

Groton Daily Independent

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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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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

Monday, Aug. 18

Senior Menu: Tater tot hot dish, green beans, mixed fruit, whole wheat bread.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

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

Groton Area Staff Development Day

Boys Golf at Meadow Creek Golf Course at Sioux Valley Invitational, 10 a.m.

Open House at Groton Area Elementary and MS/HS, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. Sixth Graders meet at 4:30 p.m. in the Gym.

Tuesday, Aug. 19

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Senior Menu: Tuna casserole with peas, Antigua blend, Mandarin oranges, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

Girls Soccer at Garretson, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 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.

Erin Becomes a Hurricane

A storm approaching the northeastern Caribbean has strengthened into the Atlantic's first hurricane of the year. Hurricane Erin could intensify to Category 4, with winds surpassing 130 mph, early next week.

As of this writing, models show Erin passing the northern Leeward Islands this weekend, prompting tropical storm watches for Anguilla, St. Martin, and nearby islands. The hurricane is expected to track north of Puerto Rico, east of the Bahamas, and remain offshore along the US East Coast. Though Erin isn't expected to make landfall, forecasters warn of flooding, landslides, and swells as the storm moves through the region.

Storms are named once sustained winds reach 39 mph. Erin is the fifth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which spans June 1 to Nov. 30. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted an above-normal season with 13 to 18 named storms. If Erin reaches Category 3 or higher, it would be the first of three to five major hurricanes expected this year.

Separately, the death toll from this week's flash floods and landslides in India and Pakistan has surpassed 280 people, with scores missing.

Justice Department removes newly named DC emergency police chief.

The move came after Washington, DC, sought an emergency restraining order against President Donald Trump's effort to federalize the city's police force. The lawsuit followed Attorney General Pam Bondi's decision to name Drug Enforcement Administration head Terry Cole as Washington's emergency police commissioner. DC's police chief will remain in charge but will be expected to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement.

Trump and Putin meet at a US military base in Alaska.

President Donald Trump, Russian President Vladimir Putin, and their top advisors met privately for over 2.5 hours Friday to discuss ending the war in Ukraine. The leaders shook hands on the tarmac of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson before the meeting and later held a joint press conference, during which they signaled they had made progress but offered no details. Trump said he intended to have further conversations with Putin and NATO leaders.

University of Michigan football fined for sign-stealing.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association hit the University of Michigan with fines potentially topping \$30M for a sign-stealing operation during the 2023-24 season. The penalties include a \$50K payment, plus 10% of the school's football budget, 10% of the cost of all football scholarships awarded this season, and all anticipated 2025 and 2026 postseason revenue. Head coach Sherrone Moore also faces a three-game suspension.

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Strange rock on Mars may reveal ancient life.

A Martian rock named Sapphire Canyon and a powerful laser technique could aid scientists searching for life on Mars. Collected by NASA's Perseverance rover, the rock features white, leopard-like spots that point to organic origins. When Sapphire Canyon eventually arrives on Earth, NASA researchers plan to analyze it with a novel imaging method that efficiently identified the composition of a visually similar rock found in Arizona. Separately, Perseverance found a helmet-shaped rock this month.

Rapper Sean Kingston sentenced to prison for \$1M fraud scheme.

Kingston, whose legal name is Kisean Paul Anderson, will serve 3.5 years in federal prison for persuading sellers to give him luxury goods and forging payment records. The 35-year-old "Beautiful Girls" singer conspired with his mother, Janice Eleanor Turner, who was also found guilty of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and wire fraud earlier this year. Turner was sentenced last month to five years in prison.

UnitedHealth Group shares jump following Buffett's investment.

The healthcare company's shares jumped 12% Friday after a federal filing showed billionaire investor Warren Buffett's holding company Berkshire Hathaway bought 5 million shares, worth about \$1.6B. UnitedHealth's shares had been down nearly 50% for 2025 before the news broke. The largest private health insurer faces a federal probe into its Medicare billing practices.

Humankind(ness)

Today, we're sharing a story from reader Jenn C. in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

"I was super down this week. My friend and I made plans to meet at the park. When she arrived, she had the most most beautiful bouquet of flowers she picked from her garden. We talked, I cried, and she reminded me of my value. Flowers and friendships with intention touch my soul."

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The following is from the Brookings Register

Register turns the page

BROOKINGS — A new chapter has likely opened for the Brookings Register.

The newspaper, which has served the Brookings community for more than a century, closed its doors last week when its parent company, News Media Corporation closed down.

"It's something that has truly shaken this community over the last several days," said Brookings City Councilor Holly Tilton Byrne said of the newspaper closure at this week's board meeting.

However, another out-of-state company has expressed interest in taking over the South Dakota operations that were abandoned by NMC.

In addition to the Register, NMC owned and operated three of other newspapers in South Dakota, the Huron Daily Plainsman, as well as two weekly newspapers, the Moody County Enterprise in Flandreau and the Redfield Press.

The newly revived newspaper could be back in print by as early as next week, according to Shaun Sarvis, who will oversee operations for both the Huron Plainsman and the Register.

Sarvis added that the paper will work to take care of the needs of subscribers and advertisers as the newspaper will continue to serve the community.

The paper turned daily in January 1970, publishing five days per week, Monday through Friday. Later that year, the paper was sold to Stauffer Communications of Topeka, Kansas. Stauffer held onto the Register until 1990, when Omaha World-Herald of Omaha, Nebraska purchased the paper.

The newspaper added a sixth day of publication— Saturday—in March 1995. News Media Corporation, of Rochelle, Illinois, bought the Register on Feb. 1, 1999. The company ceased and shuttered the paper on Aug. 6.

— From Brookings Register staff reports

Boys Soccer Team beats Custer

Groton Area's boys soccer team opened the season on the road with a 5-0 win over Custer.

Goalie Gage Sippel had six saves. Becker Bosma, Easton Weber and Logan Olson each had a goal. Karson Zak had two goals. Axel Abeln and Easton Weber each had an assist. Karson Zak had three assists.

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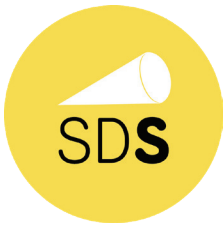
New Sound System at Doney Field

Everyone has been complaining about the sound system at the football field. Well, there should be a dramatic improvement this year. The box that has the GT on it is part of the new sound system. According to Superintendent Joe Schwan, the district invested \$50,000 in the purchase and installation of the sound system. The money came out of the Capital Outlay Fund. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Service Signs was doing some welding and upgrading to the scoreboard to make room for the new speakers on Thursday.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Claims of ineffectiveness lead one SD legal aid group to seek other group's funding

State commission withholds some financial support pending outcome of national entity's site visits

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

A nonprofit organization providing legal aid for low-income South Dakotans is attempting to take over the federal funding and territory of a similar organization, following accusations of the latter group's ineffectiveness.

Lea Wroblewski, executive director for East River Legal Services, informed the state's Commission on Equal Access to Our Courts during its July meeting that her organization will compete for federal grant funding currently awarded to Dakota Plains Legal Services.

She said some organizations working with low-income, vulnerable communities in Dakota Plains' jurisdiction are unfamiliar with the nonprofit. She added that East River has "not been able to successfully refer a single housing case" to Dakota Plains in her three years on the job.

"In our experience, and with community partners and clients, these services are not being offered," Wroblewski said.

After hearing about those concerns, the state commission chose to withhold \$56,000 of state funding from Dakota Plains until at least the December commission meeting, when the commission could consider the matter again.



The Dakota Plains Legal Services office in Rapid City, pictured on Aug. 14, 2025. (Seth Tupper/South Dakota Searchlight)

The structure of legal aid in SD

South Dakota's legal aid landscape is split between East River Legal Services on the east side of the state, and Dakota Plains Legal Services providing aid to the western half as well as to Native Americans on and off tribal lands across the state. The nonprofits help with legal aid for civil cases, including housing and evictions, applying for protection orders, and family law. Dakota Plains also takes on criminal cases when appointed by a court.

A third organization, South Dakota Access to Justice, formed by the State Bar to provide pro bono legal work, supplements legal services provided by the two programs when there are an excess of cases, and provides a reduced fee program for people who don't qualify for free services. The commission awards state grants to the organizations to improve access to the justice system.

The national Legal Services Corporation awards federal funding. Dakota Plains received \$1.4 million this year from the corporation for its service to Native Americans statewide and an additional \$576,919 for its

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service to the western part of the state. East River Legal Service received \$664,495 from the corporation for its services to the eastern part of the state.

Lori Stanford, deputy director of Dakota Plains Legal Services, told commissioners the federal funding accounts for 73% of the nonprofit's operating budget. The remainder is funded primarily through other state and government grants. If the Legal Services Corporation awarded both grants to East River, it would limit Dakota Plains to criminal defense appointments.

Stanford has been working with the nonprofit for over a year, and the organization recently hired William Sulik as its new executive director.

Sulik said he appreciates what Wroblewski told commissioners.

"It's criticism of Dakota Plains that we need to hear and we need to fix," he said, "and so I'm committed to doing that."

Stanford added that she hopes Dakota Plains improves outcomes and productivity for clients.

"We feel we're entering a new chapter here at Dakota Plains," Stanford said. "We're looking at things with a fresh perspective. Our commitment has not changed, and we're hoping to improve in a lot of areas."

Legal Services Corporation planned to visit South Dakota in August to assess both nonprofits. The agency will determine which organization is awarded funds by December. Dakota Plains applied for the funding and was preparing for the site visit, Stanford said at the July meeting.

Wroblewski hopes to streamline legal aid efforts in the state by consolidating them, improving consistency among client responses and creating efficiencies.

"We consider ourselves stewards of federal funding and want to make sure that money is being used to help people in the best way possible," Wroblewski told South Dakota Searchlight after the meeting.

Commissioner: Situation 'too unsettled' to award full state funding

The commission awarded East River Legal Services \$127,000 of state funds. Dakota Plains was awarded \$54,000 to hire an intake specialist to set up a central clearinghouse for applications and \$13,000 to support the continuation and expansion of the organization's Justice Bus, which aims to increase accessibility by driving to legal deserts across the state and meeting with clients.

Commissioners questioned Stanford about the effectiveness of the Justice Bus in the few months since its launch, asking for clearer data that state funds put toward the effort are being used wisely. Stanford told commissioners the Justice Bus received nine client applications since its launch, but did not have data for further services or general interactions with potential clients.

Another \$56,000 was withheld from Dakota Plains by the commission. The organization can reapply for the funds at the commission's December meeting.

Sulik said he was disappointed but "heartened" to be able to apply for the funding later this year "that we believe is vital to the clients and applicants" served by the organization. He added that Dakota Plains staff are "exceptional" and passionate about their work and clients' welfare.

"The commission is properly carrying out its function of ensuring that scarce funds are being used in an effective and efficient manner," Sulik said.

Commission Chair Tom Welk, who is an attorney in Sioux Falls, suggested withholding the \$56,000 from Dakota Plains until the commission knows that "leadership has got their hands around what's going on."

"I'm too unsettled, frankly, about what I've heard today," Welk said, "with where everything is going with the organization."

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.

Trump's DEI ban in K-12 schools, higher ed ruled 'unlawful' by federal judge

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — A federal judge in Maryland has struck down the U.S. Education Department's attempts to do away with diversity, equity and inclusion practices in schools.

The Thursday ruling marks a blow to President Donald Trump's administration as it continues to take significant strides to try to crack down on DEI efforts across the federal government.

U.S. District Judge Stephanie A. Gallagher found both an agency Dear Colleague letter threatening to yank federal funds for schools from K-12 through colleges and universities that use race-conscious practices in aspects of student life and a memo ordering state education leaders to certify compliance to be "unlawful," vacating the two.

Gallagher's ruling follows a lawsuit from the American Federation of Teachers union and its affiliate, AFT-Maryland, as well as the American Sociological Association and a public school district in Oregon.

She noted that both the letter and certification requirement are "unconstitutionally vague."

Gallagher is one of three federal judges who blocked different parts of the agency's initiatives back in April, which brought enforcement of the letter and the memo on certifying compliance to a halt.

"The administration is entitled to express its viewpoints and to promulgate policies aligned with those viewpoints," wrote Gallagher, who was appointed by Trump. "But it must do so within the procedural bounds Congress has outlined. And it may not do so at the expense of constitutional rights."

Feb. 14 letter to states

The department drew swift legal action after sending a Feb. 14 letter to school districts that threatened to rescind federal funds for schools that use race-conscious practices in programming, admissions, scholarships and other aspects of student life.

The letter gave a sweeping interpretation of a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 2023, which struck down the use of affirmative action in college admissions.

The four-page letter raised a myriad of questions for schools over what exactly fell within the requirements. The department in March issued a Frequently Asked Questions document on the letter in an attempt to provide more guidance.

Adding fuel to the fire, the department in April gave state education leaders just days to certify all K-12 schools in their states were complying with the letter in order to keep receiving federal financial assistance.



The Lyndon Baines Johnson Department of Education Building in Washington, D.C., pictured on Nov. 25, 2024.

(Photo by Shauneen Miranda/States Newsroom)

Reaction from department, union

"While the Department is disappointed in the judge's ruling, judicial action enjoining or setting aside this guidance has not stopped our ability to enforce Title VI protections for students at an unprecedented level," a spokesperson for the department said in a statement shared with States Newsroom on Friday.

"The Department remains committed to its responsibility to uphold students' anti-discrimination protections under the law," the spokesperson added.

Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, said "the court agreed that this vague and clearly unconstitutional requirement is a grave attack on students, our profession, honest history, and knowledge itself," in a Thursday statement.

Weingarten added that "it would hamper efforts to extend access to education, and dash the promise of equal opportunity for all, a central tenet of the United States since its founding."

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

District of Columbia sues Trump administration over 'hostile takeover' of police force

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwalb Friday filed a suit in federal court over the Trump administration's move to take control of the Metropolitan Police Department's 3,400 officers.

The suit in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia argues that President Donald Trump's Monday executive order to federalize the district's police force "far exceeded" the president's authority under the Home Rule Act of 1973 that allows Washingtonians to elect their local leaders, but gives Congress control over local laws and the district's budget.

Trump has warned he may pursue similar action in other Democratic-led cities that he sees as having "totally out of control" crime, though experts have questioned the legality and mayors already have raised objections.

"This is the gravest threat to Home Rule DC has ever faced, and we are fighting to stop it," Schwalb, a Democrat elected in

2022, wrote on social media. "The Administration's actions are brazenly unlawful. They go well beyond the bounds of the President's limited authority and instead seek a hostile takeover of MPD."

The suit also argues that Attorney General Pam Bondi's late Thursday order that placed Drug Enforcement Administrator Terry Cole as head of the MPD is a "brazen usurpation of the district's authority."

District Mayor Muriel Bowser pushed back on Bondi's order, and wrote on social media that "there is no statute that conveys the District's personnel authority to a federal official."

"Let us be clear about what the law requires during a Presidential declared emergency: it requires the



Federal Bureau of Investigation and Metropolitan Police Department officers conduct a traffic stop near the U.S. Capitol on Aug. 14, 2025 in Washington, D.C.

(Photo by Kayla Bartkowski/Getty Images)

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mayor of Washington, DC to provide the services of the Metropolitan Police Department for federal purposes at the request of the President," she said. "We have followed the law."

The suit asks for a judge to vacate Bondi's order and an order to prevent the Trump administration from "from issuing any future orders or directives or taking any other action that attempts to place MPD under the control of anyone other than the Mayor and the Chief of Police, otherwise assert operational control over MPD, or otherwise attempt to direct local law enforcement activities."

A hearing for a temporary restraining order is set for Friday at 2 p.m. Eastern before Judge Ana C. Reyes, who was nominated by former President Joe Biden.

