California would still need state lawmakers and voters approval. State Republicans vow to challenge the effort.

Switzerland's pivotal gold industry is breathing some relief

The Swiss Association of Precious Metals Manufacturers and Traders on Tuesday said it was awaiting a formal decision after Trump wrote "Gold will not be Tariffed!" on his Truth Social platform late Monday.

"President Trump's statement is an encouraging signal for trade stability," said Christoph Wild, the president of the association, which counts 15 companies that process and trade in precious metals like gold. "However, only a formal and binding decision will provide the certainty the gold sector and its partners require."

The Swiss National Bank, citing figures from the Swiss government, in April issued a report saying that gold refineries in Switzerland supply about one-third of refined gold worldwide.

Last year, gold accounted for some 27% of goods trade value from the country, making it Switzerland's most-traded product — ahead of pharmaceuticals at 22%, the SNB said.

The precious metals association, known as ASFCMP, last week expressed concern following news reports and other indications that the Trump administration might apply whopping 39% U.S. tariffs on Swiss products -- among the highest it has imposed anywhere -- to gold products.

DC mayor emphasizes 'working collaboratively' with feds amid Trump takeover

Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser says the city will aim to "make the most of" the increase in federal resources in the city after Trump's announcement that he's taking over Washington's police department and activating 800 members of the National Guard.

Bowser also emphasized that the Metropolitan Police Department will retain its independence, including over hiring and firing, saying "our organizational chart, how we do business, how we fund the police, none of that has changed."

"We have more police, and we want to make sure we use them," Bowser added after a meeting with U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi.

The remarks mark a change in tone from Monday when Bowser called Trump's executive order "unsettling and unprecedented."

Pamela Smith, chief of the Metropolitan Police Department, spoke about reduced crime in the city and said increased federal resources "will only help us build upon that."

Bondi called the meeting with Bowser "productive" in a statement on X, adding that the Justice Department will work closely with city government and police.

A UFC fight at the White House? Dana White says it's happening as part of deal with Paramount

Hours after Paramount and UFC announced a billion-dollar rights deal, Dana White said he had yet to hear from Trump on his thoughts about the fight company's new streaming home.

That was fine with White. The UFC CEO was set to travel to Washington on Aug. 28 to meet with Trump and his daughter, Ivanka, to catch up and discuss logistics on the proposed Fourth of July fight card next year at the White House.

Trump said last month he wanted to stage a UFC match on the White House grounds with upward of 20,000 spectators to celebrate 250 years of American independence.

"It's absolutely going to happen," White told The Associated Press. "Think about that, the 250th birthday of the United States of America, the UFC will be on the White House south lawn live on CBS."

Trump's moves toward taking over Washington are unprecedented. Here's what the law says

Trump took command of the police department and deployed the National Guard under laws and Constitutional powers that give the federal government more sway over the nation's capital than other cities. The measure still leaves significant power to the president and Congress, though no president has exercised the police powers before.

Here's a look at what the law says about Trump's actions:

1. Trump activated the National Guard. The president can still call up the National Guard in Washington. His authority is less clear in Los Angeles, where a legal battle continues over his recent deployment of the National Guard despite the objections of Gov. Gavin Newsom.

2. Trump took over the local police. Section 740 of the Home Rule Act allows for the president to take over Washington's Metropolitan Police Department for 48 hours, with possible extensions to 30 days, during times of emergencies. No president has done so before.

3. Trump didn't specify how long the takeover would last. Congress still has power over things like the budget and laws passed by the city council, but would have to repeal the Home Rule Act to expand federal power in the district.

Netanyahu hints that Gaza ceasefire talks now focus on the release of all hostages at once

By NATALIE MELZER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday hinted that ceasefire efforts in Gaza are now focused on a comprehensive deal that would release the remaining hostages all at once, rather than in phases.

Arab officials told The Associated Press last week that mediators Egypt and Qatar were preparing a new framework for a deal that would include the release of all remaining hostages in one go in return for a lasting ceasefire and the withdrawal of Israeli forces.

The long-running indirect talks appeared to break down last month. But a Hamas delegation arrived in Cairo for ceasefire talks on Tuesday, Egypt's state-run Qahera news channel reported, a sign that efforts have not been abandoned after 22 months of war.

Israel has threatened to widen its military offensive against Hamas to the areas of Gaza that it does not yet control, and where most of the territory's 2 million residents have sought refuge.

Those plans have sparked international condemnation and criticism within Israel, and could be intended to raise pressure on Hamas to reach a ceasefire. The militants still hold 50 hostages taken in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that sparked the war. Israel believes around 20 of them are alive.

'I want all of them'

In an interview with Israel's i24 News network broadcast Tuesday, Netanyahu was asked if the window had closed on a partial ceasefire deal. Egyptian Foreign Ministry Badr Abdelatty told reporters that Cairo is still trying to advance an earlier proposal for an initial 60-day ceasefire, the release of some hostages and an influx of humanitarian aid before further talks on a lasting truce.

"I think it's behind us," Netanyahu replied. "We tried, we made all kinds of attempts, we went through a lot, but it turned out that they were just misleading us."

"I want all of them," he said of the hostages. "The release of all the hostages, both alive and dead — that's the stage we're at."

He added, however, that Israel's demands haven't changed, and that the war will end only when all hostages are returned and Hamas has surrendered. He has said that even then, Israel will maintain open-ended security control over the territory.

Hamas has long called for a comprehensive deal but says it will only release the remaining hostages in return for the release of Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. The militant group has refused to lay down its arms, as Israel has demanded.

UN warns about starvation, malnutrition

The United Nations on Tuesday warned that starvation and malnutrition in Gaza are at the highest levels since the war began.

U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric reported the warning from the World Food Program and said Gaza's Health Ministry told U.N. staff in Gaza that five people died over the last 24 hours from malnutrition and starvation.

The ministry says 121 adults and 101 children have died of malnutrition-related causes during the war.

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"Against this backdrop, humanitarian supplies entering Gaza remain far below the minimum required to meet people's immense needs," Dujarric said.

The U.N. and its humanitarian partners are doing everything possible to bring aid into Gaza, he said, but still face significant delays and impediments from Israeli authorities that prevent the delivery of food and other essentials at the scale needed.

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people and killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in that 2023 attack. Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's air and ground offensive has since displaced most of Gaza's population, destroyed vast areas and pushed the territory toward famine. It has killed more than 61,400 Palestinians, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians but says around half were women and children.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

Israel says it struck militants disguised as aid workers

In a separate development, the Israeli military said it recently struck a group of militants in Gaza who were disguised as aid workers and using a car with the logo of international charity World Central Kitchen.

The army said it carried out an airstrike on the men after confirming with the charity that they were not affiliated with it and that the car did not belong to it.

World Central Kitchen confirmed that the men and the vehicle were not affiliated with it. "We strongly condemn anyone posing as World Central Kitchen or other humanitarians, as this endangers civilians and aid workers," it said in a statement.

The military shared video footage showing several men in yellow vests standing around a vehicle with the charity's logo on its roof. The military said five of the men were armed.

The charity, founded in 2010, dispatches teams that can quickly provide meals on a mass scale in conflict zones and after natural disasters.

In April, an Israeli strike killed seven World Central Kitchen workers in Gaza. Israel quickly admitted it had mistakenly killed the aid workers and launched an investigation.

In November, an Israeli strike killed five people, including a World Central Kitchen worker who Israel said was part of the Hamas attack that sparked the war. The charity said at the time that it was unaware the employee had any connection to the attack.

Trump's nominee to oversee jobs, inflation data faces shower of criticism

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and JOSH BOAK Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The director of the agency that produces the nation's jobs and inflation data is typically a mild-mannered technocrat, often with extensive experience in statistical agencies, with little public profile.

But like so much in President Donald Trump's second administration, this time is different.

Trump has selected E.J. Antoni, chief economist at the conservative Heritage Foundation, to be the next commissioner at the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics. Antoni's nomination was quickly met with a cascade of criticism from other economists, from across the political spectrum.

His selection threatens to bring a new level of politicization to what for decades has been a nonpartisan agency widely accepted as a producer of reliable measures of the nation's economic health. While many former Labor Department officials say it is unlikely Antoni will be able to distort or alter the data, particularly in the short run, he could change the currently dry-as-dust way it is presented.

Antoni was nominated by Trump after the BLS released a jobs report Aug. 1 that showed that hiring had weakened in July and was much lower in May and June than the agency had previously reported. Trump, without evidence, charged that the data had been "rigged" for political reasons and fired the then-BLS

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chair, Erika McEntarfer, much to the dismay of many within the agency.

Antoni has been a vocal critic of the government's jobs data in frequent appearances on podcasts and cable TV. His partisan commentary is unusual for someone who may end up leading the BLS.

For instance, on Aug. 4 — a week before he was nominated — Antoni said in an interview on Fox News Digital that the Labor Department should stop publishing the monthly jobs reports until its data collection processes improve, and rely on quarterly data based on actual employment filings with state unemployment offices.

The monthly employment reports are probably the closest-watched economic data on Wall Street, and can frequently cause swings in stock prices.

When asked at Tuesday's White House briefing whether the jobs report would continue to be released, press secretary Karoline Leavitt said the administration hoped it would be.

"I believe that is the plan and that's the hope," Leavitt said.

Leavitt also defended Antoni's nomination, calling him an "economic expert" who has testified before Congress and adding that, "the president trusts him to lead this important department."

Yet Antoni's TV and podcast appearances have created more of a portrait of a conservative ideologue, instead of a careful economist who considers tradeoffs and prioritizes getting the math correct.

"There's just nothing in his writing or his resume to suggest that he's qualified for the position, besides that he is always manipulating the data to favor Trump in some way," said Brian Albrecht, chief economist at the International Center for Law and Economics.

Antoni wrongly claimed in the last year of Biden's presidency that the economy had been in recession since 2022; called on the entire Federal Reserve board to be fired for not earning a profit on its Treasury securities holdings; and posted a chart on social media that conflated timelines to suggest inflation was headed to 15%.

