

Groton Daily Independent

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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.

Wednesday, Aug. 20

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, mixed vegetables, Fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Pizza cruncher, corn.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



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

Thursday, Aug. 21

Senior Menu: BBQ Chicken breast, catalina blend, pineapple tidbits, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Burgers, fries.

Emmanuel Lutheran: WELCA "Do Day", 1:30 p.m.

Friday, August. 22

Senior Menu: Kielbasa, Mac 'n Cheese, winter blend, banana pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: French bread pizza, green beans.

Soccer hosts Belle Fourche, Girls at 4 p.m., Boys at 6 p.m.

Football hosts Webster Area, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Aug. 23

Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove

Soccer at NSU. Girls vs. St. Thomas More at 11 a.m.; Boys vs. St. Thomas More at 1 p.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.

Ukraine Talks Continue

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European leaders are meeting with President Trump today at the White House. The gathering comes days after Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Anchorage, Alaska.

The White House did not provide a formal readout of that meeting. Since then, Trump has dropped the demand for a ceasefire as a precondition for peace talks. According to reports, Putin would be willing to halt the offensive in Ukraine's southeastern Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions and freeze the front lines in exchange for Ukrainian withdrawal from Donbas—a region Putin has partially occupied since 2014 and worked to fully capture since 2022. Putin has also reportedly agreed to allow the US and Europe to provide security guarantees to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy has rejected ceding territory to Russia, recently calling for a ceasefire. NATO's secretary-general, the European Commission president, and the leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Finland, and the UK will join today's meeting—a change in format from February's meeting between Trump and Zelenskyy.

Air Canada Walkout

Air Canada's 10,000 striking flight attendants yesterday defied a government-mandated back-to-work order. Canada's decision to force arbitration is intended to end a walkout beginning Saturday that has disrupted over 700 flights and roughly 130,000 daily passengers.

Earlier this month, 99.7% of union members voted to authorize a strike if needed amid contract negotiations and allegations of unpaid work. Flight attendants are required to perform safety checks and help passengers board and deplane, but are paid an hourly wage only for the time a flight is in the air. This approach is common, though in recent years some airlines—including Delta Air Lines and American Airlines—have begun paying for work while flights are grounded. The union also calls for increased hourly wages, citing inflation.

Binding arbitration extends the existing contract until a new deal is reached. Flight attendants were required to report to duty yesterday; the airline expects to begin restoring service this evening.

Embryo Video Captured

The first-ever real-time, 3D video of an embryo attaching itself to the wall of the uterus has been captured, scientists revealed Friday. The detailed images shed light on a critical step during the earliest days of pregnancy—issues with implantation account for an estimated 60% of miscarriages.

Studying the internal, microscopic chain of events has been nearly impossible. To replicate the process, researchers developed a synthetic replica of the uterus and recorded the interactions over 24 hours. While it was known that embryos release enzymes to soften surrounding tissue, the study found they exert considerable force to effectively burrow inside the uterine wall, growing from the inside out. Researchers also suggested the process may be behind "implantation cramps," experienced by pregnant women about six to 12 days after ovulation.

Understanding the mechanical forces involved during implantation will lead to new methods to prevent miscarriage and improve fertility treatments, including IVF.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Terence Stamp, Oscar-nominated British actor best known for playing General Zod in "Superman" films, dies at age 87.

Tristan Rogers, actor who starred on "General Hospital" over a span of 45 years, dies at age 79.

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler wins BMW Championship to become first golfer since Tiger Woods in 2006-07 to win five times on the PGA Tour in consecutive seasons.

Taylor Swift's interview on the "New Heights" podcast sets a YouTube record for concurrent viewers with 1.3 million watching last week's live stream.

Science & Technology

SpaceX receives approval for next test flight of its massive Starship, targets Sunday as launch day; 10th flight follows three failed flights, each experiencing separate technical issues.

Researchers discover eight new genes linked to schizophrenia; study suggests the condition may be related to how DNA is organized within cells, and how brain cells communicate using the chemical GABA.

Study reveals neurons help control the inflammatory response in the gut, play a role in inflammatory bowel disease, enteritis, and other conditions.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed Friday (S&P 500 -0.3%, Dow +0.1%, Nasdaq -0.4%) amid data suggesting consumer sentiment has dropped for the first time in four months.

Billionaire twins Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss file to take cryptocurrency exchange Gemini public; company reported net loss of \$158.5M last year.

Roblox shares fall over 7% Friday on news Louisiana's attorney general is suing the company for allegedly failing to protect children.

Politics & World Affairs

Bolivia's presidential election heads to a runoff between centrist Senator Rodrigo Paz and right-wing former President Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga; election comes as annual inflation exceeds 16%.

Israelis engage in nationwide protests, calling for government to secure ceasefire, return hostages.

Israeli government is reportedly in talks with leaders of South Sudan to relocate Palestinians there.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic vows tough response after anti-government protesters torch ruling party's offices over the weekend; protesters accuse the government of police brutality.

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The Minnesota Vikings hosted the New England Patriots this past week, starting with two joint practices before meeting Saturday at U.S. Bank Stadium for preseason game number two. New England left town with a 20-12 win, but the week wasn't without its bright spots.

The practices told two different stories. On Wednesday, the Patriots had the upper hand, but the Vikings bounced back on Thursday and got the better of them. Friday was a rest day before Saturday's game. And with so many connections between these two teams, it had the feel of a reunion. Kevin O'Connell spent time in New England as a player under Bill Belichick. Former Viking Garrett Bradbury is now a Patriot, joining Stefon

Diggs, Joshua Dobbs, Vederian Lowe, Parker Romo, and Khyiris Tonga. There was plenty of catching up throughout the week.

The game itself was rough. Part of that came down to Mike Vrabel's decision to play most of his starters after New England struggled in Thursday's practice. Even then, Minnesota's backups held New England's starting offense out of the end zone on the first drive. Vrabel sent his starters out again, and this time they scored, giving them a chance to sit the rest of the night. At halftime, the Patriots led 14-3.

Minnesota chipped away in the second half, trading field goals with New England to keep it close. The Vikings finally got a spark late in the fourth when Myles Price returned a kick 81 yards to set them up at the eight-yard line. They had to settle for a field goal, but it cut the deficit to one score. With under two minutes left, undrafted rookie Max Brosmer led a drive down the field and nearly tied it. His final throw into the end zone was intercepted, and although the ball came loose as the defender went to the ground, replay showed he was down by contact. The comeback fell short, but it was at least an exciting finish to an otherwise sluggish night.

Quarterback play was shaky across the board. Sam Howell, acquired to back up J.J. McCarthy, started and only completed one of five passes for 13 yards with an interception. Brett Rypien was better, going 7-of-11 for 83 yards. Brosmer looked the most comfortable, completing 15 of 27 for 156 yards. His lone interception came on the final desperation throw, so it wasn't damaging. Still, the Vikings can't feel good about their depth behind McCarthy, and I wouldn't be surprised if they explore other options.

The ground game didn't get much going. Xavier Scott, coming off a strong performance last week, ran 10 times for just 28 yards, though he did add three catches for 44 yards. Ty Chandler only saw three carries but managed 12 yards.

With Justin Jefferson still sidelined and Jordan Addison suspended for the first three games, the wide receiver competition remains wide open. Tim Jones stood out with five catches for 68 yards, Jashaun Jones added four for 39, and rookie Tai Felton had two for 32. Jalen Nailor missed the game with an injury.

Defensively, Minnesota didn't force a turnover or register a sack. Gabriel Murphy, Tyrion Ingram-Dawkins, Jonathan Harris, and Dwight McGlothern each notched a tackle for loss.

The stock report is pretty clear. Myles Price boosted his case with the long kick return and solid punt returns, putting himself in strong position to claim the returner job. On the flip side, Sam Howell's stock took a major hit. The team brought him in expecting stability at backup quarterback, but so far he hasn't delivered.

The Vikings wrap up preseason this Friday night in Tennessee against the Titans, kicking off at 7 p.m.

"Why Pelvic Health Matters: More Than Just Kegels"

In our research and clinical practice experiences, a common theme emerges from people living with pelvic floor issues -- "I wish someone had told me about this sooner." Through interviews and conversations, we've documented the stories of individuals who didn't know what questions to ask, didn't realize their symptoms were treatable, and often assumed they were alone. In her practice, Staci sees these realities unfold in the clinic every day, as both male and female patients arrive with frustration, confusion and a long history of being told that their concerns are normal, inevitable or simply something to live with.

Pelvic floor disorders such as urinary incontinence, constipation, pelvic pressure, pain with intercourse and pelvic floor dyssynergia (poor coordination) are more common than most people realize. These symptoms affect millions of adults. Nearly one in four women and one in eight men in the U.S. will experience some form of pelvic floor dysfunction in their lifetime. Yet these issues are often dismissed, hidden or normalized. Although not uncommon, we want to emphasize that dysfunction in the system is not normal. It is treatable. Conversations around pelvic health often begin only after childbirth, surgery or the slow accumulation of symptoms that have significantly affected quality of life. By that point, the affected person is often dealing not only with physical discomfort, but with years of self-doubt or embarrassment.

The pelvic floor is a group of muscles that sits at the base of the pelvis. These muscles are responsible for more than most people are ever taught. In both men and women, the pelvic floor supports the bladder, bowel, abdominal and reproductive organs. It helps control continence, allows for sexual function, and plays a role in basic breathing, posture and core stability. Despite all of this, most people grow up never learning about their pelvic floor, how it functions, or how to care for it. This lack of awareness isn't just a missed opportunity for treatment; it's a missed opportunity for prevention.

Every human has a pelvic floor. Pelvic health should be part of basic health education, not a niche topic reserved for specialists. Young people deserve to understand how their bodies work, and that includes the pelvic floor. Learning about healthy habits, such as avoiding excessive straining, practicing coordinated breathing during physical exertion, and developing strength, coordination and flexibility throughout the hips and core, can make a meaningful difference later in life. And for those planning for pregnancy, knowledge of pelvic floor function before and during pregnancy can support smoother recovery and reduce complications down the line. Gaining understanding of how the pelvic systems change with age, after surgery, or with the hormone changes of peri- and post-menopause also offers people a chance to create change and retain optimal function.

Kegels are often the only pelvic health advice people hear, but the solution is rarely that simple. Some individuals need strengthening; others need help learning to relax and coordinate pelvic floor muscles properly. Pelvic health is not a "one-size-fits-all" issue, and that's why education before symptoms emerge is so important.

When problems do arise, they're worth bringing up. Leakage, pressure and pain are common, but they're not normal or untreatable at any age. Pelvic health physical therapists and other providers trained in this area can offer effective, individualized care. But even better is helping people know enough to ask questions earlier, build healthy habits sooner and prevent dysfunction before it starts.

Pelvic health matters. And the earlier we begin talking about it, the better.

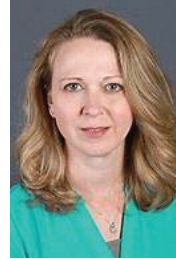
Patti Berg-Poppe is a professor and chair of the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of South Dakota. Her research focuses on pelvic health, including postpartum recovery and pediatric pelvic floor dysfunction, as well as motor control and learning in special populations. She has led interdisciplinary studies on the effects of intrapartum pelvic trauma on sexual function, return to participation and family well-being and has published on exercise interventions for conditions like diastasis recti and dysfunctional voiding in children.

Staci Wietfeld is a board-certified orthopedic clinical specialist and certified pelvic rehabilitation practitioner. She specializes in treating complex musculoskeletal conditions and pelvic floor dysfunction, integrating advanced manual therapy and patient education to promote recovery and well-being. In addition to her clinical practice with Avera Health Systems in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, she contributes to research and public education on pelvic health and physical therapy.

Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Threads. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB), providing health information based on science, built on trust.



**Dr. Patti
Berg-Poppe**



**Dr. Staci
Wietfeld**



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Terry Herron looked down the man hole along Railroad Avenue on Sunday to see how high the sewer was. This is an emergency overflow for when the main lift station at Aspen Avenue cannot keep up. The red alert went off briefly on Sunday.



Webster at Groton
Football Action
Friday, Aug. 22, 7 p.m.
Justin Olson with the play by play

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD



 YouTube

A production of the
Groton Daily Independent

For more info: GDILIVE.COM

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EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Now that the Trump administration has scrapped the EnergySTAR program, how can consumers make sure they are getting energy-efficient appliances? -- Brian Longworthy, Puyallup, WA

Have you ever seen a little blue sticker on your appliances, or paid attention to the EnergySTAR label when shopping for new ones?

Those blue EnergySTAR labels are the most widely recognized symbol when Americans search for energy-efficient appliances. A joint effort between the EPA and the Department of Energy, the program is estimated to have saved \$500 billion in energy costs and 4 billion metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions since 1992. The EnergySTAR label is only offered to appliances and homes that meet their product-specific high standards.

However, earlier this year, the Trump administration initiated plans to cut the EnergySTAR program, despite protests from economists, environmentalists and consumer advocates. With the EnergySTAR label disappearing, consumers should know how to still make energy-efficient decisions in their homes.

Another label that appears on appliances is the yellow Energy Guide, managed by the Federal Trade Commission. It lists the estimated annual energy cost (\$) and electricity use (kilowatt/hour), and shows a scale comparing the product to similar models. While useful for reference, it's important to remember that these are based on national averages, and your costs may increase if you use the appliance more or live in an area with higher average living costs.

The Consortium of Energy Efficiency places energy-efficient appliances on a Tier List from 1 through 4, with Tier 1 being equivalent to the minimum EnergySTAR standards, and Tiers 2, 3, and 4 showcasing increasing exceptional performance. While they don't provide stickers on products, CEE has an online directory, where you can check the tier rating once you find an appliance you like and are thinking of buying.

Finally, the U.S Department of Energy and organizations like SoCalGas have guides on saving energy and electrical costs in your home. These include tips for buying new appliances, such as looking for blue-flame gas stoves or testing the seal on fridge doors. There's advice for improving the energy usage of your current appliances, like adjusting your thermostat when away from home. Even regular cleaning of appliances can ensure they are working as efficiently and safely as possible. A 2022 study by researchers at San Jose State University found that the most impactful way for consumers to cut energy usage and costs isn't by changing out older appliances for more energy efficient new ones but by changing their own behavior in terms of energy consumption choices based on household profile, no matter what equipment they have.

Although it's discouraging to see the EnergySTAR program potentially cut, it's valuable for households to make an effort to improve their energy usage or buy energy-efficient appliances, in whatever steps possible for them.