The suit does not challenge Trump's decision to deploy 800 National Guard members to the district. Because the district, home to more than 700,000 residents, is not a state, the president has the sole authority over the National Guard members.

Carjacking preceded Trump order

Trump earlier this week declared a "crime emergency" after a former U.S. Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, official was injured on Aug. 3 in an attempted carjacking incident around 3 a.m. Eastern near the Logan Circle neighborhood. Two Maryland teenagers were arrested on charges of unarmed carjacking in connection with the incident.

Violent crime in the district is at a historic 30-year low.

The suit notes Trump's previous comments about his plans for the district, from his time as a 2024 presidential candidate to his most recent remarks about taking over control of the district while at a February press conference.

"I think that we should govern the District of Columbia ... I think that we should run it strong, run it with law and order, make it absolutely flawless ... And I think we should take over Washington, D.C. ... We should govern D.C. The federal government should take over the governance of D.C.," Trump said in the court document.

Advocates and local leaders have criticized the president's decision, arguing that the move is nothing more than an extension of the administration's immigration crackdown. Checkpoints have popped up all over the city in communities with a high immigrant population.

Additionally, the district's police chief Thursday issued a new executive order to allow local police to aid federal officials in immigration enforcement for immigrants not in police custody.

Trump praised Thursday's executive order, calling it "a very positive thing," especially at checkpoints in the district.

"When they stop people, they find they're illegal, they report them, they give them to us," he said.

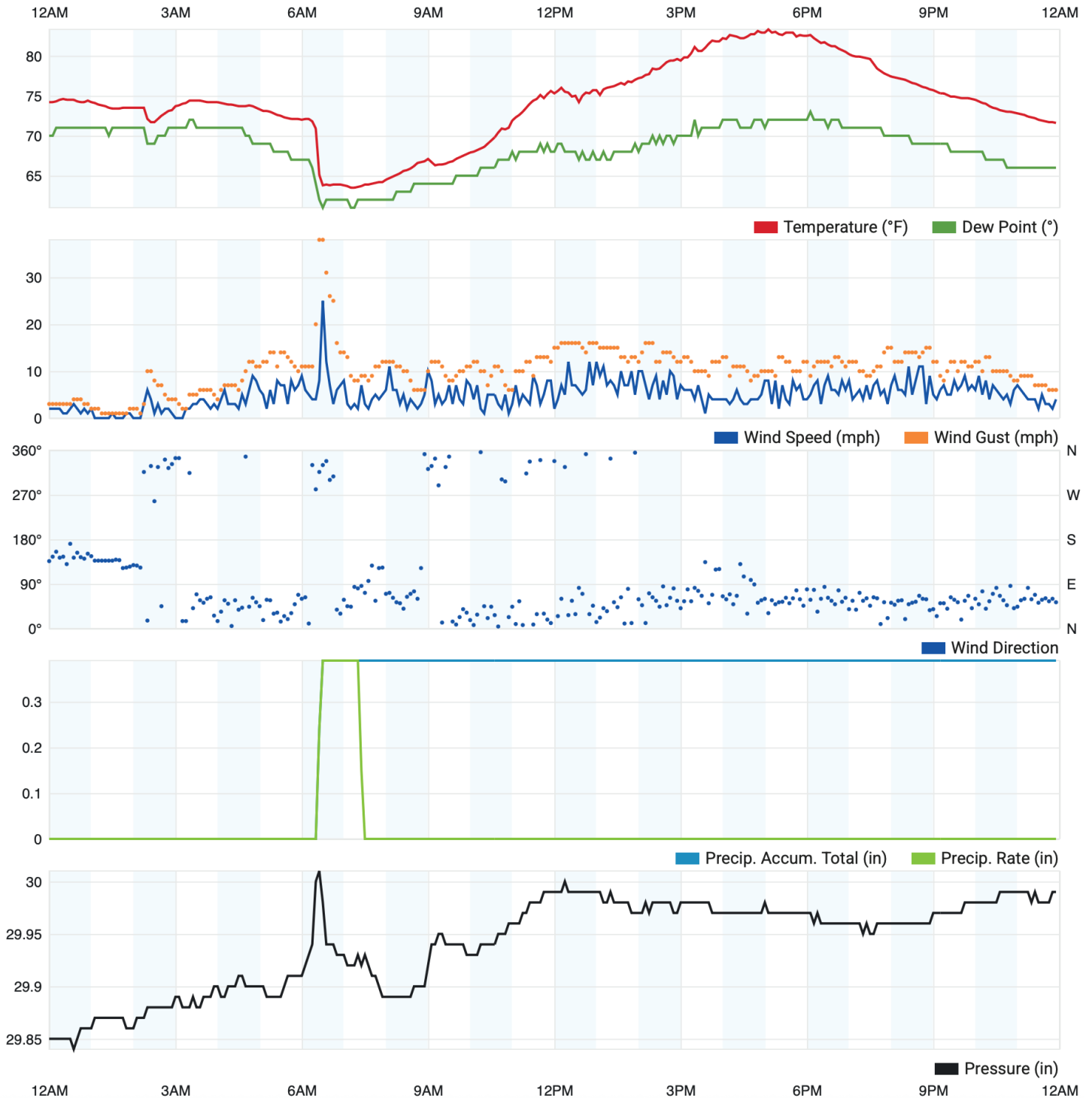
Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her areas of coverage include politics and policy, lobbying, elections and campaign finance.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

August 15, 2025



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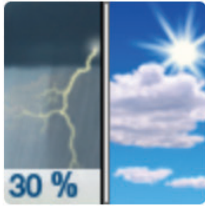
Saturday

Saturday Night

Sunday

Sunday Night

Monday



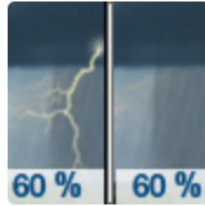
High: 81 °F

Severe
Thunderstorms
then Mostly



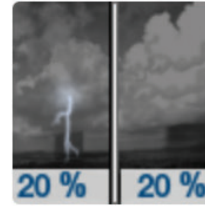
Low: 67 °F

Chance
T-storms then
T-storms



High: 83 °F

T-storms
Likely then
Showers



Low: 62 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Slight Chance



High: 79 °F

Mostly Sunny

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Scattered Severe Storms
Possible

TIMING

**This Evening Through
Overnight**

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS OF
60+ MPH



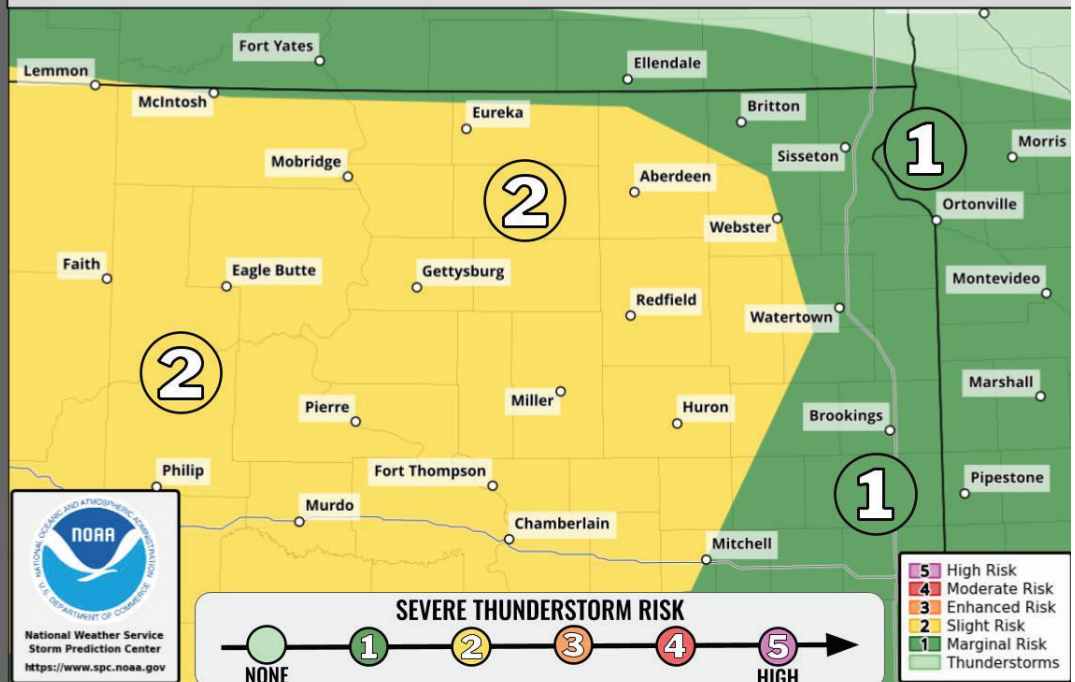
LARGE HAIL
(QUARTER SIZE)

SECONDARY THREATS



HEAVY
RAIN

Severe Storms Possible This Evening to Overnight



A slight risk (level 2 out of 5) for scattered storms is in place for Saturday evening/overnight mainly west of the Sisseton Hills. Main threats are wind gusts in excess of 60 mph and hail 1 inch in diameter or larger. A few tornadoes will be possible along with heavy rain which could cause local flooding.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:

Isolated severe storms
possible.

TIMING

Sunday afternoon into the
Evening

PRIMARY THREATS

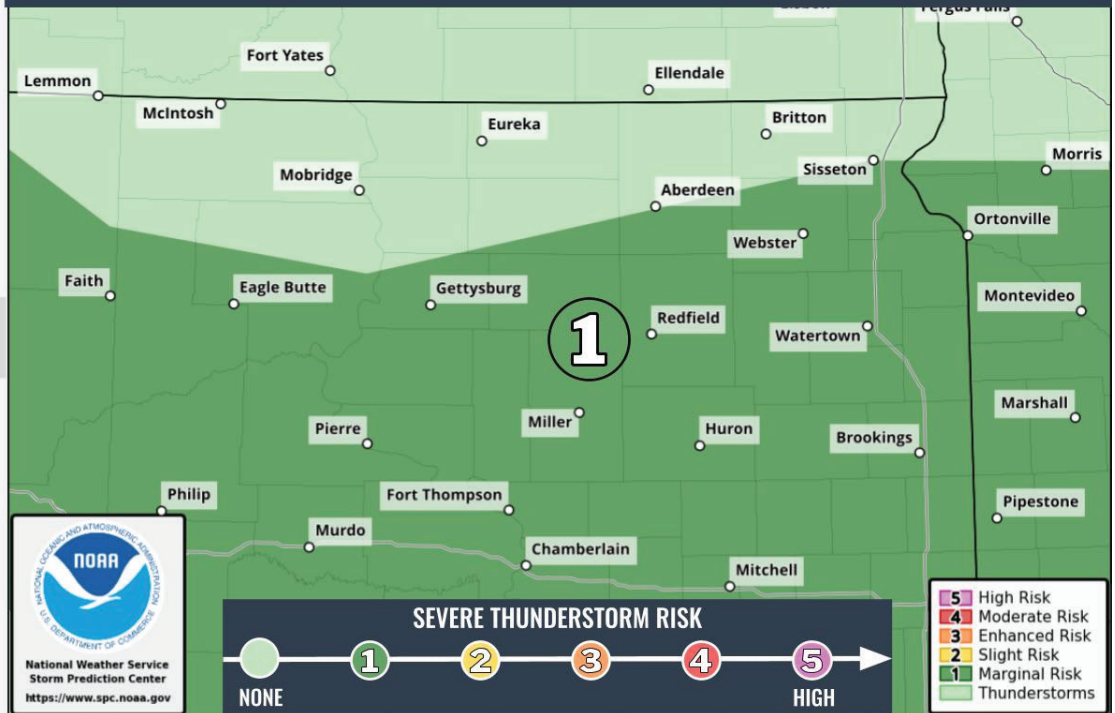

DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS OF
60+ MPH


LARGE HAIL
(QUARTER SIZE)

SECONDARY THREATS


HEAVY RAINFALL

SEVERE STORMS POSSIBLE SUNDAY



There is a Marginal Risk (level 1 out of 5) for isolated severe storms Sunday afternoon into the evening over central and northeastern SD. Damaging wind gusts of 60 mph and large hail around an inch in diameter are the primary threats, along with the threat for heavy rainfall.

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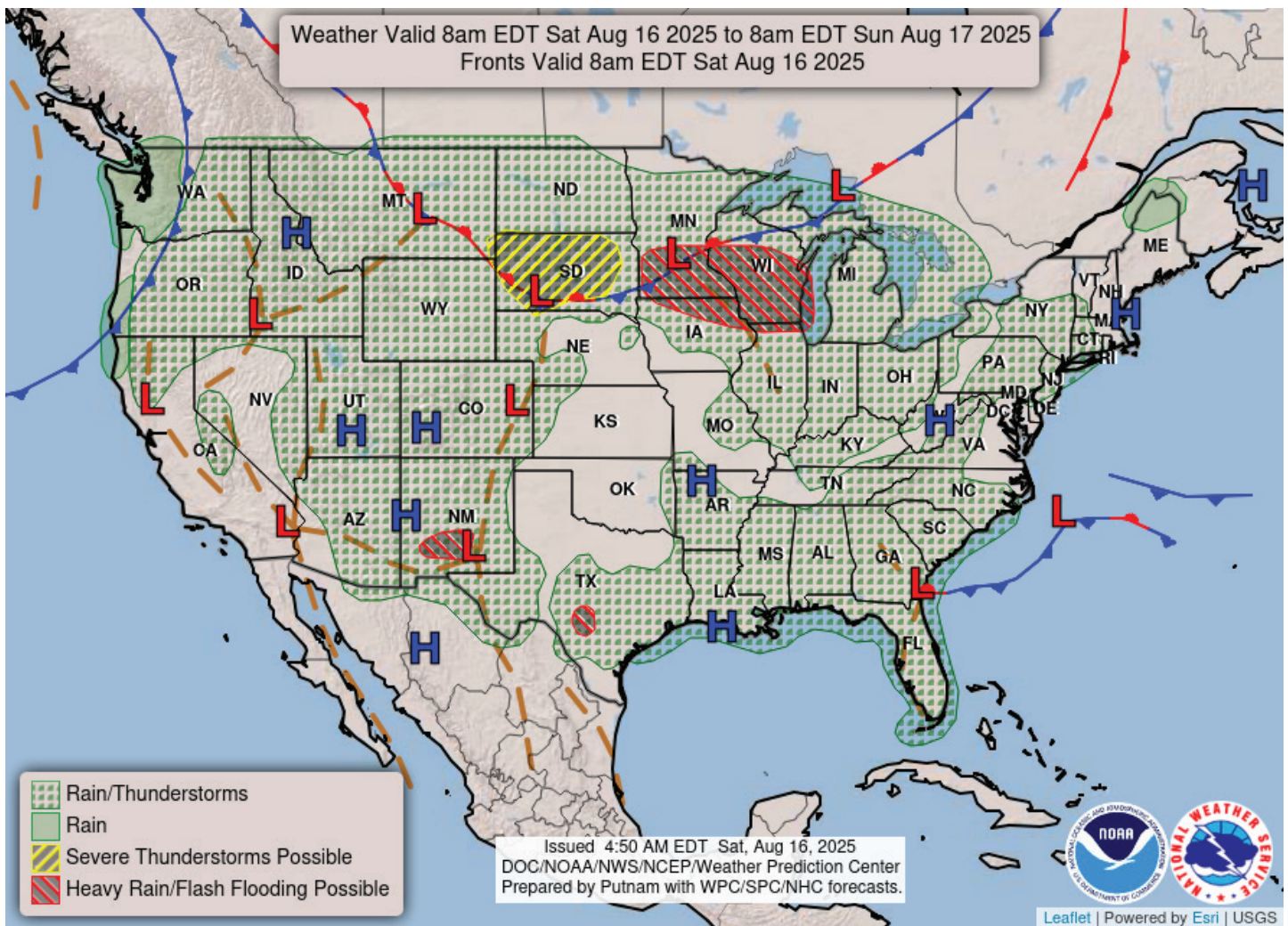
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 83 °F at 5:05 PM
Heat Index: 90 °F at 5:15 PM
Low Temp: 64 °F at 7:09 AM
Wind: 39 mph at 6:23 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 14 hours, 5 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1988
Record Low: 42 in 1897
Average High: 83
Average Low: 57
Average Precip in August.: 1.15
Precip to date in August: 2.05
Average Precip to date: 15.25
Precip Year to Date: 17.11
Sunset Tonight: 8:39:33 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:34:49 am



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Today in Weather History

August 16, 1986: Thunderstorm winds gusted to 60 mph in Forestburg, in Sanborn County. Thunderstorm winds gusting to 100 mph uprooted trees and damaged buildings in the northern part of Hanson County. On several farms, barns, garages, silos, and small buildings were destroyed. The worst affected area was south of Epiphany where large steel sheds were damaged, and a roof was blown in.