His argument that the U.S. was in a recession rested on a vastly exaggerated measure of housing inflation, based on newly-purchased home prices, to artificially make the nation's gross domestic product appear smaller than it was.

"This is actually maybe the worst Antoni content I've seen yet," Alan Cole of the center-right Tax Foundation said on social media, referring to his recession claim.

On a 2024 podcast, Antoni wanted to sunset Social Security payments for workers paying into the system, saying that "you'll need a generation of people who pay Social Security taxes but never actually receive any of those benefits." As head of the BLS, Antoni would oversee the release of the consumer price index by which Social Security payments are adjusted for inflation.

Many economists share, to some degree, Antoni's concerns that the government's jobs data has flaws and is threatened by trends such as declining response rates to its surveys. The drop has made the jobs figures more volatile, though not necessarily less accurate over time.

"The stock market moves clearly based on these job numbers, and so people with skin in the game think it's telling them something about the future of their investments," Albrecht said. "Could it be improved? Absolutely."

Katharine Abraham, an economist at the University of Maryland who was BLS Commissioner under President Bill Clinton, said updating the jobs report's methods would require at least some initial investment.

The government could use more modern data sources, she said, such as figures from payroll processing companies, and fill in gaps with surveys.

"There's an inconsistency between saying you want higher response rates and you want to spend less money," she said, referring to the administration's proposals to cut BLS funding.

Still, Abraham and other former BLS commissioners don't think Antoni, if confirmed, would be able to alter the figures. He could push for changes in the monthly press release and seek to portray the numbers in a more positive light.

William Beach, who was appointed BLS commissioner by Trump in his first term and also served under Biden, said he is confident that BLS procedures are strong enough to prevent political meddling. He said

he didn't see the figures himself until two days before publication when he served as commissioner.

"The commissioner does not affect the numbers," Beach said. "They don't collect the data. They don't massage the data. They don't organize it."

Regarding the odds of rigging the numbers, Beach said, "I wouldn't put it at complete zero, but I'd put it pretty close to zero."

It took about six months after McEntarfer was nominated in July 2023 for her to be approved. Antoni will likely face stiff opposition from Democrats, but that may not be enough to derail his appointment.

Sen. Patty Murray, a senior Democrat from Washington, on Tuesday slammed Antoni as "an unqualified right-wing extremist" and demanded that the GOP chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, hold a confirmation hearing for him.

Trump's domestic troop deployment tests the limits of a nearly 150-year-old law

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE Associated Press/Report For America

As President Donald Trump pushes the bounds of military activity on domestic soil, a debate has emerged over a nearly 150-year old law that regulates when federal troops can intervene in state issues.

About 800 National Guard troops filed into Washington, D.C., on Tuesday after President Donald Trump said — without substantiation — that they were needed to reduce crime in the "lawless" national capital. Thousands of miles away, a judge in California is hearing arguments about whether the president's recent decision to federalize Guard personnel in Los Angeles during protests against immigration raids violated federal law.

Trump has also created militarized zones along the U.S.-Mexico border as part of a major shift that has thrust the army into immigration enforcement like never before.

The cases in both California and Washington mainly hinge on Posse Comitatus Act, which passed in 1878 and largely prevents the military from enforcing domestic laws. Experts say that in both cases there are clear limitations to the law's enforcement.

Here is what to know about the law.

Posse Comitatus Act stops military from enforcing US law

The Posse Comitatus Act is a criminal statute that prevents the military from enforcing domestic law. It also prevents the military from investigating local crimes, overriding local law enforcement or compelling certain behavior.

Posse Comitatus can be bypassed by a congressional vote or in order to defend the Constitution. The Insurrection Act of 1807 can also trigger the suspension of the Posse Comitatus Act and allows the president to deploy the military domestically in cases of invasion or rebellion.

There is an exception for the U.S. Coast Guard, which has some law enforcement responsibility. The military is also allowed to share intelligence and certain resources if there is an overlap with civilian law enforcement jurisdiction, according to the Library of Congress.

Law was enacted after Reconstruction era

The law was enacted in 1878 following the post-Civil War era known as Reconstruction. Pro-segregationist representatives in Congress wanted to keep the military from blocking the enforcement of Jim Crow laws that allowed racial segregation.

But the spirit of the law also has roots going all the way back to the Revolutionary War, when the founders of the United States were scarred by the British monarchy's absolute military control, said William C. Banks, a professor at the Syracuse University College of Law.

"We have a tradition in the United States, which is more a norm than a law, that we want law enforcement to be conducted by civilians, not the military," Banks said.

That ethos — ingrained in National Guard personnel starting in basic training — becomes especially powerful in the case of the Posse Comitatus Act, because the law has hardly been tested before now,

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said Steve Vladeck, a professor of law at the Georgetown University Law Center.

"There is no authoritative precedent on exactly where these lines are, and so that's why over the years the military's own interpretation has been so important," Vladeck said.

Law applies to 'federalized' troops

The Posse Comitatus Act typically doesn't apply to the National Guard because members of the Guard report to the governor, not the federal government.

But when Guard personnel are "federalized" they are bound by the act until they are returned to state control, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

The state of California said in a federal lawsuit that the Trump administration violated the act when it deployed National Guard soldiers and U.S. Marines to Los Angeles following June protests over immigration raids.

The Trump administration has argued that the Posse Comitatus Act does not apply because the president used a provision known as Title 10 to federalize the troops. It allows the president to call the National Guard into federal service when the country "is invaded," when "there is a rebellion or danger of a rebellion against the authority of the Government," or when the president is otherwise unable "to execute the laws of the United States." Attorneys for the federal government also argue that the troops are not enforcing domestic laws and are only acting to protect federal property and agents.

In Washington, by contrast, the president is already in charge of the National Guard and can legally deploy troops for 30 days without congressional approval.

Vladeck said that both deployments over the past three months suggest that the Trump administration "appears to be trying to dance around the Posse Comitatus Act" rather than disregard it altogether.

"There is a lot in the water about the Trump administration being lawless. What is striking is actually how much the administration is trying to wrap itself in the law," Vladeck said.

Law depends on executive branch policing itself

Beyond the legal exceptions written into the law, there is a practical question of how to enforce it, said Joseph Nunn, counsel in the Brennan Center for Justice's Liberty and National Security Program.

Because the Posse Comitatus Act is a criminal statute, not a civil one, the U.S. Department of Justice is responsible for prosecution in criminal court, Nunn said.

"It's premised on the executive branch policing itself," he said. That leaves unclear legal standing for whether a state government like California's has a right to sue in civil court in the first place.

The ruling in the California case will likely be a narrow interpretation based on the circumstances of the Guard's deployment in Los Angeles, Vladeck said. But he said it could still dictate how the administration uses the Guard in other cities like Chicago and New York, where Trump has threatened to federalize troops next.

Texas shooter who killed 3 outside Target, including a child, randomly chose his victims, police say

By JAMIE STENGLE and JIM VERTUNO Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A random shooting outside a Target store in Texas began when a gunman killed an employee collecting shopping carts then a man and his 4-year-old granddaughter, sparking a chaotic hour of stolen cars and crashes that ended with him arrested naked holding a Bible, police said Tuesday.

Ethan Nieneker, 32, is charged with two counts of capital murder and one count of murder over Monday's shooting in Austin. Court records show a series of past arrests for domestic violence and assault.

"What happened yesterday was an unprovoked and deliberate attack, a deliberate act of violence," Police Chief Lisa Davis said at a news conference. "Innocent lives were taken in broad daylight, in a place where people should feel safe to run their everyday errands and to live their everyday lives."

The police chief said that although Nieneker had a history of mental health issues, she was unaware of any specific diagnosis. Sgt. Nathan Sexton said the firearm Nieneker used in the attacks was acquired through family.

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After shooting the Target employee, Nieneker shot the grandfather as he sat in the driver's seat of his sport utility vehicle, then fatally shot the little girl in the back seat before stealing the vehicle and driving away fast, police said.

"It was a completely random choosing of the victims," Sexton said.

Police said the Target employee, Hector Leopoldo Martinez Machuca, 24, was taken to a hospital where he died. Adam Chow, 65, and his granddaughter were pronounced dead at the scene while Chow's wife sustained minor injuries. The name of the child was not released.

Over the next hour, Nieneker tried to steal a water truck at a construction site, caused multiple vehicle crashes, wrecked Chow's vehicle and then stole a Volkswagen he'd crashed into, police said. He also tried to break into a Waymo self-driving vehicle, threw a brick through the home of an acquaintance and walked naked through a backyard.

Officers found Nieneker walking naked on a street after he ditched his clothes in a portable toilet, police said. He was holding a Bible and was subdued with a Taser when he would not comply with demands.

"He said that he was Jesus," Sexton said.

Police received multiple 911 calls as the suspect made his way across the city.

Chris Ferran said he was driving on a highway when he saw an SUV fly past him, then smash into two vehicles and keep going. "I'm not letting anybody get away with this, so I chased him down and called 911," he said.

Ferran watched as the driver pulled into a construction site, got out of the SUV and ripped a worker out of a water truck. Ferran said the SUV's driver, who was clad in what looked like swim trunks and a Hawaiian shirt, was in the truck for a while. So Ferran started shooting a video.

But when the man got out of the water truck, Ferran realized he had a gun.

"As soon as I saw that, I threw the phone down and I reversed and I was trying to get us out of there," said Ferran, who had his two daughters with him.

Jail records did not list an attorney for Nieneker on Tuesday.

Online court records show Nieneker was arrested several times in recent years in both Travis County, which includes Austin, and neighboring Williamson County.

His Travis County arrests include misdemeanors for criminal mischief and driving while intoxicated, and three arrests on felony domestic violence charges. He was convicted of a charge of assault causing bodily injury family violence in 2016 and briefly sentenced to jail.

Another charge within days of the 2016 episode was dismissed. It was not immediately clear if those two charges were related. Another charge of felony assault on a family or household member in 2019 was dismissed three years later when prosecutors could not locate the victim.

Williamson County records show repeated run-ins with law enforcement, including two cases of misdemeanor family violence in 2015 that were later dismissed. He was also convicted of possession of marijuana in 2012 and entered a no contest plea to a charge of criminal mischief in 2016.