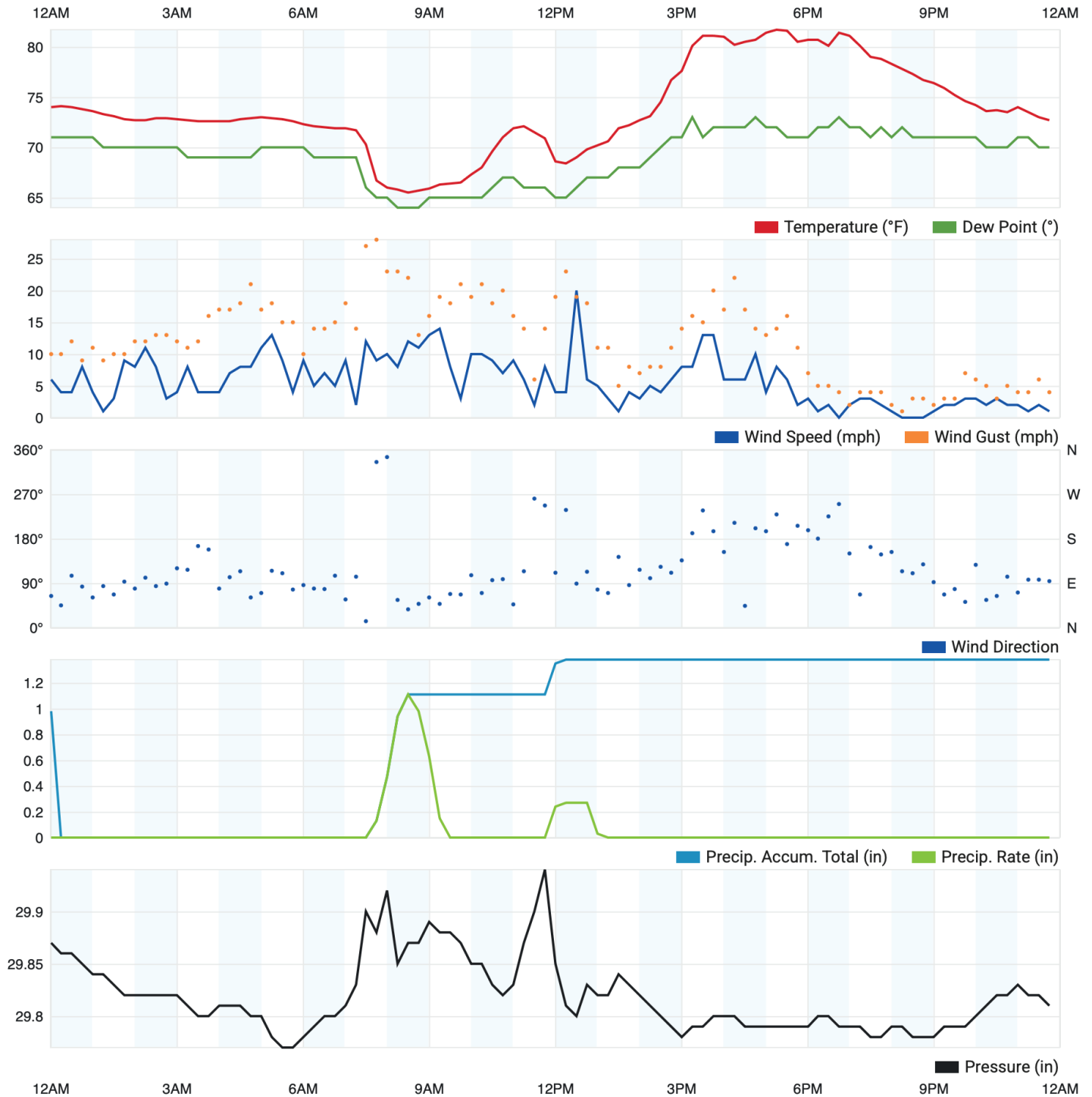
With the EnergySTAR label disappearing, consumers should know how to still make energy-efficient decisions in their homes.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

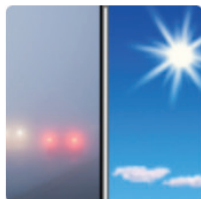
August 17, 2025



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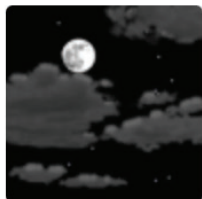
Today



High: 84 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

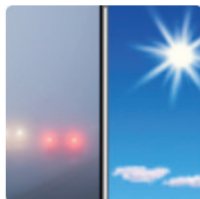
Tonight



Low: 64 °F

Partly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 86 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 64 °F

Mostly Clear

Wednesday



High: 87 °F

Sunny

Dense Fog is a travel hazard

Dense fog causes reduced visibility

Turn on your low-beam lights

Drive slowly and with caution



weather.gov/fog

Dense fog is a travel hazard as it causes reduced visibility. Drive slowly and with caution. Turn on your low-beam headlights to help you and your fellow drivers.

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NWS Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov

**Highs through Thursday mainly in the 80s,
except 90s over central South Dakota**



TODAY

Fog through mid morning. Showers & Storms 4PM to midnight over mainly central SD

Highs: 80-93°



TUESDAY

Mainly Dry!

Highs: 82-95°



WEDNESDAY

Mainly Dry!

Highs: 82-96°



THURSDAY

50% chance of evening & overnight showers & storms

Highs: 83-98°

Fog will give way to a mostly sunny sky today. There is a 20-30% chance of showers and storms over mainly central South Dakota from mid afternoon through this evening. There is a slight risk, or level 2 out of 5, that a few of the storms will become severe. Hail of around 1 inch in diameter will be the main concern with the strongest storms. Damaging winds to around 60 mph and heavy rain over areas that have already experienced significant rain over the last few days will also be concerns. Temperatures through Thursday will mainly top out in the 80s, with 90s over central South Dakota. After mainly dry weather Tuesday and Wednesday, a 50% chance of showers and storms will return Thursday evening and overnight.

Hazardous Weather Outlook

Hazardous Weather Outlook

National Weather Service Aberdeen SD

403 AM CDT Mon Aug 18 2025

Corson-Campbell-McPherson-Brown-Walworth-Edmunds-Faulk-Spink-Clark-Hyde-Hand-Buffalo-

This Hazardous Weather Outlook is for central South Dakota, north central South Dakota and northeast South Dakota.

.DAY ONE...Today and tonight.

Mainly dry weather is expected. There is a marginal risk (level 1 out of 5) for severe storms from around 4 to 10 pm CDT. If any showers or storms do develop, the main threat is for quarter sized hail, with additional threats of damaging wind gusts and locally heavy rainfall.

.DAYS TWO THROUGH SEVEN...Tuesday through Sunday.

Hazardous weather is not expected at this time.

.SPOTTER INFORMATION STATEMENT...

Spotter activation may be requested. Weather spotters are encouraged to submit reports to the National Weather Service in Aberdeen. The public can submit reports on our web page, Facebook page, or our X feed.

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THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Scattered Severe Storms
Possible

TIMING

4 PM - Midnight CDT

PRIMARY THREAT



LARGE HAIL
(QUARTER SIZE)

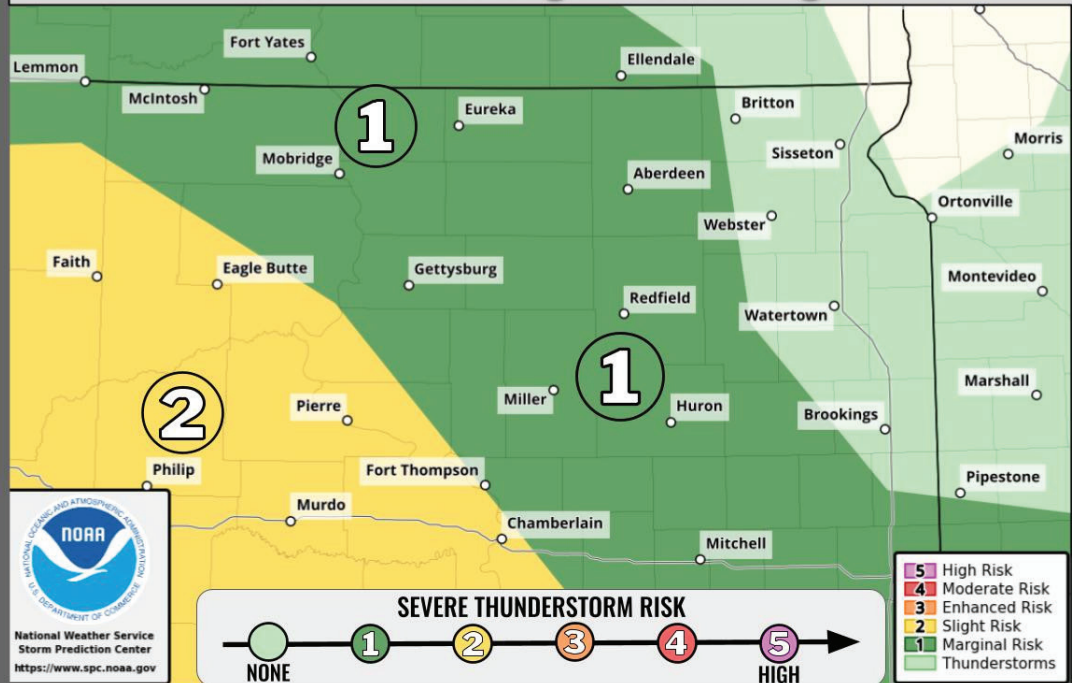
SECONDARY THREATS

DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS OF
60+ MPH

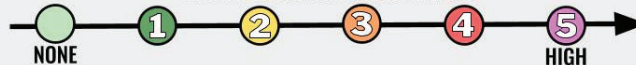


HEAVY
RAIN

Severe Storms Possible over mainly central SD from mid afternoon through this evening



SEVERE THUNDERSTORM RISK



There is a 20-30% chance of showers and storms over mainly central South Dakota from mainly 4 PM to midnight. There is a slight risk, or level 2 out of 5, that a few of the storms, if they develop, will become severe. Hail of around 1 inch in diameter will be the main concern with the strongest storms. Damaging winds to around 60 mph and heavy rain over areas that have already experienced significant rain over the last few days will also be concerns.



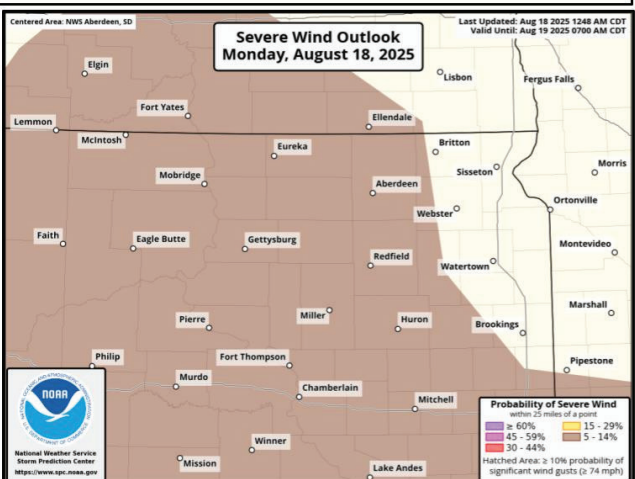
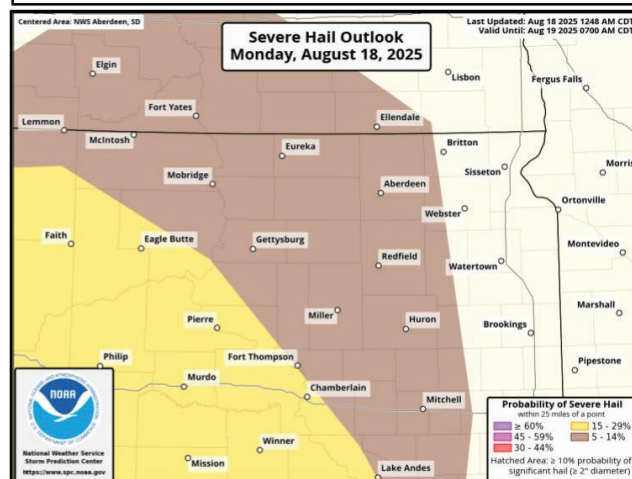
Hail and Wind Threat 4 PM - Midnight

August 18, 2025

2:45 AM

Higher probability of Large Hail, although damaging winds & Large Hail are both possible

Large Hail of 1" in diameter possible, with the main concern being over portions of south central South Dakota.
Wind Gusts to around 60 mph possible over mainly central South Dakota.



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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 6:49 PM

Heat Index: 88 °F at 3:45 PM

Low Temp: 66 °F at 8:31 AM

Wind: 30 mph at 7:50 AM

Precip: : 1.38

Day length: 14 hours, 0 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 109 in 1959

Record Low: 38 in 2002

Average High: 83

Average Low: 56

Average Precip in August.: 1.30

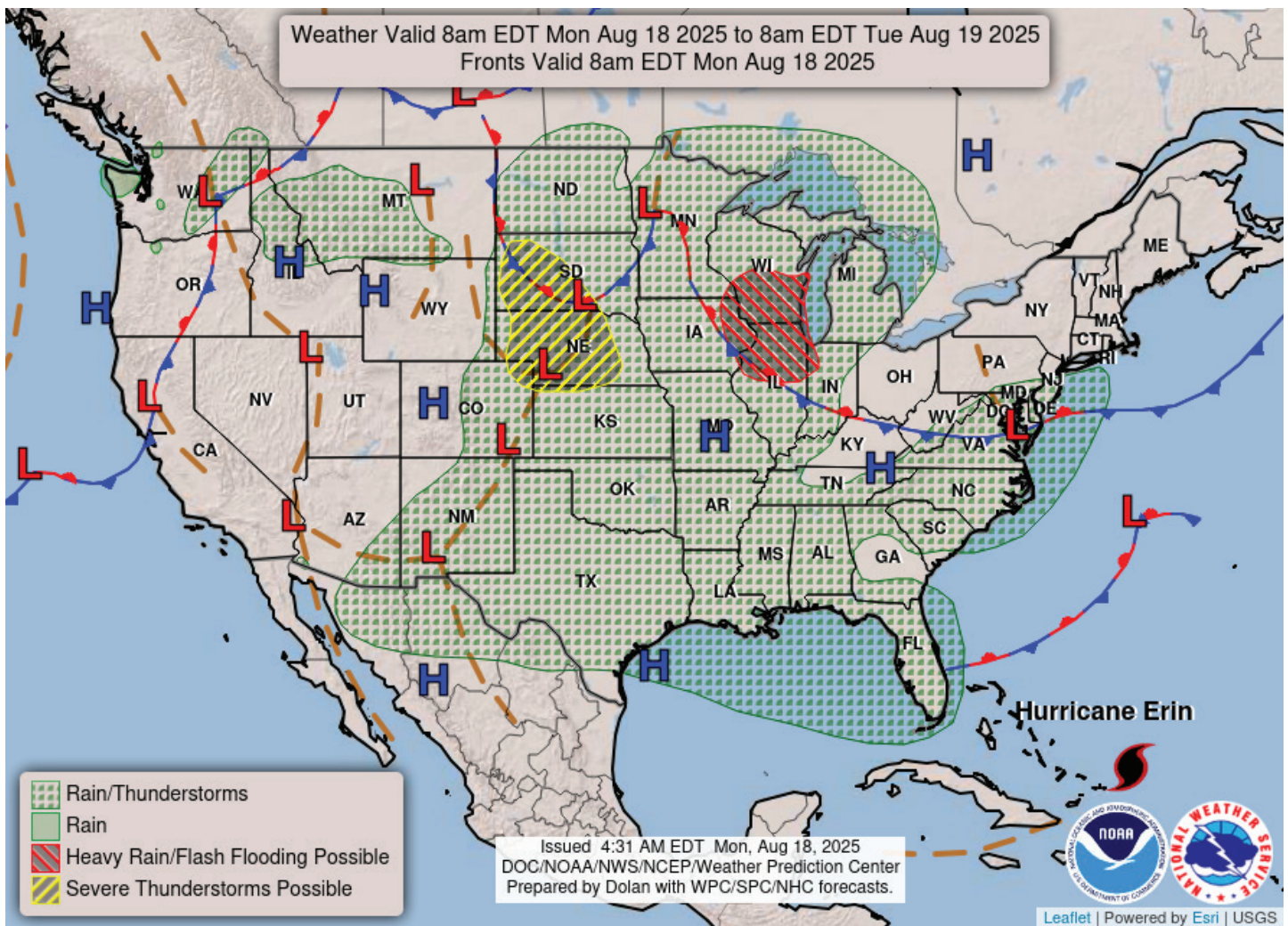
Precip to date in August: 4.40

Average Precip to date: 15.40

Precip Year to Date: 20.28

Sunset Tonight: 8:36:14 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:37:15 am



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Today in Weather History

August 18, 1936: A tornado moved east, ending southeast of Gettysburg. A farmhouse and four barns were destroyed near Gorman, in Potter County. Property damage was estimated at \$20,000.