1777: The Battle of Bennington, delayed a day by rain, was fought. The rain-delayed British reinforcements and allowed the Vermont Militia to arrive in time, enabling the Americans to win a victory by defeating two enemy forces, one at a time.

1909 - A dry spell began in San Bernardino County of southern California that lasted until the 6th of May in 1912, a stretch of 994 days! Another dry spell, lasting 767 days, then began in October of 1912. (The Weather Channel)

1916 - Altapass, NC, was deluged with 22.22 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather from Oklahoma to Wisconsin and Lower Michigan. Thunderstorms in central Illinois produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Springfield which toppled two large beer tents at the state fair injuring 58 persons. Thunderstorms also drenched Chicago IL with 2.90 inches of rain, making August 1987 their wettest month of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from North Dakota to Lower Michigan during the day. Nine tornadoes were sighted in North Dakota, and thunderstorms also produced hail three inches in diameter at Lakota ND, and wind gusts to 83 mph at Marais MI. Thirty-seven cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Rockford IL with a reading of 104 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms in the Central High Plains Region produced golf ball size hail at La Junta CO, Intercanyon CO, and Custer SD. Afternoon thunderstorms over South Texas drenched Brownsville with 2.60 inches of rain. Fair skies allowed viewing of the late evening full lunar eclipse from the Great Lakes Region to the Northern and Central Plains Region, and across much of the western third of the country. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992 - One of the most destructive United States hurricanes of record started modestly as a tropical wave that emerged from the west coast of Africa on August 14. The wave spawned a tropical depression on August 16, which became Tropical Storm Andrew the next day.

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*Father, help us to be aware of
the foundations we establish.
May we be sensitive to the
importance of guarding each
step by walking the way Your
Son did. In Jesus' Name, Amen.*

My Dad worked for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad for nearly fifty years. He was responsible for maintaining over 200 miles of railroad tracks.

Part of the tracks ran from the docks of the harbor on Lake Erie to a steel mill that was the largest manufacturer of pipe in America. Although the distance from the harbor to the steel mill was only a few miles, the tracks formed an intricate system of switches and tracks that had to be carefully laid out and spaced for the engines, coal cars, and iron ore cars to pass each other safely.

One evening when he returned from work, he was visibly shaken. He sat quietly and said nothing. All of the family

knew that something serious had happened, and we knew not to ask questions. When he was ready to talk, he would tell us the story.

Finally, he said, "We had a terrible accident in Elyria today. The men who worked there did not prepare the 'bed' properly for the tracks, and they gave way today. The engine fell over on its side and killed the engineer."

Someone failed to take the time to lay the foundation and build the bed strong enough for the trains to pass safely. That engineer did not have to die and leave his family. Someone failed in their duty, and it cost the engineer his life.

"The highway of the upright avoids evil, he who guards his way guards his life," wrote Solomon. The word highway refers to a raised roadway that is carefully groomed and maintained.

We groom our highway when we read God's Word, pray, and seek His way.

Today's Prayer: Father, help us to be aware of the foundations we establish. May we be sensitive to the importance of guarding each step by walking the way Your Son did. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "The highway of the upright avoids evil, he who guards his way guards his life." Proverbs 16:17

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.15.25

4 17 27 34 69 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$216,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

17 23 27 45 52 3

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,150,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 22 Mins 51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.15.25

2 8 19 26 32 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 52 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

3 8 11 23 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$93,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 52 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

29 33 41 50 54 23

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.13.25

4 11 40 44 50 4

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$565,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 6 Mins 51 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

Movie Review: A lyrical ode to the real cowgirls of the new West in 'East of Wall'

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Filmmaker Kate Beecroft points her lens toward the real cowgirls of the Badlands in the lyrical new film "East of Wall."

The film blends fact and fiction to tell a story about the working women of South Dakota, skilled riders and trainers with ranching and rodeo in their blood who also can't seem to catch a break. There are a few Hollywood actors in the mix, including Jennifer Ehle as a hard living grandmother with a lifetime of regrets as well as some nuggets of wisdom and Scoot McNairy as an out-of-towner who wants to acquire the land, but most of the cast are non-actors playing themselves. The film won an audience award earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival.

At the heart of "East of Wall," now playing in select theaters, is Tabatha Zimiga, a South Dakota native whose ability to tame wild horses is the stuff of legend in the area. In the film, the horses she rescues and rehabilitates are sold at auctions and often accepted for far less than what they're worth. She needs the money. There are bills to pay on the ranch and many mouths to feed (not just her own kids, but others from around the town who come to her for safety and shelter when their own caretakers stop providing).

Tabatha is also living with new and old traumas, from the generational agony of abuse to the more recent death of her husband, the shocking circumstances of which are withheld for some time. But the effects of the loss are still felt, especially for their daughter Porshia (played by her real-life daughter Porshia Zimiga), whose grief is threatening to turn into hate of her mother. Teenage Porshia provides the poetic voiceovers, in which she talks about riding, her mother and, most effectively, the land. It's reminiscent of Linda Manz's narration in "Days of Heaven."

"East of Wall" is best when it's capturing the landscapes and the girls in action, riding and filming energetic TikToks of their friends racing cars on horseback. Some have suggested that "East of Wall" might have been stronger as a documentary. These women are vibrant and authentic and don't look like anyone we see in the movies these days, with real bodies and imperfect skin, heads half-shaved, tattoos everywhere and the ability to really, really ride — no stunt team required. And they have stories to tell, many of them unhappy, as we see in one of the most moving non-action scenes involving a group of mothers speaking candidly about their lives and their regrets.

The real-life drama of financial instability is compelling and likely rooted in truth; however, the introduction of McNairy's suspect Texan feels like a narrative contrivance and drama for drama's sake. He offers to buy the ranch and let them live and work as usual, just for him now instead of themselves. These are the kind of scenes that remind you that the filmmakers, despite all their best intentions and care, are, in essence, also interlopers in this world.

Beecroft's story of how she stumbled upon Tabatha and her cowgirls sounds like something out of a folk song. A native of Los Angeles who'd worked as an actress and production designer, Beecroft felt stalled and hopped in a truck with her friend and cinematographer Austin Shelton to find the stories of everyday Americans. A wrong turn, she said, led her to these women.

"East of Wall" is a promising start for a burgeoning filmmaker and a worthy portrait of an insular world that many of us will never know.

"East of Wall," a Sony Pictures Classics release now in select theaters, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "language throughout." Running time: 97 minutes. Three stars out of four.

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NorthWestern Energy to Seek New Capacity Resources in South Dakota, Explore Expedited Electric Grid Interconnection Process

SIOUX FALLS, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Aug 15, 2025--

NorthWestern Energy Public Service Corporation d/b/a NorthWestern Energy Group will issue an all-source capacity request for proposals (RFP) on Aug. 15, 2025, for its South Dakota electric system. The capacity resource RFP is focused on improving reliability by securing additional capacity through a competitive market solicitation. NorthWestern Energy is also exploring opportunities to participate in the Southwest Power Pool Expedited Resource Adequacy Study, a one-time accelerated study of generation projects needed to address resource adequacy and reliability needs in the SPP footprint.

NorthWestern Energy provides reliable electric supply to its South Dakota customers through owned generation assets, power purchase agreements, and market purchases. NorthWestern Energy is experiencing load growth along with increased capacity needs and is seeking additional safe and reliable capacity resources in this RFP.

The RFP will be administered by Aion Energy LLC, and all inquiries from potential respondents must be directed to NWPS-2025@aionenergyllc.com.

Erin becomes a Category 3 hurricane in the Caribbean and is expected to strengthen further

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Erin became a Category 3 hurricane in the Caribbean early Saturday and is expected to strengthen further during the day, the National Hurricane Center reported.

The storm is currently 170 miles (275 kilometers) northeast of Anguilla with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph (195 kph). It is moving west-northwest at 20 mph (31 kph).

It is currently not forecast to hit land, but strong winds are affecting nearby islands, prompting forecasters to warn of possible flooding and landslides.. The NHC said it currently expected Erin to become a Category 4 storm later Saturday but to eventually swerve away from the continental United States.

Tropical storm watches are in place for St. Martin and St. Barthelemy and Sint Maarten. Up to 4 inches (10 centimeters) are expected, with isolated totals of up to 6 inches (15 centimeters), according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

"Locally, considerable flash and urban flooding, along with landslides or mudslides, are possible," the NHC said.

Hurricane specialist and storm surge expert Michael Lowry said Erin is forecast to eventually take a sharp turn northeast that would put it on a path between the U.S. and Bermuda.

"All of our best consensus aids show Erin turning safely east of the United States next week, but it'll be a much closer call for Bermuda, which could land on the stronger eastern side of Erin," he said.

Erin is the fifth named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30, but the first to reach hurricane status.

"Erin is forecast to explode into a powerful Category 4 hurricane as it moves across very warm waters in the open Atlantic. Water temperatures at the surface and hundreds of feet deep are several degrees higher than the historical average," said Alex DaSilva, Accuweather's lead hurricane expert.

This year's season is once again expected to be unusually busy. The forecast calls for six to 10 hurricanes, with three to five reaching major status with winds of more than 110 mph (177 kph).

The U.S. government has deployed more than 200 employees from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other agencies to Puerto Rico as a precaution as forecasters issued a flood watch for the entire U.S. territory from late Friday into Monday.

Puerto Rico Housing Secretary Ciary Pérez Peña said 367 shelters have been inspected and could be opened if needed.

The U.S. Coast Guard said Friday that it closed six seaports in Puerto Rico and two in the U.S. Virgin

Islands to all incoming vessels unless they had received prior authorization.

Meanwhile, officials in the Bahamas said they prepared some public shelters as a precaution as they urged people to track the hurricane.

"These storms are very volatile and can make sudden shifts in movement," said Aarone Sargent, managing director for the Bahamas' disaster risk management authority.

Trump administration agrees to keep DC police chief in place, but with immigration enforcement order

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration on Friday reversed course and agreed to leave the Washington, D.C., police chief in control of the department, while Attorney General Pam Bondi, in a new memo, directed the District's police to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement regardless of any city law.

The order from Bondi came after officials in the nation's capital sued Friday to block President Donald Trump's takeover of the Washington police. The night before, his administration had escalated its intervention into the city's law enforcement by naming a federal official as the new emergency head of the department, essentially placing the police force under the full control of the federal government.

The attorney general's new order represents a partial retreat for the Trump administration in the face of intense skepticism from a judge over the legality of Bondi's earlier directive. But Bondi also signaled the administration would continue to pressure D.C. leaders to help federal authorities aggressively pursue immigrants in the country illegally, despite city laws on the books that limit cooperation between police and immigration authorities.

In a social media post Friday evening, Bondi criticized D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb, saying he "continues to oppose our efforts to improve public safety." But she added, "We remain committed to working closely with Mayor Bowser."

Mayor Muriel Bowser's office said late Friday that it was still evaluating how it can comply with the new Bondi order on immigration enforcement operations. The police department already eased some restrictions on cooperating with federal officials facilitating Trump's mass-deportation campaign but reaffirmed that it would follow the district's sanctuary city laws.

In a letter sent Friday night to D.C. citizens, Bowser wrote: "It has been an unsettling and unprecedented week in our city. Over the course of a week, the surge in federal law enforcement across D.C. has created waves of anxiety."

She added that "our limited self-government has never faced the type of test we are facing right now," but added that if Washingtonians stick together, "we will show the entire nation what it looks like to fight for American democracy — even when we don't have full access to it."

The legal battle was the latest evidence of the escalating tensions in a mostly Democratic city that now has its police department largely under the control of the Republican president's administration. Trump's takeover is historic, yet it had played out with a slow ramp-up in federal law enforcement officials and National Guard troops to start the week.

As the weekend approached, though, signs across the city — from the streets to the legal system — suggested a deepening crisis over who controls the city's immigration and policing policies, the district's right to govern itself and daily life for the millions of people who live and work in the metro area.

A push for compromise

The two sides sparred in court for hours Friday before U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes, who is overseeing the district's lawsuit. She indicated the law likely doesn't grant the Trump administration power to fully take over city police, but it probably does give the president more power than the city might like.

"The way I read the statute, the president can ask, the mayor must provide, but the president can't control," said Reyes, who was nominated to the bench by Democratic President Joe Biden. The judge pushed the two sides to make a compromise.

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An attorney for the Trump administration, Yaakov Roth, said the move to sideline Metropolitan Police Department Chief Pamela Smith came after an immigration order that still held back some aid to federal authorities. He argued that the president has broad authority to determine what kind of help police in Washington must provide.

The police takeover is the latest move by Trump to test the limits of his legal authorities to carry out his agenda, relying on obscure statutes and a supposed state of emergency to bolster his tough-on-crime message and his plans to speed up the mass deportation of people in the United States illegally.

It also marks one of the most sweeping assertions of federal authority over a local government in modern times. While Washington has grappled with spikes in violence and visible homelessness, the city's homicide rate ranks below those of several other major U.S. cities, and the capital is not in the throes of the public safety collapse the Trump administration has portrayed.

The president has more power over the nation's capital than other cities, but D.C. has elected its own mayor and city council since the Home Rule Act was signed in 1973.

Trump is the first president to exert control over the city's police force since it was passed. The law limits that control to 30 days without congressional approval, though Trump has suggested he'd seek to extend it.

Chief had agreed to share immigration information

Bondi's Thursday night directive to place the head of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Terry Cole, in charge of the police department came even after Smith had told MPD officers hours earlier to share information with immigration agencies regarding people not in custody, such as someone involved in a traffic stop or checkpoint. The Justice Department said Bondi disagreed with the police chief's instructions because they allowed for continued practice of "sanctuary policies," which generally limit cooperation by local law enforcement with federal immigration officers.

Meanwhile, advocates in Washington were trying to advise immigrants on how to respond. Anusce Sanai, associate legal director for the Washington-based immigrant nonprofit Ayuda, said they're still parsing the legal aspects of the policies.

"Even with the most anti-immigrant administration, we would always tell our clients that they must call the police, that they should call the police," Sanai said. "But now we find ourselves that we have to be very careful on what we advise."

Amy Fischer, an organizer with Migrant Solidarity Mutual Aid, said that before the federal takeover, most of what they had seen in the nation's capital was Immigration and Customs Enforcement targeting specific individuals. But since last Friday night they've seen a "really significant change," she said, with ICE and federal officers doing roving patrols around the city.

She said a hotline set up by immigration advocates to report ICE activity "is receiving calls almost off the hook."