Monday's shooting came as back-to-school shopping was in full swing ahead of the upcoming academic year. It also comes about two weeks after an attack at a Walmart in Michigan in which a man stabbed 11 people. The suspect has been charged with terrorism and multiple counts of attempted murder.

Shooter attacked CDC headquarters to protest COVID-19 vaccines

By CHARLOTTE KRAMON and JEFF MARTIN Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — The man who fired more than 180 shots with a long gun at the headquarters of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention broke into a locked safe to get his father's weapons and wanted to send a message against COVID-19 vaccines, authorities said Tuesday.

Underscoring the level of firepower involved, the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said more than 500 shell casings were recovered from the scene. Authorities haven't said how many shots were fired by Patrick Joseph White and how many by police. The GBI said forensic testing was still pending.

Documents found in a search of the home where White had lived with his parents "expressed the shooter's

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discontent with the COVID-19 vaccinations," GBI Director Chris Hosey said.

White, 30, had written about wanting to make "the public aware of his discontent with the vaccine," Hosey added.

White also had recently verbalized thoughts of suicide, which led to law enforcement being contacted several weeks before the shooting, Hosey said. He died at the scene Friday of a self-inflicted gunshot wound after killing DeKalb County Police Officer David Rose.

The shooting reflects the dangers public health leaders have been experiencing around the country since anti-vaccine vitriol took root during the pandemic. Such rhetoric has been amplified as President Donald Trump's Health Secretary, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., has repeatedly made false and misleading statements about the safety of immunizations.

Calling for 'rational, evidence-based discourse'

"We know that misinformation can be dangerous. Not only to health, but to those that trust us and those we want to trust," Dr. Susan Monarez told CDC employees in an "all-hands" meeting Tuesday, her first since the attack capped her first full week on campus as CDC director.

"We need to rebuild the trust together," Monarez said, according to a transcript obtained by The Associated Press. "The trust is what binds us. In moments like this, we must meet the challenges with rational, evidence-based discourse spoken with compassion and understanding. That is how we will lead."

White's parents have fully cooperated with the investigation of their son, who had no known criminal history, Hosey said Tuesday. With a search warrant at their home in the Atlanta suburb of Kennesaw, authorities recovered written documents and electronic devices that are being analyzed. Investigators also recovered five firearms, including a gun of his father's that he used in the attack, Hosey said.

White did not have a key to the gun safe, Hosey said: "He broke into it."

CDC security guards stopped White from driving into the campus on Friday before he parked near a pharmacy across the street and opened fire from a sidewalk. The bullets pierced "blast-resistant" windows across the campus, pinning employees down during the barrage.

It could have been much worse

In the aftermath, CDC officials are assessing security and encouraging staff to alert authorities to any new threats, including those based on misinformation regarding the CDC and its vaccine work.

"We've not seen an uptick, although any rhetoric that suggests or leads to violence is something we take very seriously," said FBI Special Agent Paul Brown, who leads the agency's Atlanta division.

Jeff Williams, who oversees safety at the CDC, told employees there is "no information suggesting additional threats currently."

"This is a targeted attack on the CDC related to COVID-19," Williams said. "All indications are that this was an isolated event involving one individual."

The fact that CDC's security turned him away "prevented what I can only imagine to be a lot of casualties," Williams said.

"Nearly 100 children at the childcare center were reunited with their parents at the end of the night," he said. "The protections we have in place did an excellent job."

RFK Jr.'s responses to the attack

Kennedy toured the CDC campus on Monday, accompanied by Monarez. "No one should face violence while working to protect the health of others," Kennedy said in a statement Saturday, without addressing the potential impact of anti-vaccine rhetoric.

Kennedy refused to directly answer when asked during an interview with Scripps News on Monday what message he had for CDC employees who are worried about the culture of misinformation and skepticism around vaccines.

Although law enforcement officials have made clear the shooter was targeting the public health agency over the COVID-19 vaccine, Kennedy said in the interview that not enough is known about his motives. He described political violence as "wrong," but went on to criticize the agency's pandemic response.

"The government was overreaching in its efforts to persuade the public to get vaccinated and they were saying things that are not always true," Kennedy said.

Some unionized CDC employees called for more protections. Some others who recently left amid widespread layoffs squarely blamed Kennedy.

Years of false rhetoric about vaccines was bound to "take a toll on people's mental health," and "leads to violence," said Tim Young, a CDC employee who retired in April.

Trump ally Ken Paxton escalates Texas redistricting fight with call for Beto O'Rourke to be jailed

By BILL BARROW and NADIA LATHAN Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton ratcheted up President Donald Trump's congressional redistricting fight by calling Tuesday for progressive activist Beto O'Rourke to be put "behind bars" for helping Democrats who have managed to block the GOP's gerrymandering efforts with an extended walkout.

Hours earlier, Texas Republican leaders said they were prepared to end their stalemated special session that includes the proposed new maps and immediately begin another standoff with Democratic legislators. Dozens of Democrats have left the state to prevent their GOP colleagues from voting on the changes and meeting Trump's demands ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

The developments are the latest escalations in a battle that began in Austin and now reaches into multiple courtrooms and statehouses controlled by both major parties.

Paxton, a Trump acolyte who is running for the U.S. Senate, asked a Texas judge on Tuesday to hold O'Rourke in contempt of court, arguing that the former congressman and onetime presidential candidate has continued to fundraise for absent Democrats despite an order last week that Paxton said should have stopped some of his activities.

"It's time to lock him up," Paxton said of O'Rourke in a fiery written statement.

O'Rourke denied any wrongdoing and called the attorney general a "corrupt, lying thug."

At the Texas Capitol, House Speaker Dustin Burrows was more muted as he confirmed Republicans' next moves after dozens of Democrats again did not show up, preventing the necessary quorum for business to be conducted. Burrows said from the House floor that lawmakers will not attempt to reconvene again until Friday. If Democrats are still absent — and they have given no indication that they plan to return — the speaker and Gov. Greg Abbott said Republicans will end the current session, with the governor immediately calling another.

Texas flood response is caught up in the redistricting fight

Abbott called Democrats "derelict" and said in statement that he will "continue to call special session after special session until we get this Texas first agenda passed."

Democrats responded by declaring victory — even if temporarily.

"We said we would defeat Abbott's first corrupt special session, and that's exactly what we're doing," Texas House Democratic Caucus Chair Rep. Gene Wu said in a statement.

Abbott called the current session with an extensive agenda that included disaster relief for floods that killed more than 130 people. Democrats balked when Abbott added redistricting to the agenda, urging the governor not to tie the aid to an intensely partisan fight over control of Congress.

Burrows on Tuesday did not mention redistricting but chided Democrats for not showing up to debate the flood response package. Wu put the onus back on Abbott and his party.

"He can stop blocking flood relief immediately. Stop playing political games," the Democratic leader wrote.

The partisan battle has spread

Redistricting is usually done just once per decade, not long after the decennial federal census conducted under the Constitution.

The last census was in 2020. The mid-decade scheme is part of Trump's push to shore up Republicans' narrow House majority and avoid a repeat of his first presidency, when the 2018 midterms restored Democrats to a House majority that blocked his agenda and twice impeached him.

Nationally, current maps put Democrats within three seats of retaking the House — with only several

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dozen competitive districts across 435 total seats.

The Texas redistricting legislation would reshape the state's congressional districts in a design aimed at sending five more Republicans to Washington.

In California, Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, a potential 2028 presidential candidate, has pledged to redraw his state's U.S. House districts to counter any Republican gains in Texas. That would require convincing voters in the Democratic-run state to bypass an independent redistricting commission, making California Democrats' path potentially more complicated than those where legislatures determine the boundaries.

Democratic Govs. JB Pritzker of Illinois and Kathy Hochul of New York, where some Texas Democrats are temporarily staying, also have vowed to respond with redistricting attempts.

Paxton's move on O'Rourke is part of a GOP pressure campaign

In Austin, Republicans are intensifying their pressure on absent Democrats, which already included issuing civil warrants for their arrest under legislative rules. Because they are out of state, those lawmakers are beyond the reach of Texas authorities.

O'Rourke has been raising money to support the Texas House Democratic Caucus, and Paxton has gone to court to try to stop him. At issue are Texas laws and regulations that govern whether and how political donations may be used to support lawmakers who are deliberately breaking a legislative quorum.

Paxton accused O'Rourke of thinking he is "above the law" as he filed his motion Tuesday arguing that O'Rourke is defying a court order.

In a post on X, O'Rourke said Paxton's latest filing misrepresents facts.

"We alerted the Court that the AG's office blatantly lied in its filing. We're seeking maximum sanctions in response to his abuse of office," the post said. "Taking the fight directly to this corrupt, lying thug."

Abbott also has put pressure on Democrats, tasking state police with attempting to corral absent representatives and asking the courts to vacate some of their offices. He has argued in court filings that the absent lawmakers have abandoned their posts. The Texas Supreme Court in one case has set a schedule for written argument that extends beyond the current session.

Under Texas legislative rules, Democratic lawmakers face \$500 daily fines for each legislative day they miss in a deliberate move to prevent a quorum. Further, Burrows said Tuesday that he will stick Democrats with the bill for law enforcement efforts to bring them back to Austin. He said the tab for overtime alone already exceeds six figures.

Newsom is needling Trump

Newsom, for his part, says he will not pursue new district lines in California if Texas and other GOP states stand down. But he remains at the forefront of national Democrats' response.

Minutes before the Texas House attempted to convene Tuesday, Newsom's press office social media account posted an all-caps message mimicking the president's social media style.

"DONALD TRUMP, THE LOWEST POLLING PRESIDENT IN RECENT HISTORY, THIS IS YOUR SECOND-TO-LAST WARNING!!! (THE NEXT ONE IS THE LAST ONE!). STAND DOWN NOW OR CALIFORNIA WILL COUNTER-STRIKE (LEGALLY!) TO DESTROY YOUR ILLEGAL CROOKED MAPS IN RED STATES," the message read.