August 18, 1938: A tornado destroyed a barn, unroofed a gym, and damaged other buildings near Stephen, in Hyde County. The funnel moved northeast then curved to the northwest. There were two other tornadoes on this day. One moved northeast from near Worlsey and Broadland in Beadle County producing estimated F3 damage. The other was an estimated F2 and also started off in Beadle County and moved northeast into Kingsbury County. This storm injured three people.

August 18, 1983: High winds up to 80 mph caused extensive damage to trees, structures, and cars, in Lyman, Hyde, Faulk, and Brown Counties. In Presho, several homes lost their roofs. Hay bales were scattered, metal siding was ripped from outbuildings, and a ballpark lost three large fence sections. Gusty winds up to 75 mph were recorded at Ordway, in Brown County, causing damage to a mobile home. Two hangers at the Aberdeen airport received extensive damage, with roofs and doors torn off.

August 18, 2009: Numerous thunderstorms developed along a stationary front and trained over the same locations producing very heavy rains along with large hail. Nickel size hail falling for several minutes piled up to 6 to 8 inches deep near Harrold in Hughes County. Massive rains of 2 to nearly 5 inches resulted in the flash flooding of numerous roads. Several of the streets were washed out. Some rainfall amounts included 3.05 inches at Warner, 3.15 inches southwest of Bristol, 4.40 inches in Webster, and 4.50 inches east of Warner.

1925: During the late morning hours a severe hailstorm struck southeastern Iowa destroying crops along a path six to ten miles wide and 75 miles long. The hail also injured and killed poultry and livestock, and caused a total of 2.5 million dollars damage. The hailstorm flattened fields of corn to such an extent that many had to leave their farms in search of other work.

1931: The Yangtze River in China peaks during a horrible flood that kills 3.7 million people directly and indirectly over the next several months. This flood was perhaps the worst natural disaster of the 20th century.

1983 - Hurricane Alicia ravaged southeastern Texas. The hurricane caused more than three billion dollars property damage, making it one of the costliest hurricanes in the history of the U.S. Just thirteen persons were killed, but 1800 others were injured. The hurricane packed winds to 130 mph as it crossed Galveston Island, and spawned twenty-two tornadoes in less than 24 hours as it made landfall. (The Weather Channel) (Storm Data)

1987 - Thirteen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Orlando FL with a reading of 98 degrees, and Portland ME with a high of 94 degrees. Newark NJ reached 90 degrees for the thirty-sixth time of the year, their second highest total of record. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Twenty-two cities, from the Carolinas to the Upper Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date, pushing the total number of daily record highs since the first of June above the 1100 mark. Afternoon highs of 102 degrees at Greensboro NC and 105 degrees at Raleigh NC equalled all-time records. Evening thunderstorms in Montana produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Scobey. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms over the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and the Upper Ohio Valley produced torrential rains in eastern Virginia during the late morning and afternoon hours. Totals ranged up to twelve inches at Yorktown. Williamsburg VA was deluged with 10.78 inches of rain between 6 AM and 10 AM, with 6.72 inches reported in just two hours. Flash flooding caused nearly twelve million dollars damage in Accomack County VA. Early evening thunderstorms in the Central High Plains Region produced walnut size hail and wind gusts to 80 mph around Casper WY. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the Yellowstone Park area, causing fifteen mudslides. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO
ACKNOWLEDGE THE
SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND TO
ADMIT OUR OWN LIMITATIONS.

**WHEN THINGS GO WELL, WE
MUST THANK GOD FOR
BLESSING US AND GIVE HIM
THE CREDIT...**

"Have you ever made the same mistake twice?" he asked.

"What is this," I asked in a taunting voice, "a trick question?"

"No, I'm serious. You're a doctor; you're supposed to be smart. I was just wondering," was his response as he shook his head.

"Of course I have," I replied. "In fact, I've made the same mistake several times."

"You have?" he responded in surprise. "I really thought you were smarter than that. I'm shocked."

I'm sure I'm not the only one who has repeated a mistake more than once. And it doesn't make me feel comfortable thinking about it, either. But it's true.

Perhaps that's why Solomon wrote the

same Proverb twice: There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death. We need to be reminded of this fact.

There is an inherent danger in being successful: we tend to think of ourselves more highly than we should. It's easy to do. We have a new opportunity, or there are some new challenges, and we rise to the occasion. We get a new burst of energy, we are excited about a second chance, and we are off and running, believing that we will succeed!

And, that's the time we need to pause and remind ourselves that there is a way that may seem right... It's very important to acknowledge the sovereignty of God and to admit our own limitations.

When things go well, we must thank God for blessing us and give Him the credit. When they don't, we need to be aware that God is trying to get our attention.

Today's Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for this reminder. All too often we give ourselves credit when the glory is all Yours! May we do what we do through Your guidance. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end, it leads to death." Proverbs 16:25

If this message spoke to you today, don't keep it to yourself. Send it to a friend or loved one—God often uses simple moments like this to lift someone's spirit right when they need it most.

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: 1 Days 17 Hrs 14 Mins 55 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.16.25

9 15 34 45 47 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,200,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 29 Mins 56 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.17.25

8 15 20 25 28 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 44 Mins 56 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.16.25

4 5 18 20 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 44 Mins 56 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.16.25

31 34 43 44 55 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 13 Mins 56 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 08.16.25

23 40 49 65 69 23

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$605,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 13 Mins 55 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

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Upcoming Groton Events

08/09/2025 Groton Legion 30th Anniversary Celebration
08/07/2025 Groton Firemen Summer Splash in the GHS Parking Lot 7:30-8:30pm
08/11/2025 Vitalant Blood Drive at the Community Center 3:30-6pm
08/23/2025 Glacial Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/06-07/25 Groton Airport Fly-In/Drive-In, Groton Municipal Airport
09/07/2025 Couples Sunflower Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course 10am
09/07/2025 9th Annual Doggie Day at the Swimming Pool 3-5pm
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest at the City Park 10am-3pm
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
10/31/2025 United Methodist Church Trunk or Treat 5:30-7pm
11/15/2025 Legion Post #39 Turkey Party 6:30pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving 11:30am-1:30pm Community Center (Thanksgiving)
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Zelenskyy brings Europe's top leaders with him to meet Trump on ending Russia's war

By JOSH BOAK and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ukraine's future could hinge on a hastily assembled meeting Monday at the White House as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy brings with him an extraordinary cadre of European leaders to show U.S. President Donald Trump a united front against Russia.

The European political heavy-hitters were left out of Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin last Friday, and they are looking to safeguard Ukraine and the continent from any widening aggression from Moscow.

By arriving as a group, they hope to avoid any debacles like Zelenskyy's February meeting in the Oval Office, where Trump chastised him for not showing enough gratitude for American military aid. The meeting also is a test of America's relationship with its closest allies after the European Union and United Kingdom accepted Trump's tariff hikes partly because they wanted his support on Ukraine.

Monday's showing is a sign both of the progress and the possible distress coming out of the Alaska meeting as many of Europe's leaders are descending on Washington with the explicit goal of protecting Ukraine's interests, a rare and sweeping show of diplomatic force.

"It's important that America agrees to work with Europe to provide security guarantees for Ukraine, and therefore for all of Europe," Zelenskyy said on X.

The night before the meeting, however, Trump seemed to put the onus on Zelenskyy to agree to concessions and suggested that Ukraine could not regain Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, setting off an armed conflict that led to its broader 2022 invasion.

"President Zelenskyy of Ukraine can end the war with Russia almost immediately, if he wants to, or he can continue to fight," he wrote Sunday night on social media. "Remember how it started. No getting back Obama given Crimea (12 years ago, without a shot being fired!), and NO GOING INTO NATO BY UKRAINE. Some things never change!!!"

Zelenskyy appeared to respond with his own post late Sunday, saying, "We all share a strong desire to end this war quickly and reliably." He went on to say that "peace must be lasting," not as it was after Russia seized Crimea and part of the Donbas in eastern Ukraine eight years ago, and "Putin simply used it as a springboard for a new attack."

The sitdown in Alaska yielded the possible contours for stopping the war in Ukraine, though it was unclear whether the terms discussed would ultimately be acceptable to Zelenskyy or Putin.

Upon arrival in Washington, Zelenskyy said in another social media post: "We all equally want to end this war quickly and reliably. And the peace must be lasting."

He expressed hope that together with the U.S. and European countries Ukraine will be able to force Russia to "true peace."

European heavyweights in Washington

Planning to join Zelenskyy in America's capital are European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni, Finnish President Alexander Stubb and NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte.

On the table for discussion are possible NATO-like security guarantees that Ukraine would need for any peace with Russia to be durable. Putin opposes Ukraine joining NATO outright, yet Trump's team claims the Russian leader is open to allies agreeing to defend Ukraine if it comes under attack.

Trump briefed Zelenskyy and European allies shortly after the Putin meeting, and details from the discussions emerged in a scattershot way that seemed to rankle the U.S. president, who had chosen not to outline any terms when appearing afterward with Putin.

"BIG PROGRESS ON RUSSIA," Trump posted Sunday on social media. The president also bemoaned

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media coverage of his summit with Putin, saying on Truth Social: "I had a great meeting in Alaska."

Following the Alaska summit, Trump declared that a ceasefire was not necessary for peace talks to proceed, a sudden shift to a position favored by Putin.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Sunday that a ceasefire was still possible but that "the best way to end this conflict is through a full peace deal."

'A very big move'

European officials confirmed that Trump told them Putin is still seeking control of the entire Donbas region, even though Ukraine controls a meaningful share of it.

And Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, said the U.S. and its allies could offer Ukraine a NATO-like commitment to defend the country if it came under attack as the possible security guarantee.

"How that's constructed, what we call it, how it's built, what guarantees are built into it that are enforceable, that's what we'll be talking about over the next few days with our partners who are coming in from overseas," Rubio told NBC's "Meet the Press."

Rubio said on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures" that such a commitment "would be a very big move" by Trump. He expects the delegations will "spend six, seven hours talking about these things, maybe more, and try to get to a point where we have something more concrete."

Monday's meeting will likely be very tough for Zelenskyy, an official close to the ongoing talks said. That official spoke on condition of anonymity to speak openly about thinking within Ukraine and between allies.

Zelenskyy needs to prevent a scenario in which he gets blamed for blocking peace talks by rejecting Putin's maximalist demand on the Donbas, the official said. It is a demand Zelenskyy has said many times he will never accept because it is unconstitutional and could create a launching pad for future Russian attacks.

If confronted with pressure to accept Putin's demands, Zelenskyy would likely have to revert to a skill he has demonstrated time and again: diplomatic tact. Ukrainian leadership is seeking a trilateral meeting with Zelenskyy, Trump and Putin to discuss sensitive matters, including territorial issues.

Trump's ambition to end the war

After enduring a public tirade by Trump and Vice President JD Vance in February, Zelenskyy worked to repair relations with the U.S.

Constant diplomatic communication and a 15-minute meeting at the Vatican in April on the sidelines of Pope Francis' funeral helped turn the tide. Trump appeared at the time to be swayed by Zelenskyy's conditions for peace.

But Trump says he cares primarily about ending the war, an ambition that led him after his meeting with Putin to discard the need for a ceasefire.

European allies also have worked with Trump, reaching a deal in July for NATO allies to buy weapons from the U.S. for Ukraine.

Ahead of Monday's meeting, France's Macron stressed the importance of building up Ukraine's military and the need to show Putin that Europe interprets his moves as a threat to other nations.

"If we are weak with Russia today, we'll be preparing the conflicts of tomorrow and they will impact the Ukrainians and — make no mistake — they can impact us, too," Macron said.

Russia continues attacks on Ukraine

In the meantime, the Russian forces continued to pound Ukraine with missiles and drones.

A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city, killed six civilians late on Sunday. Among the victims was a toddler and a 16-year-old, according to local officials. The strike also injured 20 people, including six children, authorities said.

Russian aerial attacks also targeted the northeastern Sumy region and the southern Odesa region.

In Zaporizhzhia, a city in the southeast, 17 people were injured in an attack on Monday, according to regional head Ivan Fedorov.

Ukraine's Air Force said Russia launched a total of four Iskander-M ballistic missiles and 140 Shahed and decoy drones across Ukraine overnight, of which 88 drones were intercepted or jammed.

Stronger, bigger Hurricane Erin forecast to create dangerous surf along US coast

MIAMI (AP) — A stronger and bigger Hurricane Erin pelted parts of the Caribbean and was forecast to create dangerous surf and rip currents along the U.S. East Coast this week.

It reintensified to a Category 4 storm with 130 mph (215 kph) maximum sustained winds early Monday and moved closer to the Southeast Bahamas, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Around 5 a.m. Monday, Erin was about 105 miles (170 kilometers) north-northeast of Grand Turk Island and about 915 miles (1,470 kilometers) south-southeast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. The storm was moving northwest at 13 mph (20 kph).

The Bahamas government issued a Tropical Storm Watch for the central Bahamas, while a Tropical Storm Warning remained in effect for the Turks and Caicos Islands and southeast Bahamas, the hurricane center reported.

Additional strengthening was forecast for Monday followed by gradual weakening, but Erin was expected to remain a large, major hurricane into midweek.

Hurricane-force winds extended up to 60 miles (95 kilometers) from the center and tropical-storm-force winds extend outward up to 230 miles (370 km). The area of strong winds is expected to grow more over the next few days. At that size, Erin will impact coastal areas even though it isn't forecast to make a direct landfall.

Dare County, North Carolina, declared an emergency and ordered an evacuation beginning Monday of Hatteras Island on the Outer Banks, the thin stretch of low-lying barrier islands that juts far into the Atlantic. Several days of heavy surf and high winds and waves could wash out parts of N.C. Highway 12 running along the barrier islands, the National Weather Service said.

Erin, the year's first Atlantic hurricane, reached an exceedingly dangerous Category 5 status Saturday with 160 mph (260 kph) winds before weakening.

"You're dealing with a major hurricane. The intensity is fluctuating. It's a dangerous hurricane in any event," Richard Pasch of the National Hurricane Center said.

Erin's outer bands pelted parts of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands with heavy rains and tropical-storm winds during the day Sunday.

That knocked out power to about 147,000 customers, according to Luma Energy, a private company that oversees the transmission and distribution of power on the island. More than 20 flights were canceled due to the weather. The Coast Guard allowed all ports in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to reopen Sunday as winds and rains decreased.

Rough ocean conditions were forecast for parts of the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola and the Turks and Caicos. Life-threatening surf and rip currents were forecast into midweek for the Bahamas, Bermuda, the U.S. East Coast and Canada's Atlantic coast as Erin turns north and then northeast.

Scientists have linked the rapid intensification of hurricanes in the Atlantic to climate change. Global warming is causing the atmosphere to hold more water vapor and is spiking ocean temperatures, and warmer waters give hurricanes fuel to unleash more rain and strengthen more quickly.

Air Canada suspends restart plans after flight attendants union defies return to work order

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Air Canada suspended plans to restart operations Sunday after the union representing 10,000 flight attendants said it will defy a return to work order. The strike was already affecting about 130,000 travelers per day during the peak summer travel season.

The Canada Industrial Relations Board ordered airline staff back to work by 2 p.m. Sunday after the government intervened and Air Canada said it planned to resume flights Sunday evening.

Canada's largest airline now says it will resume flights Monday evening. Air Canada said in a statement

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that the union "illegally directed its flight attendant members to defy a direction from the Canadian Industrial Relations Board."

"Our members are not going back to work," Canadian Union of Public Employees national president Mark Hancock said outside Toronto's Pearson International Airport. "We are saying no."

Hancock ripped up a copy of the back-to-work order outside the airport's departures terminal where union members were picketing Sunday morning. He said they won't return Tuesday either.

Flight attendants chanted "Don't blame me, blame AC" outside Pearson.