ICE said in a post on X that their teams had arrested "several" people in Washington Friday. A video posted on X showed two uniformed personnel putting handcuffs on someone while standing outside a white transport van.

Residents are seeing a significant show of force

A population already tense from days of ramp-up has begun seeing more significant shows of force across the city. National Guard troops watched over some of the world's most renowned landmarks, and Humvees took position in front of the busy main train station. Volunteers helped homeless people leave long-standing encampments — to where was often unclear.

Friday night along the district's U Street, a popular nightlife corridor, an Associated Press photographer saw officers from the FBI, the DEA, the Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Park Police, U.S. Marshals and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

As the District challenged the Trump administration in court Friday, more than 100 protesters gathered less than a block away in front of police headquarters, chanting "Protect home rule!" and waving signs saying "Resist!"

Trump leaves Alaska summit with Putin empty-handed after failing to reach a deal to end Ukraine war

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska (AP) — President Donald Trump failed to secure an agreement from Vladimir Putin on Friday to end Russia's war in Ukraine, falling short in his most significant move yet to stop the bloodshed, even after rolling out the red carpet for the man who started it.

"There's no deal until there's a deal," the U.S. president said, after Putin claimed they had hammered out an "understanding" on Ukraine and warned Europe not to "torpedo the nascent progress." Trump said he would call Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders to brief them on the talks.

Trump, who for years has balked at American support for Ukraine and expressed admiration for Putin, had pledged confidently to bring about an end to the war on his first day back in the White House. Seven months later, after berating Zelenskyy in the Oval Office and stanching the flow of some U.S. military assistance to Kyiv, Trump could not bring Putin even to pause the fighting, as his forces make gains on the battlefield.

The U.S. president had offered Putin both a carrot and a stick, issuing threats of punishing economic sanctions on Russia while also extending a warm welcome at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, but he appeared to walk away without any concrete progress on ending the war in Ukraine, now in its fourth year.

Instead, he handed Putin long-sought recognition on the international stage, after years of Western efforts to make him a pariah over the war and his crackdown on dissent, and forestalled the threat of additional U.S. sanctions.

In a sign that the conversations did not yield Trump's preferred result, the two leaders ended what was supposed to be a joint news conference without taking questions from reporters.

During a subsequent interview with Fox News Channel before leaving Alaska, Trump insisted that the onus going forward might be somehow on Zelenskyy "to get it done," but said there would also be some involvement from European nations. That was notable since Zelenskyy was excluded from Trump and Putin's meeting.

The U.S. president had wanted to show off his deal-making skills, while Putin wanted to negotiate a deal that would cement Russia's gains, block Kyiv's bid to join the NATO military alliance and eventually pull Ukraine back into Moscow's orbit.

"We had an extremely productive meeting, and many points were agreed to," Trump said while standing next to Putin. "And there are just a very few that are left. Some are not that significant. One is probably the most significant, but we have a very good chance of getting there."

He continued: "We didn't get there."

Putin says Trump 'shows understanding' that Russia has its own interests

For Putin, just being on U.S. soil for the first time in more than a decade was validation after his ostracization following his invasion of Ukraine.

His meeting with Trump may stall the economic sanctions that the U.S. president had promised unless Moscow worked harder to bring the fighting to a close. It also may simply lead to more meetings, giving his forces more time to make progress on the battlefield.

Putin said Russia and the United States should "turn the page and go back to cooperation."

He praised Trump as someone who "has a clear idea of what he wants to achieve and sincerely cares about the prosperity of his country, and at the same time shows understanding that Russia has its own national interests."

"I expect that today's agreements will become a reference point not only for solving the Ukrainian problem, but will also mark the beginning of the restoration of businesslike, pragmatic relations between Russia and the U.S.," Putin said.

Despite not reaching any major breakthrough, Trump ended his remarks by thanking Putin and saying, "we'll speak to you very soon and probably see you again very soon."

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When Putin smiled and offered, "next time in Moscow," Trump said "that's an interesting one" and said he might face criticism but "I could see it possibly happening."

During the interview with Fox News, Trump bragged that Putin echoed many of the U.S. president's long-standing grievances, including about the 2020 election. This suggests that Putin, a former KGB officer, may have left Trump with the impression that he'd notched a big win even as he left empty handed.

When Trump and Putin arrived in Alaska, they had greeted each other with a warm handshake, chatting almost like old friends, and gripped hands for an extended period on a red carpet rolled out at the military base. As they chatted, Putin grinned and pointed skyward, where B-2s and F-22s — military aircraft designed to oppose Russia during the Cold War — flew overhead. The two then shared the U.S. presidential limo for a short ride to their meeting site, with Putin offering a broad smile as they rolled past the cameras.

It was the kind of reception typically reserved for close U.S. allies and belied the bloodshed and suffering in the war Putin started in Ukraine. Although not altogether surprising considering their longtime friendly relationship, such outward friendliness likely raised concerns from Zelenskyy and European leaders, who fear that Trump is primarily focusing on furthering U.S. interests and not pressing hard enough for Ukraine's.

Not a one-on-one meeting

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said shortly before Air Force One touched down that the previously planned one-on-one meeting between Trump and Putin would be a three-on-three discussion including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and special envoy Steve Witkoff. Putin was joined by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov.

The change seemed to indicate that the White House was taking a more guarded approach than it did during a 2018 meeting in Helsinki, where Trump and Putin met privately with their interpreters and Trump then shocked the world by siding with the Russian leader over U.S. intelligence officials on whether Russia meddled in the 2016 campaign.

Zelenskyy's exclusion was also a heavy blow to the West's policy of "nothing about Ukraine without Ukraine."

War still raging

Russia and Ukraine remain far apart in their demands for peace. Putin has long resisted any temporary ceasefire, linking it to a halt in Western arms supplies and a freeze on Ukraine's mobilization efforts, which are conditions rejected by Kyiv and its Western allies.

The meeting comes as the war has caused heavy losses on both sides and drained resources. Ukraine has held on far longer than some initially expected since the February 2022 invasion, but it is straining to hold off Russia's much larger army, grappling with bombardments of its cities and fighting for every inch on the over 600-mile (1,000-kilometer) front line.

Alaska is separated from Russia at its closest point by just 3 miles (less than 5 kilometers) and the international date line.

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson was crucial to countering the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It continues to play a role today, as planes from the base still intercept Russian aircraft that regularly fly into U.S. airspace.

Democrats release plan to boost party's California US House seats in fight for Congress

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD, TRẦN NGUYỄN, NADIA LATHAN and BILL BARROW Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a display of cutthroat yet calculated politics, Democrats unveiled a proposal Friday that could give California's dominant political party an additional five U.S. House seats in a bid to win the fight to control of Congress next year.

The plan calls for an unusually timed reshaping of House district lines to greatly strengthen the Democratic advantage in the state ahead of midterm elections, when Republicans will be defending a fragile majority.

It amounts to a counterpunch to Texas, where the GOP is trying to add five seats to its House delegation at the urging of President Donald Trump as he tries to avoid losing control of Congress and, with it,

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prospects for his conservative agenda in the later part of his term.

If approved by voters in November, the California blueprint could nearly erase Republican House members in the nation's most populous state. The Democratic plan is intended to win the party 48 of its 52 U.S. House seats, up from 43.

The campaign arm of House Democrats, the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, released the maps Friday, and the Democratic-led Legislature later posted them online. State lawmakers plan to hold hearings and vote on the new maps next week.

"This is about more than drawing lines on a map. It's about drawing a line in the sand to stop Texas and Trump from rigging the election," state Senate Democratic leader Mike McGuire said in a statement.

New districts have boundaries to boost Democratic edge

While a general notion behind drawing districts is to unite what's called communities of interest — neighborhoods and cities that share similar concerns or demographic traits — the proposed remapping would create a jigsaw of oddly shaped districts to maximize Democratic clout.

The 1st Congressional District is currently anchored in the state's conservative far northeast corner and is represented by Republican Rep. Doug LaMalfa, a Trump supporter. The district has a nearly 18-point GOP registration edge.

Under the proposal, Democrats would end up with a 10-point registration advantage there after drastic reshaping to include parts of heavily Democratic Sonoma County near the Pacific Coast.

In a post on the social platform X, LaMalfa called the proposal "absolutely ridiculous."

In the battleground 41st District east of Los Angeles, home to long-serving Republican Rep. Ken Calvert, Democratic and Republican registration is currently split about evenly.

But in the redrawn district, Democratic registration would jump to 46% with GOP registration falling to 26%.

Other Republicans whose districts would see major changes intended to favor Democrats include Reps. Kevin Kiley in Northern California, David Valadao in the Central Valley farm belt and Darrell Issa in San Diego County. Also, embattled Democratic incumbents would see their districts padded with additional left-leaning voters.

Newsom promises fight with Trump

Democratic California Gov. Gavin Newsom said Thursday that his state will hold a Nov. 4 special referendum on the redrawn districts.

"We can't stand back and watch this democracy disappear district by district all across the country," Newsom said.

The announcement marked the first time any state beyond Texas officially waded into Trump's fight, though several governors and legislative leaders from both parties have threatened such moves.

Rep. Richard Hudson of North Carolina, who heads the House GOP campaign arm, accused Newsom, a potential 2028 presidential candidate, of "shredding California's Constitution and disenfranchising voters."

"Californians oppose Newsom's stunt because they won't let a self-serving politician rig the system to further his career," said Hudson, who heads the National Republican Congressional Committee.

The looming question: How will voters react?

A big risk for Democrats is whether voters will be open to setting aside district boundaries crafted by an independent commission for ones shaped for partisan advantage.

Some people already have said they would sue over the effort. Republican former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a longtime opponent of partisan redistricting, signaled that he will not side with Democrats even after talking to Newsom. He posted a photo of himself Friday at the gym wearing a T-shirt that said, "Terminate gerrymandering."

"I'm getting ready for the gerrymandering battle," Schwarzenegger said.

What's next in Texas?

The release of the plan came the same day that Texas Republicans began a second special session to approve new congressional maps sought by Trump.

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The first special session ended without approving new maps, thwarted by Democrats who staged a nearly two-week walkout that meant not enough lawmakers were present to pass any legislation. Gov. Greg Abbott then called a second session that started without the necessary quorum to conduct business.

Absent lawmakers have said they will return to Austin once California Democrats take more formal steps on their own redistricting plan.

Trump is trying to avoid a repeat of the 2018 midterms, when the GOP yielded control during his first presidency to a Democratic majority that stymied his agenda and twice impeached him. The nation's two most populous states have been at the forefront of the resulting battle, which has reached into multiple courtrooms and statehouses controlled by both parties.

Texas House Speaker Dustin Burrows chided colleagues who left Austin, accusing them of "following Gov. Newsom's lead instead of the will of Texans." The speaker said, however, that he has "been told" to expect a quorum Monday.

House control could come down to a few seats in 2026

On a national level, the partisan makeup of existing district lines puts Democrats within three seats of a majority. Of the 435 total seats, only several dozen districts are competitive. So even slight changes in a few states could affect which party wins control.

New maps are typically drawn once a decade after the census — the last being in 2020. Many states, including Texas, give legislators the power to draw maps. California is among those that empower independent commissions with the task.

New Orleans mayor indicted over allegations of trying to hide relationship with bodyguard

By JIM MUSTIAN, JACK BROOK and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell was indicted Friday in what prosecutors called a yearslong scheme to hide a romantic relationship with her bodyguard, who is accused of being paid as if he was working even when they met alone in apartments and traveled to vineyards for wine tasting.

Cantrell faces charges of conspiracy, fraud and obstruction, less than five months before she leaves office due to term limits. The first female mayor in New Orleans' 300-year history was elected twice but now becomes the city's first mayor to be charged while in office.

"Public corruption has crippled us for years and years," Acting U.S. Attorney Michael Simpson said, referring to Louisiana's notorious history. "And this is extremely significant."

Cantrell's bodyguard, Jeffrey Vappie, was already facing charges of wire fraud and making false statements. He has pleaded not guilty. A grand jury returned an 18-count indictment Friday that added Cantrell to the case.

They are accused of exchanging encrypted messages through WhatsApp to avoid detection and then deleting the conversations. The mayor and Vappie have said their relationship was strictly professional, but the indictment portrayed it as "personal and intimate."

App captured dreamy chats

The City of New Orleans said in a statement that it was aware of the indictment and that the mayor's attorney is reviewing it.

"Until his review is complete, the City will not comment further on this matter," the statement said.

Cantrell hasn't sent out a message on her official social media feed on X since July 15, when she said the city was experiencing historic declines in crime.

In a WhatsApp exchange, the indictment says, Vappie reminisced about accompanying Cantrell to Scotland in October 2021, saying that was "where it all started."

Cantrell and Vappie used WhatsApp for more than 15,000 messages, including efforts to harass a citizen, delete evidence, make false statements to FBI agents, "and ultimately to commit perjury before a federal grand jury," Simpson said.

They met in an apartment while Vappie claimed to be on duty, and she arranged for him to attend 14

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trips, Simpson said. The trips, he added, were described by her as times "when they were truly alone." New Orleans taxpayers paid more than \$70,000 for Vappie's travel, the prosecutor said.

Together on an island

Authorities cited a September 2022 rendezvous on Martha's Vineyard, a trip Cantrell took instead of attending a conference in Miami. Vappie's travel to the island was covered by the city to attend a separate conference. "The times when we are truly (traveling) is what spoils me the most," the mayor wrote to him that month.

Simpson said Cantrell lied in an affidavit that she activated a function on her phone that automatically deleted messages in 2021 when she really didn't activate that feature until December 2022, a month after the media began speculating on the pair's conduct.

When a private citizen took photos of them dining together and drinking wine, Cantrell filed a police report and sought a restraining order, Simpson said.

Vappie retired from the police department in 2024.

Mayor has her defenders

Cantrell and her remaining allies have said that she has been unfairly targeted as a Black woman and held to a different standard than male officials, her executive powers at City Hall sabotaged. Simpson, however, shook off claims that any of it played a role in the investigation.

"It's irrelevant that it's romance or that it's female," he told reporters, adding that the allegations were "an incredible betrayal of people's confidence in their own government."

Cantrell, a Democrat, has clashed with City Council members during a turbulent second term and survived a recall effort in 2022.

"This is a sad day for the people of New Orleans," Monet Brignac, a spokesperson for City Council President JP Morrell, said as news of the indictment spread.

In 2014, former New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin was sentenced to 10 years in prison for bribery, money laundering, fraud and tax crimes. The charges stemmed from his two terms as mayor from 2002 to 2010. He was granted supervised release from prison in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As she heads into her final months in office, Cantrell has alienated former confidants and supporters, and her civic profile has receded. Her early achievements were eclipsed by self-inflicted wounds and bitter feuds with a hostile city council, political observers say. The mayor's role has weakened following voter-approved changes to the city's charter meant to curb her authority.

Earlier this year, Cantrell said she has faced "very disrespectful, insulting, in some cases kind of unimaginable" treatment. Her husband, attorney Jason Cantrell, died in 2023.

The Latest: Trump says no deal to end the Russia-Ukraine war was made with Putin after Alaska talks

By The Associated Press undefined

U.S. President Donald Trump said he and Russian President Vladimir Putin did not reach a deal to end Russia's war in Ukraine after talks in Alaska on Friday, as the two leaders offered scant details on what was discussed but heaped praise on one another.

Putin said he and Trump had reached an "understanding" on Ukraine and warned Europe not to "torpedo the nascent progress." But Trump said, "There's no deal until there's a deal" and said he plans to speak with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders soon.

The high-profile summit ended without an agreement to end, or even pause, the brutal conflict — the largest land war in Europe since 1945 — which has raged for more than three years.