The post concluded the same way that Trump ends policy pronouncements unveiled on his Truth Social platform: "THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION TO THIS MATTER."

US stocks rally to records on hopes for cuts to interest rates

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market rallied to records on Tuesday after data suggested inflation across the country was a touch better last month than economists expected.

The S&P 500 rose 1.1% to top its all-time high set two weeks ago. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 483 points, or 1.1%, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 1.4% to set its own record.

Stocks got a lift from hopes that the better-than-expected inflation report will give the Federal Reserve leeway to cut interest rates at its next meeting in September.

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Lower rates would give a boost to investment prices and to the economy by making it cheaper for U.S. households and businesses to borrow to buy houses, cars or equipment. President Donald Trump has angrily been calling for cuts to help the economy, often insulting the Fed's chair personally while doing so.

But the Fed has been hesitant because of the possibility that Trump's tariffs could make inflation much worse. Lowering rates would give inflation more fuel, potentially adding oxygen to a growing fire. That's why Fed officials have said they wanted to see more data come in about inflation before moving.

Tuesday's report said U.S. consumers paid prices for groceries, gasoline and other costs of living that were overall 2.7% higher in July than a year earlier. That's the same inflation rate as June's, and it was below the 2.8% that economists expected.

The report pushed traders on Wall Street to increase bets that the Fed will cut interest rates for the first time this year in September. They're betting on a 94% chance of that, up from nearly 86% a day earlier, according to data from CME Group.

The Fed will receive one more report on inflation, as well as one more on the U.S. job market, before its next meeting, which ends Sept. 17. The most recent jobs report was a stunner, coming in much weaker than economists expected.

Some economists warn that more twists and turns in upcoming data could make the Fed's upcoming decisions not so easy. Its twin goals are to get inflation to 2% while keeping the job market healthy. Helping one with interest rates, though, often means hurting the other.

Even Tuesday's better-than-expected inflation report had some discouraging undertones. An underlying measure of inflation, which economists say does a better job of predicting where inflation may be heading, hit its highest point since early this year, noted Gary Schlossberg, market strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute. That helped cause some up-and-down swings for Treasury yields in the bond market.

"Eventually, tariffs can show up in varying degrees in consumer prices, but these one-off price increases don't happen all at once," said Brian Jacobsen, chief economist at Annex Wealth Management. "That will confound the Fed and economic commentators for months to come."

Other central banks around the world have been lowering interest rates, and Australia's on Tuesday cut for the third time this year.

On Wall Street, Intel's stock rose 5.6% after Trump said its CEO has an "amazing story," less than a week after he had demanded Lip-Bu Tan's resignation.

Circle Internet Group, the company behind the popular USDC cryptocurrency that tracks the U.S. dollar, climbed 1.3% despite reporting a larger loss for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It said its total revenue and reserve income grew 53% in its first quarter as a publicly traded company, which topped forecasts.

On the losing side of Wall Street was Celanese, which sank 13.1% even though the chemical company delivered a better profit than expected. It said that customers in most of its markets continue to be challenged, and CEO Scott Richardson said that "the demand environment does not seem to be improving."

Cardinal Health dropped 7.2% despite likewise reporting a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. Its revenue fell short of forecasts, and analysts said the market's expectations were particularly high for the company after its stock had already soared 33.3% for the year coming into the day.

Critics say the broad U.S. stock market is looking expensive after its surge from a bottom in April. That's putting pressure on companies to deliver continued growth in profit.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 72.31 points to 6,445.76. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 483.52 to 44,458.61, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 296.50 to 21,681.90.

In stock markets abroad, indexes edged up in China after Trump signed an executive order late Monday that delayed hefty tariffs on the world's second-largest economy by 90 days. The move was widely expected, and the hope is that it will clear the way for a possible deal to avert a dangerous trade war between the United States and China.

Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 2.1%, and South Korea's Kospi fell 0.5% for two of the world's bigger moves. In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.28% from 4.27% late Monday.

The yield on the two-year Treasury, which more closely tracks expectations for the Fed, fell to 3.73% from 3.76%.

US inflation held steady as mild tariff hit offset by cheaper gas, food

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. inflation was unchanged in July as rising prices for some imported goods were balanced by falling gas and grocery prices, leaving overall prices modestly higher than a year ago.

Consumer prices rose 2.7% in July from a year earlier, the Labor Department said Tuesday, the same as the previous month and up from a post-pandemic low of 2.3% in April. Excluding the volatile food and energy categories, core prices rose 3.1%, up from 2.9% in June. Both figures are above the Federal Reserve's 2% target.

The new numbers suggest that slowing rent increases and cheaper gas are offsetting some impacts of President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs. Many businesses are also likely still absorbing much of the cost of the duties. Tuesday's figures probably reflect some impact from the 10% universal tariff Trump imposed in April, as well as higher duties on countries such as China and Canada.

Brian Bethune, an economist at Boston College, said that overall U.S. tariffs — calculated as the amount of duties paid by U.S. companies divided by overall imports — has reached 10%, the highest in decades, and will likely keep rising for months.

"Those cost increases will be passed on to the consumer in some way, shape, or form," Bethune said. Some companies could return to "shrinkflation," he added, in which they reduce the package size of a good while keeping the price the same.

And companies that are absorbing tariff costs, which would cut into their profit margins, are less likely to hire new employees, he said.

The Federal Reserve may now be in a difficult spot.

Hiring slowed sharply in the spring, after Trump announced tariffs in April. The stalling out of job gains has boosted financial market expectations for an interest rate cut by the central bank at its next meeting in September, and some Fed officials have raised concerns about the health of the job market. A rate cut by the Fed often, but not always, lowers borrowing costs for mortgages, car loans, and business loans.

Economists are divided over how Fed officials will read the data in the coming months. Some argued that the worsening jobs picture will outweigh lingering inflation concerns and lead the Fed to cut at its next meeting in September. Yet some say that with core inflation notably above 2% and rising, the Fed will postpone that decision.

Chair Jerome Powell has warned that worsening inflation could keep the Fed on the sidelines — a stance that has enraged Trump, who has defied traditional norms of central bank independence and demanded lower borrowing costs.

On Tuesday, Trump attacked Powell again for not cutting rates and suggested he would allow a lawsuit against the Fed to proceed because of the rising costs of its extensive building renovation. It wasn't clear what lawsuit he was referring to.

On a monthly basis, prices rose 0.2% in July, down from 0.3% the previous month, while core prices ticked up 0.3%, a bit faster than the 0.2% in June.

Gas prices fell 2.2% from June to July and have plunged 9.5% from a year earlier, the government's report said. Grocery prices slipped 0.1% last month, though they are still 2.2% higher than a year ago.

Tariffs appeared to raise the cost of some imported items: Shoe prices jumped 1.4% from June to July, though they are still just 0.9% more expensive than a year ago. The cost of furniture leapt 0.9% in July and is 3.2% higher than a year earlier.

Coffee costs nearly 15% more than a year earlier, mostly because of troubled harvests overseas, though steep duties on imports from Brazil could push those prices higher in the coming months. Nearly all U.S. coffee is imported.

Tuesday's data arrives at a highly-charged moment for the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics, which collects and publishes the inflation data. Trump fired Erika McEntarfer, then the head of BLS, after the Aug. 1 jobs report also showed sharply lower hiring for May and June than had previously been reported.

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The president posted on social media Monday that he has picked E.J. Antoni, an economist at the conservative Heritage Foundation and a frequent critic of the jobs report, to replace McEntarfer.

Adding to the turmoil at BLS is a government hiring freeze that has forced it to cut back on the data it collects for each inflation report, the agency has said. UBS economist Alan Detmeister estimates that BLS is now collecting about 18% fewer price quotes for the inflation report than it did earlier this year. He thinks the report will produce more volatile results, though averaged out over time, still reliable.

Smaller companies are trying to avoid raising prices and some have turned to novel ways of raising funds.

Clothing maker Princess Awesome, which designs matching clothes for children and adults, has seen its costs jump 15% to 20% because of the tariffs. The company has joined a lawsuit seeking to block the duties. Rebecca Melsky, CEO and co-founder of the firm, says it is prohibitively expensive to make the cotton blend fabrics it uses in the United States.

For now, the company has instituted a "tip jar" on its website where it asks customers to help defray the cost of goods.

"We have not across the board raised prices because of the tariffs -- yet," she said.

Trump has insisted that overseas manufacturers will pay the tariffs by reducing their prices to offset the duties. Yet the pre-tariff prices of imports haven't fallen much since the levies were put in place.

Economists at Goldman Sachs estimate that foreign manufacturers have absorbed just 14% of the duties through June, while 22% has been paid by consumers and 64% by U.S. companies. Yet the economists expect that by this fall consumers will bear two-thirds of the burden, while foreign exporters pay a quarter and U.S. companies handle less than a tenth.

Many large corporations are raising prices, including apparel makers Ralph Lauren and Under Armour, and eyewear company Warby Parker. Most of those increases weren't in place for Tuesday's inflation report.

Consumer products giant Procter & Gamble, maker of Crest toothpaste, Tide detergent and Charmin toilet paper, said late last month that it would lift prices in August on about a quarter of its products by mid-single-digit percentages. Walmart has also raised prices.

And cosmetics maker e.l.f. Beauty, which makes a majority of its products in China, said on Wednesday that it had raised prices by a dollar on its entire product assortment as of Aug. 1 because of tariff costs, the third price hike in its 21-year history.

Taylor Swift announces 12th studio album, 'The Life of a Showgirl'

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Look what you made her do — Taylor Swift has announced her 12th studio album, "The Life of a Showgirl."

Swift announced the album on her website shortly after a countdown timer expired at 12:12 a.m. Tuesday. No release date was announced, but her site said vinyl editions of the album would ship before Oct. 13.

Fans have long theorized that Swift's 12th album would soon arrive. On Monday, Taylor Nation — an official branch of the pop superstar's marketing team — posted a TikTok slideshow of 12 images with the caption "Thinking about when she said 'See you next era...'" Swift is seen wearing orange in every image.

A special limited vinyl edition of the album will be released in "Portofino orange glitter," according to a preorder page on her site. A special cassette edition is also available for preorder.

