

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday., Sept 4

School Breakfast: Maple French Toast Bake.  
School Lunch: Sloppy Joe, potato wedges  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.  
Volleyball: Sisseton at Groton: (Gym: 7th-5, 8th-6;  
Arena: C-5, JV-6, V-7:15)  
Cross Country at Redfield, 10 a.m.

## Friday, Sept. 5

School Breakfast: Breakfast boats.  
School Lunch: Hot dogs, baked beans.  
Homecoming Parade, 1 p.m.  
Football hosts Winner, 7 p.m.

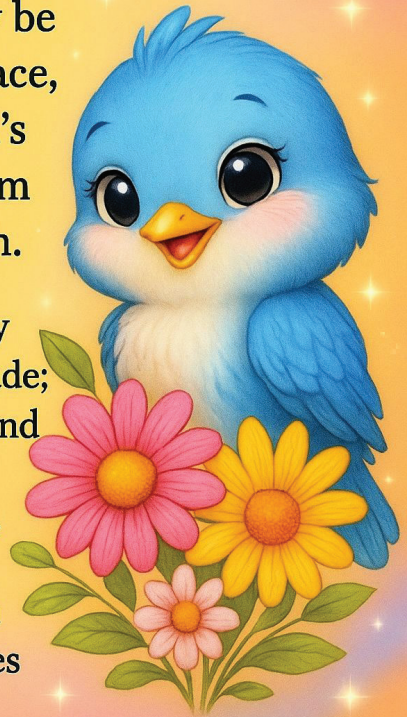
**Groton Daily Independent**  
**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**  
**Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460**

## Good Morning Happy Thursday

May your day be  
filled with peace,  
joy, and God's  
blessings from  
start to finish.

"This is the day  
the Lord has made;  
we will rejoice and  
be glad in it."  
– Psalm 118:24

God's Spoken  
Word Ministries



## Saturday, Sept 6

Groton Fly-In/Drive-in at Groton Municipal Airport  
Fall City Wide Rummage Sale, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Junior High Volleyball Tournament at Northwest-  
ern, 9 a.m.  
Soccer hosts West Central (Girls at noon, Boys at  
2 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.**

## Florida Vaccine Mandate

Florida's surgeon general said yesterday the state would work to end all vaccine mandates, including those required for children to attend school. If successful, Florida would become the first state to undo its vaccine mandate program.

Vaccine mandates date back to 1827, when Boston became the first city to require students to be inoculated against smallpox to enroll in public school. Massachusetts adopted the approach in the 1850s, followed by New York, Connecticut, and others. By 1980, all 50 states had adopted similar requirements, following the invention of the measles vaccine in 1963. Today, over 50 million schoolchildren are required to be vaccinated against polio, chickenpox, tetanus, and other illnesses. Parents in most states can secure religious or medical exemptions.

Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) said he will end all mandates not written into state law, and called on the state's Republican-led legislature to eliminate the others.

## Venezuelan Drug Gang

A federal appeals court ruled late Tuesday that President Donald Trump cannot fast-track deportations of suspected Tren de Aragua members under the Alien Enemies Act. The judges determined alleged affiliation with the Venezuelan gang does not meet the wartime act's threshold for expelling citizens of hostile nations.

Founded in 2014 in a Venezuelan prison, Tren de Aragua has since grown into a transnational gang with known cells in Colombia, Peru, and Chile. While its US footprint is not publicly known, Trump accuses the group of violent crimes and illicit drug trafficking and, contrary to a declassified intelligence assessment, claims it operates under Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. After declaring the gang a terrorist organization, he invoked the Alien Enemies Act in March to send 137 alleged members to an El Salvadoran prison without court hearings.

Separately, the Trump administration threatened further military action against Latin American drug cartels, following Tuesday's lethal strike on an alleged Tren de Aragua drug-smuggling boat.

## Polymarket Returns

The Commodity Futures Trading Commission approved Polymarket to relaunch in the US yesterday. Founded in 2020, Polymarket is the world's largest betting market by trading volume, handling \$9B last year.

In 2022, the CFTC found Polymarket acting as an unregulated exchange, ending its US operations. After several accounts placed multimillion-dollar bets that then-candidate Donald Trump would win the 2024 presidential election, the FBI opened an investigation into whether US users were still operating on the platform—a decision Polymarket founder Shayne Coplan characterized as politically motivated. The FBI under Trump closed its investigation in July without comment. Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr., joined the company as an adviser last week.

Billionaire Thomas Peterffy has suggested betting markets will eclipse the stock market within 15 years. Polymarket and its competitor Kalshi have nonetheless struggled to drum up sustained interest outside of US election cycles, witnessing steep drops in engagement this year.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

The 2025 NFL regular season kicks off tonight (8:20 pm ET, NBC) with the Dallas Cowboys taking on the Philadelphia Eagles.

The internet's best resources on the NFL (1440 Topics) | FIFA to use dynamic pricing model for 2026 World Cup.

Willie Nelson, Neil Young, and John Mellencamp to headline Farm Aid 40th Anniversary music festival on Sept. 20 to benefit US farmers.

Newsmax files antitrust lawsuit against Fox News, accusing Fox of holding monopoly on conservative viewership.

"Superman" sequel announced with July 2027 release date.

"The Office" spinoff, "The Paper," renewed for a second season ahead of today's series premiere (Peacock).

## Science & Technology

First known organism capable of giving birth to two separate species discovered; queen Iberian harvester ant mates with a different species to create an army of worker ants.

Neurons responsible for sociability in children gradually stop driving the behavior as brains age into adulthood.

DNA analysis of hundreds of ancient skeletal remains reveals a mass migration of Slavic groups into Eastern Europe during the sixth to eighth centuries.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.5%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq +1.0%), with Nasdaq lifted by Alphabet shares rising to all-time high after antitrust ruling allowing Google to keep Chrome browser.

US job openings fell to roughly 7.2 million in July from 7.4 million in June; figure is lowest since September 2024 and below expectations of 7.4 million.

Macy's shares close up nearly 21% after retailer beats earnings estimates, reports strongest quarterly same-store sales for first time in three years.

Oil giant ConocoPhillips to lay off up to 25% of 13,000-person global workforce.

## Politics & World Affairs

Federal judge orders Trump administration to restore over \$2.6B in research funding to Harvard, citing cuts as illegal retaliation by the White House.

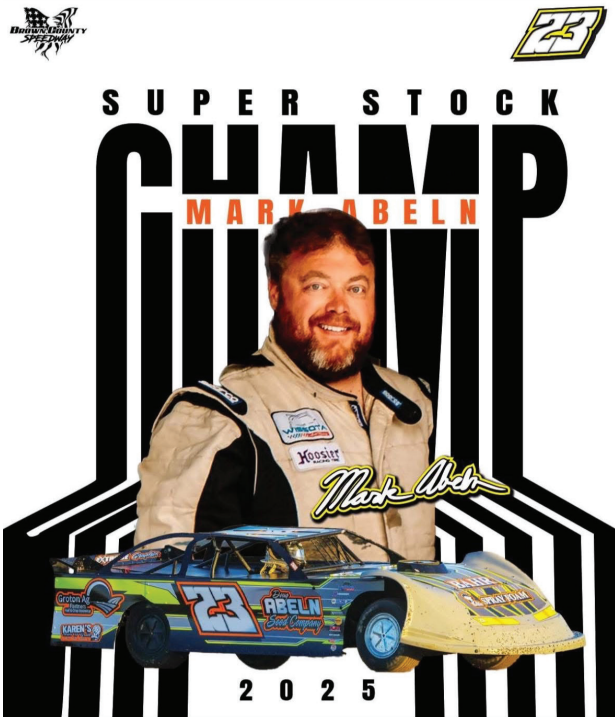
Leaked UN nuclear watchdog report says Iran increased its stockpile of near weapon-grade uranium by over 70 pounds in the weeks before Israel's June 13 attack.

Streetcar derails and crashes in popular Lisbon tourist location, killing at least 15 people and injuring 18 others.

Sudan appeals for international aid after a landslide wiped out a rural village Tuesday, killing roughly 1,000 people.



## Abeln Captures Brown County Speedway Super Stock Points Championship



**Mark Abeln wins the Super Stock division at Brown County Speedway.**

"I watched some friends race, and then my dad asked if I wanted to try it," Abeln recalled. "He got me started, and after that, it was an addiction."

Abeln began his career in a Pure Stock — essentially a street car outfitted with a roll cage. After a year, he moved up to the Super Stock class, where he has stayed ever since. Along the way, he also tried his hand at racing modifieds and late models.

"Late models were fun, but really expensive," he said. "The Super Stocks are more relaxed. You can be competitive but also just go out there and have fun."

### The Track and the Team

While Abeln occasionally travels to Watertown, Miller, or even Madison, the Brown County Speedway remains his home track. This season saw 31 different Super Stock drivers compete, with 16 to 20 showing up on a typical Friday night.

Behind every successful driver is a team. For Abeln, that includes his wife, Kelly, who he credits as the cornerstone of his racing life.

"If it wasn't for her, we wouldn't be doing this," he said. "She lets me follow this passion."

Other key members of Abeln's crew include Brandon Smith, Dan Nelson, Marshall McConnell, and Abeln's son Kaden, who also races in the same class.

"There's nothing like getting behind the wheel," Abeln said. "Any stress from the week disappears because you have to focus on the race and the safety of others. It's a

ABERDEEN — For Groton-area driver Mark Abeln, Friday nights at the Brown County Speedway are more than just racing — they're a release. This season, that passion paid off as Abeln captured the Super Stock points championship, edging out a strong field of competitors.

Abeln, who races under the WISSOTA Super Stock classification, wrapped up the title in dramatic fashion, battling fellow driver Austin Arbogast right down to the final race of the season.

"We went into the last night just nine points apart," Abeln said. "That's nothing. It can change in one lap depending on where you finish."