"Like many Canadians, the Minister is monitoring this situation closely. The Canada Industrial Relations Board is an independent tribunal," Jennifer Kozelj, a spokeswoman for Federal Jobs Minister Patty Hajdu said in a emailed statement.

Hancock said the "whole process has been unfair" and said the union will challenge what it called an unconstitutional order.

Less than 12 hours after workers walked off the job,)Hajdu ordered the 10,000 flight attendants back to work, saying now is not the time to take risks with the economy and noting the unprecedented tariffs the U.S. has imposed on Canada. Hajdu referred the work stoppage to the Canada Industrial Relations Board.

The airline said the CIRB has extended the term of the existing collective agreement until a new one is determined by the arbitrator.

The shutdown of Canada's largest airline early Saturday was impacting about 130,000 people a day. Air Canada operates around 700 flights per day.

Tourist Mel Durston from southern England was trying to make the most of sightseeing in Canada. But she said she doesn't have a way to continue her journey.

"We wanted to go see the Rockies, but we might not get there because of this," Durston said. "We might have to head straight back."

James Hart and Zahara Virani were visiting Toronto from Calgary, Alberta for what they thought would be a fun weekend. But they ended up paying \$2,600 Canadian (\$1,880) to fly with another airline on a later day after their Air Canada flight got canceled.

"It's a little frustrating and stressful, but at the same time, I don't blame the flight attendants at all," Virani said. "What they're asking for is not unreasonable whatsoever."

Flight attendants walked off the job around 1 a.m. EDT on Saturday. Around the same time, Air Canada said it would begin locking flight attendants out of airports.

The bitter contract fight escalated Friday as the union turned down Air Canada's prior request to enter into government-directed arbitration, which allows a third-party mediator to decide the terms of a new contract.

Last year, the government forced the country's two major railroads into arbitration with their labor union during a work stoppage. The union for the rail workers is suing, arguing the government is removing a union's leverage in negotiations.

Hajdu maintained that her Liberal government is not anti-union, saying it is clear the two sides are at an impasse.

Passengers whose flights are impacted will be eligible to request a full refund on the airline's website or mobile app, according to Air Canada.

The airline said it would also offer alternative travel options through other Canadian and foreign airlines when possible. Still, it warned that it could not guarantee immediate rebooking because flights on other airlines are already full "due to the summer travel peak."

Air Canada and CUPE have been in contract talks for about eight months, but they have yet to reach a tentative deal. Both sides have said they remain far apart on the issue of pay and the unpaid work flight attendants do when planes aren't in the air.

The airline's latest offer included a 38% increase in total compensation, including benefits and pensions, over four years, that it said "would have made our flight attendants the best compensated in Canada."

But the union pushed back, saying the proposed 8% raise in the first year didn't go far enough because of inflation.

Israel's growing frustration over the war in Gaza erupts in nationwide protests

By SAM METZ, NATALIE MELZER and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli protesters demanding a deal to free hostages in Gaza attempted to shut down the country Sunday in one of the largest and fiercest protests in 22 months of war. Organizers, representing the families of hostages, asserted that hundreds of thousands of people took part.

Frustration is growing in Israel over plans for a new military offensive in some of Gaza's most populated areas. Many Israelis fear that could further endanger the remaining hostages. Twenty of the 50 who remain are believed to be alive.

"We live between a terrorist organization that holds our children and a government that refuses to release them for political reasons," said Yehuda Cohen, whose son Nimrod is held in Gaza.

Even some former Israeli army and intelligence chiefs now call for a deal to end the fighting.

Protesters gathered at dozens of places including outside politicians' homes, military headquarters and on major highways. They blocked lanes and lit bonfires. Some restaurants and theaters closed in solidarity. Police said they arrested 38 people.

One protester carried a photo of an emaciated Palestinian child from Gaza. Such images were once rare at Israeli demonstrations but now appear more often as outrage grows over conditions in the territory after more than 250 malnutrition-related deaths.

Netanyahu opposes any deal that leaves Hamas in power

An end to the war does not seem near. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is balancing competing pressures including the potential for mutiny within his coalition.

"Those who today call for an end to the war without defeating Hamas are not only hardening Hamas' position and delaying the release of our hostages, they are also ensuring that the horrors of Oct. 7 will be repeated," Netanyahu said, referencing the Hamas-led attack in 2023 that killed some 1,200 people and sparked the war.

The last time Israel agreed to a ceasefire that released some hostages earlier this year, far-right members of his cabinet threatened to topple Netanyahu's government.

Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich called Sunday's demonstrations "a bad and harmful campaign that plays into Hamas' hands, buries the hostages in the tunnels and attempts to get Israel to surrender to its enemies and jeopardize its security and future."

The new offensive would require the call-up of thousands of reservists, another concern for many Israelis. Another 17 aid-seekers killed in Gaza

Hospitals and witnesses in Gaza said Israeli forces killed at least 17 aid-seekers on Sunday, including nine awaiting U.N. aid trucks close to the Morag corridor.

Hamza Asfour said he was just north of the corridor awaiting a convoy when Israeli snipers fired, first to disperse the crowds. He saw two people with gunshot wounds.

"It's either to take this risk or wait and see my family die of starvation," he said.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, which runs the Israeli-backed and U.S.-supported distribution points that have become the main source of aid since they opened in May, said there was no gunfire "at or near" its sites, which are located in military-controlled areas.

An Israeli strike targeting a group of people in the Bureij camp in central Gaza killed three, according to Al-Awda hospital, which received the casualties.

Israel's military did not immediately respond to questions.

Israel's air and ground war has killed more than 61,900 people, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not specify how many were fighters or civilians but says around half were women and children.

Two children and five adults died of malnutrition-related causes Sunday, according to the ministry, which is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

The United Nations has warned that levels of starvation and malnutrition in Gaza are at their highest

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since the war began. Most aid has been blocked from entering Gaza since Israel imposed a total blockade in March after ending a ceasefire. Deliveries have since partially resumed, though aid organizations say the flow is far below what is needed.

Fears of the coming military offensive

It is not clear when Israel's military will begin the new offensive in crowded Gaza City, Muwasi and what Netanyahu has called the "central camps" of Gaza.

The military body that coordinates its humanitarian aid to Gaza, COGAT, this weekend noted plans to forcibly evacuate people from combat zones to southern Gaza "for their protection." Designated "safe zones," however, also have been bombed during the war.

War-weary Palestinians insisted they won't leave, arguing that there is no safe place in Gaza.

"There are no humanitarian zones at all," said Raghda Abu Dhaher, who said she has been displaced 10 times during the war and now shelters in a school in western Gaza City.

Mohamed Ahmed also insisted that he won't move south. "Here is bombing and there is bombing," he said.

Airstrike on power plant in Yemen

Israeli airstrikes hit Yemen's capital Sunday, escalating strikes on the Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who since the war in Gaza began have fired missiles at Israel and targeted ships in the Red Sea.

The Houthi-run Al-Masirah Television said the strikes targeted a power plant in the southern district of Sanhan, knocking it out of service. Israel's military said the strikes were launched in response to missiles and drones aimed at Israel.

While some projectiles have breached its missile defenses — notably during its 12-day war with Iran in June — Israel has intercepted the vast majority of missiles launched from Yemen. Its military later Sunday said it had intercepted another, and the Houthis claimed they had targeted Israel's Ben Gurion Airport.

Texas Republicans set to resume push for redrawn US House maps

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Texas Republicans on Monday aimed to resume pushing through redrawn U.S. House district maps that would carve out a bigger GOP advantage in the 2026 midterm elections after state Democrats indicated they were ready to end a two-week walkout.

In response, California Democrats are also moving ahead with their own reshaping of congressional districts to counteract Texas, putting in motion a potentially widening and unusually timed redistricting battle nationwide.

The redrawing began in Texas but has been stalled since dozens of Democrats, who are the minority in each chamber, left the state on Aug. 3, with most of them going to Illinois. The absent lawmakers had signaled they were ready return to Austin after Republican Gov. Greg Abbott ended a first special session and California moved forward with its own plan.

The Texas House was scheduled to try convening a quorum again Monday.

Abbott put redistricting on the agenda at the urging of President Donald Trump, who wants to shore up Republicans' narrow U.S. House majority to avoid losing control of the chamber, and with it, prospects for Trump's conservative agenda in the later part of his term.

It is unusual for redistricting to take place in the middle of the decade and typically occurs once at the beginning of each decade to coincide with the census.

Many states, including Texas, give legislators the power to draw maps. California is among those that empower independent commissions with the task.

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.

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

Texas' maps would aim to give the GOP five more winnable seats there.

California Democrats, who hold supermajorities in both chambers — enough to act without any Repub-

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ican votes — on Friday unveiled a proposal that could give Democrats there an additional five U.S. House seats. But any changes would first need the approval of state lawmakers and voters. Democratic California Gov. Gavin Newsom has said that his state will hold a Nov. 4 special referendum on the redrawn districts.

Judge to weigh detainees' legal rights at 'Alligator Alcatraz' in Florida Everglades

By DAVID FISCHER and MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A federal judge will hear arguments Monday over whether detainees at a temporary immigrant detention center in the Florida Everglades have been denied their legal rights.

In the second of two lawsuits challenging practices at the facility known as "Alligator Alcatraz," civil rights attorneys are seeking a preliminary injunction to ensure that detainees at the facility have confidential access to their lawyers, which they say hasn't happened. Florida officials dispute that claim.

The civil rights attorneys also want U.S. District Judge Rodolfo Ruiz to identify an immigration court that has jurisdiction over the detention center so that petitions can be filed for the detainees' bond or release. The attorneys say that hearings for their cases have been routinely canceled in federal Florida immigration courts by judges who say they don't have jurisdiction over the detainees held in the Everglades.

"The situation at 'Alligator Alcatraz' is so anomalous from what is typically granted at other immigration facilities," Eunice Cho, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, said Thursday during a virtual meeting to prepare for Monday's hearing in Miami.

But before delving into the core issues of the detainees' rights, Ruiz has said he wants to hear about whether the lawsuit was filed in the proper jurisdiction in Miami. The state and federal government defendants have argued that even though the isolated airstrip where the facility was built is owned by Miami-Dade County, Florida's southern district is the wrong venue since the detention center is located in neighboring Collier County, which is in the state's middle district.

The judge has hinted that some issues may pertain to one district and other issues to the other district, but said he would decide after Monday's hearing.

"I think we should all be prepared that, before we get into any real argument about preliminary injunctive relief, that we at least spend some time working through the venue issues," Ruiz said Thursday.

The hearing over legal access comes as another federal judge in Miami considers whether construction and operations at the facility should be halted indefinitely because federal environmental rules weren't followed. U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams on Aug. 7 ordered a 14-day halt on additional construction at the site while witnesses testified at a hearing that wrapped up last week. She has said she plans to issue a ruling before the order expires later this week.

Meanwhile, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis announced last week that his administration was preparing to open a second immigration detention facility dubbed "Deportation Depot" at a state prison in north Florida. DeSantis justified building the second detention center by saying President Donald Trump's administration needs the additional capacity to hold and deport more immigrants.

The state of Florida has disputed claims that "Alligator Alcatraz" detainees have been unable to meet with their attorneys. The state's lawyers said that since July 15, when videoconferencing started at the facility, the state has granted every request for a detainee to meet with an attorney, and in-person meetings started July 28. The first detainees arrived at the beginning of July.

But the civil rights attorneys said that even if lawyers have been scheduled to meet with their clients at the detention center, it hasn't been in private or confidential, and it is more restrictive than at other immigration detention facilities. They said scheduling delays and an unreasonable advanced notice requirement have hindered their ability to meet with the detainees, thereby violating their constitutional rights.

Civil rights attorneys said officers are going cell-to-cell to pressure detainees into signing voluntary removal orders before they're allowed to consult their attorneys, and some detainees have been deported even though they didn't have final removal orders. Along with the spread of a respiratory infection and rainwater flooding their tents, the circumstances have fueled a feeling of desperation among detainees,

the attorneys wrote in a court filing.

"One intellectually disabled detainee was told to sign a paper in exchange for a blanket, but was then deported subject to voluntary removal after he signed, without the ability to speak to his counsel," the filing said.

The judge has promised a quick decision once the hearing is done.

Putin agrees that US, Europe could offer NATO-style security guarantees to Ukraine, Trump envoy says

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Russian leader Vladimir Putin agreed at his summit with President Donald Trump that the United States and its European allies could offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO's collective defense mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the war, a U.S. official said Sunday.

Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, who took part in the talks Friday at a military base in Alaska, said it "was the first time we had ever heard the Russians agree to that" and called it "game-changing."

"We were able to win the following concession: that the United States could offer Article 5-like protection, which is one of the real reasons why Ukraine wants to be in NATO," Witkoff told CNN's "State of the Union."

Witkoff offered few details on how such an arrangement would work. But it appeared to be a major shift for Putin and could serve as a workaround to his deep-seated objection to Ukraine's potential NATO membership, a step that Kyiv has long sought.

It was expected to be a key topic Monday as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and major European leaders meet with Trump at the White House to discuss ending the 3 1/2-year conflict.

"BIG PROGRESS ON RUSSIA," Trump said Sunday on social media. "STAY TUNED!"

On Sunday night, however, Trump seemed to put the onus on Zelenskyy to agree to concessions.

"President Zelenskyy of Ukraine can end the war with Russia almost immediately, if he wants to, or he can continue to fight," he wrote. "Remember how it started. No getting back Obama given Crimea (12 years ago, without a shot being fired!), and NO GOING INTO NATO BY UKRAINE. Some things never change!!!"

Hammering out a plan for security guarantees

Article 5, the heart of the 32-member transatlantic military alliance, says an armed attack against a member nation is considered an attack against them all.

What needed to be hammered out at this week's talks were the contours of any security guarantees, said Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who also participated in the summit. Ukraine and European allies have pushed the U.S. to provide that backstop in any peace agreement to deter future attacks by Moscow.

"How that's constructed, what we call it, how it's built, what guarantees are built into it that are enforceable, that's what we'll be talking about over the next few days with our partners," Rubio said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

It was unclear, however, whether Trump had fully committed to such a guarantee. Rubio said it would be "a huge concession."

The comments shed new light on what was discussed in Alaska. Before Sunday, U.S. officials had offered few details even as both Trump and Putin said their meeting was a success.

Witkoff also said Russia had agreed to enact a law that it would not "go after any other European countries and violate their sovereignty."

"The Russians agreed on enshrining legislatively language that would prevent them from — or that they would attest to not attempting to take any more land from Ukraine after a peace deal, where they would attest to not violating any European borders," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

Europe welcomes US openness to security guarantees

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, speaking in Brussels alongside Zelenskyy, applauded the news from the White House as a European coalition looks to set up a force to police any future peace in Ukraine.

"We welcome President Trump's willingness to contribute to Article 5-like security guarantees for Ukraine

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and the 'coalition of the willing' — including the European Union — is ready to do its share," she said.

Zelenskyy thanked the U.S. for signaling that it was willing to support such guarantees but said much remained unclear.

"There are no details how it will work, and what America's role will be, Europe's role will be and what the EU can do — and this is our main task: We need security to work in practice like Article 5 of NATO," he said.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the substance of security guarantees to secure any peace arrangement will be more important than whether they are given an Article 5-type label.

At the White House meeting, Macron said European leaders will ask the U.S. to back their plans to beef up Ukraine's armed forces with more training and equipment and deploy an allied force away from the front lines.

"We'll show this to our American colleagues, and we'll tell them, 'Right, we're ready to do this and that, what are you prepared to do?'" Macron said. "That's the security guarantee."

Defending Trump's shift from ceasefire to peace deal

Witkoff and Rubio defended Trump's decision to abandon a push for a ceasefire, arguing that the Republican president had pivoted toward a full peace agreement because so much progress had been made at the summit.

"We covered almost all the other issues necessary for a peace deal," Witkoff said, without elaborating. "We began to see some moderation in the way they're thinking about getting to a final peace deal."