Sensing a pattern, eagle-eyed fans noticed that 12 minutes before Monday's Taylor Nation post, the popular "New Heights" podcast posted a tease for Wednesday. The show, hosted by Swift's boyfriend and Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce alongside his brother, former Philadelphia Eagles center Jason Kelce, posted an orange image on social media with a mysterious silhouette that many believed to be Swift.

The podcast later announced that Swift would indeed appear on "New Heights" and a teaser video posted about her appearance showed her pulling the album from a briefcase. The actual album artwork, just as it is on her website, is blurred.

How to watch Taylor Swift on the 'New Heights' podcast

Swift's episode of the "New Heights" podcast will premiere at 7 p.m. Eastern on Wednesday. It will be available to stream in full on YouTube. Fans who'd prefer to listen to the show, instead, can do so via most

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podcast streaming platforms: Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Audible, Spotify and Wondery among them. Episodes typically run around one hour to two in duration.

The road to 'The Life of a Showgirl'

"The Life of a Showgirl" follows last year's "The Tortured Poets Department," announced during the 2024 Grammys and released during her record-breaking tour, which raked in over \$2.2 billion across two years and five continents, making it the highest-grossing tour of all time.

The album is also Swift's first release since she regained control over her entire body of work. In May, the pop star said she purchased her catalog of recordings — originally released through Big Machine Records — from their most recent owner, the private equity firm Shamrock Capital. She did not disclose the amount paid.

In recent years, Swift had been re-recording and releasing her first six albums in an attempt to regain control of her music. The project was instigated by music executive Scooter Braun's purchase and sale of her early catalog. Previous "Taylor's Version" releases have been more than conventional re-recordings, arriving with new "from the vault" music, Easter eggs and visuals that deepen understanding of her work.

So far, there have been four re-recorded albums, beginning with "Fearless (Taylor's Version)" and "Red (Taylor's Version)" in 2021. All four have been massive commercial and cultural successes, each debuting at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Swift's last re-recording, "1989 (Taylor's Version)," arrived in October 2023, just four months after the release of "Speak Now (Taylor's Version)." That was the same year Swift claimed the record for the woman with the most No. 1 albums in history.

Israel is in talks to possibly resettle Palestinians from Gaza in South Sudan

By SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israel is in discussions with South Sudan about the possibility of resettling Palestinians from the Gaza Strip to the war-torn East African country, part of a wider effort by Israel to facilitate mass emigration from the territory left in ruins by its 22-month offensive against Hamas.

Six people familiar with the matter confirmed the talks to The Associated Press. It's unclear how far the talks have advanced, but if implemented, the plans would amount to transferring people from one war-ravaged land at risk of famine to another, and raise human rights concerns.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he wants to realize U.S. President Donald Trump's vision of relocating much of Gaza's population through what Netanyahu refers to as "voluntary migration." Israel has floated similar resettlement proposals with other African nations.

"I think that the right thing to do, even according to the laws of war as I know them, is to allow the population to leave, and then you go in with all your might against the enemy who remains there," Netanyahu said Tuesday in an interview with i24, and Israeli TV station. He did not make reference to South Sudan.

Palestinians, rights groups, and much of the international community have rejected the proposals as a blueprint for forcible expulsion in violation of international law.

For South Sudan, such a deal could help it build closer ties to Israel, now the almost unchallenged military power in the Middle East. It is also a potential inroad to Trump, who broached the idea of resettling Gaza's population in February but appears to have backed away in recent months.

Israel's Foreign Ministry declined to comment and South Sudan's foreign minister did not respond to questions about the talks. A U.S. State Department spokesperson said it doesn't comment on private diplomatic conversations.

Egypt opposes proposals to resettle Palestinians out of Gaza

Joe Szlavik, the founder of a U.S. lobbying firm working with South Sudan, said he was briefed by South Sudanese officials on the talks. He said an Israeli delegation plans to visit the country to look into the possibility of setting up camps for Palestinians there. No known date has been set for the visit. Israel did not immediately respond to a request for confirmation of the visit.

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Szlavik said Israel would likely pay for makeshift camps.

Edmund Yakani, who heads a South Sudanese civil society group, said he had also spoken to South Sudanese officials about the talks. Four additional officials with knowledge of the discussions confirmed talks were taking place on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss them publicly.

Two of the officials, both from Egypt, told AP they've known for months about Israel's efforts to find a country to accept Palestinians, including its contact with South Sudan. They said they've been lobbying South Sudan against taking the Palestinians.

Egypt is deeply opposed to plans to transfer Palestinians out of Gaza, with which it shares a border, fearing an influx of refugees into its own territory.

The AP previously reported on similar talks initiated by Israel and the U.S. with Sudan and Somalia, countries that are also grappling with war and hunger, and the breakaway region of Somalia known as Somaliland. The status of those discussions is not known.

'Cash-strapped South Sudan needs any ally'

Szlavik, who's been hired by South Sudan to improve its relations with the United States, said the U.S. is aware of the discussions with Israel but is not directly involved.

South Sudan wants the Trump administration to lift a travel ban on the country and remove sanctions from some South Sudanese elites, said Szlavik. It has already accepted eight individuals swept up in the administration's mass deportations, in what may have been an effort to curry favor.

The Trump administration has pressured a number of countries to help facilitate deportations.

"Cash-strapped South Sudan needs any ally, financial gain and diplomatic security it can get," said Peter Martell, a journalist and author of a book about the country, "First Raise a Flag."

Israel's Mossad spy agency provided aid to the South Sudanese during their decades-long civil war against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum ahead of independence in 2011, according to the book.

The State Department, asked if there was any quid pro quo with South Sudan, said decisions on the issuing of visas are made "in a way that prioritizes upholding the highest standards for U.S. national security, public safety, and the enforcement of our immigration laws."

From one hunger-stricken conflict zone to another

Many Palestinians might want to leave Gaza, at least temporarily, to escape the war and a hunger crisis bordering on famine. But they have roundly rejected any permanent resettlement from what they see as an integral part of their national homeland.

They fear that Israel will never allow them to return, and that a mass departure would allow it to annex Gaza and reestablish Jewish settlements there, as called for by far-right ministers in the Israeli government.

Still, even those Palestinians who want to leave are unlikely to take their chances in South Sudan, among the world's most unstable and conflict-ridden countries.

South Sudan has struggled to recover from a civil war that broke out after independence, and which killed nearly 400,000 people and plunged pockets of the country into famine. The oil-rich country is plagued by corruption and relies on international aid to help feed its 11 million people – a challenge that has only grown since the Trump administration made sweeping cuts to foreign assistance.

A peace deal reached seven years ago has been fragile and incomplete, and the threat of war returned when the main opposition leader was placed under house arrest this year.

Palestinians in particular could find themselves unwelcome. The long war for independence from Sudan pitted the mostly Christian and animist south against the predominantly Arab and Muslim north.

Yakani, of the civil society group, said South Sudanese would need to know who is coming and how long they plan to stay, or there could be hostilities due to the "historical issues with Muslims and Arabs."

"South Sudan should not become a dumping ground for people," he said. "And it should not accept to take people as negotiating chips to improve relations."

Israeli strikes kill journalists and aid-seekers as Australia backs Palestinian statehood

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAM METZ and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli forces killed at least 55 people across the Gaza Strip overnight and into Monday, including a well-known journalist Israel said was a militant as well as people seeking humanitarian aid, according to local health officials.

Hospital officials reported at least 34 people were killed on Monday, not including journalists who were slain in a tent shortly before midnight.

More than 15 people were killed while waiting for aid at the Zikim crossing in northern Gaza, said Fares Awad, head of the ambulance services in northern Gaza.

Israel's military did not immediately respond to questions about the deaths. Earlier on Monday, it said air and artillery units were operating in northern Gaza and in Khan Younis, where resident Noha Abu Shamala told The Associated Press that two drone strikes killed a family of seven in their apartment.

A dozen more people killed seeking aid

Among the dead were at least 12 aid seekers killed by Israeli gunfire while trying to reach distribution points, or awaiting aid convoys, according to officials at two hospitals and witnesses.

The Palestine Red Crescent Society said its Saraya Field Hospital received about 30 injured from the Zikim area. Al-Shifa hospital received five bodies and over 70 wounded, said Mohamed Abu Selmiya, the hospital's director.

Relatives said casualties included children and an infant. Witnesses to gunfire near the Morag corridor said they saw barrages of bullets and later dead bodies, describing the grim scene as a near-daily occurrence.

The AP spoke to five witnesses who were among the crowds in central Gaza, the Teina area and the Morag corridor. All said that Israeli forces had fired toward the crowds.

"The occupation (forces) targeted us, as they do every day," said Hussain Matter, a displaced father of two who was in the Morag corridor. "Out of nowhere, you find bullets from everywhere."

Ahmed Atta said he helped carry a wounded man from the Teina area who had been shot in his shoulder and was bleeding. "It's a pattern," Atta said of the Israeli gunfire toward aid seekers.

Aid seekers were killed from 3 kilometers (nearly 2 miles) to just hundreds of meters (yards) from sites operated by the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, according to Nasser and Awda hospitals.

The United States and Israel support the American contractor as an alternative to the United Nations, which they say allows Hamas to siphon off aid. The U.N., which has delivered aid throughout Gaza for decades when conditions allow, denies the allegations.

The latest deaths raise the toll to more than 1,700 people killed while seeking food since the new aid distribution system began in May, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

U.N. agencies generally do not accept Israeli military escorts for aid trucks, citing concerns over neutrality, and its convoys have come under fire amid severe food shortages.

The deaths came hours after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called reports about conditions in Gaza a "global campaign of lies," and announced plans to move deeper into the territory and push to dismantle Hamas.

Five more Palestinians, including a child, died of malnutrition-related causes in Gaza in the past 24 hours, the health ministry said.

Israel increased the flow of supplies two weeks ago amid such concerns.

Israeli strike targets and kills Al Jazeera journalists

Israel's military targeted an Al Jazeera correspondent with an airstrike Sunday, killing him. The strike killed a total of eight people, including six journalists and two other civilians, according to Shifa Hospital. Press advocates described the attack as a brazen assault on those documenting the war.