When the green flag dropped, Abeln's car was dialed in. He eventually passed Arbogast, who later had to exit the race due to a flat tire. By the end of the night, Abeln had stretched his lead to 18 points, securing the championship he'd been chasing for years.

"The stars finally aligned," Abeln said with a smile. "We've been trying forever to win this, and it finally happened."

### Years in the Making

Abeln's journey to the top wasn't a short one. He's been racing on and off for roughly two decades, first getting behind the wheel in 2001 after being introduced to the sport by his father, Doug Abeln.



**Kelly, Kaden and Mark Abeln.**



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huge stress reliever.”

## A Family Tradition

Now that Abeln has secured his first championship, he’s considering stepping back to support Kaden’s racing career.

“My son is doing really well,” Abeln said. “It would be pretty cool to focus on helping him chase a title next.”

Kaden races the No. 23 Jr car, continuing the family tradition at Brown County Speedway. As for Mark’s plans?

“We might just flip a coin,” he laughed. “Either I’ll be out there again, or I’ll be the guy in the pits making sure Kaden’s ready to go.”

Regardless of what the future holds, this season will be one to remember for Abeln and his team — a season where hard work, family support, and dedication led to a long-awaited championship.



Mark and Kaden



Kaden’s vehicle is the 23 Jr on the left and Mark’s vehicle is the 23 on the right.

## South Dakota Mosquito



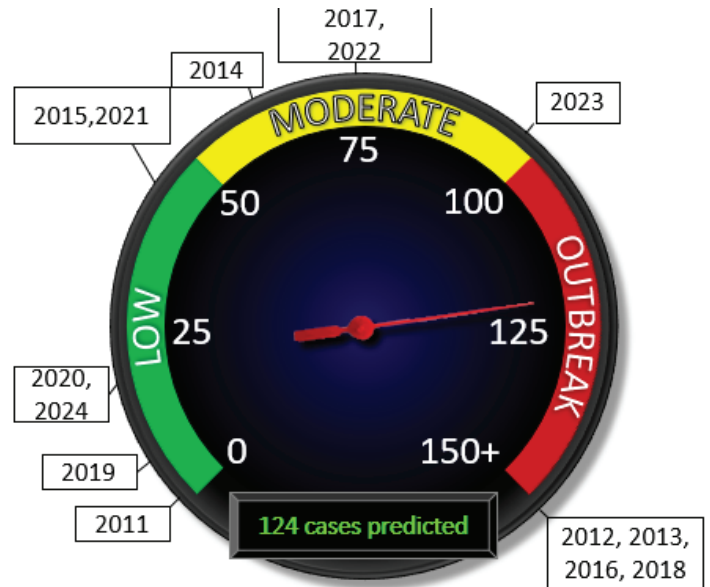
SD WNV (as of September 3):

45 human cases (Beadle, Bon Homme, Brookings, Brown, Corson, Codington, Charles Mix, Grant, Hamlin, Hand, Hughes, Hutchinson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Marshall, Miner, Minnehaha, Pennington, Sanborn, Spink, Walworth) and 2 deaths

6 human viremic blood donors (Brookings, Brown, Codington, Minnehaha, Pennington)

7 counties with positive mosquito pools (Beadle, Brown, Brookings, Codington, Hughes, Lincoln, Minnehaha)

US WNV (as of September 2): 577 cases (AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NM, NY, OH, OK, OR, PA, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, WI, WY)



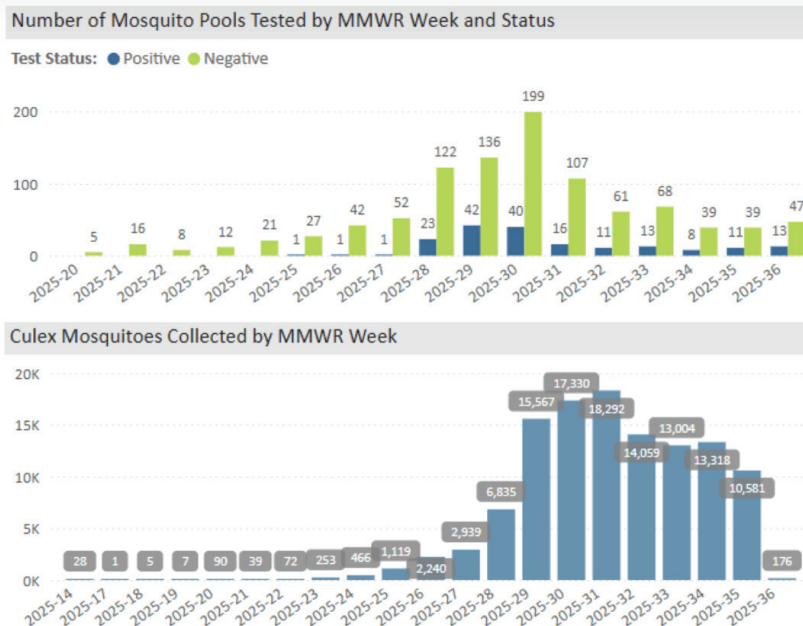
WNV Prediction Model – Total Number of Cases Projected for 2025, South Dakota (as of September 3)

Mosquito Surveillance Summary for 2025

Total sites collecting mosquitoes: 57

Total mosquito pools tested: 1,181

% positivity: 15.24%







## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Governor race exposes divergent paths on economic development among South Dakota Republicans

**Some in party are criticizing their own leaders' decades-long approach**

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 10:26 AM

Something "perplexing" is happening in South Dakota Republican politics, according to Pat Costello.

He has decades of experience in business and government, having worked as an accountant, a restaurateur, a Sioux Falls city councilman and as commissioner of the Governor's Office of Economic Development from 2011 to 2016.

Throughout his experience, the approach to business by Republican political leaders has been consistent.

"I can't remember a governor who wasn't pro-economic development," he said.

Costello thinks that could change after next year's election. Two of the three declared Republican candidates for governor are critical of how the state has involved itself in economic development for the past four decades under Republican control.

One of those candidates is state Speaker of the House Jon Hansen.

"You're using tax dollars to bring in companies that compete with current South Dakota businesses," Hansen said. "You're using their tax dollars to fund their competition."

He has pledged to put an end to what he describes as "corporate welfare." That would be a reversal of Republican policy and philosophy that has guided economic development in South Dakota since the 1980s.

#### **Mickelson creates the modern GOED**

The late former Gov. George Mickelson combined several separate state offices in 1987 to create the



**In this combination of images, carbon dioxide pipeline opponents attend a rally Jan. 13, 2025, at the Capitol in Pierre, and South Dakota congressional delegates and other speakers and attendees cut a ribbon to celebrate Madison's connection to the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System on Aug. 21, 2024.** (South Dakota Searchlight photos by

Joshua Haiar and Makenzie Huber; photo illustration by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)



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Governor's Office of Economic Development. Gov. Dennis Daugaard made the office a Cabinet-level agency in 2011.

Julie Johnson was the state secretary of labor when Mickelson created the office, and she helped write the legislation putting its initial programs into law. She said South Dakota's incentives for businesses grew out of necessity in the 1980s. Back then, she said, the state had few tools to compete with other states for jobs and business investments.

The Mickelson administration used a temporary sales tax increase to create a revolving fund offering low-interest loans to businesses for startup or expansion — the Revolving Economic Development and Initiative (REDI) Fund. Mickelson also used a new, permanent fee on employer-paid unemployment insurance taxes to create a governor-controlled grant program supporting research and economic development, the Future Fund.

Mickelson pitched his ideas to legislators during his 1987 State of the State speech. Referencing the Future Fund, he said South Dakota needed to make "long-term investments."

"Too often, politicians are attracted to short-term programs so that by the next election they might be able to point back and look at benefits or look at results," Mickelson said. "The courageous politicians are people who are willing to look at the long term and make a long-term investment in what we believe is right."

He said the money would be used for purposes including libraries, scholarships, vocational education, tourism development and scientific research. Johnson said those kinds of projects were needed.

"Investments in science, research, and tech were seen as ways to build opportunities and keep young people here," Johnson said. "Without tools like the Future Fund, we didn't stand a chance."

Both funds still exist. The REDI Fund awarded a total of \$15.9 million in loans for eight projects in 2024, retaining or creating a projected 447 jobs. The Future Fund awarded four grants totaling \$28.6 million last year.

The office has created other programs since the 1980s. Last year, the office and its various boards approved \$264 million in aid for businesses. Although some of that is direct spending in the form of state-funded grants, much of it consists of loans, sales tax refunds, federal funds, and bonds that leverage the state's tax-exempt status.

The office's 2024 annual report says its efforts helped create 1,085 jobs and spark \$916 million in total capital investment projects.

Those numbers haven't spared the office from criticism. For example, a legislative committee endorsed a bill last winter to abolish the employer fee that supports the Future Fund. It failed 32-38 in the state House of Representatives. The representative who sponsored that bill, Liz May, a Republican from Kyle, told South Dakota Searchlight she plans to reintroduce it.

## **Republican lawmakers grill office's new leader**

During a recent meeting of the Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee, the governor's new commissioner of economic development, Bill Even, introduced himself to lawmakers. Even and his staff were peppered with critical questions from some Republicans on the committee.

"Are you making dollars available to just as many small business owners as you are to large, outside-of-South Dakota corporations?" asked Rep. Julie Auch, R-Yankton.

Even said roughly three-quarters of projects involve existing South Dakota businesses, mostly with fewer than 500 employees.

Assistant House Majority Leader Marty Overweg, R-New Holland, said some state assistance is used to prop up "bad deals." He pointed to a shrimp-farming project that has yet to break ground after receiving a \$6.5 million low-interest loan in 2018 from Madison's regional economic development group. Of that amount, \$5.5 million was a state Future Fund grant to the development group, and \$1 million came from the development group itself.