Rubio, appearing on several TV news shows Sunday, said it would have been impossible to reach any truce Friday because Ukraine was not there.

"Now, ultimately, if there isn't a peace agreement, if there isn't an end of this war, the president's been clear, there are going to be consequences," Rubio said on ABC's "This Week." "But we're trying to avoid that."

Rubio, who is also Trump's national security adviser, also voiced caution on the progress made.

"We're still a long ways off," he said. "We're not at the precipice of a peace agreement. We're not at the edge of one. But I do think progress was made towards one."

Land swaps are on the table

Among the issues expected to dominate Monday's meeting: What concessions Zelenskyy might accept on territory.

In talks with European allies after the summit, Trump said Putin reiterated that he wants the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that make up the Donbas, European officials said. It was unclear among those briefed whether Trump sees that as acceptable.

Witkoff said the Russians have made clear they want territory as determined by legal boundaries instead of the front lines where territory has been seized.

"There is an important discussion to be had with regard to Donetsk and what would happen there. And that discussion is going to specifically be detailed on Monday," he said.

Zelenskyy has rejected Putin's demands that Ukraine give up the Donbas region, which Russia has failed to take completely, as a condition for peace.

In Brussels, the Ukrainian leader said any talks involving land must be based on current front lines, suggesting he will not abandon land that Russia has not taken.

"The contact line is the best line for talking, and the Europeans support this," he said. "The constitution of Ukraine makes it impossible, impossible to give up territory or trade land."

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Hurricane Erin weakens to Category 3 as forecasters warn of storm's rapid growth

By IVELISSE RIVERA Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Erin weakened to a Category 3 hurricane on Sunday, its outer bands lashing the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, as forecasters warned of a growing risk of life-threatening surf and rip currents along the U.S. Eastern seaboard during the week from what is expected to become a very large hurricane.

While Erin's maximum winds diminished Sunday, its overall size kept growing as forecasters issued tropical storm warnings for the Turks and Caicos Islands and the southeast Bahamas. The hurricane's outer bands pelted parts of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands with heavy rains and tropical-storm winds during the day.

The storm wasn't expected to directly hit the U.S. East Coast, but by doubling or tripling in size its impacts threatened the North Carolina Outer Banks, the thin, low stretch of barrier islands off the mainland, that juts far out into the Atlantic, Dare County emergency officials said in declaring a state of emergency.

They ordered an evacuation of Hatteras Island starting Monday. Several days of heavy surf and high winds and waves could wash out parts of North Carolina Highway 12 running along the barrier islands that are a popular vacation destination, the National Weather Service said.

The center of the storm is forecast to stay at least 200 miles (320 kilometers) from the Outer Banks but will also bring rip tides all along the East Coast, officials said.

Bermuda could have similar conditions as Erin is forecast to turn to the north and then northeast, forecasters said.

Erin, the first Atlantic hurricane of 2025, reached an exceedingly dangerous Category 5 status Saturday with maximum winds of 160 mph (260 kph) before weakening. The storm's maximum sustained winds were 125 mph (205 kph) Sunday afternoon, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

The winds decreased as the storm went through internal changes. Erin is expected to remain powerful for the next several days and is expected to strengthen somewhat over the next 48 hours as it grows, forecasters said Sunday afternoon.

"You're dealing with a major hurricane. The intensity is fluctuating. It's a dangerous hurricane in any event," said Richard Pasch of the National Hurricane Center.

Erin's center was about 310 miles (500 kilometers) northwest of San Juan, Puerto Rico, and 155 miles (245 kilometers) east-northeast of Grand Turk Island, moving west-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph). On the forecast track, the core of Erin was expected to pass to the east and northeast of the Turks and Caicos and the southeastern Bahamas overnight and on Monday.

The rain and winds from the outer bands of the storm left about 147,000 customers without power Sunday morning in Puerto Rico, according to Luma Energy, a private company that oversees the transmission and distribution of power on the island. The weather canceled more than 20 flights, officials said.

Swells were also expected to affect portions of the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, Hispaniola and the Turks and Caicos Islands during the next couple of days, forecasters said.

The Coast Guard allowed all ports in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to reopen on Sunday as winds and rains in the area decrease.

A tropical storm warning means tropical storm conditions are expected somewhere within the warning area, and in this case, within 24 hours, the hurricane center said. Heavy rain is still expected across the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, with rainfall of 3 to 6 inches (about 7.6 to 15 centimeters), with 8 inches (20 centimeters) in some isolated areas.

Scientists have linked the rapid intensification of hurricanes in the Atlantic to climate change. Global warming is causing the atmosphere to hold more water vapor and is spiking ocean temperatures, and warmer waters give hurricanes fuel to unleash more rain and strengthen more quickly.

Terence Stamp, British actor who portrayed General Zod in early Superman films, dies at 87

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Terence Stamp, the British actor who often played the role of a complex villain, including that of General Zod in the early Superman films, has died. He was 87.

His death on Sunday was disclosed in a death notice published online, prompting a wave of tributes from and an array of fans and those close to him within the industry, including the British Academy of Film and Television Arts, or BAFTA.

The London-born Stamp started his film career with 1962's seafaring "Billy Budd," for which he earned Oscar and BAFTA award nominations.

His six decades in the business were peppered with highlights, including his touching portrayal of the transsexual Bernadette in 1994's "The Adventure of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," the second of his two BAFTA nominations.

But it will be his portrayal of the bearded Zod in 1978's "Superman" and its sequel "Superman II" two years later that most people associate with Stamp. As the Kryptonian arch enemy to Christopher Reeve's Man of Steel, Stamp introduced a darker, charming and vulnerable — more human — element to the franchise, one that's been replicated in countless superhero movies ever since.

Edgar Wright, who directed Stamp in his final feature film, 2021's "Last Night in Soho," remembered the actor in an Instagram post as "kind, funny, and endlessly fascinating."

"The closer the camera moved, the more hypnotic his presence became. In close-up, his unblinking gaze locked in so powerfully that the effect was extraordinary. Terence was a true movie star: the camera loved him, and he loved it right back," Wright said.

Bill Duke, who starred with Stamp in director Steven Soderbergh's 1999 crime drama "The Limey," said he was "deeply saddened" to hear of his death.

"He brought a rare intensity to the screen, but off-screen he carried himself with warmth, grace, and generosity," he said on Facebook.

Stamp started his acting career on stage in the late 1950s, where he acted in repertory theatre and met Michael Caine, who was five years older than himself. The pair lived together in a flat in central London while looking for their big break.

He got his break with "Billy Budd" and Stamp embarked on a career that would see him in the early 1960s be part of the "angry young men" movement that was introducing an element of social realism into British moviemaking.

That was perhaps most notable in the 1965 adaptation of John Fowles' creepy debut novel "The Collector," where he played the awkward and lonely Freddie Clegg, who kidnapped Samantha Eggar's Miranda Grey in a warped attempt to win her love. It was a performance that would earn the young Stamp, fresh off his Oscar nomination, the best actor award at that year's Cannes Film Festival.

While part of that 1960s British movement, Stamp learned from some of the most seasoned actors from the classical era, including Laurence Olivier.

"I worked with Olivier briefly on my second movie (1962's "Term of Trial")," Stamp recalled in an interview with the AP in 2013. "And he said to me, 'You should always study your voice.'" Stamp then segued into a spot-on Olivier impersonation, continuing, "Because, as you get older, your looks go, but your voice will become empowered."

His career took a bit of a hiatus from the late 1960s after he missed out on the role of James Bond to replace Sean Connery, that included a years-long stint in India and which saw him embrace a more holistic approach to his self.

It was the unexpected role of General Zod that brought him back to the limelight. He played John Tunstall in 1988's "Young Guns," the Galactic Republic leader in 1999's "Star Wars" prequel "The Phantom Menace," appeared in the comedies "Yes Man" and "Get Smart" in 2008 and delivered voice performances in the

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video games "Halo 3" and "The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion."

Born in London's East End on July 22, 1938, Stamp lived a colorful life, particularly during the 1960s when he had a string of romances, including with actress Julie Christie and model Jean Shrimpton. He married 29-year-old Elizabeth O'Rourke in 2002 at the age of 64 but the couple divorced six years later. Stamp did not have any children.

Stamp retained his looks as the years ticked by, his natural handsomeness hardened by a more grizzled look.

He generally sought to keep his standards high — to a point.

"I don't do crappy movies, unless I haven't got the rent," he said.

Fatal explosion at U.S. Steel's plant raises questions about its future, despite heavy investment

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — The fatal explosion last week at U.S. Steel's Pittsburgh-area coal-processing plant has revived debate about its future just as the iconic American company was emerging from a long period of uncertainty.

The fortunes of steelmaking in the U.S. — along with profits, share prices and steel prices — have been buoyed by years of friendly administrations in Washington that slapped tariffs on foreign imports and bolstered the industry's anti-competitive trade cases against China.

Most recently, President Donald Trump's administration postponed new hazardous air pollution requirements for the nation's roughly dozen coke plants, like Clairton, and he approved U.S. Steel's nearly \$15 billion acquisition by Japanese steelmaker Nippon Steel.

Nippon Steel's promised infusion of cash has brought vows that steelmaking will continue in the Mon Valley, a river valley south of Pittsburgh long synonymous with steelmaking.

"We're investing money here. And we wouldn't have done the deal with Nippon Steel if we weren't absolutely sure that we were going to have an enduring future here in the Mon Valley," David Burritt, U.S. Steel's CEO, told a news conference the day after the explosion. "You can count on this facility to be around for a long, long time."

Will the explosion change anything?

The explosion killed two workers and hospitalized 10 with a blast so powerful that it took hours to find two missing workers beneath charred wreckage and rubble. The cause is under investigation.

The plant is considered the largest coking operation in North America and, along with a blast furnace and finishing mill up the Monongahela River, is one of a handful of integrated steelmaking operations left in the U.S.

The explosion now could test Nippon Steel's resolve in propping up the nearly 110-year-old Clairton plant, or at least force it to spend more than it had anticipated.

Nippon Steel didn't respond to a question as to whether the explosion will change its approach to the plant.

Rather, a spokesperson for the company said its "commitment to the Mon Valley remains strong" and that it sent "technical experts to work with the local teams in the Clairton Plant, and to provide our full support."

Meanwhile, Burritt said he had talked to top Nippon Steel officials after the explosion and that "this facility and the Mon Valley are here to stay."

U.S. Steel officials maintain that safety is their top priority and that they spend \$100 million a year on environmental compliance at Clairton alone.

However, repairing Clairton could be expensive, an investigation into the explosion could turn up more problems, and an official from the United Steelworkers union said it's a constant struggle to get U.S. Steel to invest in its plants.

Besides that, production at the facility could be affected for some time. The plant has six batteries of ovens and two — where the explosion occurred — were damaged. Two others are on a reduced produc-

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tion schedule because of the explosion.

There is no timeline to get the damaged batteries running again, U.S. Steel said.

Accidents are nothing new at Clairton

Accidents are nothing new at Clairton, which heats coal to high temperatures to make coke, a key component in steelmaking, and produces combustible gases as byproducts.

An explosion in February injured two workers.

Even as Nippon Steel was closing the deal in June, a breakdown at the plant dealt three days of a rotten egg odor into the air around it from elevated hydrogen sulfide emissions, the environmental group GASP reported.

The Breathe Project, a public health organization, said U.S. Steel has been forced to pay \$57 million in fines and settlements since Jan. 1, 2020, for problems at the Clairton plant.

A lawsuit over a Christmas Eve fire at the Clairton plant in 2018 that saturated the area's air for weeks with sulfur dioxide produced a withering assessment of conditions there.

An engineer for the environmental groups that sued wrote that he "found no indication that U.S. Steel has an effective, comprehensive maintenance program for the Clairton plant."

The Clairton plant, he wrote, is "inherently dangerous because of the combination of its deficient maintenance and its defective design."

U.S. Steel settled, agreeing to spend millions on upgrades.

Matthew Mehalik, executive director of the Breathe Project, said U.S. Steel has shown more willingness to spend money on fines, lobbying the government and buying back shares to reward shareholders than making its plants safe.

Will Clairton be modernized?

It's not clear whether Nippon Steel will change Clairton.

Central to Trump's approval of the acquisition was Nippon Steel's promises to invest \$11 billion into U.S. Steel's aging plants and to give the federal government a say in decisions involving domestic steel production, including plant closings.

But much of the \$2.2 billion that Nippon Steel has earmarked for the Mon Valley plants is expected to go toward upgrading the finishing mill, or building a new one.

For years before the acquisition, U.S. Steel had signaled that the Mon Valley was on the chopping block.

That left workers there uncertain whether they'd have jobs in a couple years and whispering that U.S. Steel couldn't fill openings because nobody believed the jobs would exist much longer.

Relics of steelmaking's past

In many ways, U.S. Steel's Mon Valley plants are relics of steelmaking's past.

In the early 1970s, U.S. steel production led the world and was at an all-time high, thanks to 62 coke plants that fed 141 blast furnaces. Nobody in the U.S. has opened a new blast furnace in decades, as foreign competition devastated the American steel industry and coal fell out of favor.

Now, China is dominant in steel and heavily invested in coal-based steelmaking. In the U.S., there are barely a dozen coke plants and blast furnaces left, as the country's steelmaking has shifted to cheaper electric arc furnaces that use electricity, not coal.

Blast furnaces won't entirely go away, analysts say, since they produce metals that are preferred by automakers, appliance makers and oil and gas exploration firms.

Still, Christopher Briem, an economist at the University of Pittsburgh's Center for Social and Urban Research, questioned whether the Clairton plant really will survive much longer, given its age and condition. It could be particularly vulnerable if the economy slides into recession or the fundamentals of the American steel market shift, he said.

"I'm not quite sure it's all set in stone as people believe," Briem said. "If the market does not bode well for U.S. Steel, for American steel, is Nippon Steel really going to keep these things?"

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Shooting in a crowded New York club leaves 3 dead, 9 wounded

By JULIE WALKER and LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A club shooting in the New York City borough of Brooklyn early Sunday left three people dead and nine others wounded in a year of record low gun violence in the city.

Investigators believe up to four shooters opened fire at Taste of the City Lounge in Crown Heights after a dispute just before 3:30 a.m. The violence appeared to be gang-related, Police Commissioner Jessica Tisch told reporters.

There were no immediate arrests. At a news briefing, Tisch called the killings “a tragic, senseless act of violence.”

The crime is the second mass shooting within weeks in New York City during a year that has otherwise seen declining gun violence. On July 29, a man stalked through a Manhattan office tower with a rifle, wounding one person and killing four others. A New York City police officer was among those who died.

Mayor Eric Adams said both shootings reinforce “why we do this work of going after guns off our streets.”

“This is the second within weeks, and we don’t want this to turn into a normal course of doing business of violence in our city,” he said.

Those wounded Sunday were being treated at hospitals for non-life-threatening injuries, Tisch said. The ages of the victims range from 19 to 61. A 19-year-old man died at the scene and two other men -- ages 35 and 27 -- died after being transported to a hospital.

Investigators found at least 42 shell casings from 9 mm and .45-caliber weapons and a firearm in a nearby street.

Adams said crisis management teams had been mobilized to provide trauma services and facilitate mediation efforts with the victims’ friends and families to try to stop any retaliation. He asked members of the public who might have information about the shooting to help investigators by calling NYPD’s crime stoppers line, 800-577-TIPS.

“If you were inside the club, if you heard individuals talking about this shooting, if you witnessed someone fleeing the location, every piece of information will allow us to put the puzzle together,” Adams said.

Tisch said the city has reported the lowest number of shootings and shooting victims on record during the first seven months of 2025.

“Something like this is, of course, thank God, an anomaly and it’s a terrible thing that happened this morning, but we’re going to investigate and get to the bottom of what went down,” she said.