The network said that along with its correspondent, three others of the slain journalists also worked for Al Jazeera.

The Israeli military claimed responsibility for the strike. It came less than a year after Israeli army of-

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officials first accused correspondent Anas al-Sharif and other Al Jazeera journalists of being members of the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, an allegation that Al Jazeera and al-Sharif have previously dismissed as baseless.

Al Jazeera called the strike a "targeted assassination" while press freedom groups denounced the rising death toll facing Palestinian journalists working in Gaza. Mourners laid the journalists to rest in Gaza City.

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people and killed around 1,200 people, mostly civilians, in the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. Most of the hostages have been released in ceasefires or other deals but 50 remain inside Gaza. Israel believes around 20 are still alive.

Israel's air and ground offensive has since displaced most of the population, destroyed vast areas and pushed the territory toward famine. It has killed more than 61,400 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians but says around half were women and children.

Besides those killed, 121 adults and 101 children have died of malnutrition-related causes, including five in the past 24 hours, the ministry said. One was a child.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

International reaction

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday added his country to a list moving toward recognition of a state of Palestine, along with France, Britain and Canada. He said his government's decision aimed to build momentum toward a two-state solution, which he called the best path to ending violence and bringing leadership other than Hamas to Gaza.

"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."

Also on Monday Italy's Premier Giorgia Meloni announced new aid to Gaza in a phone conversation with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. She stressed the need to bring hostilities with Israel to an immediate halt and "shared her deep concern about recent Israeli decisions that appear to be leading to further military escalation," her office said in a statement.

Meloni reiterated that "the humanitarian situation in Gaza is unjustifiable and unacceptable."

Italy's Defense Minister Guido Crosetto also told the Italian daily La Stampa Monday that Israel's government has "lost reason and humanity" over Gaza and raised the possibility of imposing sanctions.

Egypt seeking talks

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty confirmed Monday that Egypt is pushing for negotiations to reach a deal that would end the war in Gaza, release Israeli hostages, guarantee aid entry and ultimately agree on a political road map that would lead to establishing a Palestinian state.

Deploying international forces to support establishing a Palestinian state was previously proposed throughout the war, but Israel has opposed the idea.

Abdelatty's comments in a news conference in Cairo came as mediators from Egypt and Qatar were working on a new framework that would include the release of all hostages — dead and alive — in one go, in return for an end of the war in Gaza and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the strip, according to two Arab officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the issue.

U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff met with the Qatari prime minister in Spain on Saturday to discuss new efforts.

What to know about the Putin-Trump summit in Alaska

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

The U.S.-Russia summit in Alaska is happening at a site where East meets West — quite literally — in a place familiar to both countries as a Cold War front line of missile defense, radar outposts and intelligence gathering.

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Whether it can lead to a deal to produce peace in Ukraine more than 3 1/2 years after Moscow's invasion remains to be seen.

Here's what to know about the meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, the first summit in four years:

When and where is it taking place?

The summit will take place Friday in Alaska, although where in the state is still unknown.

It will be Putin's first trip to the United States since 2015, for the U.N. General Assembly in New York. Since the U.S. is not a member of the International Criminal Court, which in 2023 issued a warrant for Putin on war crimes accusations, it is under no obligation to arrest him.

Is Zelenskyy going?

Both countries confirmed a meeting between only Putin and Trump, even though there were initial suggestions that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy might be part of it. But the Kremlin has long pushed back against Putin meeting Zelenskyy — at least until a peace deal is reached by Russia and Ukraine and was ready to be signed.

Putin said last week he wasn't against meeting Zelenskyy "but certain conditions need to be created" for it to happen and were "still a long way off."

That raised fears about excluding Ukraine from negotiations. Ukrainian officials last week talked with European allies, who stressed that peace cannot be achieved without Kyiv's involvement.

What's Alaska's role in Russian history?

It will be the first visit by a Russian leader to Alaska, even though it was part of the czarist empire until 1867, the state news agency Tass said.

Alaska was colonized by Russia starting from the 18th century until Czar Alexander II sold it to the United States in 1867 for \$7.2 million. When it was found to contain vast resources, it was seen as a naïve deal that generated remorse and self-reproach.

After the USSR's collapse, Alaska was a subject of nostalgia and jokes for Russians. One popular song in the 1990s went: "Don't play the fool, America ... give back our dear Alaska land."

Sam Greene of King's College London said on X the symbolism of Alaska as the site of a summit about Ukraine was "horrendous — as though designed to demonstrate that borders can change, land can be bought and sold."

What's the agenda?

Trump has appeared increasingly exasperated with Putin over Russia's refusal to halt the bombardment of Ukrainian cities. Kyiv has agreed to a ceasefire, insisting on a truce as a first step toward peace.

Moscow presented ceasefire conditions that are nonstarters for Zelenskyy, such as withdrawing troops from the four regions Russia illegally annexed in 2022, halting mobilization efforts, or freezing Western arms deliveries. For a broader peace, Putin demands Kyiv cede the annexed regions, even though Russia doesn't fully control them, and Crimea, renounce a bid to join NATO, limit the size of its armed forces and recognize Russian as an official language along with Ukrainian.

Zelenskyy insists any peace deals must include robust security guarantees for Ukraine to protect it from future Russian aggression.

Putin has warned Ukraine it will face tougher conditions for peace 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 territory still under Ukrainian control in the four annexed regions annexed by Moscow.

Zelenskyy said Saturday that "Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier."

But Trump said Monday: "There'll be some land swapping going on. I know that through Russia and through conversations with everybody. To the good, for the good of Ukraine. Good stuff, not bad stuff. Also, some bad stuff for both."

What are expectations?

Putin sees a meeting with Trump as a chance to cement Russia's territorial gains, keep Ukraine out of NATO and prevent it from hosting any Western troops so Moscow can gradually pull the country back into

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its orbit.

He believes time is on his side as Ukrainian forces are struggling to stem Russian advances along the front line amid swarms of Moscow's missiles and drones battering the country.

The meeting is a diplomatic coup for Putin, isolated since the invasion. The Kremlin sought to portray renewed U.S. contacts as two superpowers looking to resolve various global problems, with Ukraine being just one.

Ukraine and its European allies are concerned a summit without Kyiv could allow Putin to get Trump on his side and force Ukraine into concessions.

"Any decisions that are without Ukraine are at the same time decisions against peace," Zelenskyy said. "They will not bring anything. These are dead decisions. They will never work."

European officials echoed that.

"As we work towards a sustainable and just peace, international law is clear: All temporarily occupied territories belong to Ukraine," European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. "A sustainable peace also means that aggression cannot be rewarded."

NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said Sunday he believed Trump was "making sure that Putin is serious, and if he is not, then it will stop there."

"If he is serious, then from Friday onwards, the process will continue. Ukraine getting involved, the Europeans being involved," Rutte added.

Since last week, Putin spoke to Chinese leader Xi Jinping, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, as well as the leaders of South Africa, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, the Kremlin said.

That suggested Putin perhaps wanted to brief Russia's most important allies about a potential settlement, said pro-Kremlin analyst Sergei Markov.

Land swaps with Russia are not only unpopular in Ukraine. They're also illegal

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A peace deal that requires Kyiv to accept swapping Ukrainian territory with Russia would not only be deeply unpopular. It also would be illegal under its constitution.

That's why President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has categorically rejected any deal with Moscow that could involve ceding land after U.S. President Donald Trump suggested such a concession would be beneficial to both sides, ahead of his meeting Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska.

Zelenskyy said over the weekend that Kyiv "will not give Russia any awards for what it has done," and that "Ukrainians will not give their land to the occupier." The remarks came after Trump said a peace deal would involve swapping of Ukrainian territories by both sides "to the betterment of both."

For Zelenskyy, such a deal would be disaster for his presidency and spark public outcry after more than three years of bloodshed and sacrifice by Ukrainians. Moreover, he doesn't have the authority to sign off on it, because changing Ukraine's 1991 borders runs counter to the country's constitution.

For now, freezing the front line appears to be an outcome the Ukrainian people are willing to accept.

A look at the challenges such proposals entail:

Russia occupies about a fifth of Ukraine

Russia occupies about a fifth of Ukraine, from the country's northeast to the Crimean Peninsula, which was annexed illegally in 2014.

The front line is vast and cuts across six regions — the active front stretches for at least 1,000 kilometers (680 miles) — but if measured from along the border with Russia, it reaches as far as 2,300 kilometers (1,430 miles).

Russia controls almost all of the Luhansk region and almost two-thirds of Donetsk region, which together comprise the Donbas, as the strategic industrial heartland of Ukraine is called. Russia has long coveted

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the area and illegally annexed it in the first year of the full-scale invasion, even though it didn't control much of it at the time.

Russia also partially controls more than half of the Kherson region, which is critical to maintain logistical flows of supplies coming in from the land corridor in neighboring Crimea, and also parts of the Zaporizhzhia region, where the Kremlin seized Europe's largest nuclear power plant.

Russian forces also hold pockets of territory in Kharkiv and Sumy regions in northeastern Ukraine, far less strategically valuable for Moscow. Russian troops are gaining a foothold in the Dnipropetrovsk region. These could be what Moscow is willing to exchange for land it deems more important in Donetsk, where the Russian army has concentrated most of its effort.

"There'll be some land swapping going on. I know that through Russia and through conversations with everybody. To the good, for the good of Ukraine. Good stuff, not bad stuff. Also, some bad stuff for both," Trump said Monday.

Ukrainian forces are still active in the Kursk region inside Russia, but they barely hold any territory there, making it not as potent a bargaining chip as Kyiv's leaders had probably hoped when they launched the daring incursion across the border last year. Swapping Ukrainian controlled territory in Russia, however minuscule, will likely be the only palatable option for Kyiv in any land swapping scenario.

Conceding land risks another invasion

Surrendering territory would see those unwilling to live under Russian rule to pack up and leave. Many civilians have endured so much suffering and bloodshed since pro-Moscow forces began battling the Ukrainian military in the east in 2014 and since the full-scale invasion in 2022.