Then-Gov. Daugaard awarded the Future Fund grant to the Lake Area Improvement Corporation in Madison, which loaned the money to Minnesota-based trū Shrimp, Even told the committee. The improvement

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corporation did not reply to an interview request.

The company planned to break ground by the end of 2019 and create more than 100 jobs, but construction never started. In May 2023, Michael Ziebell, president and CEO of the company, told South Dakota Public Broadcasting he hoped to break ground in 2024, offering over 60 jobs. The company did not respond to South Dakota Searchlight's requests for an interview.

Even acknowledged the project's long delays and told lawmakers the state is reviewing legal and financial options to recover the grant.

"My active engagement here is indicative of the fact that both myself and the governor are interested in understanding how you ensure that projects move forward," Even said.

Overweg was not satisfied.

"It's not what government 'can' do, it's what government 'should' do," Overweg told South Dakota Searchlight after the meeting. "We are built on a free-market society. When government becomes the driver of economic development, it distorts the market."

Overweg said he might support incentive programs if they came with stronger accountability. Right now, he said, companies "can get taxpayer money, pay low wages, and their workers still qualify for Medicaid. That's a double cost to taxpayers."

Johnson, who helped create some of the programs, thinks the criticism of economic development policy from some Republicans stems from frustrations over a controversial pipeline proposal. Summit Carbon Solutions, of Iowa, wants to capture carbon dioxide from dozens of ethanol plants and transport it via a five-state pipeline, including South Dakota, to a sequestration site in North Dakota. Supporters, including some Republicans, describe the project as economic development, but a coalition of opponents — including a wing of the Republican Party — oppose it because of concerns about the rights of landowners along the route.

Fourteen incumbent Republican legislators lost their primary elections in 2024, partly due to a split in the party over the pipeline. The Legislature and Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden went on to ban carbon pipelines from using a legal avenue called eminent domain to obtain land access from landowners.

"There's been a philosophical shift, yes," Johnson said. "But it feels like guilt by association — especially after the backlash against the carbon pipeline project. People learned the wrong lessons from that fight and are now vilifying economic development writ large."

## A 2026 Republican primary issue

Economic development policy is already an issue in the 2026 race for the Republican nomination for governor. So far, the party's declared candidates are Hansen, Aberdeen businessman Toby Doeden and U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson. Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden, who's filling out the term of former Gov. Kristi Noem after she accepted a Trump Cabinet position, has not announced whether he'll run but is expected to join the race.

Doeden told South Dakota Searchlight he hopes to change the focus of the Governor's Office of Economic Development. He said the state should shift its focus away from job creation, pointing to South Dakota's 1.9% unemployment rate. He said the office should focus on helping existing businesses thrive, rather than recruiting new ones.

"We should be helping them be more efficient, more profitable — so they can reinvest in their people and communities," Doeden said.

Doeden would also establish a small business task force and have the Governor's Office of Economic Development allocate more of its efforts toward in-state entrepreneurs.

"There are two distinct paths," he said. "Congressman Johnson wants to subsidize billion-dollar companies from out of state. I want to help South Dakotans build better futures for themselves."

Johnson rejected that claim, saying, "As governor, my top economic development focus will always be homegrown businesses."

Johnson previously served in the Rounds and Daugaard administrations, and as an elected member of

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the state Public Utilities Commission. South Dakota Searchlight asked Johnson for his vision for economic development, and his office sent a statement.

"We will grow the economy with new small businesses, new energy production, expanded dairy, and bringing high-tech jobs home to South Dakota. We will keep tax rates low by growing the tax base," the statement said. "This is growth with a purpose — not growth for its own sake, but growth that creates opportunity for the next generation."

Without mentioning the carbon pipeline fight specifically, Johnson said during a recent public forum that he is "befuddled" by blanket opposition to economic development, including data centers and other large projects. He said South Dakota leaders need to be "visionary" and bring new industries to the state "or we are saying that our children will have diminished opportunities." That, Johnson said, is "absolutely unacceptable."

"It's un-American and it's not at all capitalist," he said.

Hansen responded on social media, writing that South Dakotans like him aren't "anti-development," but against "Washington-style giveaways that shovel OUR money into projects that benefit coastal billionaires while our families and businesses foot the bill."

Hansen said in a statement to Searchlight that his priority is "freedom and the free market. Making sure our kids get a good education. Stewarding the land our grandparents homesteaded. Putting food on the table for our families. NOT cutting sweetheart deals for big politically connected corporations."

Although Rhoden signed the ban on eminent domain for carbon pipelines, the rest of his approach to economic development has largely been a continuation of past practices. That includes the appointment of Even, whose service in several prior state government positions included a previous stint as commissioner of economic development.

Rhoden hasn't announced that he's running, but he does have a campaign website that alludes to economic development and says "he's committed to keeping the doors of opportunity wide open for everyone, from farmers and ranchers to small-town entrepreneurs and big-city business owners."

## **Traditional approach works, defenders say**

Nathan Sanderson, a Republican, executive director of the South Dakota Retailers Association and former director of policy and operations in the Daugaard administration, said one of the state's greatest economic development successes is the dairy industry.

He said because of the state recruiting out-of-state operations and supporting local expansions through loans, bonds, grants and tax relief from 2011 to 2023, South Dakota's dairy cow population more than doubled from 90,000 to 187,000 as North Dakota's collapsed from 20,000 to 14,000, according to data from the National Agriculture Statistics Service.

"That is a direct result of government engagement," Sanderson said. "If the state didn't get involved, that growth wouldn't have happened. This isn't about picking winners and losers — it's about building partnerships to improve quality of life."

Costello said incentives are often the only meaningful tool South Dakota can offer to compete nationally. "If every state dropped its business incentives, we could, too," he said. "But they haven't, and we can't afford to sit on the sidelines."

But he also said criticisms of former Gov. Kristi Noem's use of the Future Fund in recent years were valid. Examples included her use of the fund for a \$2.5 million contract to promote and conduct the Cinch Play-offs Governor's Cup rodeo in Sioux Falls. Noem played a starring role in the rodeo, carrying the American flag into the arena on horseback and posing for photos with the event winners.

Noem also used \$13.5 million to help construct a Rapid City-area shooting range lawmakers declined to fund, and approved a contract for up to \$9 million, mostly from the Future Fund, for the Freedom Works Here workforce recruitment campaign starring herself.

Costello said state economic development tools are intended to be used with everyday South Dakotans in mind.

"We've always said we work through the business community, but we work for the citizens," he said.



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"It's about encouraging better jobs, higher wages and a better quality of life."

While acknowledging that not every deal succeeds, Costello said the overall record is positive. South Dakota's median household income trailed the national average throughout the 1980s and '90s but caught up and even surpassed it several times since 2008.

"Any economic development strategy will have wins and losses," Costello said. "The real question is whether we've improved life for South Dakotans. The answer is yes."

*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*

## North Dakota tribes become a model for promoting Native tourism, with spillover into South Dakota

BY: JEFF BEACH-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 6:10 PM



**Paloma Ruiz of Parshall, North Dakota, dances during the United Tribes Technical College International Powwow in Bismarck, North Dakota, on Sept. 6, 2024. This year's powwow begins Sept. 5.** (Photo by Michael Achterling/North Dakota Monitor)

North Dakota tribes say their first-in-the-nation effort to band together to promote tourism is paying off.

"We want to tell our stories with our voices," said Stacey LaCompte, director of the North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance.

She said the group has had success catering to tour groups from Europe. She said the European groups are often in North Dakota for about three weeks and are interested in visiting all five tribal nations that share geography with North Dakota. They often want to take in South Dakota sites, too, she said.

"They're paying for the tour. They're paying for the hotels, the gas, the food," LaCompte said. "They're buying souvenirs. They're buying from our artisans."

LaCompte and others from the tourism group briefed North Dakota lawmakers on their efforts recently.

The presentation was to the North Dakota Legislature's Tribal and State Relations Committee that met at the Dakota Magic Casino near Hankinson on the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. The reservation lies mostly in South Dakota with a small portion in southeast North Dakota.

The reservation is the home of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate tribe. Tamara St. John is a historian for the tribe who called North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance "precedent setting," with similar groups forming in other states after hearing of the success in North Dakota.

The North Dakota Native Tourism Alliance was formed in 2016. The group began offering cultural tours in 2021.

St. John, a board member for the group, said international travelers are often interested in an "authentic"

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travel experience to learn about Native American culture.

"And who better to share that than us," St. John said.

Some tour groups from countries such as Norway and Germany are interested in learning about immigrant families that settled in Dakota Territory.

"They want to understand the cultural differences and relationships" with Native Americans, St. John said.

Fred Walker is global marketing manager for the North Dakota Department of Commerce's tourism and marketing team. He said in an interview that Europeans do have strong interest in Native American culture and when they visit, will take their time to visit multiple attractions.

"They spend more time, they spend more money, and they really try to engage into wherever they're at," Walker said. "They immerse themselves."

He said the groups are usually families of four to eight people instead of large tour groups.

European tourists may visit the reservations but tours often include visits to other sites, such as Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the National Buffalo Museum at Jamestown and other museums.

LaCompte said the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, which is scheduled to open in Medora next year, has already reached out to the Native Tourism Alliance so the group can be a resource for library visitors.

Walker said other states, including South Dakota and Montana, have followed North Dakota's example in forming Native tourism groups.

North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho also have formed a tourism partnership called the Great American West. Each year, it hosts an event called the International Roundup that helps tour promoters learn about attractions and events, including with Native Americans, in the five-state region.

The 2026 International Roundup will be in Medora from April 28 to May 1.

In addition to international tours, Les Thomas, president of the Native Tourism Alliance, said tribes have been building themselves up as tourist destinations beyond casinos. The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, where he is a citizen, has added a water park and trampoline park.