European leaders to join Ukraine’s Zelenskyy for meeting with Trump

By SAMYA KULLAB and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — European and NATO leaders announced Sunday they will join President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Washington to present a united front in talks with President Donald Trump on ending Russia’s war in Ukraine and firming up U.S. security guarantees now on the negotiating table.

Leaders from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Finland are rallying around the Ukrainian president after his exclusion from Trump’s summit on Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Their pledge to be at Zelenskyy’s side at the White House on Monday is an apparent effort to ensure the meeting goes better than the last one in February, when Trump berated Zelenskyy in a heated Oval Office encounter.

“The Europeans are very afraid of the Oval Office scene being repeated and so they want to support Mr. Zelenskyy to the hilt,” said retired French Gen. Dominique Trinquand, a former head of France’s military mission at the United Nations.

“It’s a power struggle and a position of strength that might work with Trump,” he said.

Putin agreed at his summit in Alaska with Trump that the U.S. and its European allies could offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO’s collective defense mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the 3 1/2-year war, special U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said in an interview Sunday on CNN’s “State of the Union.”

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It "was the first time we had ever heard the Russians agree to that," said Witkoff, who called it "game-changing."

Later, French President Emmanuel Macron said the European delegation will ask Trump to back plans they drafted to beef-up Ukraine's armed forces — already Europe's largest outside of Russia — with more training and equipment to secure any peace.

"We need a credible format for the Ukrainian army, that's the first point, and say — we Europeans and Americans — how we'll train them, equip them, and finance this effort in the long-term," the French leader said.

The European-drafted plans also envision an allied force in Ukraine away from the front lines to reassure Kyiv that peace will hold and to dissuade another Russian invasion, Macron said. He spoke after a nearly two-hour video call Sunday with nations in Europe and further afield — including Canada, Australia and Japan — that are involved in the so-called "coalition of the willing."

The "several thousand men on the ground in Ukraine in the zone of peace" would signal that "our fates are linked," Macron said.

"This is what we must discuss with the Americans: Who is ready to do what?" Macron said. "Otherwise, I think the Ukrainians simply cannot accept commitments that are theoretical."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said earlier at a news conference in Brussels with Zelenskyy that "we welcome President Trump's willingness to contribute to Article 5-like security guarantees for Ukraine. And the 'coalition of the willing' -- including the European Union -- is ready to do its share."

Macron said the substance of security guarantees will be more important than whether they are given an Article 5-type label.

"A theoretical article isn't enough, the question is one of substance," he said. "We must start out by saying that the first of the security guarantees for Ukraine is a strong Ukrainian army."

Along with Von der Leyen and Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni and Finnish President Alexander Stubb also said they'll will take part in Monday's talks, as will secretary-general of the NATO military alliance, Mark Rutte.

The European leaders' support could help ease concerns in Kyiv and in other European capitals that Ukraine risks being railroaded into a peace deal.

Neil Melvin, director of international security at the London-based Royal United Services Institute, said European leaders are trying to "shape this fast-evolving agenda." After the Alaska summit, the idea of a ceasefire appears all-but-abandoned, with the narrative shifting toward Putin's agenda of ensuring Ukraine does not join NATO or even the EU.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday that a possible ceasefire is "not off the table" but that the best way to end the war would be through a "full peace deal."

Putin has implied that he sees Europe as a hindrance to negotiations. He has also resisted meeting Zelenskyy in person, saying that such a meeting can only take place once the groundwork for a peace deal has been laid.

Speaking to the press after his meeting with Trump, the Russian leader raised the idea that Kyiv and other European capitals could "create obstacles" to derail potential progress with "behind-the-scenes intrigue."

For now, Zelenskyy offers the Europeans the "only way" to get into the discussions about the future of Ukraine and European security, says RUSI's Melvin.

However, the sheer number of European leaders potentially in attendance means the group will have to be "mindful" not to give "contradictory" messages, Melvin said.

"The risk is they look heavy-handed and are ganging up on Trump," he added. "Trump won't want to be put in a corner."

Although details remain hazy on what Article 5-like security guarantees from the U.S. and Europe would entail for Ukraine, it could mirror NATO membership terms, in which an attack on one member of the alliance is seen as an attack on all.

Zelenskyy continues to stress the importance of both U.S. and European involvement in any negotiations.

"A security guarantee is a strong army. Only Ukraine can provide that. Only Europe can finance this

army, and weapons for this army can be provided by our domestic production and European production. But there are certain things that are in short supply and are only available in the United States," he said at the press conference Sunday alongside Von der Leyen.

Zelenskyy also pushed back against Trump's assertion — which aligned with Putin's preference — that the two sides should negotiate a complete end to the war, rather than first securing a ceasefire. Zelenskyy said a ceasefire would provide breathing room to review Putin's demands.

"It's impossible to do this under the pressure of weapons," he said. "Putin does not want to stop the killing, but he must do it."

Pakistan defends flood response after over 270 people killed in northwestern district

By MUHAMMAD SAJJAD and RIAZ KHAN Associated Press

BUNER, Pakistan (AP) — Rescuers recovered dozens more bodies from the rubble of collapsed homes in a northwestern district of Pakistan, bringing the death toll to at least 274, as authorities defended their response to the flooding and said they did not need any foreign help at this point.

Heavy rains and flooding also killed dozens of people in neighboring Kashmir.

Mohammad Suhail, a spokesman for Pakistan's emergency service, said 54 bodies were found in Buner, a mountainous area in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, where torrential rains and cloudbursts triggered massive flooding on Friday.

Suhail said villagers remain missing, and search efforts are focused on areas where homes were flattened by torrents of water that swept down from the mountains, carrying boulders that smashed into houses like explosions.

Authorities have warned of more deluges and possible landslides between now and Tuesday, urging local administrations to remain on alert. Higher-than-normal monsoon rains have lashed the country since June 26 and killed more than 600.

In India-administered Kashmir, located across Pakistan's northeastern border, rains triggered more flash floods in two villages in the Kathua district, killing seven people, officials said Sunday. Rescuers in Chositi village are still looking for dozens of missing people after the area was hit by flash floods last week during an annual Hindu pilgrimage. At least 60 people were killed, and some 150 injured. Over 300 others were rescued.

Warnings of more intense rain to come

Residents in Buner have accused officials of failing to warn them to evacuate after torrential rain and cloudbursts triggered deadly flooding and landslides. There was no warning broadcast from mosque loudspeakers, a traditional method in remote areas.

The government said that while an early warning system was in place, the sudden downpour in Buner was so intense that the deluge struck before residents could be alerted.

Lt. Gen. Inam Haider, chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority, told a hastily convened news conference in Islamabad that Pakistan was experiencing shifting weather patterns because of climate change. Since the monsoon season began in June, Pakistan has already received 50% more rainfall than in the same period last year, he added.

He warned that more intense weather could follow, with heavy rains forecast to continue this month.

Some countries have reached out to Islamabad offering help, but Haider said Pakistan has sufficient resources and does not require foreign assistance at this time.

Asfandiyar Khan Khattak, director-general of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, said there was "no forecasting system anywhere in the world" that could predict the exact time and location of a cloudburst, a sudden and intense downpour.

Mohammad Iqbal, a schoolteacher in Pir Baba village, said the lack of a timely warning system caused casualties and forced many to flee their homes at the last moment.

"Survivors escaped with nothing," he said. "If people had been informed earlier, lives could have been

saved and residents could have moved to safer places.”

People still missing

Idrees Mahsud, a disaster management official, said Pakistan’s early warning system used satellite imagery and meteorological data to send alerts to local authorities. These were shared through the media and community leaders. He said monsoon rains that once only swelled rivers now also triggered urban flooding.

An emergency services spokesman in Buner, Mohammad Sohail, said more than half the damaged roads in the district had reopened by Sunday, allowing vehicles and heavy machinery to reach cut-off villages.

Crews were clearing piles of rocks and mud dumped by the floods. They were still using heavy machinery to remove the rubble of collapsed homes after families reported that some of their relatives were missing.

In one of the deadliest incidents, 24 people from one family died in the village of Qadar Nagar when floodwaters swept through their home on the eve of a wedding. The head of the family, Umar Khan, said he survived the floods because he was out of the house at the time. Four of his relatives have yet to be found.

Extreme weather

Pakistan is highly vulnerable to climate-induced disasters. In 2022, a record-breaking monsoon killed nearly 1,700 people and destroyed millions of homes.

The country also suffers regular flash floods and landslides during the monsoon season, which runs from June to September, particularly in the rugged northwest, where villages are often perched on steep slopes and riverbanks.

Experts say climate change is intensifying the frequency and severity of such extreme weather events in South Asia.

Khalid Khan, a weather expert, said Pakistan produces less than 1% of planet-warming emissions but faces heatwaves, heavy rains, glacial outburst floods and now cloudbursts, underscoring how climate change is devastating communities within hours.

Pope Leo XIV celebrates Mass for local homeless people, invites them to lunch at summer villa

By MARIA SELENE CLEMENTE, ANDREA ROSA and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy (AP) — Pope Leo XIV spent the last Sunday of his summer vacation with several dozen refugees, homeless and poor people and the church volunteers who help them, celebrating a special Mass for them and inviting them into the Vatican’s lakeside estate for a lunch of lasagna and roast veal.

Welcoming them for the luncheon, Leo said he was happy to “break bread” with them “in such a beautiful place that reminds us of the beauty of nature, of creation, but also makes us think that the most beautiful creature is the one created in the likeness, in the image of God, which is all of us.”

The guests included around 110 people cared for by the local Caritas church charity, and the volunteers who run the diocese’s shelters, clinics and social service offices. Many had attended Mass with him in the nearby St. Mary sanctuary of Albano.

In his homily, Leo celebrated the “fire of charity” that had brought them together.

“And I encourage you not to distinguish between those who assist and those who are assisted, between those who seem to give and those who seem to receive, between those who appear poor and those who feel they have something to offer in terms of time, skills, and help,” he said.

In the church, he said, everyone is poor and precious, and all share the same dignity.

Leo, the former Robert Prevost, spent most of his adult life working with the poor people of Peru, first as an Augustinian missionary and then as bishop. Former parishioners and church workers say he greatly reinforced the work of the local Caritas charity, opening soup kitchens and shelters for migrants and rallying funds to build oxygen plants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The luncheon was held at the Borgo Laudato Si’, the Vatican’s environmental educational center in the gardens of the papal villa in Castel Gandolfo. The center is named for Pope Francis’ 2015 landmark environmental encyclical, Laudato Si (Praised Be).

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Local caterers provided a menu of lasagna, eggplant parmesan and roast veal. For dessert, the menu called for fruit salad and sweets named for the pope, "Dolce Leone."

Guests at Leo's table included Rosabal Leon, a Peruvian refugee who has been in Italy for a few months, along with her husband and two children. One of his other luncheon companions was an 85-year-old Roman, Gabriella Oliveira, who lives on her own, organizers said.

Leo is expected to wrap up his vacation Tuesday and return to the Vatican, but there are indications he plans to use the Castel Gandolfo retreat regularly as an escape from Rome, resuming the tradition that Pope Francis had eschewed in favor of staycations at the Vatican.

Leo's older brother, John Prevost, told NBC's Chicago affiliate that the pope found the getaway relaxing and had actually hoped to read a book during his vacation — the pope likes legal thrillers — but hadn't found the time. He did, however, make use of the estate's tennis court and swimming pool, he said.

Prevost, who speaks daily with the pope to compare notes on the New York Times daily Wordle puzzle, said he understood the thing Leo missed most about being pope was not being able to drive.

"Driving to him is totally relaxing," Prevost said, adding that when they were together, his little brother would always insist on driving himself. "Absolutely, because otherwise then he would criticize my driving," Prevost said, chuckling.

In the interview, Prevost revealed the pope's favorite pizza — pepperoni — and candy: Peeps.

A massive mountain park in Vermont celebrates the bond between dogs and their humans

By AMANDA SWINHART Associated Press

ST. JOHNSBURY, Vt. (AP) — Anne Pace has been hearing about Dog Mountain for years, but until earlier this month, had never made a trip to the park.

"I really wanted to see this place," she said, during a visit to the grounds with her one-year-old border collie, Tam. "I put a note up for my previous border collie. He was my best buddy."

Set on 150 acres tucked away on a hillside in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, Dog Mountain has become a destination for dog lovers looking to explore nature, take in art, or pay tribute to a pet.

The park was created 25 years ago by Vermont folk artist Stephen Huneck and his wife, Gwen, and features hiking trails, swimming ponds, an art gallery and a Dog Chapel where visitors can add to the thousands of photos and notes to pets that cover the chapel walls.

"It is absolutely breathtaking. That's a lot of love when you think about each picture that's here," said Vanessa Hurley, who was visiting with her husband and two dogs from Ohio. "Dogs and cats both, they just bring so much enjoyment to our lives," she said.

Inspired by the bond he shared with his dogs, Huneck wanted to create a space where other animal lovers could celebrate their beloved pets, gallery manager Pam McCann said.

"Dog Mountain is really a pilgrimage place and a sanctuary," she said.

Huneck's sculpture, prints and furniture are featured in the gallery and scattered throughout the park, including inside the chapel he built himself. With black labs and golden retrievers carved into the ends of each pew and images of his own dog, Sally, in the stained-glass windows, his love of dogs is evident in every detail.

Scott Ritchie and his wife, Julie, have been traveling the country in an RV with their three large dogs and thought Dog Mountain would be the perfect place for them to stretch their legs. They enjoyed it so much on their first visit, they decided to come back the next day.

"It's very rare you see something like this anywhere. We've been traveling all over the U.S. for five and a half months. Just a beautiful area," he said.

McCann says the park was made for visitors like Ritchie.

"That's what it's for, people who really care and people who are very connected to everything around them," she said. "Including the animals that they are the guardians of."

Black mayors of cities Trump decries as 'lawless' tout significant declines in violent crimes

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

As President Donald Trump declared Washington, D.C., a crime-ridden wasteland in need of federal intervention and threatened similar federal interventions in other Black-led cities, several mayors compared notes.

The president's characterization of their cities contradicts what they began noticing last year: that they were seeing a drop in violent crime after a pandemic-era spike. In some cases the declines were monumental, due in large part to more youth engagement, gun buyback programs and community partnerships.

Now members of the African American Mayors Association are determined to stop Trump from burying accomplishments that they already felt were overlooked. And they're using the administration's unprecedented law enforcement takeover in the nation's capital as an opportunity to disprove his narrative about some of the country's greatest urban enclaves.

"It gives us an opportunity to say we need to amplify our voices to confront the rhetoric that crime is just running rampant around major U.S. cities. It's just not true," said Van Johnson, mayor of Savannah, Georgia, and president of the African American Mayors Association. "It's not supported by any evidence or statistics whatsoever."

After deploying the first of 800 National Guard members to Washington, the Republican president is setting his sights on other cities including Baltimore, Chicago, Los Angeles and Oakland, California, calling them crime-ridden and "horribly run." One thing they all have in common: They're led by Black mayors.

"It was not lost on any member of our organization that the mayors either were Black or perceived to be Democrats," Johnson said. "And that's unfortunate. For mayors, we play with whoever's on the field."

The federal government's actions have heightened some of the mayors' desires to champion the strategies used to help make their cities safer.

Some places are seeing dramatic drops in crime rates

Trump argued that federal law enforcement had to step in after a prominent employee of the Department of Government Efficiency, or DOGE, was attacked in an attempted carjacking. He also pointed to homeless encampments, graffiti and potholes as evidence of Washington "getting worse."

However statistics published by Washington's Metropolitan Police contradict the president and show violent crime has dropped there since a post-pandemic peak in 2023.

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson scoffed at Trump's remarks, hailing the city's "historic progress driving down homicides by more than 30% and shootings by almost 40% in the last year alone."