The Latest:

Trump says it's now up to Zelenskyy 'to get it done'

Trump is passing the buck to the Ukrainian president, saying he will need to agree to do anything discussed today with Putin.

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"Now it's really up to President Zelenskyy to get it done," Trump told Sean Hannity of the Fox News Channel in a post-summit interview.

Trump said he expects a meeting to take place between Putin and Zelenskyy and that he will perhaps join them,

He declined to discuss what he and Putin had agreed to and what remained outstanding, repeating that "it's not a done deal at all."

Putin has previously said he's not against meeting Zelenskyy but that "certain conditions" must first be met. The Kremlin has said the two should only meet when there's a peace agreement on the table ready to be signed.

Kremlin says Trump and Putin made 'comprehensive statements,' hence no questions

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Putin and Trump made "comprehensive statements" after the talks so a decision was made not to take questions from journalists, Russian state news agency RIA Novosti reported.

Putin and Trump made statements after the talks but left the room full of reporters without taking questions.

RIA Novosti quoted Peskov as describing the talks as "very positive" and saying that the summit allows Moscow and Washington to "continue to confidently move together along the path of searching for (Ukraine conflict) resolution options."

Putin thanks Trump for 'friendly' tone of talks, urges Russia and US to 'turn the page'

Putin thanked Trump for the "friendly" tone of the conversation they had on Friday and said Russia and the United States should "turn the page and go back to cooperation."

He praised Trump as someone who "has a clear idea of what he wants to achieve and sincerely cares about the prosperity of his country, and at the same time shows understanding that Russia's has its own national interests."

"I expect that today's agreements will become a reference point not only for solving the Ukrainian problem, but will also mark the beginning of the restoration of businesslike, pragmatic relations between Russia and the U.S.," Putin said.

Trump praises 'fantastic' relationship with Putin but offers no details on their talks

Trump said there are "just a very few" issues to resolve concerning the war in Ukraine, without providing any sense of what those issues might be.

"Some are not that significant," Trump said. "One is probably the most significant, but we have a very good chance of getting there. We didn't get there, but we have a very good chance of getting there."

The president said he's "always had a fantastic relationship" with Putin. He referenced the U.S. government investigations into Russia's support for his 2016 presidential campaign and repeated his claims of the U.S. economy being the "hottest" in the world.

Putin reiterates points made since early on in the war

Putin repeated Moscow's long-held position that it is "sincerely interested in putting an end" to the war in Ukraine, but for that to happen, "all the root causes of the crisis ... must be eliminated."

"All of Russia's legitimate concerns must be taken into account, and a fair balance in the security sphere in Europe and the world as a whole must be restored," Putin said.

He added that he agrees with Trump on ensuring Ukraine's security and said Moscow was "ready to work on this," without offering details.

"I would like to hope that the understanding we have reached will allow us to get closer to that goal and open the way to peace in Ukraine," Putin said, without elaborating on what the understanding was.

"We hope that Kyiv and the European capitals will perceive all of this in a constructive manner and will not create any obstacles or attempt to disrupt the nascent progress through provocation or behind-the-scenes intrigue," the Russia leader added.

Putin suggests in English that next meeting could be held in Moscow

Trump has spoken repeatedly in recent days about wanting to have a second meeting after the Alaska

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summit.

As they wrapped their statements after the summit, Putin said to Trump in English, "Next time in Moscow." Trump responded, "I could see it possibly happening."

Neither leader announced that a second meeting would be held before they left the room without answering questions from reporters.

Trump and Putin did not take questions after giving joint statements

After their nearly three-hour-long meeting, neither Trump nor Putin took questions from reporters after giving brief remarks. Putin said the two leaders had reached an "understanding," but neither offered further details.

Trump says he will fill Zelenskyy in on Putin meeting

The U.S. president also said he would call European and NATO leaders to give them updates from his meeting with Putin.

Trump said "some great progress" was made in his bilateral meeting with the Russian president, saying "many points were agreed to," with just a "very few" remaining.

Zelenskyy was not invited to the Alaska summit.

Putin says there would no be war in Ukraine if Trump had been president in 2022

Trump has long claimed that Putin would never have invaded Ukraine if he had still be in the White House — and the Russian leader confirmed that argument at a news conference after their meeting.

Putin criticized former President Joe Biden without naming him and referenced Trump's argument about his presence being sufficient to stop the war.

"I can confirm that," Putin said through a translator.

Putin speaks first at joint news conference with Trump

Speaking in Russian, the president said he had greeted Trump as "dear neighbor," thankful to see him in good health.

Putin also said he and Trump "have very good, direct contact."

As Putin spoke, Trump stood about 6 or 7 feet (1.8 or 2.1 meters) away from him, at his own podium.

Putin said the U.S. and Russia are close neighbors, separated by mere miles, so it made sense for the summit to be held in Alaska.

He said the talks were held "in a constructive and mutually respectful atmosphere," and were "very thorough and useful."

Trump administration reverses course and agrees to leave DC police chief in charge

The Trump administration on Friday reversed course and agreed to leave the Washington, D.C., police chief in control of department after a court hearing.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, in a new memo, directed the District's police to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement "notwithstanding" city law.

Trump and Putin wrap their meeting in Alaska

Trump and Putin have ended their three-on-three talk after about 2 1/2 hours. They met behind closed doors with top advisers.

Alaska summit hits 2.5-hour mark

A top aide to Trump says the president, Putin and their aides are still meeting.

The aide, Dan Scavino, said Trump, Rubio and Witkoff are still behind closed doors with Putin and the Russian delegation. The meeting began around 3:30 p.m. ET.

Trump administration and DC appear near deal on police leadership

The nation's capital and the Trump administration appear to be nearing a temporary agreement on the leadership of the city's police department.

Washington's top attorney, Brian Schwalb, told reporters he expects the U.S. to agree that the city police chief remains in charge of the department, at least for the coming days.

The two sides sparred in court for hours Friday after the city sued to block the federal government from

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putting a Trump administration official in charge of city police officers.

The federal judge overseeing the lawsuit said the law doesn't allow the federal government to name a new police chief, but the city can't completely keep them out either.

U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes asked the two sides to hammer out a compromise but promised to issue a court order temporarily blocking the administration from naming a new chief if they couldn't agree.

Kremlin shares clips of Putin and Trump smiling and talking as talks begin

The Kremlin shared two clips of Putin and Trump smiling and talking before the two world leaders began their sit-down meeting in Alaska, alongside Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov.

Russian media outlets also shared images that appeared to show a bemused Putin raising his eyebrows in response to shouted questions from assembled reporters. At one point, Putin cupped his hands around his mouth and appeared to say something, although his voice could not be heard.

Trump sends out fundraising email about his Putin meeting

While Trump was meeting privately with his top aides and Putin, his political team sent out a fundraising email that said, "I'm meeting with Putin in Alaska!"

"It's a little chilly," the fundraising pitch said. "THIS MEETING IS VERY HIGH STAKES for the world."

It also said, "No one in the world knows how to make deals like me!" and encouraged people to donate, suggesting they start with \$10.

Trump told interviewer he won't be happy unless he gets a ceasefire

Interviewed by Bret Baier of Fox News Channel aboard Air Force One as he flew to Alaska, Trump said he'd like to walk away from the meeting with a ceasefire.

He also said he'd like a second meeting on Russia's war in Ukraine.

"I wouldn't be thrilled if I didn't get it," Trump said of a halt to hostilities between the countries. He said everyone tells him he won't get a ceasefire until a second meeting.

"So, we'll see what happens. I'm going to be, I won't be happy if I walk away without some form of a ceasefire," he said.

World leaders take no questions as they start their meeting

The two leaders were seated in a room with their aides in front of a blue backdrop that had the words "Pursuing Peace" printed on it.

Trump and Putin were seated in the middle of the chair arranged in a horseshoe, with a small table between them with drinking glasses and paper.

They didn't take any questions but Trump said, "Thank you" to reporters who were briefly in the room.

Trump and Putin arrive at meeting location

The two leaders' motorcade made the short drive to a building on the base where they're expected to meet and hold a news conference later.

Military jets designed during Cold War fly over Trump and Putin before summit

Trump greeted Putin at an air base in Alaska on Friday as a squadron of U.S. stealth military planes designed during the Cold War in part for use in a possible conflict with the Soviet Union flew overhead.

As Trump and Putin shook hands at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson outside Anchorage, F-22s and B2 bombers soared above. Neither plane entered active service until after the Cold War had ended but their design and development began during the 1970s and 1980s when the U.S.-Soviet rivalry was at its height.

The presence of the planes during the red carpet welcome afforded to Putin by summit host Trump may have been intended to remind the Russian leader of U.S. military might as the pair head in to talks focused on Russia's war with Ukraine.

Trump and Putin shake hands, again

Both leaders stood alongside each other, shaking hands again, appearing to exchange words and ignoring shouted questions from reporters on site.

Trump and Putin meet face to face

The two men shook hands and smiled warmly as they greeted each other on the tarmac at Joint Base

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Elmendorf-Richardson.

Russian media say Putin will use Russian-made limousine in Alaska

Russian state news agencies Tass and RIA Novosti reported Friday that Putin will use Aurus, a high-end Russian-made limousine, in Alaska.

The agencies posted footage of a black limousine with Russian license plates and a small Russian flag attached to the hood driving around the tarmac.

Putin brought Aurus on foreign trips before, and even gifted one to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un last year.

Lavrov and Ushakov to join Putin in his 'three-on-three' meeting with Trump

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Putin's foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov will join the Russian leader during his "three-on-three" meeting with Trump, Rubio and Witkoff.

Lavrov and Ushakov took part in the first in-person Russia-US talks in February this year.

Putin arrives in the US for the first time in a decade

The Russian president hasn't been to the United States since a 2015 meeting at the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant on war crimes accusations for Putin in 2023. But the U.S. isn't a member of that global body, so officials are under no obligation to arrest him.

Excluded from Trump-Putin summit, Zelenskyy says he hopes for 'strong position from the US'

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressed, during a video address on Friday, his hope for a "strong position from the U.S." ahead of talks between Trump and Putin in Alaska.

"Everyone wants an honest end to the war. Ukraine is ready to work as productively as possible to end the war, and we hope for a strong position from the U.S.," Zelenskyy said.

The Ukrainian leader also stressed that Russia "is still killing people" despite the upcoming negotiations.

"The war continues and it continues precisely because there is no order, nor any signals from Moscow that it is preparing to end this war," he added.

Trump meets Alaska officials aboard plane as he waits for Putin to arrive

Trump has yet to leave Air Force One.

He's meeting aboard the aircraft with Alaska U.S. Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, as well as Gov. Mike Dunleavy, according to White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt.

Witkoff and Rubio to join Trump in Putin meeting

Press secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters aboard Air Force One that Trump won't be meeting Putin alone, as she had previewed earlier in the week, but instead will be joined the secretary of state and his special envoy.

Leavitt said it would be a three-on-three meeting instead of a one-on-one.

His planned lunch meeting with Putin was to include Rubio and Witkoff, along with Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and White House chief of staff Susie Wiles.

Why are Trump and Putin meeting in Alaska?

Alaska was part of the Russian empire until 1867, but Friday marks the first time a Russian leader has visited the area.

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 by Russians as a naïve deal that generated remorse.

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."

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Trump arrives for pivotal summit with Putin in Alaska that could reshape the war in Ukraine

Trump arrived in Alaska on Friday for a pivotal summit with Putin that could reshape the war in Ukraine and relations between Moscow and Washington.

Trump was scheduled to meet Russia's president at his plane shortly. A large "Alaska 2025" sign, flanked by four parked fighter jets and red carpets, was placed on the tarmac at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage for the leaders' arrival. Trump and Putin have shared closely watched handshakes before — but the one they are expected to have Friday will be as scrutinized as any, as will any body language or hints about how each is feeling.

The sit-down gives Trump a chance to prove to the world that he is both a master dealmaker and a global peacemaker. He and his allies have cast him as a heavyweight negotiator who can find a way to bring the slaughter to a close — something he used to boast he could do quickly.

Trump says he's open to talking business with Putin if 'progress' made on Ukraine

Trump made those comments during a gaggle aboard Air Force One, noting that the Russian delegation includes business people.

Trump also suggested that Russia's latest strikes on Ukraine represent Putin "trying to negotiate," adding that any consequences for Russia would be "economically severe."

Air Force One just rolled by platform where Trump and Putin expected to appear

Uniformed military members are now standing alongside the red carpet area, leading to the "Alaska 2025" sign and platform.

Minutes after Trump's plane landed, Air Force One moved by the scene as final preparations were being made.

Putin will lay flowers at the tomb of Soviet pilots in Alaska

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying that Putin will lay flowers at the tomb of Soviet pilots in Alaska after his summit with Trump.

DC's special status gives Trump special powers over National Guard

The National Guard now assisting law enforcement in Washington, D.C. are under the direct control of Trump as delegated through Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, the National Guard says.

Trump's authority is delegated through Hegseth and Secretary of the Army Gen. Leland Blanchard, the commanding officer of the D.C. Guard.

The direct coordination of the Guard's operations in Washington is being handled by Col. Larry Doan, the leader of the National Guard's D.C. task force. Doan's responsibilities include working with the Metropolitan Police Department and other federal agencies working on law enforcement in the district.

Unlike the 50 states, Washington is governed by federal laws including Title 32, which gives the president control over the Guard in the District of Columbia without the need to fully federalize Guard units.

Trump says 'he would walk' if Putin meeting doesn't go well

In a snippet from an interview aboard Air Force One with Fox News Channel's Bret Baier posted on X, Trump predicted that his meeting with the Russian president would "work out very well — and if it doesn't, I'm going to head back home real fast."

"I would walk, yeah," he added, after a follow up question from Baier.

Friday afternoon on social media, Trump posted a video clip from a gaggle also aboard the plane, in which he was asked what would make the summit a success.

"I want to see a ceasefire rapidly. I don't know if it's going to be today but I'm not going to be happy if it's not today," Trump told reporters, as he stood in an aisle of the plane. "I'm in this to stop the killing."

NATO Supreme Allied Commander in Alaska to provide Trump with military advice

General Alexis Grynkeiwich, NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe is in Alaska to provide "military advice" to President Trump and Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, a senior NATO military official told AP,

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speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

Grynkeiwich, who is the commander of U.S and NATO forces in Europe, is a supporter of Ukraine and views Russia as a clear threat to European security. He has previously spoken of the need to get military aid into Kyiv quickly, including after President Trump said in July that NATO would be coordinating deliveries of U.S weapons.

Grynkeiwich's presence in Alaska is likely to be welcomed by European leaders who have spent recent days trying to convince President Trump to be robust with President Putin and not to do a deal over Kyiv's head.

Protesters outside DC police department pledge to 'Resist fascism'

As the DC police department prepared to fight the Trump administration in court about a block away, more than 100 protestors gathered in front of police headquarters to rally against the federal takeover.

Protesters chanted "protect home rule" and waved signs saying "Resist!"

Organizer Nee Nee Taylor of FreeDC shouted on the microphone, "One thing Trump can't take away from DC is our resilience and our joy."

DC police chief says Trump administration move is a 'dangerous' threat to law and order

Police Chief Pamela Smith's statement came in a court filing Friday as the city seeks to block the federal takeover of its police department in court.

Smith said the Trump administration's order installing a federal official as "emergency police chief," if allowed to stand, would upend command structure and be 'dangerous' threat to law and order.

Washington's top legal official is seeking an emergency restraining order in federal court. District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwab argues the police takeover is illegal and threatens to "wreak operational havoc."

Hillary Clinton has a message for Trump

"If Donald Trump negotiates an end to Putin's war on Ukraine without Ukraine having to cede territory, I'll nominate him for a Nobel Peace Prize myself," the former U.S. secretary of state wrote on X.