Thomas emphasized the economic impact of tourism for the tribes and North Dakota.

He said the United Tribes Technical College annual powwow in Bismarck has a \$10 million economic impact. The powwow is Friday to Sunday.

Tourism is on the agenda for Wednesday's Annual Tribal Leaders Summit that leads up to the powwow.

He said the tribes also have been participating in more non-tribal events, such as being a sponsor of the Norsk Hostfest in Minot and having dancers perform at Country Fest near New Salem.

St. John invited North Dakotans to stop at a new visitor center for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate.

"There's so much to be gained by building bridges and building relationships and that's really what North Dakota tribal tourism is all about," St. John said.

*North Dakota Monitor Deputy Editor Jeff Beach can be reached at [jbeach@northdakotamonitor.com](mailto:jbeach@northdakotamonitor.com).*

*This story was originally produced by North Dakota Monitor, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.*

*North Dakota Monitor Deputy Editor Jeff Beach is based in the Fargo area. His interests include agriculture, renewable energy and rural issues.*

## Avian flu found in South Dakota, North Dakota turkeys

BY: JEFF BEACH

-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 4:14 PM

Avian flu has hit turkey farms in North Dakota and South Dakota, the first cases in commercial flocks in the United States since early July.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service on Aug. 28 confirmed an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Faulk County in northeast South Dakota. The outbreak meant 55,400 birds were killed to prevent the spread of the disease.



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It is the first case in a U.S. commercial flock since July 2, when the avian flu was confirmed at a game bird facility in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture said Wednesday that bird flu had been confirmed Saturday at a turkey farm in Dickey County, near the South Dakota state line.

"After a quiet summer, it's not unexpected that we have another case of HPAI as birds are gathering to begin the fall migration," North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring said in a news release.

Dr. Ethan Andress, state veterinarian in North Dakota, said 60,000 birds had to be destroyed in Dickey County.

Andress said that because large flocks of waterfowl, such as snow geese, are not yet migrating south over the Dakotas, it may be an indication that the virus was spread from local waterfowl.

Avian influenza exists in many wild birds and can be transmitted by contact with infected birds or through infected food and water.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the public health risk is low but notes that avian flu also has spread to dairy cattle and humans with one human death.

In August, the avian flu also was confirmed at a live-bird market in Los Angeles County, California, and in backyard birds in St. Lawrence County, New York, according to the USDA.

The poultry industry has been combating different strains of avian influenza since 2020, according to the CDC.

*North Dakota Monitor Deputy Editor Jeff Beach can be reached at [jbeach@northdakotamonitor.com](mailto:jbeach@northdakotamonitor.com).*

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*North Dakota Monitor Deputy Editor Jeff Beach is based in the Fargo area. His interests include agriculture, renewable energy and rural issues.*



**Avian flu has recently been confirmed at commercial turkey farms in North Dakota and South Dakota.** (Scott Bauer/Agriculture

Research Service, USDA)

## DHS Secretary Kristi Noem ends temporary protections for 250,000 Venezuelans

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 6:22 PM**

WASHINGTON — U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem Wednesday ended temporary protections for more than 250,000 Venezuelans, opening them up to deportation.

Temporary Protected Status for a group of Venezuelans dating from 2021 was set to expire Sept. 10. However, DHS said the designation will end in 60 days after the notice is published in the Federal Register.

Initially, Venezuelans with TPS were granted protections until October 2026 under the Biden administration, but Noem revoked that extension.

DHS is currently being sued over Noem's decision to revoke the extension granted under the Biden administration for TPS for two groups of Venezuelans, people who arrived in 2021 and those who arrived





**Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem arrives for a Senate Appropriations Committee hearing in the Dirksen Senate Office Building on Capitol Hill on May 8, 2025 in Washington, D.C.** (Photo by Andrew Harnik/Getty Images)

in 2023.

DHS has already terminated TPS for 350,000 Venezuelans who arrived in 2023, which is still being challenged in courts.

"Given Venezuela's substantial role in driving irregular migration and the clear magnet effect created by Temporary Protected Status, maintaining or expanding TPS for Venezuelan nationals directly undermines the Trump Administration's efforts to secure our southern border and manage migration effectively," a DHS spokesperson said in a statement.

During the last day of President Donald Trump's first term, he granted deportation protections for that group of Venezuelans who arrived in the U.S. before Jan. 20, 2021, citing unstable conditions with the country's government.

"The deteriorative condition within Venezuela, which presents an ongoing national security threat to the safety and well-being

of the American people, warrants the deferral of the removal of Venezuelan nationals who are present in the United States," according to Trump's 2021 proclamation.

After that designation, under the Biden administration in March 2021, then-Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas created a TPS designation for Venezuelans who entered the U.S. before March 9, 2021.

Mayorkas created a second TPS designation, for another group of Venezuelans who arrived in 2023, about 350,000.

TPS is designated when a country is deemed too dangerous for return, due to violence or a major disaster. A national from a country under the TPS designation has to go through vetting and is granted work permits and deportation protections for up to 18 months before having their TPS renewed.

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

## Trump speculates New Orleans is next as he weighs National Guard expansion

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER AND ARIANA FIGUEROA**

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump was unclear Wednesday about his plans to deploy National Guard troops to cities around the country, seeming to backtrack slightly on sending troops to Chicago while teasing New Orleans as a possible next location instead.

Despite a Tuesday morning ruling from a federal judge in California that called Trump's use of military personnel for law enforcement in Los Angeles illegal, the president continued to explore further use of Guard units for what he said is crime prevention in other U.S. cities.

But in the face of pushback from Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker, a Democrat, and other state and city officials in Chicago, Trump said Wednesday he still wanted to send troops to the city, but may be more inclined to call up the Guard in a politically friendlier state.

"We're making a determination now," Trump said during an Oval Office appearance Wednesday morning. "Do we go to Chicago? Or do we go to a place like New Orleans, where we have a great governor,

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Jeff Landry, who wants us to come in and straighten out a very nice section of this country that's become quite tough, quite bad."

Landry, a Republican, said on social media Wednesday he would accept federal troops.

"We will take President @realDonaldTrump's help from New Orleans to Shreveport!" he said.

Third Democratic city for National Guard?

If the president follows through, it would be the third heavily Democratic city where he orders troops this year.

He deployed the California National Guard and Marines to Los Angeles this summer and called Guard members from multiple states — including Louisiana — to the District of Columbia while also seizing the police force in the city.

The president has said he's using troops to quell crime, despite violent crime decreasing in cities across the country.

Last month, the president signed an executive order directing state National Guard units to be ready to assist in local, state and federal law enforcement, a potential step toward a dramatic expansion of Trump's use of military personnel for domestic policing.

The use of the military has stemmed from the Trump administration's immigration crackdown and plans for mass deportations.

The president deployed troops to Los Angeles following massive protests against federal immigration officers' aggressive tactics.

In the District of Columbia, immigration officials and federal law enforcement officers have established checkpoints in metro stations and elsewhere inquiring about immigration status.

Chicago is considered by Republicans to be a "sanctuary city," because it leaves immigration enforcement to the federal government. The Trump administration has slammed those policies, attempting to revoke federal funding from cities and states with similar stances.

Trump has also mentioned Baltimore as another candidate for Guard deployment.

'All they have to do is ask'

Pritzker's opposition was keeping him from deploying troops to Chicago, Trump said.

Governors control their states' National Guard units, except in rare circumstances in which the president can assume control. Trump this summer federalized the California National Guard over the objection of Gov. Gavin Newsom, but has waffled about repeating that experience with Chicago.

"We could straighten out Chicago," he said Wednesday. "All they have to do is ask us to go into Chicago."

A day earlier, Trump indicated it was only a matter of time before he sent troops to the largest city in the Midwest.

"Chicago is a hellhole right now," he said late Tuesday. "We're going in. I didn't say when. We're going in."



**A member of the National Guard arrives at the Guard's headquarters at the D.C. Armory on Aug. 12, 2025 in Washington, D.C.** (Photo by

Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images)

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If Trump were to either send Guard members from another state into Illinois or federalize the state's troops, it would likely see swift legal action. Pritzker told reporters Tuesday state leaders would have to see how the administration acts before bringing a lawsuit.

Louisiana Republicans praise Trump

Like Landry, U.S. Sen. John Kennedy said he and his fellow Louisiana Republican, U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, supported the idea of a Guard presence.

"Unlike Democratic governors, @SpeakerJohnson and I aren't scared of a little help from the brave men and women of our National Guard," he wrote on X. "Anybody who actually wants to stop crime would welcome our troops in a skinny minute."

Christopher Mirasola, a professor at the University of Houston Law Center, said he found the idea of Trump mobilizing a red-state Guard "confusing" because that state's troops are already controlled by its Republican governor.

"If the governor of Louisiana wanted to use the military for some kind of law enforcement action in Louisiana, he certainly has the authority to do it under Louisiana law," he said.

"There really is no role for the federal government. In fact, the governor of Louisiana probably has more authority under state law to use the National Guard for these domestic deployments than if the National Guard was used under some federal authority."

Texas gov's office denies Pritzker report

Speaking to reporters shortly after Trump's Tuesday comments, Pritzker said a U.S. Customs and Border Protection official had recently called the head of the Illinois State Police to inform state officials that Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents would soon be sent there.

The call was the only communication state leaders have had with the administration about its plans for the city, Pritzker said.

"It's the first outreach we have received from the Trump administration on this topic," he said.

Without clear communication from Trump officials, Pritzker said he sought information from anonymous federal workers and well-placed reporters. Information from those people led Pritzker to believe the administration was readying to deploy the Texas National Guard to the state, he said.

"We have reason to believe that the Trump administration has already begun staging the Texas National Guard for deployment in Illinois," Pritzker said. "We know before anything has happened here, that the Trump plan is to use any excuse to deploy armed military personnel to Chicago."