From a military standpoint, abandoning the Donetsk region in particular would vastly improve Russia's ability to invade Ukraine again, according to the Washington-based think tank Institute for the Study of War.

Bowing to such a demand would force Ukraine to abandon its "fortress belt," the main defensive line in Donetsk since 2014, "with no guarantee that fighting will not resume," the institute said in a recent report.

The regional defensive line has prevented Russia's efforts to seize the region and continues to impede Russia's efforts to take the rest of the area, ISW said.

Ukraine's constitution poses a major challenge to any deal involving a land swap because it requires a nationwide referendum to approve changes to the country's territorial borders, said Ihor Reiterovych, a politics professor in the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

"Changes in territorial integrity can be done only by the decision of the people — not the president, the cabinet of ministers or the parliament can change it," he said. "In the constitution it is written that only by referendum can changes to Ukraine's territory be conducted."

If during negotiations Zelenskyy agrees to swap territory with Russia, "in the same minute he will be a criminal because he would be abandoning the main law that governs Ukraine," Reiterovych said.

Trump said he was "a little bothered" by Zelenskyy's assertion over the weekend that he needed constitutional approval to cede to Russia the territory that it captured in its unprovoked invasion.

"I mean, he's got approval to go into a war and kill everybody, but he needs approval to do a land swap?" Trump added. "Because there'll be some land swapping going on. I know that through Russia and through conversations with everybody."

Oksana Markarova, Ukraine's ambassador to the U.S., brought a copy of her country's constitution to her interview on Sunday with CBS' "Face the Nation," and described how the president is "the guarantor of the constitution" and cannot give away land under Article 133.

Zelenskyy is still trying to regain the people's trust that was damaged when he reversed course on a law that would have diminished the independence of Ukraine's anti-corruption watchdogs. The move was a red line for those citizens who are protective of the country's institutions and are suspicious of certain members of Zelenskyy's inner circle.

Freezing the conflict seems a lesser evil for Ukraine

Analysts like Reiterovych dismiss a land swap as a distraction. Freezing the conflict along the current front line is the only option Ukrainians are willing to accept, he said, citing recent polls.

This option would also buy time for both sides to consolidate manpower and build up their domestic weapons industries. Ukraine would require strong security guarantees from its Western partners to deter future Russian aggression, which Kyiv believes is inevitable.

Still, freezing the conflict will also be difficult for Ukrainians to accept.

Along with the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the partial occupation of Luhansk and Donetsk after that, it would require accepting that the Ukrainian military is not able to retake lost territories militarily. Kyiv accepted its inability to retake these territories but never formally recognized them as Russian. A similar scenario could unfold in the new regions taken by Russian forces.

It also is not a viable long-term solution.

"It is the lesser evil option for everyone and it will not provoke protests or rallies on the streets," Reiterovych said.

Trump's rhetoric about DC echoes a history of racist narratives about urban crime

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has taken control of D.C.'s law enforcement and ordered National Guard troops to deploy onto the streets of the nation's capital, arguing the extraordinary moves are necessary to curb an urgent public safety crisis.

Even as district officials questioned the claims underlying his emergency declaration, the Republican president promised a "historic action to rescue our nation's capital from crime, bloodshed, bedlam and squalor and worse." His rhetoric echoed that used by conservatives going back decades who have denounced cities, especially those with majority non-white populations or led by progressives, as lawless or crime-ridden and in need of outside intervention.

"This is liberation day in D.C., and we're going to take our capital back," Trump promised Monday.

Trump's action echoes uncomfortable historical chapters

As D.C. the National Guard arrived at their headquarters Tuesday, for many residents, the prospect of federal troops surging into neighborhoods represented an alarming violation of local agency. To some, it echoes uncomfortable historical chapters when politicians used language to paint historically or predominantly Black cities and neighborhoods with racist narratives to shape public opinion and justify aggressive police action.

April Goggans, a longtime D.C. resident and grassroots organizer, said she was not surprised by Trump's actions. Communities had been preparing for a potential federal crackdown in D.C. since the summer of 2020, when Trump deployed troops during racial justice protests after the murder of George Floyd.

"We have to be vigilant," said Goggans, who has coordinated local protests for nearly a decade. She worries about what a surge in law enforcement could mean for residents' freedoms.

"Regardless of where you fall on the political scale, understand that this could be you, your children, your grandmother, your co-worker who are brutalized or have certain rights violated," she said.

Other residents reacted with mixed feelings to Trump's executive order. Crime and homelessness has been a top concern for residents in recent years, but opinions on how to solve the issue vary. And very few residents take Trump's catastrophic view of life in D.C.

"I think Trump's trying to help people, some people," said Melvin Brown, a D.C. resident. "But as far as (him) trying to get (the) homeless out of this city, that ain't going to work."

"It's like a band-aid to a gunshot wound," said Melissa Velasquez, a commuter into D.C. "I feel like there's been an increase of racial profiling and stuff, and so it's concerning for individuals who are worried about how they might be perceived as they go about their day-to-day lives."

Uncertainty raises alarms

According to White House officials, troops will be deployed to protect federal assets and facilitate a safe environment for law enforcement to make arrests. The Trump administration believes the highly visible

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presence of law enforcement will deter violent crime. It is unclear how the administration defines providing a safe environment for law enforcement to conduct arrests, raising alarm bells for some advocates.

"The president foreshadowed that if these heavy-handed tactics take root here, they will be rolled out to other majority-Black and Brown cities, like Chicago, Oakland and Baltimore, across the country," said Monica Hopkins, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union's D.C. chapter.

"We've seen before how federal control of the D.C. National Guard and police can lead to abuse, intimidation and civil rights violations — from military helicopters swooping over peaceful racial justice protesters in 2020 to the unchecked conduct of federal officers who remain shielded from full accountability," Hopkins said.

A history of denigrating language

Conservatives have for generations used denigrating language to describe the condition of major cities and called for greater law enforcement, often in response to changing demographics in those cities driven by nonwhite populations relocating in search of work or safety from racial discrimination and state violence. Republicans have called for greater police crackdowns in cities since at least the 1965 Watts Riots in Los Angeles.

President Richard Nixon won the White House in 1968 after campaigning on a "law and order" agenda to appeal to white voters in northern cities alongside overtures to white Southerners as part of his "Southern Strategy." Ronald Reagan similarly won both his presidential elections after campaigning heavily on law and order politics. Politicians, including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and former President Bill Clinton have cited the need to tamp down crime as a reason to seize power from liberal cities for decades.

D.C. Mayor Muriel Bowser called Trump's takeover of local police "unsettling" but not without precedent. Bowser kept a mostly measured tone during a Monday news conference but decried Trump's reasoning as a "so-called emergency," saying residents "know that access to our democracy is tenuous."

Trump threatened to "take over" and "beautify" D.C. on the campaign trail and claimed it was "a nightmare of murder and crime." He also argued the city was "horribly run" and said his team intended "to take it away from the mayor." Trump on Monday repeated old comments about some of the nation's largest cities, including Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland and his hometown of New York City. All are currently run by Black mayors.

"You look at Chicago, how bad it is. You look at Los Angeles, how bad it is. We have other cities in a very bad, New York is a problem. And then you have, of course, Baltimore and Oakland. We don't even mention that anymore. They're so far gone. We're not going to let it happen," he said.

Civil rights advocates see the rhetoric as part of a broader political strategy.

"It's a playbook he's used in the past," said Maya Wiley, CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights.

Trump's rhetoric "paints a picture that crime is out of control, even when it is not true, then blames the policies of Democratic lawmakers that are reform- and public safety-minded, and then claims that you have to step in and violate people's rights or demand that reforms be reversed," Wiley said.

She added that the playbook has special potency in D.C. because local law enforcement can be directly placed under federal control, a power Trump invoked in his announcement.

Leaders call the order an unjustified distraction

Trump's actions in Washington and comments about other major cities sent shock waves across the country, as other leaders prepare to respond to potential federal action.

Democratic Maryland Gov. Wes Moore said in a statement that Trump's plan "lacks seriousness and is deeply dangerous" and pointed to a 30-year-low crime rate in Baltimore as a reason the administration should consult local leaders rather than antagonize them. In Oakland, Mayor Barbara Lee called Trump's characterization of the city "fearmongering."

The administration already faced a major flashpoint between local control and federal power earlier in the summer, when Trump deployed National Guard troops to quell protests and support immigration enforcement operations in LA despite opposition from California Gov. Gavin Newsom and LA Mayor Karen Bass.

Civil rights leaders have denounced Trump's action in D.C. as an unjustified distraction.

"This president campaigned on 'law and order,' but he is the president of chaos and corruption," said NAACP President Derrick Johnson. "There's no emergency in D.C., so why would he deploy the National Guard? To distract us from his alleged inclusion in the Epstein files? To rid the city of unhoused people? D.C. has the right to govern itself. It doesn't need this federal coup."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth belongs to an archconservative church network. Here's what to know

By TIFFANY STANLEY and PETER SMITH Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth says he's proud to be part of the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches, an archconservative network of Christian congregations.

Hegseth recently made headlines when he shared a CNN video on social media about CREC, showing its pastors arguing women should not have the right to vote.

Pastor Doug Wilson, a CREC co-founder, leads Christ Church in Moscow, Idaho, the network's flagship location. Jovial and media-friendly, Wilson is no stranger to stirring controversy with his church's hard-line theology and its embrace of patriarchy and Christian nationalism.

Wilson told The Associated Press on Monday he was grateful Hegseth shared the video. He noted Hegseth's post was labeled with Christ Church's motto: "All of Christ for All of Life."

"He was, in effect, reposting it and saying, 'Amen,' at some level," Wilson said.

Hegseth, among President Donald Trump's most controversial Cabinet picks, attends Pilgrim Hill Reformed Fellowship, a CREC member church in a suburb outside Nashville, Tennessee. His pastor, Brooks Potteiger, prayed at a service Hegseth hosted at the Pentagon.

CREC recently opened a new outpost in the nation's capital, Christ Church DC, with Hegseth attending its first Sunday service.