Trump has already said he believes a peace deal would likely require the swapping of Ukrainian territories by both sides.

Clinton, Trump's 2016 Democratic opponent, linked to her appearance on the "Raging Moderates" podcast, where she offered Trump some advice: "He is not meeting with a friend. He is meeting with an adversary."

But Clinton said that if Trump can negotiate a ceasefire, have Russia withdraw from the territory it seized and bring an end to the war without making Ukraine concede territory, she would join the Nobel lobbying.

Trump and his allies have been lobbying for years for him to get the prize.

Putin is studying up on his flight to Alaska, spokesman says

Putin is scheduled to arrive at 11:00 a.m. local time Friday in Anchorage, where he will be met at the plane by Trump, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in an interview with Russian state TV, an excerpt of which was published on reporter Pavel Zarubin's Telegram channel on Friday.

According to Peskov, during the four-hour flight from Magadan, Putin will review materials on Ukraine, bilateral tensions, economic cooperation, and global affairs.

Trump speaks to Putin ally as he heads to Alaska

The president posted on his social media network that he had "a wonderful talk" with the president of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko.

He said their "good" conversation included a discussion of Putin's visit.

Trump said they also spoke about the release of some prisoners earlier this year and the future release of prisoners. He did not offer details.

New lawsuit challenges Trump's federal takeover of DC police as crackdown intensifies

The nation's capital challenged Trump's takeover of its police department in court on Friday after his administration named the DEA administrator as the new "emergency police chief."

District of Columbia Attorney General Brian Schwab accused Trump of going far beyond his legal authority and asked a judge to keep control of the police department in district hands.

"The administration's unlawful actions are an affront to the dignity and autonomy of the 700,000 Ameri-

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cans who call D.C. home. This is the gravest threat to Home Rule that the District has ever faced, and we are fighting to stop it," Schwalb said.

'Possibility' of US security guarantees for Ukraine, 'but not in the form of NATO'

Trump says there's "a possibility" of the United States offering Ukraine security guarantees alongside European powers, "but not in the form of NATO."

Trump spoke to reporters aboard Air Force One on his way to the summit with Putin in Alaska.

He said it will be up to the Ukrainians to decide whether to concede land to Putin as part of a peace deal, but added: "I think they'll make the proper decision."

"I'm not here to negotiate for Ukraine," Trump said. "I'm here to get them at a table."

Macron and Zelenskyy huddled ahead of the Alaska summit

The office of President Emmanuel Macron says the French leader and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke Thursday and again Friday before the Trump-Putin summit. The two have agreed to meet each other after the U.S.-Russia summit, when "it will be most useful and effective."

The brief readout of the exchanges didn't detail any specifics of what Macron and Zelenskyy discussed.

Several Cabinet members will accompany Trump on Air Force One

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent, Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and Secretary of State Marco Rubio are among the Trump administration officials joining the president for his flight to Alaska.

Trump will also be accompanied on Air Force One by CIA Director John Ratcliffe and top White House aides, including Chief of Staff Susie Wiles.

Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff and Monica Crowley, a former Fox News commentator serving as Trump's chief of protocol, also are making the trip.

The Washington police department seeks to assure its citizens

With the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Police Department potentially in open conflict with the federal government over the terms of Trump's departmental takeover, the police department is looking to address public concerns.

"What's most important for our community to know is that MPD remains committed to delivering high-quality police service and ensuring the safety of everyone in our city," a Friday morning statement from an MPD spokesperson.

The city appears poised to fight back against the federal takeover, particularly Thursday's attempt by Attorney General Pam Bondi to install DEA chief Terry Cole as "emergency police commissioner."

D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwalb issued a declaration that Bondi's order was "unlawful" and the MPD was under no obligation to comply.

Trump: 'HIGH STAKES!!!'

Trump made his first public comments on the day as he prepares to meet with Putin.

"HIGH STAKES!!!" he posted on Truth Social as his motorcade idled outside the White House shortly after sunrise in Washington.

He left the White House for Joint Base Andrews, the home base for Air Force One, at 7:32 a.m. ET.

Singer Sean Kingston sentenced to 3.5 years in prison for \$1 million fraud scheme

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Singer Sean Kingston was sentenced to three and a half years in prison Friday after being convicted of a \$1 million fraud scheme in which he leveraged his fame to dupe sellers into giving him luxury items that he then never paid for.

Kingston, whose legal name is Kisean Paul Anderson, and his mother, Janice Eleanor Turner, were convicted in March by a federal jury of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and four counts of wire fraud. Turner was sentenced to five years in prison last month.

Before U.S. Judge David Leibowitz handed down Kingston's sentence, the singer apologized to the judge

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in the South Florida courtroom and said he had learned from his actions. His attorney asked if he could self-surrender at a later date due to health issues, but the judge ordered him taken into custody immediately. Kingston, who was wearing a black suit and white shirt, removed his suit jacket and was handcuffed and led from the courtroom.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Marc Anton described Kingston as someone addicted to his celebrity lifestyle even though he could no longer afford to maintain it.

"He clearly doesn't like to pay and relies on his celebrity status to defraud his victims," Anton said Friday.

The federal prosecutor described a yearslong pattern by Kingston of bullying victims for luxury merchandise and then refusing to pay.

"He is a thief and a conman, plain and simple," Anton said.

Defense attorney Zeljka Bozanic countered that the 35-year-old Kingston had the mentality of a teenager — the age he was when he vaulted to stardom. The attorney said Kingston had almost no knowledge of his finances, relying on business managers and his mother.

"No one showed him how to invest his money," Bozanic said. "Money went in and money went out on superficial things."

Bozanic said Kingston has already started paying back his victims and intends to pay back every cent once he is free and can start working again.

Leibowitz rejected the idea that Kingston was unintelligent or naive, but the judge said he gave Kingston credit for accepting responsibility and declining to testify rather than possibly lying in court. That was in contrast to Kingston's mother, whose trial testimony Leibowitz described as obstruction.

Kingston and his mother were arrested in May 2024 after a SWAT team raided Kingston's rented mansion in suburban Fort Lauderdale. Turner was taken into custody during the raid, while Kingston was arrested at Fort Irwin, an Army training base in California's Mojave Desert, where he was performing.

According to court records, Kingston used social media from April 2023 to March 2024 to arrange purchases of luxury merchandise. After negotiating deals, Kingston would invite the sellers to one of his high-end Florida homes and promise to feature them and their products on social media.

Investigators said that when it came time to pay, Kingston or his mother would text the victims fake wire receipts for the items, which included a bulletproof Escalade, watches and a 19-foot (5.9-meter) LED TV, investigators said.

When the funds never cleared, victims often contacted Kingston and Turner repeatedly, but were either never paid or received money only after filing lawsuits or contacting law enforcement, authorities said.

Kingston, who was born in Florida and raised in Jamaica, shot to fame at age 17 with the 2007 hit "Beautiful Girls," which laid his lyrics over Ben E. King's 1961 song "Stand By Me." His other hits include 2007's "Take You There" and 2009's "Fire Burning."

Flash floods kill more than 280 people in India and Pakistan as thousands flee

By CHANNI ANAND and RIAZ KHAN Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — Flash floods triggered by torrential rains have killed over 280 people in India and Pakistan and left scores of others missing, officials said Friday, as rescuers brought to safety some 1,600 people from two mountainous districts in the neighboring countries.

Flooding began a day earlier in Indian-controlled Kashmir and spread to the north and northwest in Pakistan, triggered by sudden, intense downpours over small areas. The floods and subsequent landslides injured dozens of people and forced the evacuation and rescue of thousands of others, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Such cloudbursts are increasingly common in India's Himalayan regions and Pakistan's northern areas, and experts have said climate change is a contributing factor.

Leaders in both countries offered their condolences to the victims' families and assured them of swift relief.

Dozens missing in remote Himalayan village

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In Indian-controlled Kashmir, rescuers searched for missing people in the remote Himalayan village of Chositi after flash floods a day earlier left at least 60 people dead and at least 80 missing, officials said.

At least 300 people were rescued Thursday following a powerful cloudburst that triggered floods and landslides, but the operation was halted overnight. Officials said many missing people were believed to have been washed away, and the number of missing could increase.

Resident Harvinder Singh said he joined the rescue efforts immediately after the disaster and helped retrieve 33 bodies from the mud.

At least 50 seriously injured people were treated at hospitals, many of them rescued from a stream filled with mud and debris.

Chositi, in Kashmir's Kishtwar district, is the last village accessible to motor vehicles on the route of an annual Hindu pilgrimage to a mountainous shrine at an altitude of 3,000 meters (9,500 feet). Officials said the pilgrimage, which began July 25 and was scheduled to end Sept. 5, was suspended.

The devastating floods swept away the main community kitchen for pilgrims, as well as dozens of vehicles and motorbikes. More than 200 pilgrims were in the kitchen at the time of the flood, which also damaged or washed away many of the homes clustered together in the foothills, officials said.

Sneha, who gave only one name, said her husband and a daughter were swept away. The two were having meals at the community kitchen while she and her son were nearby. The family had come for the pilgrimage, she said.

Authorities erected makeshift bridges Friday to help stranded pilgrims cross a muddy water channel and used dozens of earthmovers to shift boulders, uprooted trees, electricity poles and other debris. Nearly 4,000 pilgrims were evacuated, officials said.

Photos and videos on social media showed household goods strewn next to damaged vehicles and homes in the village.

Kishtwar district is home to multiple hydroelectric power projects, which experts have long warned pose a threat to the region's fragile ecosystem.

More heavy rain and floods were forecast for the area.

Hundreds of tourists trapped by floods in Pakistan

In northern and northwestern Pakistan, flash floods killed at least 243 people, including 157 who died Friday in the Buner district in northwest Pakistan.

Mohammad Suhail told The Associated Press that dozens of people were still missing, and rescue operations were underway.

He said 78 bodies were recovered by midday Friday, and another 79 were pulled from the rubble of collapsed homes and flooded villages later.

"The death toll may rise as we are still looking for dozens of missing people," Suhail said.

Dozens were injured as the deluge destroyed homes in villages in Buner, where authorities declared a state of emergency on Friday. Rescuers backed by boats and helicopters worked to reach stranded residents. Ambulances transported more than 100 bodies to hospitals, according to a government statement.

Bilal Faizi, a provincial emergency service spokesman in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said rescuers worked for hours to save 2,000 tourists trapped by flash flooding and landslides in the Siran Valley in Mansehra district and elsewhere on Thursday.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, at an emergency meeting, ordered the disaster-management authority to ensure the evacuation of tourists and all those hit by the floods.

A helicopter carrying relief supplies to the northwestern Bajaur region crashed due to bad weather, killing all five people on board, including two pilots, a government statement said.

The latest fatalities bring the total number of rain-related deaths to 556 since June 26, according to the National Disaster Management Authority.

Region hit by multiple floods in recent weeks

Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region has been hit by multiple floods since July, triggering landslides along the Karakoram Highway, a key trade and travel route linking Pakistan and China that tourists use to travel to the scenic north. The region is home to scenic glaciers that provide 75% of Pakistan's stored water supply.

During the summer, when schools are closed for more than two months, hundreds of thousands of people travel to scenic destinations in northern and northwestern Pakistan. This year, despite repeated government warnings about landslides and flash floods, many still visited popular resorts in flood-hit areas.

Pakistan's disaster-management agency has issued fresh alerts for glacial lake outburst flooding in the north, warning travelers to avoid affected areas.

A study released this week by World Weather Attribution, a network of international scientists, found rainfall in Pakistan from June 24 to July 23 was 10% to 15% heavier because of global warming.

In 2022, the country's worst monsoon season on record killed more than 1,700 people and caused an estimated \$40 billion in damage.

NCAA fines Michigan millions, adds game suspension for Moore over sign-stealing scandal

By LARRY LAGE and MAURA CAREY AP Sports Writers

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (AP) — The NCAA fined Michigan tens of millions of dollars Friday and suspended coach Sherrone Moore for a third game as punishment for a sprawling sign-stealing scandal that has loomed over college football's winningest program for nearly two years, including its national championship season in 2023.

The NCAA said it had "overwhelming" and concerning evidence of a cover-up by Wolverines staff and noted there were "sufficient grounds for a multiyear postseason ban" against a program now considered a repeat violator. But the governing body stopped short of program-crippling punishments, saying a two-year postseason ban "would unfairly penalize student-athletes for the actions of coaches and staff" who are no longer there.

"The panel concluded that an elaborate, impermissible scouting scheme was embedded in the Michigan football program over the course of three football seasons, 2021, 2022 and 2023, and this occurred under former head coach Jim Harbaugh's oversight," said Norman Bay, chief hearing officer for the Division I Committee on Infractions. "What makes this case even more serious, in addition to the clear intent to impermissibly gain a substantial competitive advantage, is the elaborate effort to obstruct the investigation."

Moore, who is facing a school-imposed two-game suspension this season, will also sit out the first game of the 2026-27 season for a total of three games. Moore received a two-year show-cause order, but will be allowed to fulfill coaching commitments under the NCAA order.

The biggest blow came from the financial penalties, which are expected to exceed \$20 million. They include a \$50,000 fine, a 10% fine on the football program's budget, a 10% fine on Michigan's 2025-26 scholarships and a fine equivalent to the anticipated loss of postseason revenue for the 2025 and 2026 seasons. The program also faces a 25% reduction in official recruiting visits during the upcoming season and a 14-week prohibition on recruiting communications during its four-year probation period.

Harbaugh, a former Michigan quarterback and now the coach of the NFL's Los Angeles Chargers, faces a 10-year show-cause order following the conclusion of his previous four-year order effective Aug. 7, 2028. Connor Stalions, a former low-level staffer who ran the scouting and sign-stealing operation, was issued an eight-year show-cause order, which effectively bans a person from college athletics for the period handed down.

Michigan said it would appeal the decision.

"(R)espectfully, in a number of instances the decision makes fundamental errors in interpreting NCAA bylaws; and it includes a number of conclusions that are directly contrary to the evidence – or lack of evidence – in the record," the school said.

Athletic director Warde Manuel added that "a postseason ban should never have been a consideration in this case. I fully support the university's decision to pursue an appeal."

The scheme

Harbaugh has always maintained he knew nothing about the scheme. NCAA investigators were clearly skeptical.

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"Aspects of the record suggest that there may have been broader acceptance of the scheme throughout the program," the report says. "At a minimum, there was a willful intent not to learn more about Stalions' methods. However, the true scope and scale of the scheme -- including the competitive advantage it conferred -- will never be known due to individuals' intentional destruction and withholding of materials and information."

The NCAA does not have rules against stealing signs, but does prohibit schools from sending scouts to the games of in-season opponents and using electronic equipment to record another team's signals. The scheme run by Stalions, the NCAA said, was elaborate and detailed -- in fact, the NCAA said, Stalions described it as "counterintelligence" and his network of helpers was referred to as the "KGB," a nod to the Soviet-era spy service.

During the 2021, 2022 and 2023 seasons, "Stalions directed and arranged for individuals to conduct off-campus, in-person scouting of Michigan's future regular season opponents," the NCAA report said, noting that he bought their tickets and saying he spent some \$35,000 in 2022 alone. "While in attendance, they filmed the signal callers on the future opponents' sidelines and then provided that film to Stalions. Using the footage they collected, Stalions then deciphered their signals. Additionally, on one occasion, Stalions personally attended a future opponent's contest. In total, 56 instances of off-campus, in-person scouting of 13 future regular season opponents occurred across 52 contests."

When asked about Stalions' devices, accounts and documents, the NCAA said, "multiple members of the KGB stated that Stalions gave them access to his hard drives and Google drive to review videos and assist in identifying signals."