That report has not been verified and an aide to Texas Gov. Greg Abbott denied such a deployment was imminent.

Abbott has tangled with Pritzker before on national issues. He bused migrants to Chicago during an immigration wave in President Joe Biden's term in office.

The White House declined to comment Wednesday.

'It would be an invasion'

If Pritzker's information was correct, and Guard troops from Texas or another state were sent to Illinois without Pritzker's consent, it would represent a new development in Trump's use of military members within the U.S. — and could cross a red line of state sovereignty — legal experts told States Newsroom.

"It would be an invasion," Stephen Dycus, a professor emeritus in national security law at the Vermont Law and Graduate School, said.

"I'm not aware of that ever happening in the past, and I don't think it would be legal," Dycus said. "There's no provision in the Constitution or anywhere else that would allow one state to attack or invade another for any purpose."

Joseph Nunn, counsel in the Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Program, agreed that it would be a "constitutional barrier" for one state's governor to send National Guard troops to another without that governor's approval.

Illinois would quickly challenge such a deployment and would likely prevail in litigation, Nunn said.

But Mirasola said because courts have never considered the issue, it is not clear a challenge by Illinois would succeed.



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Courts, including a unanimous 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel hearing a case on the National Guard's deployment to Los Angeles this year, have given the executive branch "incredible deference" to mobilize the National Guard, Mirasola said.

"It's a pretty close analysis in terms of which way I think courts would land on the issue," he said. "I don't think it's clear."

A safer legal route for Trump could be to federalize one state's National Guard and send them to Illinois or another state that does not request a deployment, Nunn said.

"It's far more likely that you see a red state's National Guard being voluntarily federalized — federalized with the consent of the governor — and then deployed to Illinois," he said. "Because in that circumstance those become essentially federal troops. And the president can send federal troops wherever he wants to send them."

*Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

## Despite shutdown deadline, little movement in Congress on spending deal

**Thune hopes for a continuing resolution that 'enables us to buy some time to get a regular appropriations process done'**

**BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND SHAUNEEN MIRANDA-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 6:01 PM**



**U.S. House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., takes questions from reporters during a press conference in the Rayburn Room of the Capitol building in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, Sept. 3, 2025. Also pictured, from left to right, are Ohio Republican Rep. Dave Taylor; Majority Whip Tom Emmer R-Minn.; co-founders of Patriot Industries Sarah and Tom Click; Majority Leader Steve Scalise, R-La.; and Republican Conference Chairwoman Lisa McClain, R-Mich.** (Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

WASHINGTON — Members of Congress began searching for compromise on a short-term government funding bill Wednesday, with just a few weeks left to broker a deal before a possible shutdown.

Fresh off their August recess, congressional leaders and members of the Appropriations Committee appealed for bipartisanship from the other side while admitting they are far from a final agreement.

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., declined to say during a press conference whether he will negotiate a stopgap spending bill with Democrats, or use the go-at-it-alone approach that succeeded in March.

"Republicans are committed to keeping the government open, and unfortunately, it seems like not all Democrats agree with that, and they're beginning to apply the government shutdown pressure," Johnson said. "But I want you to remember one thing: All but one House Democrat voted to shut down the government in March, and we expect, sadly, that that may happen again."

Johnson said he was open to negotiations with Democratic leaders as long as they "are willing to work with us and think responsibly about how

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we can spend less than we did last year.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said during an afternoon press conference that Democrats want GOP leaders to negotiate the stopgap spending bill across party lines.

“The bottom line is very simple: We Democrats want a bipartisan bill and we are pushing the Republicans very hard to do it,” Schumer said. “We’re on our front foot. We’re unified.”

Schumer, who took considerable flak for helping Republicans limit debate on a partisan stopgap bill in March, said “it’s much different than last time.”

Pressed by several reporters about what Democrats would help move through the Senate this time around, Schumer said: “We are willing to sit down and negotiate a bipartisan proposal with significant Democratic input. So far, they are not.”

Spending running on autopilot

The House and Senate are supposed to complete work on the dozen annual government funding bills by the start of the fiscal year on Oct. 1 but that hasn’t happened for decades, so lawmakers rely on a stopgap spending bill to keep federal departments and agencies running on autopilot for a couple months.

That measure, sometimes called a continuing resolution, is intended to give lawmakers a bit more time to complete bipartisan House-Senate negotiations on the full-year appropriations bills, though Congress used three CRs to fund the government this fiscal year instead of getting its work done.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said he expects lawmakers will need to approve a stopgap spending bill “for some time into the foreseeable future,” but that discussions are ongoing about how long it will last and what else might be added.

“My hope would be that whatever that CR looks like, that it is clean and that it enables us to buy some time to get a regular appropriations process done,” Thune said. “I still think the best way to fund the government is through the appropriations process.”

President Donald Trump said from the Oval Office earlier in the day that he expects Republicans will vote for a stopgap spending bill but he didn’t address how it would get through the Senate’s 60-vote legislative filibuster, which requires bipartisanship.

“I think the Republicans will vote for an extension,” Trump said. “We won’t have any Democrat votes.”

Three spending bills seen as possible

House Appropriations Chairman Tom Cole, R-Okla., told reporters he hopes to negotiate final versions of three full-year bills with the Senate before the end of the month.

Lawmakers would then use a stopgap spending bill to keep the departments and agencies covered in the other nine bills flat funded for a couple of months until the two chambers can reach final agreement on the spending levels and policy within those measures.

“We’re talking about relatively modest bills and bills where there is either broad agreement, like MilCon-VA, or LegBranch and Ag,” Cole said. “We’re not talking about major bills. You can’t really do that until you have a topline and we don’t have a topline.”

The Agriculture-FDA, Legislative Branch and Military Construction-VA spending bills are generally easier to negotiate than some of the other full-year measures, like Defense, Homeland Security and Labor-Health and Human Services-Education.

Cole said when House and Senate leaders begin negotiating a total spending level for all of the bills, or topline, is “above my paygrade.”

“I’m ready to do it at any time if they want to empower us, otherwise the leadership on both sides and the president have to” figure that out, Cole said.

The House and Senate are supposed to start off the annual government funding process in the spring by reaching bipartisan agreement on how much in total spending to spread throughout the dozen appropriations bills.

Those talks haven’t even started for fiscal 2026, which is slated to begin Oct. 1.

Instead, the House and Senate Appropriations committees have separately decided how much to spend and written vastly different versions of the bills.

House and Senate at odds

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The 12 bills that have been released by the GOP-led House committee are partisan, while the eight bills released by the Senate panel have received broad bipartisan support in committee.

Senate Appropriations Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, said she's spoken with Cole a couple of times about the three-bills-plus-stopgap strategy and supports the concept.

"I have and I agree with that approach," Collins said.

Washington state Democratic Sen. Patty Murray, ranking member on the Appropriations Committee, said any stopgap bill "needs to be a real bipartisan compromise."

"For the last few months we have shown a bipartisan way forward on the Appropriations Committee," Murray said. "Democrats have shown that we are willing to work in good faith to write bipartisan funding bills that protect investments in education, life-saving research and a lot more."

"We've already passed eight out of the committee and three on the floor: MilCon-VA, Ag and LegBranch. As part of a bipartisan short-term CR, I support conferencing those three bills and passing them with the short-term CR for the remaining nine bills."

House Appropriations ranking member Rosa DeLauro said "the best case scenario for us is to move forward."

"No gimmicks, no riders, let's clear the decks," the Connecticut Democrat said. "Talk about how we get Republican priorities, Democratic priorities."

Negotiations 'for weeks now'

House Majority Leader Steve Scalise said "there's a chance" to wrap up negotiations between the two chambers on final versions of some of the full-year government spending bills before the end of the month.

"It might not be all 12, but a few of them for sure," Scalise said. "So let's give the appropriators that opportunity to keep negotiating. They've already been having negotiations for weeks now — Tom Cole and a lot of his counterparts. I have faith they can hopefully get a lot of things done."

Scalise, R-La., said he plans to reserve floor time later this month to ensure whatever spending bill gets written is "the top priority."

Rep. Robert Aderholt, chairman of the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Subcommittee, said he thinks most people agree there's going to be some sort of stopgap given all 12 of the annual bills aren't close to becoming law.

The Alabama Republican said this feat is "almost impossible" given the short number of legislative days left before the shutdown deadline.

"The solution, of course, obviously, or the only alternative, would be to have a CR, but I think the shorter the CR, the better," he said, noting that the measure would have to be "long enough that you can have negotiations, but short enough that it doesn't drag out until Christmas and that ... we're up here at Christmas doing an omnibus or something like that, which everybody wants to avoid."

Congress has often bundled the final, conferenced versions of the dozen bills together into a sweeping omnibus package at the end of the year to ensure quick floor votes, though GOP leaders have tried to get away from that practice in recent years.

Rep. Chuck Edwards, a North Carolina Republican who sits on the House Appropriations Committee, said that while he hopes a stopgap spending bill is "not necessary," the panel is "certainly prepared to put together a short-term CR if that's what's required to avoid a shutdown."

*Jennifer covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include congressional policy, politics and legal challenges with a focus on health care, unemployment, housing and aid to families.*

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



## 'Congress must choose': Epstein survivors demand vote to release case files

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 4:02 PM

WASHINGTON — As survivors of abuse inflicted by the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein pleaded on Capitol Hill Wednesday for the release of investigative files, Kentucky Republican Rep. Thomas Massie accused House GOP leaders of using “the oldest trick in the swamp” to avoid the issue.

An unusually large crowd gathered outside the U.S. House to hear from the women, who described emotional manipulation and physical coercion, beginning as early as age 14 in some cases, at the hands of Epstein and convicted co-conspirator Ghislaine Maxwell.

The speakers included family of the late Virginia Roberts Giuffre, who pursued charges against Maxwell and died earlier this year by suicide.