Pentagon chief spokesman Sean Parnell confirmed Hegseth's CREC affiliation and told the AP that Hegseth "very much appreciates many of Mr. Wilson's writings and teachings."

Here are other things to know about the church network:

What does Wilson's church say about women?

Wilson's church and wider denomination practice complementarianism, the patriarchal idea that men and women have different God-given roles. Women within CREC churches cannot hold church leadership positions, and married women are to submit to their husbands.

Wilson told the AP he believes the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote "was a bad idea." Still, he said his wife and daughters vote.

He would prefer the United States follow his church's example, which allows heads of households to vote in church elections. Unmarried women qualify as voting members in his church.

"Ordinarily, the vote is cast by the head of the household, the husband and father, because we're patriarchal and not egalitarian," Wilson said. He added that repealing the 19th Amendment is not high on his list of priorities.

Hegseth's views on women have been in the spotlight, especially after he faced sexual assault allegations, for which no charges were filed. Before his nomination to lead the Defense Department, Hegseth had questioned women serving in combat roles in the military.

Wilson, a Navy veteran who served on submarines, also questions women serving in some military roles.

"I think we ought to find out the name of the person who suggested that we put women on those submarines and have that man committed," Wilson said. "It's like having a playpen that you put 50 cats in and then drop catnip in the middle of it. Whatever happens is going to be ugly. And if you think it's going to advance the cause of women and make sailors start treating women less like objects, then you haven't been around the block very many times."

What is the Communion of Reformed Evangelical Churches?

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Founded in 1998, CREC is a network of more than 130 churches in the United States and around the world. CREC ascribes to a strict version of Reformed theology — rooted in the tradition of 16th-century Protestant reformer John Calvin — that puts a heavy emphasis on an all-powerful God who has dominion over all of society.

Wilson and CREC are also strongly influenced by a 20th-century Reformed movement called Christian Reconstructionism, according to Julie Ingersoll, a religion professor at the University of North Florida who wrote about it in her 2015 book "Building God's Kingdom."

She sees that theology reflected in the Wilson slogan Hegseth repeated on social media.

"When he says, 'All of life,' he's referencing the idea that it's the job of Christians to exercise dominion over the whole world," Ingersoll said.

Since the 1970s, Wilson's ministry and influence have grown to include the Association of Christian Classical Schools and New Saint Andrew's College in Moscow, Idaho.

The ministry has a robust media presence, including Canon Press, publisher of books like "The Case for Christian Nationalism" and "It's Good to Be a Man: A Handbook for Godly Masculinity."

What is the connection to Christian nationalism?

Wilson wants the United States to be a Christian nation. He does not mind being called a Christian nationalist.

"I am more than happy to work with that label because it's a better label than what I usually get called," Wilson said.

"If I get called a white nationalist or a theo-fascist or a racist bigot, misogynist thug, I can't work with them except to deny them," he said. "I'm a Christian, and I'm a patriot who loves my country. How do I combine those two things? How do they work together?"

U.S. Christian nationalism is a fusion of American and Christian identity, principles and symbols that typically seeks a privileged place for Christian people and ideas. Wilson contends that early America was Christian, a notion historians dispute.

"If we succeed, this will be Christian America 2.0," Wilson wrote in 2022.

American Christian nationalism involves overlapping movements. Among them are evangelicals who view Trump, a Republican, as a champion, some of whom are influenced by Christian Reconstructionist ideas; a charismatic movement that sees politics as part of a larger spiritual war; and a Catholic postliberal movement envisioning a muscular government promoting traditional morality.

CREC now has a closer relationship to the upper echelons of government. This has renewed scrutiny of Wilson's other controversial views, including his downplaying of the horrors of Southern slavery in the U.S. But it's also given Wilson a bigger stage.

Hegseth and Wilson have spoken approvingly of each other. Wilson said they have only met in person once, when they talked informally after Wilson preached at Hegseth's home church in Tennessee this year.

Wilson said CREC's new Washington church began as a way to serve church members who relocated to work in the Trump administration.

"This is the first time we've had connections with as many people in national government as we do now," Wilson said. "But this is not an ecclesiastical lobbying effort where we're trying to meet important people. We're trying to give some of these people an opportunity to meet with God."

US and China extend trade truce another 90 days, easing tension between world's largest economies

By PAUL WISEMAN and DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump extended a trade truce with China for another 90 days Monday, at least delaying once again a dangerous showdown between the world's two biggest economies.

Trump posted on his Truth Social platform that he signed the executive order for the extension, and that "all other elements of the Agreement will remain the same." Beijing at the same time also announced the extension of the tariff pause, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

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The previous deadline was set to expire at 12:01 a.m. Tuesday. Had that happened the U.S. could have ratcheted up taxes on Chinese imports from an already high 30%, and Beijing could have responded by raising retaliatory levies on U.S. exports to China.

The pause buys time for the two countries to work out some of their differences, perhaps clearing the way for a summit later this year between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, and it has been welcomed by the U.S. companies doing business with China.

Sean Stein, president of the U.S.-China Business Council, said the extension is "critical" to give the two governments time to negotiate a trade agreement that U.S. businesses hope would improve their market access in China and provide the certainty needed for companies to make medium- and long-term plans.

"Securing an agreement on fentanyl that leads to a reduction in U.S. tariffs and a rollback of China's retaliatory measures is acutely needed to restart U.S. agriculture and energy exports," Stein said.

China said Tuesday it would extend relief to American companies who were placed on an export control list and an unreliable entities list. After Trump initially announced tariffs in April, China restricted exports of dual-use goods to some American companies, while banning others from trading or investing in China. The Ministry of Commerce said it would stop those restrictions for some companies, while giving others another 90-day extension.

Reaching a pact with China remains unfinished business for Trump, who has already upended the global trading system by slapping double-digit taxes – tariffs – on almost every country on earth.

The European Union, Japan and other trading partners agreed to lopsided trade deals with Trump, accepting once unthinkable U.S. high tariffs (15% on Japanese and EU imports, for instance) to ward off something worse.

Trump's trade policies have turned the United States from one of the most open economies in the world into a protectionist fortress. The average U.S. tariff has gone from around 2.5% at the start of the year to 18.6%, highest since 1933, according to the Budget Lab at Yale University.

But China tested the limits of a U.S. trade policy built around using tariffs as a cudgel to beat concessions out of trading partners. Beijing had a cudgel of its own: cutting off or slowing access to its rare earths minerals and magnets – used in everything from electric vehicles to jet engines.

In June, the two countries reached an agreement to ease tensions. The United States said it would pull back export restrictions on computer chip technology and ethane, a feedstock in petrochemical production. And China agreed to make it easier for U.S. firms to get access to rare earths.

"The U.S. has realized it does not have the upper hand," said Claire Reade, senior counsel at Arnold & Porter and former assistant U.S. trade representative for China affairs.

In May, the U.S. and China had averted an economic catastrophe by reducing massive tariffs they'd slapped on each other's products, which had reached as high as 145% against China and 125% against the U.S.

Those triple-digit tariffs threatened to effectively end trade between the United States and China and caused a frightening sell-off in financial markets. In a May meeting in Geneva they agreed to back off and keep talking: America's tariffs went back down to a still-high 30% and China's to 10%.

Having demonstrated their ability to hurt each other, they've been talking ever since.

"By overestimating the ability of steep tariffs to induce economic concessions from China, the Trump administration has not only underscored the limits of unilateral U.S. leverage, but also given Beijing grounds for believing that it can indefinitely enjoy the upper hand in subsequent talks with Washington by threatening to curtail rare earth exports," said Ali Wyne, a specialist in U.S.-China relations at the International Crisis Group. "The administration's desire for a trade détente stems from the self-inflicted consequences of its earlier hubris."

It's unclear whether Washington and Beijing can reach a grand bargain over America's biggest grievances. Among these are lax Chinese protection of intellectual property rights and Beijing's subsidies and other industrial policies that, the Americans say, give Chinese firms an unfair advantage in world markets and have contributed to a massive U.S. trade deficit with China of \$262 billion last year.

Reade doesn't expect much beyond limited agreements such as the Chinese saying they will buy more American soybeans and promising to do more to stop the flow of chemicals used to make fentanyl and to

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allow the continued flow of rare-earth magnets.

But the tougher issues will likely linger, and "the trade war will continue grinding ahead for years into the future," said Jeff Moon, a former U.S. diplomat and trade official who now runs the China Moon Strategies consultancy.

Today in History: August 13, East Germany closes Berlin border

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 13, the 225th day of 2025. There are 140 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 13, 1961, on what would become known as Barbed Wire Sunday, East Germany sealed the border between Berlin's eastern and western sectors before building a wall that would divide the city for the next 28 years.

Also on this date:

In 1521, Spanish conqueror Hernando Cortez captured Tenochtitlan (teh-natch-teet-LAHN'), present-day Mexico City, from the Aztecs.

In 1792, French revolutionaries arrested and imprisoned King Louis XVI; he would be executed by guillotine the following January.

In 1889, William Gray of Hartford, Connecticut, received a patent for the first coin-operated telephone.

In 1918, Opha May Johnson became the first woman to join the U.S. Marine Corps.

In 1952, Big Mama Thornton first recorded the song "Hound Dog," four years before Elvis Presley's famous version was released.

In 1969, New York City held a ticker-tape parade for Apollo 11 astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins.

In 1995, Baseball Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle died at a Dallas hospital of rapidly spreading liver cancer at age 63.

In 2011, seven people were killed when a stage collapsed at the Indiana State Fair during a powerful storm just before a concert was to begin.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders is 92. Opera singer Kathleen Battle is 77. High wire aerialist Philippe Petit is 76. Hockey Hall of Famer Bobby Clarke is 76. Golf Hall of Famer Betsy King is 70. Movie director Paul Greengrass is 70. Actor Danny Bonaduce is 66. TV weatherman Sam Champion is 64. Actor Dawnn Lewis is 64. Actor John Slattery is 63. Actor Debi Mazar is 61. Figure skater Midori Ito is 56. Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders is 43. Actor Sebastian Stan is 43. Actor Lennon Stella is 26.