Mayor Karen Bass of Los Angeles, where homicides fell 14% between 2023 and 2024, called the federal takeover nothing but a performative "power grab."

In Baltimore, officials say they have seen historic decreases in homicides and nonfatal shootings this year, and those have been on the decline since 2022, according to the city's public safety data dashboard. Carjackings were down 20% in 2023, and other major crimes fell in 2024. Only burglaries have climbed slightly.

The lower crime rates are attributed to tackling violence with a "public health" approach, city officials say. In 2021, under Mayor Brandon Scott, Baltimore created a Comprehensive Violence Prevention Plan that called for more investment in community violence intervention, more services for crime victims and other initiatives.

Scott accused Trump of exploiting crime as a "wedge issue and dog whistle" rather than caring about curbing violence.

"He has actively undermined efforts that are making a difference saving lives in cities across the country in favor of militarized policing of Black communities," Scott said via email.

The Democratic mayor pointed out that the Justice Department has slashed over \$1 million in funding this year that would have gone toward community anti-violence measures. He vowed to keep on making headway, regardless.

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"We will continue to closely work with our regional federal law enforcement agencies, who have been great partners, and will do everything in our power to continue the progress despite the roadblocks this administration attempts to implement," Scott said.

Community organizations help curb violence

Just last week Oakland officials touted significant decreases in crime in the first half of this year compared with the same period in 2024, including a 21% drop in homicides and a 29% decrease in all violent crime, according to the midyear report by the Major Cities Chiefs Association. Officials credited collaborations with community organizations and crisis response services through the city's Department of Violence Prevention, established in 2017.

"These results show that we're on the right track," Mayor Barbara Lee said at a news conference. "We're going to keep building on this progress with the same comprehensive approach that got us here."

After Trump gave his assessment of Oakland last week, she rejected it as "fearmongering."

Social justice advocates agree that crime has gone down and say Trump is perpetuating exaggerated perceptions that have long plagued Oakland.

Nicole Lee, executive director of Urban Peace Movement, an Oakland-based organization that focuses on empowering communities of color and young people through initiatives such as leadership training and assistance to victims of gun violence, said much credit for the gains on lower crime rates is due to community groups.

"We really want to acknowledge all of the hard work that our network of community partners and community organizations have been doing over the past couple of years coming out of the pandemic to really create real community safety," Lee said. "The things we are doing are working."

She worries that an intervention by military forces would undermine that progress.

"It creates kind of an environment of fear in our community," Lee said.

Patrols and youth curfews

In Washington, agents from multiple federal agencies, National Guard members and even the United States Park Police have been seen performing law enforcement duties from patrolling the National Mall to questioning people parked illegally.

Pentagon press secretary Kingsley Wilson said the guard troops will not be armed but declined to elaborate on their assignments to safety patrols and beautification efforts.

Savannah's Johnson said he is all for partnering with the federal government, but troops on city streets is not what he envisioned. Instead, cities need federal assistance for things like multistate investigation and fighting problems such as gun trafficking, and cybercrimes.

"I'm a former law enforcement officer. There is a different skill set that is used for municipal law enforcement agencies than the military," Johnson said.

There has also been speculation that federal intervention could entail curfews for young people.

But that would do more harm, Nicole Lee said, disproportionately affecting young people of color and wrongfully assuming that youths are the main instigators of violence.

"If you're a young person, basically you can be cited, criminalized, simply for being outside after certain hours," Lee said. "Not only does that not solve anything in regard to violence and crime, it puts young people in the crosshairs of the criminal justice system."

A game of wait-and-see

For now, Johnson said, the mayors are watching their counterpart in Washington, Muriel Bowser, closely to see how she navigates the unprecedented federal intervention. She has been walking a fine line between critiquing and cooperating since Trump's takeover, but things ramped up Friday when officials sued to try to block the takeover.

Johnson praised Bowser for carrying on with dignity and grace.

"Black mayors are resilient. We are intrinsically children of struggle," Johnson said. "We learn to adapt quickly, and I believe that we will and we are."

Trump administration halts visas for people from Gaza after Laura Loomer questions arrivals

Associated Press undefined

WASHINGTON (AP) — A day after conservative activist Laura Loomer posted videos on social media of children from Gaza arriving in the U.S. for medical treatment and questioning how they got visas, the State Department said it was halting all visitor visas for people from Gaza pending a review.

The State Department said Saturday the visas would be stopped while it looks into how “a small number of temporary medical-humanitarian visas” were issued in recent days. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday told “Face the Nation” on CBS that the action came after “outreach from multiple congressional offices asking questions about it.”

Rubio said there were “just a small number” of the visas issued to children in need of medical aid but that they were accompanied by adults. The congressional offices reached out with evidence that “some of the organizations bragging about and involved in acquiring these visas have strong links to terrorist groups like Hamas,” he asserted, without providing evidence or naming those organizations.

As a result, he said, “we are going to pause this program and reevaluate how those visas are being vetted and what relationship, if any, has there been by these organizations to the process of acquiring those visas.”

Loomer on Friday posted videos on X of children from Gaza arriving earlier this month in San Francisco and Houston for medical treatment with the aid of an organization called HEAL Palestine. “Despite the US saying we are not accepting Palestinian ‘refugees’ into the United States under the Trump administration,” these people from Gaza were able to travel to the U.S., she said.

She called it a “national security threat” and asked who signed off on the visas, calling for the person to be fired. She tagged Rubio, President Donald Trump, Vice President JD Vance, GOP Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat.

Trump has downplayed Loomer’s influence on his administration, but several officials swiftly left or were removed shortly after she publicly criticized them.

The State Department on Sunday declined to comment on how many of the visas had been granted and whether the decision to halt visas to people from Gaza had anything to do with Loomer’s posts.

HEAL Palestine said in a statement Sunday that it was “distressed” by the State Department decision to stop halt visitor visas from Gaza. The group said it is “an American humanitarian nonprofit organization delivering urgent aid and medical care to children in Palestine.”

A post on the organization’s Facebook page Thursday shows a photo of a boy from Gaza leaving Egypt and headed to St. Louis for treatment and said he is “our 15th evacuated child arriving in the U.S. in the last two weeks.”

The organization brings “severely injured children” to the U.S. on temporary visas for treatment they can’t get at home, the statement said. Following treatment, the children and any family members who accompanied them return to the Middle East, the statement said.

“This is a medical treatment program, not a refugee resettlement program,” it said.

The World Health Organization has repeatedly called for more medical evacuations from Gaza, where Israel’s over 22-month war against Hamas has heavily destroyed or damaged much of the territory’s health system.

“More than 14,800 patients still need lifesaving medical care that is not available in Gaza,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Wednesday on social media, and called on more countries to offer support.

A WHO description of the medical evacuation process from Gaza published last year explained that the WHO submits lists of patients to Israeli authorities for security clearance. It noted that before the war in Gaza began, 50 to 100 patients were leaving Gaza daily for medical treatment, and it called for a higher rate of approvals from Israeli authorities.

The U.N. and partners say medicines and even basic health care supplies are low in Gaza after Israel cut

off all aid to the territory of over 2 million people for more than 10 weeks earlier this year.

"Ceasefire! Peace is the best medicine," Tedros added Wednesday.

From apps to matchmaking: the diverse ways some American Muslims navigate finding marriage partners

By MARIAM FAM Associated Press

Nura Maznavi got a kick out of learning that New York City Muslim mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani met his wife on Hinge.

"It made me feel like less of a loser," Maznavi said laughingly about meeting her own husband online more than 14 years ago, before apps like Hinge became a dating fixture for many people.

"He's so cool," she said of Mamdani. "Him and his wife are just so New York chic."

Mamdani's success on Hinge, as well as the show "Muslim Matchmaker" on Hulu, provide a glimpse into some of the ways American Muslims meet their spouses, from the traditional to the contemporary. Many navigate the quest for love and marriage while balancing their beliefs, levels of devoutness, diverse lifestyles and a range of cultural influences.

"We just wanted a realistic assessment of what's going on in the love space for Muslim Americans and that we do have unique challenges, but we also have very universal challenges," said Yasmin Elhady, one of two matchmakers on the reality series on Hulu. "We show up in ways that are complicated and joyful and dynamic."

Maznavi, a self-described "sucker for romance," co-edited two collections by American Muslims on love and relationships. She found that people met "through family, through friends, through sort of serendipitous meetings, through college, through work."

Back when she was the one looking, Maznavi, a lawyer, writer and daughter of Sri Lankan immigrants, met people through her parents, friends and extended family.

Then living in San Francisco, she found the pool of Muslims small. Her mom heard a Match.com radio ad and suggested she try it.

"I still resisted," Maznavi said. Eventually, she relented — and met her husband there.

Not as many fish in the sea

For Muslims seeking Muslims, "most of us are pretty few and far between and quite spread out," said Hoda Abraham, the show's other matchmaker. "You're not gonna go to the gym and just be surrounded by people that you could potentially marry."

That may mean having to try a long-distance relationship, she said. Many of her clients already used Muslim-specific and other dating apps, she said.

There're also some in-person events for Muslim singles seeking marriage.

In the show, the matchmakers outline their "Rules of Three" — three meetings within three months and 300 compatibility questions to go through together. Their matched clients experience those first-meeting jitters, the warmth of a connection or the pain of rejection, and the uncertainty in between.

In assessing a couple's compatibility, the matchmakers consider what they call the "halal-haram ratio," referring to the level of religious observance and how a couple's lifestyles would align.

One participant says she tries to perform the required daily prayers, but doesn't "particularly dress very modestly." She wants someone who's open to the possibility of her faith growing and "who goes out" and "enjoys themselves, but ... still follows the tenets of Islam — and trying to find a healthy balance of what that means." (She's also into good banter and concerts. Hairy men? Not so much).

Another participant says he wants a partner with "Islamic qualities" and has no strong preference on whether or not she wears the hijab.

"Many Muslims, even if they're not a practicing, adherent Muslim, will have certain things that they're very intense about: It could be the Ramadan practice. ... It could be that they stay away from pork. It could be the clothing," Elhady said. "There's a really serious lifestyle choice that is associated with Islam and I think that in marriage, you are looking for someone to complement your style."

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According to a Pew Research Center 2023-2024 study, 60% of U.S. Muslim adults said religion was “very important” in their lives. That’s close to the 55% of U.S. Christians who said the same in the survey.

Abraham said some online disliked the “halal-haram ratio” term, seeing it as normalizing “haram” behavior, meaning behavior that’s not religiously permitted. She pushes back. “We’re not normalizing it. We’re just saying obviously people practice to a certain level.”

Dating vs. courting

Then there’s the debate over what to call getting to know the other person: Is it dating? Courting?

“This is something we discussed a lot,” Abraham said. “If I say ‘dating,’ I mean courting and we actually specified that on the show, like, we’re intentional and we’re serious.”

Elhady said there were so many positive responses to the show, but noted that some Muslims didn’t like the word “dating.” To that, she says: Make your own definition, or call it what you’d like. (Some use the term “halal dating.”)

“In their mind, dating is a word that was made for non-Muslims by non-Muslims and it means that there’s a physical relationship prior to commitment,” she said. “The show is not depicting people in premarital sex. ... It’s depicting people searching for love.”

Among the questions that Kaiser Aslam gets asked by some of the students he serves as Muslim chaplain at the Center for Islamic Life at Rutgers University are: How to know if someone is compatible? And how to know them without getting intimate?

“In the Islamic tradition getting intimate, and sexually intimate is not allowed before marriage,” he said.

He suggests having serious conversations with accountability measures in place, like chaperones, meeting in relatively public places and clearly setting intentions “that you’re not trying to actually initiate intimacy or intimate contact, but you’re actually just trying to understand each other.” And, also, talking to the person’s friends and family, he said.

Marriage, faith and culture

Muslim Americans are vastly diverse — racially and ethnically.

“Young Muslims are finding people of different cultures over and over again, which is beautiful and great to see,” Aslam said.

For some, cultural differences can fuel “arguments of like, ‘No, we do marriage this way. No, in our tradition, the guy side pays for this. The girl side pays for this,’” said Aslam, who’s performed many marriages and provides premarital counseling.

Some parents object to their children marrying outside their culture, he said.

At times, there can be “racist underpinnings,” he said, adding: “We have to call it out for what it is. It’s not religious in any way, shape or form.” Theologically, he said, “we’re encouraged to make sure that the most diverse, good traditions have the ability of interacting with each other.”

Other times, he said, parents fear their children may be running away from their culture and need reassurance.

Tahirah Nailah Dean, who’s Black and Latina, said she’d encountered such barriers in her search, knowing that some potential matches were seeking to marry within their own culture and ethnicity. Some of her concerns also echo broader questions and debates beyond Muslim communities over racial preference and racial bias in dating.

Dean, an attorney who also writes about Muslim love and marriage, got married at 30 and later divorced.

In her 20s, she navigated the apps, but found dealing with such things as “ghosting” and “love bombing” emotionally draining. She tried matchmaking through the mosque and the “matchmaking aunties” as well as getting to know people through activities like volunteering at the mosque. She’d also asked friends to set her up.

Recently, she’s returned to the search.

Muslim or not, Elhady of the “Muslim Matchmaker” show argued, “people want to really fall in love — and it is hard to do in the modern age.”

Coastal communities restoring marshes, dunes, reefs to protect against rising seas and storm surges

By TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

In San Francisco Bay, salt ponds created more than a century ago are reverting to marshland. Along the New York and New Jersey coasts, beaches ravaged by Superstorm Sandy underwent extensive restoration. In Alabama, a rebuilt spit of land is shielding a historic town and providing wildlife habitat.

Coastal communities nationwide are ramping up efforts to fend off rising seas, higher tides and stronger storm surges that are chewing away at coastlines, pushing saltwater farther inland and threatening ecosystems and communities.

The need for coastal restoration has been in the spotlight this month after Louisiana officials canceled a \$3 billion project because of objections from the fishing industry and concerns about rising costs. The Mid-Barataria project was projected to rebuild more than 20 square miles (32 square kilometers) of land over about 50 years by diverting sediment-laden water from the Mississippi River.

But work continues on many other projects in Louisiana and around the country, including barrier islands, saltwater marshes, shellfish reefs and other natural features that provided protection before they were destroyed or degraded by development. Communities are also building flood walls, berms and levees to protect areas that lack adequate natural protection.

The work has become more urgent as climate change causes more intense and destructive storms and leads to sea-level rise that puts hundreds of communities and tens of millions of people at risk, scientists say.

"The sooner we can make these coastlines more resilient the better," said Doug George, a geological oceanographer at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Gulf Coast

In the U.S., perhaps nowhere is more vulnerable than the hurricane-prone Gulf Coast. Louisiana alone has lost more than 2,000 square miles (5,180 square kilometers) of coastline — more than any other state — over the past century, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Historically, sediment deposited by the Mississippi and other rivers rebuilt land and nourished shore-buffering marshes. But that function was disrupted by the construction of channels and levees, along with other development.

The dangers were magnified in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina breached flood walls and levees, submerging 80% of New Orleans and killing almost 1,400 people — followed closely by Hurricane Rita.

Afterward, the state formed the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority to lessen risks from storm surges and stem land loss.

Most of the almost \$18 billion spent in the past 20 years was to shore up levees, flood walls and other structures, the authority said.

Dozens of other projects are completed, planned or underway, including rebuilding marshes and other habitat with sediment dredged from waterways and restoring river flow to areas that have lacked it for years.

On Louisiana's Chandeleur Islands, a barrier island chain, the state will pump in sand to help rebuild them, which will dampen storm surges and benefit sea turtles and other wildlife, said Katie Freer-Leonards, who leads development of the state's 2029 coastal master plan.

The authority is digging a channel to allow water and sediment from the Mississippi River to flow into part of Maurepas Swamp, a roughly 218-square-mile forested wetland northwest of New Orleans that has been "dying for over a century" because of levees, project manager Brad Miller said.