In speech after speech, the victims urged Congress and President Donald Trump to make public what federal authorities uncovered about the reach of Epstein’s abuse, and specifically voiced support for Massie’s bipartisan effort that would bypass House leadership and force the release of volumes of records.

“Congress must choose — will you continue to protect predators, or will you finally protect survivors?” said Lisa Phillips, who was victimized by Epstein on his private Caribbean island and now hosts a podcast about healing after abuse.

The government’s investigation into Epstein’s widespread sexual abuse has dogged and splintered House Republicans since July, when Trump’s administration declared it would not share any further information on the powerful and well-connected financier. Epstein died in 2019 in a Manhattan jail cell while awaiting trial on federal charges of sex trafficking minors.

Epstein surrounded himself with celebrities and politicians, including Trump and former President Bill Clinton.

Trump campaigned on releasing what he and many describe as the “Epstein files,” and for years many of his supporters, including some now in his administration, fixated on conspiracy theories about the scandal.

Discharge petition roils House

“There are real victims to this criminal enterprise, and the perpetrators are being protected because they’re rich and powerful and political donors to the establishment here in Washington, D.C. So today, we’re standing with these survivors,” Massie said at the outdoors press conference.

Massie and House Democrat Ro Khanna of California need just two more Republican signatures on a discharge petition that would trigger the release of the Epstein case file, leapfrogging House leadership.

House Speaker Mike Johnson instead urged his party Wednesday to support a symbolic measure ap-



**Women who say they were abused by disgraced financier and sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein raise their hands as attorney Bradley Edwards speaks at a news conference outside the U.S. Capitol on Sept. 3, 2025 in Washington, DC.** (Photo by Andrew Harnik/Getty Images)

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proving an already ongoing GOP-led committee probe.

Khanna, and GOP Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, welcomed the victims to Capitol Hill alongside Massie.

"This is the most important fight we can wage here in Congress, fighting for innocent people that never received justice, and the women behind me have never received justice. And do you want to know why? It's because Jeffrey Epstein somehow was able to walk among the most rich, powerful people," Greene said.

Republican Reps. Lauren Boebert of Colorado and Nancy Mace of South Carolina joined Massie and Greene in signing the petition. All Democrats in the House, which has a 219-212 split, are expected to sign.

Lured by Epstein

With the U.S. Capitol as their backdrop, numerous women shared stories of being lured, some at just 14 years old, by money and opportunities Epstein offered to them.

Annie Farmer said she was 16 when she and her sister were flown to New Mexico to spend a weekend with Epstein and Maxwell, where she said they were assaulted and photographed. Her sister reported their sexual abuse to authorities later that year.

"I am now 46 years old. Thirty years later, we still do not know why that report wasn't properly investigated, or why Epstein and his associates were allowed to harm hundreds, if not thousands, of other girls and young women.

"We have never been told whether those images were found when they discovered a large amount of child sexual abuse material on his property," said Farmer, who testified publicly in both cases against Epstein and Maxwell.

Farmer said for many years it felt like Epstein's abusive behavior was "an open secret" and that his network of powerful friends "chose to look the other way because it benefited them."

Farmer called for a thorough public review of the government's findings in the Epstein case.

"At a time with record-high levels of distrust in our institutions and a perception that there are two Americas — one for those with power and privilege and one for everyone else — passing this Epstein transparency bill is one important step that can be taken to prove to Americans that the government does not side with sexual perpetrators," she said.

Jena-Lisa Jones told the large crowd that Epstein began abusing her when she was 14.

"I know that I was just a little kid, but sometimes I still feel like it is my fault that this happened," she said.

"If you're a member of Congress and you're listening to all of us speak here today, please really listen to us. Please vote for this bill to be passed. Please recognize how important it is for transparency relating to Jeffrey Epstein. Whether you are a Democrat or Republican, this does not matter."

Jones then directly appealed to Trump: "Please, President Trump, pass this bill and help us. Make us feel like our voices are finally being heard."

Trump rebuffs reports on Epstein relationship

Trump's past relationship with Epstein has been under a microscope since July. The president sued the Wall Street Journal for reporting on a 50th birthday card Trump gave to Epstein. The card allegedly featured a cryptic message and a doodle of a naked woman with Trump's signature mimicking pubic hair.

The Journal also reported that Attorney General Pam Bondi briefed the president in May that his name appeared in the Epstein case files. The context in which his name appeared is unclear.

Trump has denied the reports.

Trump dismissed questions about releasing the Epstein case files when asked by reporters in the Oval Office Wednesday afternoon.

"This is a Democrat hoax that never ends," Trump said while sitting alongside Poland's President Karol Nawrocki during their previously planned meeting.

"What they're trying to do with the Epstein hoax is getting people to talk about that instead of speaking about the tremendous success like ending seven wars. I ended seven wars, nobody's going to talk about (that) because they're going to talk about the Epstein whatever," Trump continued. Trump did not detail specifically which wars.

"I understand that we were subpoenaed to give files, and I understand we've given thousands of pages

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of files, and I know that no matter what you do, it's going to keep going."

The GOP-led House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform released roughly 33,000 pages Tuesday night related to the government's Epstein investigation. But the collection was quickly dismissed by many observers as duplicates and items that were already public.

"I appreciate the efforts of my colleague, James Comer, who's leading the Oversight Committee," Massie said of his fellow Kentucky lawmaker. "They may find some information, but they're allowing the (Department of Justice) to curate all of the information that the DOJ is giving them. If you've looked at the pages they've released so far, they're heavily redacted. Some pages are entirely redacted, and 97% of this is already in the public domain."

Subpoenas issued

Comer's committee has also subpoenaed testimony from Clinton, as well as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, and numerous former Department of Justice officials, from both Democratic and Republican administrations.

Massie told reporters Wednesday that Speaker Johnson urged colleagues not to support the Kentucky Republican's discharge petition and instead vote for a procedural rule to support the Oversight Committee's investigation. A committee investigation, however, does not require a floor vote to proceed.

"My message to my colleagues was, 'Don't set yourself up.' Yes, the speaker's resolution will give you temporary political cover, but there are millions of people watching this," Massie said.

Members of the House Oversight Committee met with several Epstein victims Tuesday.

Johnson, of Louisiana, said Massie and Khanna's petition is "moot and unnecessary."

"The Oversight Committee's investigation is already ongoing. They're already producing and putting out there the documents that are covered, the White House is in full compliance. The administration is willfully complying with the subpoenas because they want maximum transparency as well. I talked to the president himself last night, so this is going to be an ongoing effort."

Jennifer Shutt and Shauneen Miranda contributed to this report.

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

## Nominations sought for southeast South Dakota House seat

**BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF-SEPTEMBER 3, 2025 11:26 AM**

Gov. Larry Rhoden is seeking nominations to fill a South Dakota House of Representatives seat following the death of Rep. Richard Vasgaard, R-Centerville.

Vasgaard, a farmer, died last month at age 75. He represented Lincoln, Turner and Union counties in District 16 and was serving his second, non-consecutive term after previously serving from 2021 to 2022. The district is in the southeastern part of the state.

Those wishing to be considered for the vacancy, or to nominate someone, should email [ryan.brunner@state.sd.us](mailto:ryan.brunner@state.sd.us). Nominations should include the candidate's name, address, resume, cover letter and letters of recommendation. The deadline for submissions is Sept. 7.

After reviewing nominations, Rhoden will appoint someone to serve the remainder of Vasgaard's term through 2026.



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## Upcoming Events on GDILIVE.COM

**GT** on

Varsity Volleyball  
7:15 p.m., Sept. 4, 2026  
Sisseton at Groton

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

**GDILIVE**



 YouTube

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For more info: [GDILIVE.COM](https://GDILIVE.COM)

**GT** on

Homecoming Parade  
Fri., Sept. 5, 2026  
1 p.m.