Stalions, a Naval Academy graduate, was a volunteer for Michigan's football program for years, including when he was stationed in San Diego and slept in his car while renting his house, until Harbaugh hired him 2022. The retired captain in the Marine Corps was an analytics assistant for the Wolverines when he was suspended in October 2023, a day after the school disclosed it was under NCAA investigation. Stalions later resigned.

"If I'm a bad guy, then everyone in football is a bad guy," Stalions said in a recent Netflix documentary. Stalions, who did not participate in the NCAA investigation, recently said he knew almost every signal opponents used in seven games over two seasons.

The NCAA said the efforts to cover up the scheme included Stalions and other Michigan employees.

"Stalions himself described smashing his phone into 1,000 pieces and throwing it into a pond, providing false and misleading information during interviews, telling a potential witness to lie when interviewed, and some staff members, most notably Harbaugh not participating in interviews at all," Bay said. "Moore deleted his entire 52 message text thread with Stalions from his personal phone. Harbaugh failed to cooperate by refusing to provide necessary records or participating in interviews with NCAA enforcement staff."

The coaches

In a notice sent to the school last year, the NCAA alleged that Moore violated rules as an assistant under Harbaugh. The text messages with Stalions were recovered and provided to the NCAA.

Harbaugh, who left the Wolverines after they won the 2023 national championship, served a three-game suspension in exchange for the Big Ten dropping its investigation into the allegations after the two ended up in court.

The NCAA also noted unrelated recruiting violations were part of the mix, violations that got Harbaugh that initial show-cause order. The NCAA said those involved lower-level staffers communicating with four recruits.

"The scouting scheme and recruiting violations in the football program demonstrate that Harbaugh violated the principles of head coach responsibility," the NCAA said. "Harbaugh did not embrace or enforce a culture of compliance during his tenure, and his program had a contentious relationship with Michigan's compliance office, leading coaches and staff to disregard NCAA rules."

The Wolverines open the season on Aug. 30 at home against New Mexico State and then play at Oklahoma, where Moore was an offensive lineman, on Sept. 6.

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"I am glad that this part of the process has been completed," Moore said in a statement issued by Michigan. "I greatly respect the rules governing collegiate athletics and it is my intent to have our program comply with those rules at all times."

Wall Street finishes its latest winning week with a fade

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks edged back from their record levels on Friday in a quiet finish to another winning week.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.3% from the all-time high it set the day before, as it closed its fourth winning week in the last five. The Dow Jones Industrial Average flirted with its own record, which was set in December, before ending just below the mark with a rise of 34 points, or 0.1%. The Nasdaq composite dipped 0.4%, though it's still near its record set on Wednesday.

The U.S. stock market reached all-time highs this past week as expectations built that the Federal Reserve will deliver a cut to interest rates at its next meeting in September. Lower rates can boost investment prices and the economy by making it cheaper for U.S. households and businesses to borrow to buy houses, cars or equipment, but they also risk worsening inflation.

A disappointing report about inflation at the U.S. wholesale level made traders pare back bets for coming cuts to interest rates on Thursday, but they're still overwhelmingly expecting them. Such anticipation has sent Treasury yields lower in the bond market, though they inched higher Friday following some mixed updates on the economy.

One said shoppers boosted their spending at U.S. retailers last month, as economists expected, while another said that manufacturing in New York state unexpectedly grew. A third said industrial production across the country shrank last month, when economists were looking for modest growth.

Another report suggested sentiment among U.S. consumers is worsening because of worries about inflation, when economists expected to see a slight improvement.

"Overall, consumers are no longer bracing for the worst-case scenario for the economy feared in April," when President Donald Trump announced his stunning set of worldwide tariffs, according to Joanne Hsu, director of the University of Michigan's surveys of consumers. "However, consumers continue to expect both inflation and unemployment to deteriorate in the future."

On Wall Street, UnitedHealth Group jumped 12% after famed investor Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway said it bought nearly 5 million shares of the insurer during the spring, valued at \$1.57 billion. Buffett is known for trying to buy good stocks at affordable prices, and UnitedHealth's halved for the year by the end of July because of a run of struggles.

Berkshire Hathaway's own stock slipped 0.4%.

Applied Materials helped lead Wall Street lower with a decline of 14.1% even though it reported better results for the latest quarter than analysts expected. The focus was on the company's forecast for a drop in revenue during the current quarter.

Its products help manufacture semiconductors and advanced displays, and CEO Gary Dickerson pointed to a "dynamic macroeconomic and policy environment, which is creating increased uncertainty and lower visibility in the near term, including for our China business."

Sandisk fell 4.6% despite reporting a profit for the latest quarter that blew past analysts' expectations. Investors focused instead on the data storage company's forecast for profit in the current quarter, which came up short of Wall Street's.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 18.74 points to 6,449.80. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 34.86 to 44,946.12, and the Nasdaq composite sank 87.69 to 21,622.98.

In stock markets abroad, indexes rose 0.8% in Shanghai but fell 1% in Hong Kong after data showed China's economy may have slowed in July under pressure from uncertainty surrounding Trump's tariffs.

"Chinese economic activity slowed across the board in July, with retail sales, fixed asset investment, and value added of industry growth all reaching the lowest levels of the year. After a strong start, several

months of cooling momentum suggest that the economy may need further policy support," ING Economics said in a market commentary.

Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 1.7% after the government said its economy grew at a better-than-expected pace in the latest quarter.

European stock indexes finished mixed before Trump began his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, which could dictate where the war in Ukraine is heading.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.31% from 4.29% late Thursday. The two-year Treasury yield, which more closely tracks expectations for Fed action, rose to 3.75% from 3.74% late Thursday.

No end in sight to plastic pollution crisis as treaty negotiations in Geneva fail

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Negotiations to reach a major treaty to end growing plastic pollution around the world fell apart on Friday, with delegates in Switzerland adjourning with no immediate plans to resume.

The consequence of the failed talks is devastating, as it leaves no clear path for nations to collectively address the mountains of plastic that are filling landfills, clogging oceans and showing up in chunks on beaches and other public places.

"Consensus is dead," Bjorn Beeler, international coordinator for the International Pollutants Elimination Network, upon adjournment.

Every year, the world makes more than 400 million tons of new plastic, and that could grow by about 70% by 2040 without policy changes. About 100 countries want to limit production. Many have said it's also essential to address toxic chemicals used to make plastics.

The final decision, or lack thereof, underscored the influence of the United States and other oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, which opposed any limit on the productions of plastics, made mostly from fuels like oil and gas.

Nations had worked for 11 days at the United Nations office in Geneva. But they were deadlocked over whether the treaty should reduce exponential growth of plastic production and put global, legally binding controls on toxic chemicals used to make plastics.

Environmentalists, waste pickers and Indigenous leaders and many business executives traveled to the talks to make their voices heard. Indigenous leaders sought a treaty that recognizes their rights and knowledge.

The Youth Plastic Action Network was the only organization that spoke at the closing meeting Friday. Comments from observers were cut off at the request of the U.S. and Kuwait after 24 hours of meetings and negotiating.

After the adjournment, some delegates tried to put a good face on the negotiations and expressed hope for future talks. Delegates did agree they would meet again at some point in the future.

Inger Andersen, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme, said despite challenges, despite the disappointment, "we have to accept that significant progress was made."

This process won't stop, she said, but it's too soon to say how long it will take to get a treaty now.

A repeat of last year's failure

The negotiations were supposed to be the last round and produce the first legally binding treaty on plastic pollution, including in the oceans. But just like at the meeting in South Korea last year, the talks ended with no agreement.

Luis Vayas Valdivieso, the chair of the negotiating committee, wrote and presented two drafts of treaty text in Geneva based on the views expressed by the nations. The representatives from 184 countries did not agree to use either one as the basis for their negotiations.

Valdivieso said Friday morning as the delegates reconvened in the assembly hall that no further action was being proposed at this stage on the latest draft.

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After a three-hour meeting, he banged a gavel made of recycled plastic bottle tops from a Nairobi landfill, one of many symbols of the plastic problem that were visible during the talks.

A 'deeply disappointing' outcome

European Commissioner Jessika Roswall said the European Union and its member states had higher expectations for this meeting and while the draft falls short on their demands, it's a good basis for another negotiating session.

"The Earth is not ours only. We are stewards for those who come after us. Let us fulfill that duty," she said.

Representatives of Norway, Australia, Tuvalu and others nations said they were "deeply disappointed" to be leaving Geneva without a treaty. Madagascar's representative said the world is "expecting action, not reports from us."

China's delegation said the fight against plastic pollution is a long marathon and that this temporary setback is a new starting point to forge consensus.

For their part, representatives from plastics industry, heavily criticized in recent years, called for nations to compromise more to get a deal. The Global Partners for Plastics Circularity said governments must move past entrenched positions.

For any proposal to make it into the treaty, every nation must agree. India, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, Vietnam and others have said that consensus is vital to an effective treaty. Some countries want to change the process so decisions may be made by a vote if necessary.

Graham Forbes, head of the Greenpeace delegation in Geneva, urged delegates in that direction.

"We are going in circles. We cannot continue to do the same thing and expect a different result," he said as Friday's meeting ended.

Red lines that were not surmountable

The biggest issue of the talks has been whether the treaty should impose caps on producing new plastic or focus instead on things like better design, recycling and reuse.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the U.S. opposed cutting plastic production or banning chemical additives in the treaty. The U.S. supported provisions to improve waste collection and management, improve product design and drive recycling, reuse and other efforts to cut the plastic dumped into the environment.

Saudi Arabia said both drafts lacked balance, and Saudi and Kuwaiti negotiators said the latest proposal gave more weight to the views of other nations.

That draft, released early Friday, did not include a limit on plastic production, but recognized that current levels of production and consumption are "unsustainable" and global action is needed. New language had been added to say these levels exceeded current waste management capacities and are projected to increase further, "thereby necessitating a coordinated global response to halt and reverse such trends."

The objective of the treaty was revamped to state that the accord would be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics. It talked about reducing plastic products containing "a chemical or chemicals of concern to human health or the environment," as well as reducing of single-use or short-lived plastic products.

It was a much better, more ambitious text, though not perfect. Each country came to Geneva with a lot of "red lines," said Magnus Heunicke, the Danish environment minister. Denmark holds the rotating presidency of the Council of Europe.

"To be very clear, a compromise means that we have to bend our red lines," he said.

Stone Age humans were picky about which rocks they used for making tools, study finds

By CHRISTINA LARSON AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Early human ancestors during the Old Stone Age were more picky about the rocks they used for making tools than previously known, according to research published Friday.

Not only did these early people make tools, they had a mental picture of where suitable raw materials

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were located and planned ahead to use them, traveling long distances.

By around 2.6 million years ago, early humans had developed a method of pounding rocks together to chip off sharp flakes that could be used as blades for butchering meat.

This allowed them to feast on large animals like hippos that gathered near a freshwater spring at the Nyayanga archaeological site in Kenya.

"But hippo skin is really tough" — and not all rocks were suitable for creating blades sharp enough to pierce hippo skin, said co-author Thomas Plummer, a paleoanthropologist at Queens College of the City University of New York.

Co-author Emma Finestone of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History added: "When we think about stone tools, not every rock is equal in terms of the quality of tools."

At the Nyayanga site, researchers found durable blades made of quartzite, a rock material that they traced to streambeds and other locations around 8 miles (13 kilometers) away. The new research appears in the journal *Science Advances*.

"This suggests they've got a mental map of where different resources are distributed across the landscape," said co-author Rick Potts of the Smithsonian's Human Origins Program.

Previously, researchers had assumed the stones may have been found within just a mile or so of the freshwater spring site.

The new study shows that "these early humans were thinking ahead. This is probably the earliest time we have in the archaeological record an indication of that behavior," said Eric Delson, a paleoanthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History, who was not involved in the research.

The oldest previously known example of early human ancestors transporting raw materials for tool-making was about 600,000 years later than the Nyayanga site.

Researchers said it's unclear who these early toolmakers were — whether members of the *Homo* genus or a related but extinct branch of the family tree, such as *Paranthropus*.

Homo sapiens did not arise until much later, around 300,000 years ago.

But the knack for seeking out the best raw materials to make simple technology dates back nearly 3 million years. "We today are a species that's still technology-dependent — using tools to spread around the world and adapt to different environments," said Finestone.

Solar panels that fit on your balcony or deck are gaining traction in the US

By ISABELLA O'MALLEY Associated Press

When Terrence Dwyer received a knock on his door and a flyer for a solar panel system small enough to fit on his deck, he was quickly sold. Solar systems that plug into regular wall outlets have been popular in Europe for years and are gaining traction in the U.S. for their affordability and simple installation.

"We thought absolutely, let's do this right away," said Dwyer, who lives in Oakland, California.

These small-scale solar systems could become attractive to more homeowners now that President Donald Trump's sweeping budget-and-policy package will scrap residential rooftop solar tax credits and may shift interest to cheaper alternatives. Even before the GOP bill passed, manufacturers of the smaller systems known as plug-in or balcony solar were seeing increased demand and other positive signs such as a new Utah law streamlining regulations for homeowners to buy and install them. The systems about the size of a door haven't been as widely adopted in the U.S. as in Europe because of lack of awareness, patchwork utility rules and limited availability.

The \$2,000 plug-in solar system installed on Dwyer's backyard deck in March consists of two 400 watt panels, an inverter, a smart meter and a circuit breaker. It saves him around \$35 per month on his power bill because he is consuming less energy from the grid, but he said reducing his carbon footprint was his primary motivation.

"We like the environmental benefits of solar and wanted to engage with solar in some fashion," Dwyer said.

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Had Dwyer opted for rooftop solar, he would have paid \$20,000 for the system and \$30,000 to upgrade his roof to support the panels.

Installing a plug-in solar system requires some homework. What power companies let customers do with energy-generating equipment varies, which is why prospective purchasers should check their utility's policies first. Building permits might be required depending on the municipality. Some systems can be self-installed, while others may require an electrician. For example, some kits have meters that must be wired into a home's circuit breaker.

Removing hurdles for plug-in solar

Dwyer bought his system from Bright Saver, a nonprofit company in California that advocates for plug-in solar. In addition to the type Dwyer bought, the company also offers a smaller model costing \$399 that recently sold out in six days.

"The interest and demand have been overwhelming," said Cora Stryker, a founder of Bright Saver. "It is clear that we are hitting a nerve — many Americans have wanted solar for a long time but have not had an option that is feasible and affordable for them until now."

Kevin Chou, another founder of Bright Saver, said wider adoption of the systems in the U.S. has been hindered by utility policies that create uncertainty about whether they're allowed and a lack of state and local policies to make clear what rules apply.

Some utilities contacted by The Associated Press say plug-in solar systems require the same interconnection applications as rooftop panels that send electricity back to the wider network. But Steven Hegedus, an electrical engineering professor at University of Delaware, said he doesn't understand why a utility would need to require an interconnection agreement for plug-in solar because, unlike rooftop systems, they are designed to prevent energy from flowing to the grid.

Still, if in doubt, a customer should follow their utility's policy.

During the early days of plug-in solar's growth, some opposition from utilities is likely since customers are buying less energy, said Robert Cudd, a research analyst at the California Center for Sustainable Communities at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"Utilities really prefer everyone being a predictable and generous consumer of the electricity they sell," Cudd said.

This year, Utah enacted a novel law supporting plug-in solar by exempting certain small-scale systems from interconnection agreements and establishing safety requirements such as being certified by a nationally recognized testing organization such as Underwriters Laboratories. It appears to be the only state that's passed legislation supporting plug-in solar, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Republican state Rep. Raymond Ward, who sponsored the legislation, said the smaller systems allow people to better manage where their energy comes from and what they pay.

"Europe has these things. You can go buy them and they work and people want them. There is no reason why we shouldn't have them here in the United States," Ward said.