Sediment dredged from elsewhere also has been pumped into thousands of acres of sinking marshes to nourish them and raise their levels.

The same is happening in other states.

In Bayou La Batre, Alabama — a fishing village built in the late 1700s — The Nature Conservancy built breakwaters offshore, then pumped in sediment and built ridges, now covered with vegetation. That cre-

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ated a "speed bump" that has helped protect the town from erosion, said Judy Haner, the Alabama Nature Conservancy's coastal programs director.

The conservancy and others also have been creating miles of oyster reefs, and are acquiring tracts of land away from the coast to allow habitats to move as seawater encroaches.

Such efforts won't prevent all land losses, but in Louisiana, "cumulatively, they could make a big difference," said Denise Reed, a research scientist who is working on Louisiana's coastal master plan. "It could buy us some time."

Pacific Coast

On the West Coast, communities vulnerable to sea-level rise also could see more flooding from increasingly intense atmospheric rivers, which carry water vapor from the ocean and dump huge amounts of rain in a short period of time.

So tidal marshes and estuaries drained for agriculture and industry are being restored along the entire coast, both for habitat and coastal protection.

Habitat restoration, not climate change, was the primary consideration when planning began about 20 years ago to restore marshland along the south end of San Francisco Bay, destroyed when ponds were created to harvest sea salt.

But as sediment naturally fills in ponds and marsh plants return, "we're realizing that ... marshes absorb wave energy, storm surge and the force of high tides," said Dave Haling, executive project manager at the California State Coastal Conservancy.

That helps protect whatever is behind them, including sea walls and land that otherwise could be inundated or washed away, including some of California's most expensive real estate, near Silicon Valley.

Projects also are underway along Alaska's coast and in Hawaii, where native residents are rebuilding ancient rocky enclosures originally intended to trap fish, but which also protect against storm surge.

Atlantic Coast

Thirteen years after Superstorm Sandy swamped the Atlantic coast, communities still are restoring natural buffers and building other protective structures.

Sandy began as a fairly routine hurricane in the fall of 2012 before merging with other storms, stretching for a record 1,000 miles and pushing enormous amounts of ocean water into coastal communities.

But the threat of future storm surges could be even greater because sea levels in some areas could rise as much as three feet within 50 years, said Donald E. Cresitello, a coastal engineer and senior coastal planner for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps rebuilt beaches, dunes and human-made structures from Massachusetts to Virginia and now is turning to areas farther inland that are increasingly vulnerable to more powerful storm surges, Cresitello said.

"If there's a river coming to the coast, that storm surge has the potential to just ride up that river," depending on the storm, he said.

A "phenomenal amount" of the U.S. population lives and works along its coasts, so protecting those areas is important to the U.S. economy, said George, the NOAA scientist. But it is also important to preserve generations of culture, he said.

"When you think about why people should care ... it's a whole way of life," George said.

How do mascots like the Phillie Phanatic stay fresh in the summer heat? Vodka and water

By DAN GELSTON AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The Phillie Phanatic has a boozy little secret for surviving the dog days of summer. Vodka and water. Neat. Hold the lemon.

Not for hydration. "He's a milk guy," jokes Tom Burgoyne, who brings the Phanatic to life.

Burgoyne, officially known as the mascot's best friend, works up a mighty sweat dancing on dugouts during Philadelphia's steamy summer nights. Lysol or Febreze used to be the go-tos for keeping the stench

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under control.

Most mascots these days order off the happy hour menu when they really want to feel fresh and clean on the inside.

"Now a big thing in the mascot world is vodka and water," Burgoyne said. "You put it in half-and-half, maybe a third vodka, the rest water, you put it in a squeegee bottle and you can spray your head that way and sometimes that takes the smell away."

Sports fans around the globe get their kicks from all costumed creatures great and small that entertain no matter how red-hot it gets under that heavy honker. The musky muppets take the field through triple-digit heat, broken temperature records and oppressive humidity that can wilt even the most die-hard fan during the summer stretch. Yes, sweaty is the head that wears the crown — such as Kansas Royals' mascot Sluggerrr — and regular costume cleaning is part of the mascot game.

Of course, so is staying safe.

Mascot performers use vents, fans and lots of breaks to combat the heat

The Phanatic, Fredbird and Clark the Cub all need a respite from the sweltering heat, which include frequent breaks, constant hydration, cooling materials and proper ventilation.

No one with a baseball for a head wants to faint on the field and need even more stitches.

Keeping those performers from overheating is top of mind for Mitch Maxine. His company BAM Mascots, designs and manufactures all sorts of bears, birds, sea creatures and monsters for sports teams at all levels. He understands a good mascot is more than just fabric and fur. Take a walk in their fuzzy feet and most costume designers understand the health and safety of the person inside matters just as much as the amusement provided at the ol' ballgame.

"In terms of the actual manufacturing of the costumes, they're just hot," Maxine said. "In terms of how we build it or what we make it out of, it's about how to reduce that level of heat."

That's not always easy when designing a muscular costume meant to be worn for hours.

"The thing that prevents people from being hot is usually the movement of air," Maxine said. "If I make a costume, even if I make it out of very light, thin material, if I wear it in the middle of the heat, unless there's something to move air through the material and across my skin, I'm going to be hot."

BAM is among the mascot manufacturers that strategically place vents or a battery-operated fan to circulate fresh air and expel stale air and heat inside the head. Lightweight, durable fabrics are used to wick away moisture and inconspicuous ventilation ports — think of fabric screens on the eyes, nose, mouth, ears or your favorite parrot or moose — can provide fresh air.

No amount of costume tech overrides the importance of staying hydrated

Maxine also suggests cooling vests that can help regulate body temperatures in environments hotter than a pennant race or during extreme physical activity.

Yet, the best advice on those worrisome weather days may as well come straight from mom before a Little League game: Take frequent breaks. Drink water.

"We've had a couple of clients saying they want some sort of system built into the costume where a performer can wear a water bottle inside the pouch and have a straw come up inside their head so they can sip water while they're performing," he said.

BAM made it for one customer. It was a simple design, just a belt with a holder for a water bottle, with a tube that ran up the character's chest and into the head. More could be sold in the future.

The Phanatic suit doesn't include any vents or fans, but the 59-year-old Burgoyne — who started performing as the Phanatic at old Veterans Stadium in the late 1980s — has his own dressing room inside the bowels of Citizens Bank Park and can scamper away for a quick rest to beat the heat.

It's needed. Consider, this summer in Philadelphia, the city's public health department declared a heat emergency once temperatures spiked to triple-digits and power outages were even reported.

"At the Vet, I used to wear bags of ice around my belly," Burgoyne said. "It turned to hot water after five minutes. I don't know if it really did any good at all. Citizens Bank Park seems to have more of a cross-wind so it doesn't steam up the way the Vet used. When we came over here (in 2004), I stopped doing it."

Bernie Brewer, Blooper and Bernie the Marlin might want to try sticking their swampy extendable body

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parts in the freezer.

There's an 80% chance the world will break another annual temperature record in the next five years, and it's even more probable that the world will again exceed the international temperature threshold set 10 years ago, according to a five-year forecast released in May by the World Meteorological Organization and the U.K. Meteorological Office.

Phillies fans send cooling vests in the mail to the Phanatic ("I get a lot of, 'try this, try that,'" Burgoyne said) or cooling collars to stave off heat exhaustion. The Phanatic — the costume weighs about 35 pounds, Burgoyne normally wears just T-shirts and shorts under the flightless bird — is always hot no matter the weather because of the constant motion needed to ride ATVs or fight Tommy Lasorda or hug it out with Jason Kelce.

On those stifling hot days, the Phanatic doesn't charm the crowd for more than 20 or 30 minutes at a time without a break and, no, he's never passed out. Burgoyne — such a delightful storyteller, it's a shame the Phanatic is mute — says a perfect weather day for a mascot is almost any day in October.

"If the Phanatic is out there running around doing his thing in October, all is right in the world," he said. "He's not sweating as much, I'm not sweating as much and the Phillies are in the playoffs. That is the ideal time."

Republicans look to make a U-turn on federal commitment to electric vehicles for the Postal Service

By SUSAN HAIGH Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A year after being lauded for its plan to replace thousands of aging, gas-powered mail trucks with a mostly electric fleet, the U.S. Postal Service is facing congressional attempts to strip billions in federal EV funding.

In June, the Senate parliamentarian blocked a Republican proposal in a major tax-and-spending bill to sell off the agency's new electric vehicles and infrastructure and revoke remaining federal money. But efforts to halt the fleet's shift to clean energy continue in the name of cost savings.

Donald Maston, president of the National Rural Letter Carriers' Association, said canceling the program now would have the opposite effect, squandering millions of dollars.

"I think it would be shortsighted for Congress to now suddenly decide they're going to try to go backwards and take the money away for the EVs or stop that process because that's just going to be a bunch of money on infrastructure that's been wasted," he said.

Beyond that, many in the scientific community fear the government could pass on an opportunity to reduce carbon emissions that contribute to global warming when urgent action is needed.

Electrified vehicles reduce emissions

A 2022 University of Michigan study found the new electric postal vehicles could cut total greenhouse gas emissions by up to 20 million tons over the predicted, cumulative 20-year lifetime of the trucks. That's a fraction of the more than 6,000 million metric tons emitted annually in the United States, said professor Gregory A. Keoleian, co-director of the university's Center for Sustainable Systems. But he said the push toward electric vehicles is critical and needs to accelerate, given the intensifying impacts of climate change.

"We're already falling short of goals for reducing emissions," Keoleian said. "We've been making progress, but the actions being taken or proposed will really reverse decarbonization progress that has been made to date."

Many GOP lawmakers share President Donald Trump's criticism of the Biden-era green energy push and say the Postal Service should stick to delivering mail.

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, said "it didn't make sense for the Postal Service to invest so heavily in an all-electric force." She said she will pursue legislation to rescind what is left of the \$3 billion from the Inflation Reduction Act allocated to help cover the \$10 billion cost of new postal vehicles.

Ernst has called the EV initiative a "boondoggle" and "a textbook example of waste," citing delays, high costs and concerns over cold-weather performance.

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"You always evaluate the programs, see if they are working. But the rate at which the company that's providing those vehicles is able to produce them, they are so far behind schedule, they will never be able to fulfill that contract," Ernst said during a recent appearance at the Iowa State Fair, referring to Wisconsin-based Oshkosh Defense.

"For now," she added, "gas-powered vehicles — use some ethanol in them — I think is wonderful."

Corn-based ethanol is a boon to Iowa's farmers, but the effort to reverse course has other Republican support.

Rep. Michael Cloud, R-Texas, a co-sponsor of the rollback effort, has said the EV order should be canceled because the project "has delivered nothing but delays, defective trucks, and skyrocketing costs."

The Postal Service maintains that the production delay of the Next Generation Delivery Vehicles, or NGDVs, was "very modest" and not unexpected.

"The production quantity ramp-up was planned for and intended to be very gradual in the early months to allow time for potential modest production or supplier issues to be successfully resolved," spokesperson Kim Frum said.

EVs help in modernization effort

The independent, self-funded federal agency, which is paid for mostly by postage and product sales, is in the middle of a \$40 billion, 10-year modernization and financial stabilization plan. The EV effort had the full backing of Democratic President Joe Biden, who pledged to move toward an all-electric federal fleet of car and trucks.

The "Deliver for America" plan calls for modernizing the ground fleet, notably the Grumman Long Life Vehicle, which dates back to 1987 and is fuel-inefficient at 9 mpg. The vehicles are well past their projected 24-year lifespan and are prone to breakdowns and even fires.

"Our mechanics are miracle workers," said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union. "The parts are not available. They fabricate them. They do the best they can."

The Postal Service announced in 2022 it would deploy at least 66,000 electric vehicles by 2028, including commercial off-the-shelf models, after years of deliberation and criticism it was moving too slowly to reduce emissions. By 2024, the agency was awarded a Presidential Sustainability Award for its efforts to electrify the largest fleet in the federal government.

Building new postal trucks

In 2021, Oshkosh Defense was awarded a contract for up to 165,000 battery electric and internal combustion engine Next Generation vehicles over 10 years.

The first of the odd-looking trucks, with hoods resembling a duck's bill, began service in Georgia last year. Designed for greater package capacity, the trucks are equipped with airbags, blind-spot monitoring, collision sensors, 360-degree cameras and antilock brakes.

There's also a new creature comfort: air conditioning.

Douglas Lape, special assistant to the president of the National Association of Letter Carriers and a former carrier, is among numerous postal employees who have had a say in the new design. He marvels at how Oshkosh designed and built a new vehicle, transforming an old North Carolina warehouse into a factory along the way.

"I was in that building when it was nothing but shelving," he said. "And now, being a completely functioning plant where everything is built in-house — they press the bodies in there, they do all of the assembly — it's really amazing in my opinion."

Where things stand now

The agency has so far ordered 51,500 NGDVs, including 35,000 battery-powered vehicles. To date, it has received 300 battery vehicles and 1,000 gas-powered ones.

Former Postmaster General Louis DeJoy said in 2022 the agency expected to purchase chiefly zero-emissions delivery vehicles by 2026. It still needs some internal combustion engine vehicles that travel longer distances.

Frum, the Postal Service spokesperson, said the planned NGDV purchases were "carefully considered from a business perspective" and are being deployed to routes and facilities where they will save money.

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The agency has also received more than 8,200 of 9,250 Ford E-Transit electric vehicles it has ordered, she said.

Ernst said it's fine for the Postal Service to use EVs already purchased.

"But you know what? We need to be smart about the way we are providing services through the federal government," she said. "And that was not a smart move."

Maxwell Woody, lead author of the University of Michigan study, made the opposite case.

Postal vehicles, he said, have low average speeds and a high number of stops and starts that enable regenerative braking. Routes average under 30 miles and are known in advance, making planning easier.

"It's the perfect application for an electric vehicle," he said, "and it's a particularly inefficient application for an internal combustion engine vehicle."

Today in History: August 18, 19th Amendment gives women the vote

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, Aug. 18, the 230th day of 2025. There are 135 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Aug. 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, guaranteeing American women's right to vote, was ratified as Tennessee became the 36th state to approve it.

Also on this date:

In 1590, John White, the governor of the Roanoke Island colony (in present-day North Carolina), returned to Roanoke after nearly three years abroad only to find the settlement deserted; the fate of the "Lost Colony" remains a mystery.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson issued his Proclamation of Neutrality, aimed at keeping the United States out of World War I.

In 1958, Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita* was published in the United States.

In 1963, James Meredith became the first Black student to graduate from the University of Mississippi.

In 1969, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in Bethel, New York, wound to a close after three nights with a mid-morning set by Jimi Hendrix.

In 1983, Hurricane Alicia slammed into the Texas coast, leaving 21 dead and causing more than a billion dollars' worth of damage.

In 2004, in Athens, Paul Hamm (hahm) won the men's gymnastics all-around Olympic gold medal by the closest margin ever in the event; controversy followed after it was discovered that a scoring error cost Yang Tae-young of South Korea the title.

In 2005, a judge in Wichita, Kansas, sentenced BTK serial killer Dennis Rader to 10 consecutive life terms, the maximum the law would allow.

In 2014, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon ordered the National Guard to Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis convulsed by protests over the fatal shooting of a Black 18-year-old, Michael Brown.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-director Robert Redford is 89. Actor Carole Bouquet is 68. Actor Denis Leary is 68. Actor Madeleine Stowe is 67. ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff is 64. Actor Edward Norton is 56. Actor Christian Slater is 56. Actor Kaitlin Olson is 50. Actor-comedian Andy Samberg is 47. Artist-model Frances Bean Cobain is 33. Actor-singer Maia Mitchell is 32. Actor Madelaine Petsch is 31. Olympic gold medal swimmer Summer McIntosh is 19.