Bright Saver says they are lobbying other states for similar legislation.

Alexis Abramson, dean of the University of Columbia Climate School, also applauded Utah's move.

"We actually need more localities, more states putting in allowances for this type of equipment," she said.

Plug-in solar availability and savings potential

Some questions remain about how much customers could save. Severin Borenstein, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley's Haas School of Business, said the cost of some portable solar systems in the U.S. would make it hard for customers to come out ahead on their utility bills over the time they own them. He estimates the price of a \$2,000 system in the U.S. works out to paying about \$0.20 a kilowatt-hour over a 25-year period, which only saves people money if they have high utility costs. By comparison, Borenstein said the cost of systems sold in Europe, typically around \$600, is equivalent to paying about \$0.05 or \$0.06 per kilowatt-hour over 25 years.

Baltimore resident Craig Keenan said saving money was only part of why he installed one of the smaller Bright Saver models on his balcony in July.

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"I'm interested in renewable energy because the amount of carbon emissions that we produce as a species is very, very unsustainable for our world," he said.

He said he expects the system will save him about \$40 per year on utility bills, so it would take him about 10 years to recoup the cost of the kit.

Keenan, a mechanical engineer, said installation took him 10 to 15 minutes.

"I think anyone can install this," he said. "It's not complicated. It doesn't require a technical degree."

Other companies selling plug-in solar kits include Texas-based Craftstrom. It has sold about 2,000 systems in the U.S. since 2021, mostly in California, Texas and Florida. The company's basic kits contain a solar panel that can fit in a backyard or other sunny space, along with equipment to maintain and regulate the flow of energy including an inverter and smart meter.

Kenneth Hutchings, Craftstrom's chief revenue officer, said their U.S. sales rose this year even before the passage of the GOP tax bill, and he expects demand for plug-in solar to increase further as federal rooftop solar credits expire.

The company advises customers to notify their power company before installation, but it has "never had any pushback from any utility," said Michael Scherer, one of the founders of Craftstrom.

China-based EcoFlow plans to begin selling plug-in solar systems in Utah and expand to other states if supportive legislation is passed, said Ryan Oliver, a company spokesperson.

"This is an example of where technology is sort of ahead of the regulators," Oliver said, adding: "As this rolls out to more of a nationwide product, we expect it will become more mainstream as people understand it better."

Heat and thirst drive families in Gaza to drink water that makes them sick

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAM METZ Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — After waking early to stand in line for an hour under the August heat, Rana Odeh returns to her tent with her jug of murky water. She wipes the sweat from her brow and strategizes how much to portion out to her two small children. From its color alone, she knows full well it's likely contaminated.

Thirst supersedes the fear of illness.

She fills small bottles for her son and daughter and pours a sip into a teacup for herself. What's left she adds to a jerrycan for later.

"We are forced to give it to our children because we have no alternative," Odeh, who was driven from her home in Khan Younis, said of the water. "It causes diseases for us and our children."

Such scenes have become the grim routine in Muwasi, a sprawling displacement camp in central Gaza where hundreds of thousands endure scorching summer heat. Sweat-soaked and dust-covered, parents and children chase down water trucks that come every two or three days, filling bottles, canisters and buckets and then hauling them home, sometimes on donkey-drawn carts.

Each drop is rationed for drinking, cooking, cleaning or washing. Some reuse what they can and save a couple of cloudy inches in their jerrycans for whatever tomorrow brings — or doesn't.

When water fails to arrive, Odeh said, she and her son fill bottles from the sea.

Over the 22 months since Israel launched its offensive, Gaza's water access has been progressively strained. Limits on fuel imports and electricity have hampered the operation of desalination plants while infrastructure bottlenecks and pipeline damage choked delivery to a dribble. Gaza's aquifers became polluted by sewage and the wreckage of bombed buildings. Wells are mostly inaccessible or destroyed, aid groups and the local utility say.

Meanwhile, the water crisis has helped fuel the rampant spread of disease, on top of Gaza's rising starvation. UNRWA — the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees — said Thursday that its health centers now see an average 10,300 patients a week with infectious diseases, mostly diarrhea from contaminated water.

Efforts to ease the water shortage are in motion, but for many the prospect is still overshadowed by the

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risk of what may unfold before new supply comes.

And the thirst is only growing as a heat wave bears down, with humidity and temperatures in Gaza soaring on Friday to 35 degrees Celsius (95 degrees Fahrenheit).

Searing heat and sullied water

Mahmoud al-Dibs, a father displaced from Gaza City to Muwasi, dumped water over his head from a flimsy plastic bag — one of the vessels used to carry water in the camps.

"Outside the tents it is hot and inside the tents it is hot, so we are forced to drink this water wherever we go," he said.

Al-Dibs was among many who told The Associated Press they knowingly drink non-potable water.

The few people still possessing rooftop tanks can't muster enough water to clean them, so what flows from their taps is yellow and unsafe, said Bushra Khalidi, an official with Oxfam, an aid group working in Gaza.

Before the war, the coastal enclave's more than 2 million residents got their water from a patchwork of sources. Some was piped in by Mekorot, Israel's national water utility. Some came from desalination plants. Some was pulled from high-saline wells, and some imported in bottles.

Every source has been jeopardized.

Palestinians are relying more heavily on groundwater, which today makes up more than half of Gaza's supply. The well water has historically been brackish, but still serviceable for cleaning, bathing, or farming, according to Palestinian water officials and aid groups.

Now people have to drink it.

The effects of drinking unclean water don't always appear right away, said Mark Zeitoun, director general of the Geneva Water Hub, a policy institute.

"Untreated sewage mixes with drinking water, and you drink that or wash your food with it, then you're drinking microbes and can get dysentery," Zeitoun said. "If you're forced to drink salty, brackish water, it just does your kidneys in, and then you're on dialysis for decades."

Deliveries average less than three liters (12.5 cups) per person per day — a fraction of the 15-liter (3.3-gallon) minimum humanitarian groups say is needed for drinking, cooking and basic hygiene. In February, acute watery diarrhea accounted for less than 20% of reported illnesses in Gaza. By July, it had surged to 44%, raising the risk of severe dehydration, according to UNICEF, the U.N. children's agency.

System breakdown

Early in the war, residents said deliveries from Israel's water company Mekorot were curtailed — a claim that Israel has denied. Airstrikes destroyed some of the transmission pipelines as well as one of Gaza's three desalination plants.

Bombardment and advancing troops damaged or cut off wells — to the point that today only 137 of Gaza's 392 wells are accessible, according to UNICEF. Water quality from some wells has deteriorated, fouled by sewage, the rubble of shattered buildings and the residue of spent munitions.

Fuel shortages have strained the system, slowing pumps at wells and the trucks that carry water. The remaining two desalination plants have operated far below capacity or ground to a halt at times, aid groups and officials say.

In recent weeks, Israel has taken some steps to reverse the damage. It delivers water via two of Mekorot's three pipelines into Gaza and reconnected one of the desalination plants to Israel's electricity grid, Deputy Foreign Minister Sharren Haskel told The Associated Press.

Still, the plants put out far less than before the war, Monther Shoblaq, head of Gaza's Coastal Municipalities Water Utility, told AP. That has forced him to make impossible choices.

The utility prioritizes getting water to hospitals and to people. But that means sometimes withholding water needed for sewage treatment, which can trigger neighborhood backups and heighten health risks.

Water hasn't sparked the same global outrage as limits on food entering Gaza. But Shoblaq warned of a direct line between the crisis and potential loss of life.

"It's obvious that you can survive for some days without food, but not without water," he said.

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Supply's future

Water access is steadying after Israel's steps. Aid workers have grown hopeful that the situation won't get worse and could improve.

Southern Gaza could get more relief from a United Arab Emirates-funded desalination plant just across the border in Egypt. COGAT, the Israeli military body in charge of humanitarian aid to Gaza, said it has allowed equipment into the enclave to build a pipeline from the plant and deliveries could start in a few weeks.

The plant wouldn't depend on Israel for power, but since Israel holds the crossings, it will control the entry of water into Gaza for the foreseeable future.

But aid groups warn that access to water and other aid could be disrupted again by Israel's plans to launch a new offensive on some of the last areas outside its military control. Those areas include Gaza City and Muwasi, where much of Gaza's population is now located.

In Muwasi's tent camps, people line up for the sporadic arrivals of water trucks.

Hosni Shaheen, whose family was also displaced from Khan Younis, already sees the water he drinks as a last resort.

"It causes stomach cramps for adults and children, without exception," he said. "You don't feel safe when your children drink it."

Retail sales rise 0.5% in July as some shoppers step up purchases ahead of tariffs

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Shoppers spent at a healthy pace in July, particularly at the nation's auto dealerships, even as President Donald Trump's tariffs start to take a toll on jobs and lead to some price increases.

But the figures also underscore anxiety among Americans: all the uncertainty around the expansive duties appears to be pushing them to step up their purchases of furniture and other items ahead of the expected price increases, analysts said.

Retail sales rose a solid 0.5% last month from the previous month, and June spending was stronger than expected, according to the Commerce Department's report released Friday. June's retail sales were revised upward to 0.9% from the original 0.6% increase, the agency said. The pace in July matched economists' estimates.

The increases followed two consecutive months of spending declines in April and May.

Excluding auto sales, which have been volatile since Trump imposed tariffs on many foreign-made cars, retail sales rose 0.3% in July.

Auto sales rose 1.6%. They appear to have returned roughly to normalized spending after a surge in March and April as Americans attempted to get ahead of Trump's 25% duty on imported cars and parts and then a slump after that, according to Samuel Tombs, chief U.S. Economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics.

The data showed solid spending across various stores. Business at clothing stores and online retailers saw increases. Business at home furnishings and furniture stores had strong sales gains.

However, at electronics stores, sales were down. And business at restaurants, the lone services component within the Census Bureau report and a barometer of discretionary spending, also fell, as shoppers eat at home to save money.

A category of sales that excludes volatile sectors such as gas, cars, and restaurants rose last month by 0.5% from the previous month. The figure feeds into the Bureau of Economic Analysis's consumption estimate and is sign that consumers are still spending on some discretionary items.

Tuan Nguyen, an economist at RSM US, noted the difficulty of attributing the entire July gain to resilient American shoppers given so much uncertainty surrounding the economy and tariffs. A sizable portion of the gain likely came from rising prices of imported goods under the impact of tariffs, he said.

Nguyen also noted he can't dismiss the possibility that consumers once again pulled forward their spending ahead of the August tariff deadline, taking advantage of Amazon Prime Day sales as well as competing

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sales from the likes of Walmart and Target.

In fact, Nguyen noted the sharp rise in furniture sales, for example, appeared to indicate shoppers were trying to get ahead of the duties.

"There is nothing fundamentally wrong with American households that would suggest a spending recession given that shoppers are in a strong enough financial position to accelerate purchases," he wrote. "With so much noise in the data, the rest of the year promises to be a wild and bumpy ride."

Earlier this month, the Labor Department reported that U.S. hiring is slowing sharply as Trump's trade policies paralyze businesses and raise concerns about the outlook for the world's largest economy. U.S. employers added just 73,000 jobs last month, the Labor Department reported, well short of the 115,000 expected.

Another government report, issued Tuesday, on U.S. inflation showed that inflation was unchanged in July as rising prices for some imported goods were offset by declining 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 same as the previous month and up from a post-pandemic low of 2.3% in April. 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.

The new numbers suggest that slowing rent increases and cheaper gas are offsetting some impacts of Trump's sweeping tariffs.

Many businesses are also likely still absorbing much of the cost of the duties. The consumer price figures likely reflect some impact from the 10% universal tariff Trump imposed in April, as well as higher duties on countries such as China and Canada.

But that may change. U.S. wholesale inflation soared unexpectedly last month, signaling that Trump's taxes are pushing costs up and that higher prices for consumers may be on the way.

The Labor Department reported Thursday that its producer price index — which measures inflation before it hits consumers— rose 0.9% last month from June, biggest jump in more than three years.

The report comes as major retailers like Walmart and Target are slated to report their fiscal second-quarter earnings reports starting next week. Analysts will study the reports to get insight into the state of consumer behavior. But they will also monitor how much stores are passing on the tariffs costs to shoppers.

In May, Walmart, the nation's largest retailer, warned that it had increased prices on bananas imported from Costa Rica from 50 cents per pound to 54 cents, but it noted that a large sting for shoppers wouldn't start to appear until June and July.

But a growing list of companies including Procter & Gamble, e.l.f. Cosmetics, Black & Decker and Ralph Lauren told investors in recent weeks that they plan to or have already raised prices.

Some are trying to be selective and focusing on raising prices on just their premium products as a way to offset the higher costs from tariffs.

Warby Parker, which has been shifting their sourcing away from China, told analysts last Thursday that it plans to keep its \$95 option. But it's increasing prices on select lens types. It also wants to cater more to older shoppers who need more expensive progressive lens. Warby Parker said that progressives, trifocals and bifocals make up roughly 40% of all prescription units sold industrywide.

But just 23% of Warby Parker's business now is made up of progressives, its highest priced offering and offer the highest profit margins.

"We were able to quickly roll out select strategic price increases that have benefited our growth," Neil Blumenthal, co-chairman and co-founder and co-CEO of Warby Parker, told analysts last week.

Today in History: August 16, American music loses two legends

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Saturday, Aug. 16, the 228th day of 2025. There are 137 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 16, 1977, Elvis Presley died at his Graceland estate in Memphis, Tennessee at the age of 42;

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forty-one years later, in 2018, singer Aretha Franklin, known as the "Queen of Soul," died in Detroit at the age of 76.

Also on this date:

In 1777, American forces won the Battle of Bennington in what was considered a turning point of the Revolutionary War.

In 1812, Detroit fell to British and Native American forces in the War of 1812.

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 86, which prohibited the states of the Union from engaging in commercial trade with states that were in rebellion — i.e., the Confederacy.

In 1896, gold was discovered in Canada's Yukon Territory, sparking the "Klondike Fever" that would draw tens of thousands to the region in search of fortune.

In 1948, baseball legend Babe Ruth died in New York at age 53.

In 1954, the first issue of "Sports Illustrated" was released.

In 1962, the Beatles fired their original drummer, Pete Best, replacing him with Ringo Starr.

In 1978, James Earl Ray, convicted assassin of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., told a Capitol Hill hearing he did not commit the crime, saying he'd been set up by a mysterious man called "Raoul."

In 1987, people worldwide began a two-day celebration of the "Harmonic Convergence," which heralded what believers called the start of a new, purer age of humankind.

In 2014, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, where police and protesters repeatedly clashed in the week since a Black 18-year-old, Michael Brown, was shot to death by a white police officer.

In 2020, lightning sparked the August Complex wildfire in California. More than 1,600 square miles — greater than the size of Rhode Island — would burn over the following three months.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Julie Newmar is 92. Film director Bruce Beresford is 85. Actor Bob Balaban is 80. Ballerina Suzanne Farrell is 80. Actor Lesley Ann Warren is 79. Actor Reginald VelJohnson is 73. Singer/author/TV personality Kathie Lee Gifford is 72. Singer J.T. Taylor (Kool and the Gang) is 72. Movie director James Cameron is 71. Singer/actor Madonna is 67. Actor Angela Bassett is 67. Actor Timothy Hutton is 65. Actor Steve Carell (kuh-REHL') is 63. Country musician Emily Strayer (The Chicks) is 53. Actor/filmmaker Taika Waititi is 50. Singer Vanessa Carlton is 45. Country singer Dan Smyers (Dan & Shay) is 38. Actor Rumer Willis is 37. U.S. Olympic gold medal swimmer Caeleb Dressel is 29. Tennis player Jannik Sinner is 24.