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

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**GT** on

Football  
7 p.m., Fri., Sept. 5, 2026  
Winner at Groton

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

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**GT** on

Girls Soccer  
Noon, Sat., Sept. 6, 2026  
West Central at Groton

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

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**GT** on

Boys Soccer  
2 p.m., Sat., Sept. 6, 2026  
West Central at Groton

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

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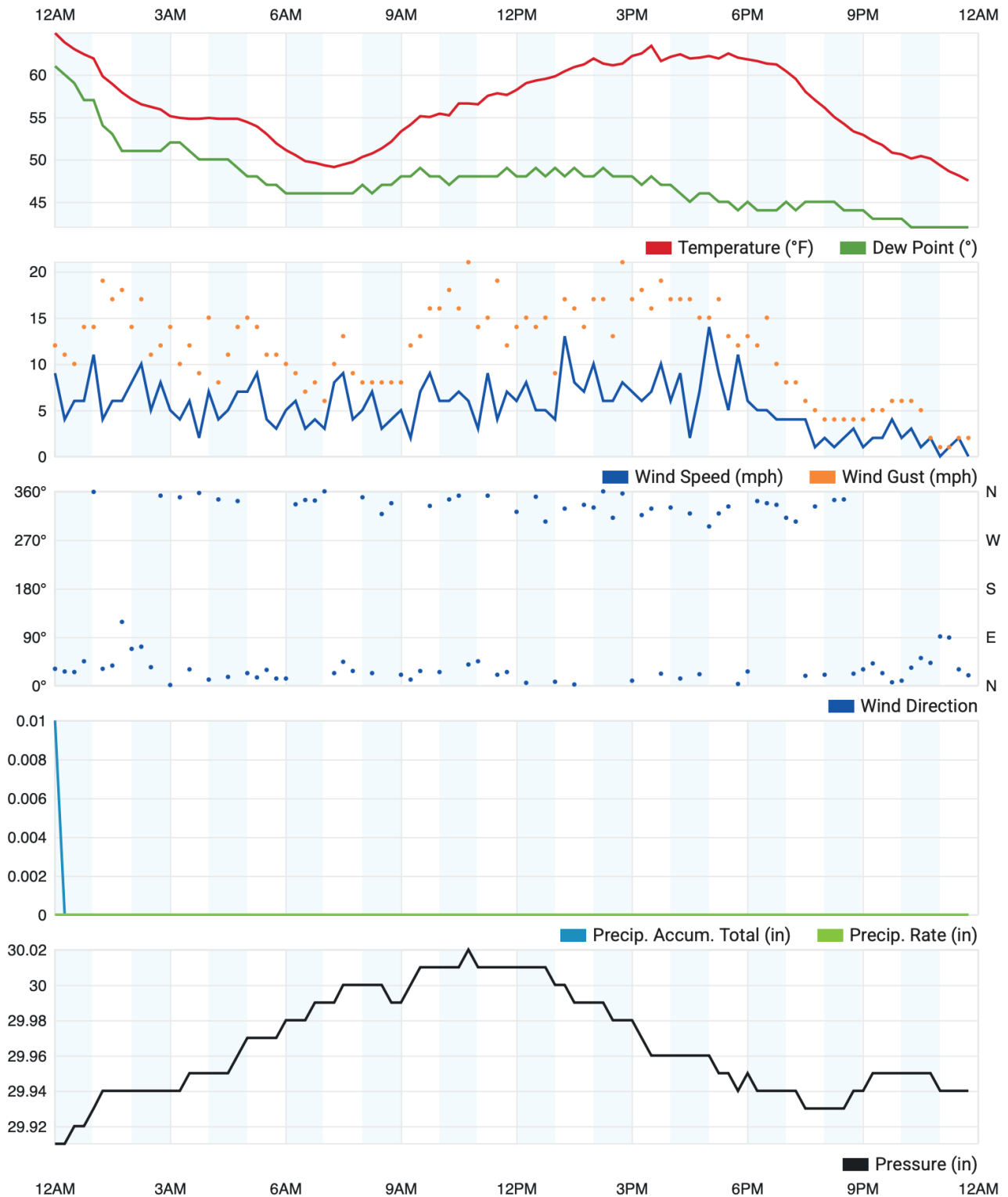
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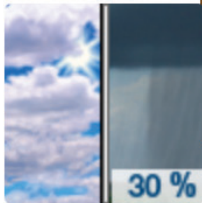





## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs


September 3, 2025



# Broton Daily Independent

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| Today   | Wind Adv...   | Tonight   | Friday  | Friday Night   | Saturday  |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>High: 71 °F</b>  |   | <b>Low: 44 °F</b>   | <b>High: 59 °F</b>  | <b>Low: 39 °F</b>  | <b>High: 63 °F</b>  |
| Partly Sunny<br>then Chance<br>Showers and<br>Breezy                              |   | Mostly Cloudy<br>and Breezy<br>then Mostly<br>Cloudy                              | Partly Sunny  | Partly Cloudy  | Mostly Sunny  |



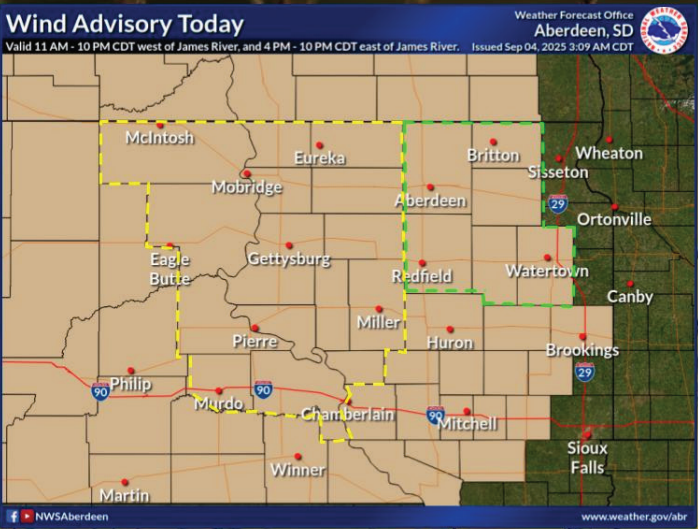
## Windy Advisory Today

September 4, 2025  
3:47 AM

Strong northwesterly winds are expected, with highest gusts west of the James River.

### Wind Advisory Today

Valid 11 AM - 10 PM CDT west of James River, and 4 PM - 10 PM CDT east of James River. Issued Sep 04, 2025 3:09 AM CDT



Valid from 11 AM CDT through 10 PM CDT  
Valid from 4 PM CDT through 10 PM CDT

|             | 11am | 12pm | 1pm | 2pm | 3pm | 4pm | 5pm | 6pm | 7pm | 8pm | 9pm | 10pm | 11pm | Maximum |
|-------------|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|---------|
| McIntosh    | 44   | 51   | 56  | 58  | 58  | 56  | 56  | 56  | 55  | 51  | 46  | 40   | 36   | 58      |
| Eagle Butte | 33   | 39   | 45  | 49  | 51  | 52  | 52  | 51  | 48  | 45  | 40  | 37   | 35   | 52      |
| Murdo       | 25   | 30   | 36  | 40  | 45  | 48  | 49  | 48  | 47  | 43  | 39  | 35   | 31   | 49      |
| Mobridge    | 33   | 38   | 43  | 46  | 48  | 49  | 51  | 51  | 49  | 46  | 41  | 38   | 33   | 51      |
| Pierre      | 23   | 28   | 32  | 38  | 43  | 46  | 47  | 47  | 46  | 43  | 39  | 36   | 32   | 47      |
| Gettysburg  | 29   | 33   | 38  | 43  | 47  | 51  | 52  | 52  | 49  | 46  | 41  | 37   | 33   | 52      |
| Eureka      | 33   | 39   | 44  | 49  | 55  | 58  | 59  | 58  | 55  | 51  | 46  | 40   | 36   | 59      |
| Chamberlain | 22   | 24   | 28  | 33  | 40  | 45  | 48  | 48  | 47  | 46  | 43  | 37   | 31   | 48      |
| Miller      | 25   | 29   | 32  | 37  | 43  | 46  | 48  | 49  | 48  | 46  | 43  | 39   | 36   | 49      |
| Redfield    | 24   | 26   | 30  | 36  | 41  | 46  | 48  | 49  | 48  | 46  | 41  | 37   | 33   | 49      |
| Aberdeen    | 23   | 25   | 29  | 33  | 38  | 43  | 45  | 45  | 45  | 41  | 38  | 33   | 30   | 45      |
| Britton     | 21   | 22   | 24  | 28  | 31  | 35  | 38  | 41  | 43  | 40  | 37  | 33   | 30   | 43      |
| Clark       | 24   | 26   | 30  | 33  | 37  | 40  | 44  | 47  | 48  | 47  | 44  | 39   | 37   | 48      |
| Webster     | 22   | 24   | 26  | 30  | 33  | 37  | 40  | 44  | 46  | 45  | 43  | 39   | 36   | 46      |
| Watertown   | 21   | 23   | 25  | 29  | 31  | 35  | 38  | 43  | 45  | 45  | 44  | 41   | 38   | 45      |

Created: 2 am CDT Thu 9/4/2025 | Values are maximums over the period beginning at the time shown.  
(Sorted geographically from West to East)



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Strong northwesterly winds are expected this afternoon and evening over much of central and north-eastern South Dakota, and a Wind Advisory is in effect. Maximum wind gusts will be 40 to 50 miles per hour, potentially touching 55 miles per hour or more at times over north central South Dakota. Wind will decrease this evening, and the Advisory will expire at 10 PM CDT.



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## Winds on the Increase!

September 3, 2025

3:35 PM

### Key Messages:

- Winds on the increase Thursday
- Peak Thursday afternoon
- Decrease Thursday night
- Winds range between 25-35 mph Friday as well

### Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

|             | 9/4<br>Thu |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |  | 9/5<br>Fri |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |  | 9/6<br>Sat |     |     |     |
|-------------|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|--|------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|--|------------|-----|-----|-----|
|             | 12am       | 3am | 6am | 9am | 12pm | 3pm | 6pm | 9pm |  | 12am       | 3am | 6am | 9am | 12pm | 3pm | 6pm | 9pm |  | 12am       | 3am | 6am | 9am |
| Aberdeen    | 7          | 6   | 10  | 20  | 30   | 40  | 43  | 39  |  | 29         | 21  | 21  | 25  | 26   | 28  | 23  | 15  |  | 10         | 12  | 13  | 17  |
| Britton     | 6          | 6   | 12  | 20  | 28   | 38  | 43  | 40  |  | 29         | 21  | 21  | 26  | 28   | 29  | 23  | 15  |  | 10         | 10  | 12  | 17  |
| Chamberlain | 7          | 7   | 10  | 20  | 33   | 47  | 47  | 44  |  | 36         | 26  | 23  | 28  | 29   | 30  | 25  | 15  |  | 8          | 7   | 8   | 14  |
| Clark       | 9          | 7   | 12  | 21  | 30   | 41  | 47  | 44  |  | 35         | 26  | 24  | 28  | 28   | 28  | 23  | 15  |  | 10         | 9   | 12  | 18  |
| Eagle Butte | 9          | 12  | 16  | 28  | 45   | 48  | 48  | 43  |  | 33         | 28  | 26  | 30  | 30   | 29  | 25  | 16  |  | 9          | 10  | 12  | 13  |
| Eureka      | 7          | 9   | 15  | 26  | 44   | 53  | 52  | 45  |  | 35         | 26  | 25  | 30  | 31   | 31  | 28  | 17  |  | 10         | 10  | 13  | 18  |
| Gettysburg  | 9          | 10  | 16  | 25  | 39   | 48  | 48  | 41  |  | 32         | 25  | 25  | 30  | 30   | 30  | 25  | 16  |  | 9          | 9   | 13  | 17  |
| McIntosh    | 8          | 14  | 22  | 37  | 53   | 56  | 56  | 47  |  | 33         | 26  | 25  | 31  | 32   | 32  | 28  | 17  |  | 10         | 10  | 12  | 14  |
| Milbank     | 9          | 7   | 8   | 15  | 21   | 29  | 37  | 38  |  | 32         | 24  | 22  | 25  | 25   | 24  | 20  | 15  |  | 12         | 13  | 14  | 17  |
| Miller      | 7          | 8   | 14  | 23  | 35   | 45  | 47  | 41  |  | 32         | 25  | 24  | 29  | 29   | 29  | 24  | 15  |  | 9          | 12  | 12  | 15  |
| Mobridge    | 7          | 10  | 16  | 26  | 41   | 47  | 48  | 45  |  | 33         | 25  | 25  | 29  | 29   | 29  | 26  | 16  |  | 9          | 9   | 10  | 15  |
| Murdo       | 9          | 10  | 14  | 23  | 38   | 46  | 46  | 41  |  | 31         | 25  | 24  | 29  | 29   | 29  | 24  | 15  |  | 8          | 8   | 9   | 12  |
| Pierre      | 7          | 7   | 10  | 20  | 35   | 45  | 45  | 40  |  | 32         | 25  | 23  | 28  | 28   | 28  | 24  | 13  |  | 6          | 6   | 8   | 13  |
| Redfield    | 7          | 7   | 12  | 21  | 32   | 46  | 47  | 41  |  | 31         | 25  | 22  | 28  | 29   | 28  | 24  | 15  |  | 9          | 12  | 12  | 15  |
| Sisseton    | 8          | 7   | 9   | 15  | 22   | 33  | 39  | 37  |  | 29         | 23  | 23  | 26  | 26   | 26  | 23  | 16  |  | 13         | 14  | 15  | 18  |
| Watertown   | 8          | 6   | 9   | 18  | 28   | 37  | 43  | 43  |  | 35         | 26  | 23  | 25  | 26   | 26  | 23  | 16  |  | 12         | 12  | 13  | 18  |
| Webster     | 9          | 7   | 12  | 20  | 29   | 39  | 45  | 43  |  | 32         | 25  | 24  | 28  | 29   | 29  | 24  | 17  |  | 13         | 12  | 13  | 18  |
| Wheaton     | 10         | 7   | 7   | 13  | 18   | 25  | 33  | 33  |  | 26         | 22  | 22  | 25  | 25   | 25  | 22  | 17  |  | 13         | 13  | 14  | 17  |



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

A system will bring some showers to northeast South Dakota/western Minnesota Thursday, but the main impacts associated with this system will be the winds, which will increase though the day. Peak winds are expected in north central and central South Dakota. Winds decline in the evening/overnight but will continue through the day Friday.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 65 °F at 12:00 AM**

**Low Temp: 48 °F at 11:19 PM**

**Wind: 21 mph at 1:05 AM**

**Precip: : 0.01**

**Day length: 13 hours, 9 minutes**

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1931

Record Low: 30 in 1961

Average High: 79

Average Low: 51

Average Precip in Sept.: 0.27

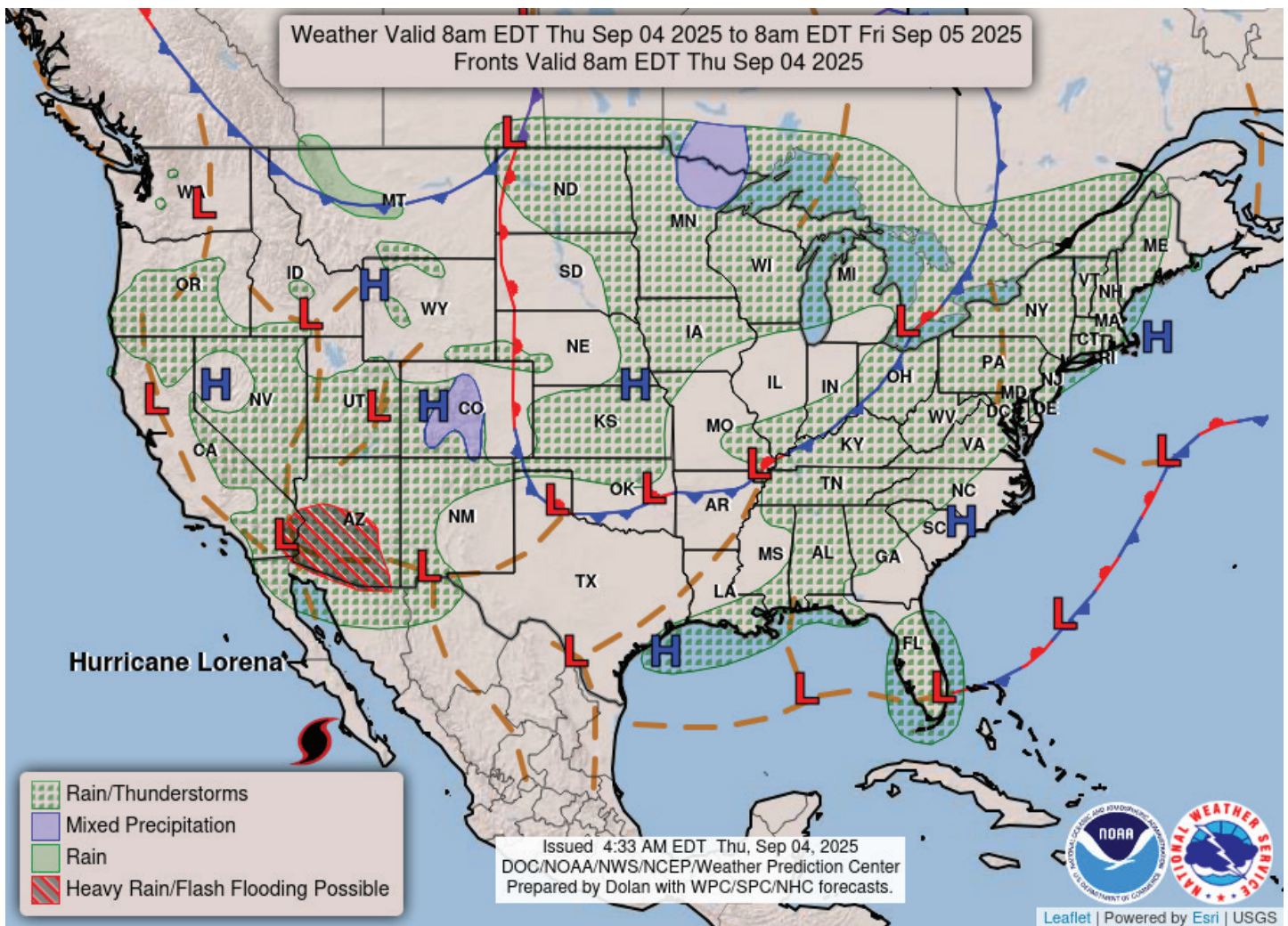
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.01

Average Precip to date: 16.61

Precip Year to Date: 20.31

Sunset Tonight: 8:05:45 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:57:57 am





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## Today in Weather History

September 4, 2001: Near record or record heat hit central and north-central South Dakota on this day in 2001. High temperatures during the afternoon were in the upper 90s to around 105 degrees. Pierre and Kennebec set record highs of 105 and 106, respectively. Mobridge rose to a high of 96, and Timber Lake topped out at 98 degrees on this day in 2001.

1766: A hurricane made landfall at modern-day Galveston, Texas. The following is from David Roth of the Weather Prediction Center. "A mission, named San Augustine de Ahumado was located in what is nowadays known as Chambers County. This mission was destroyed and subsequently abandoned. A seven-foot storm surge put the area under water. A richly-laden treasure fleet of 5 galleons en route from Vera Cruz to Havana was driven ashore and had to wait many weeks for assistance to come. La Caraqueña wrecked on Galveston Island while El Nuevo de Constante sank along the western Louisiana coast. Fortunately, much of the treasure and people aboard were saved."

1939 - A thunderstorm deluged Washington D.C. with 4.4 inches of rain in two hours. September of that year was very dry across much of the nation, and Washington D.C. received more rain in that two hour period than most other places in the country that entire month. (David Ludlum)

1941: A violent tornado ripped through Northeast and North Minneapolis shortly afternoon on this day. The hardest-hit location was the Soo Line Railroad's Shoreham Yards where four people died, and at least 50 were injured. The death toll at Soo Line could have been higher, but the tornado struck five minutes after the lunch bell went off, meaning 100 men left the shops.

1970 - The greatest natural disaster of record for Arizona occurred. Unprecedented rains caused rivers in central Arizona to rise five to ten feet per hour, sweeping cars and buildings as far as 30 to 40 miles downstream. Flooding claimed the lives of 23 persons, mainly campers, and caused millions of dollars damage. Water crested 36 feet above normal near Sunflower AZ. Workman's Creek was deluged with 11.40 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. Moisture from Pacific Tropical Storm Norma led to the severe flooding. (4th-6th) (The Weather Channel)

1986 - An unusually strong dust devil moved across the Flagstaff Pulliam Airport. The dust devil blew open the doors of the National Weather Service office scattering papers and bringing down a ceiling-mounted light fixture. (Storm Data)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a stationary front produced heavy rain across the Southern Atlantic Coast States. Up to eight inches was reported north of Charleston SC. Serious flooding was reported in Monks Corner SC. Seven cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Houlton ME dipped to 32 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - The western U.S. experienced another day of record heat. The afternoon high of 91 degrees at Stampede Pass WA established an all-time record for that location, and Los Angeles CA equalled their all-time record high with a reading of 110 degrees. A record high of 107 degrees at San Diego CA was their hottest reading in 25 years. Red Bluff CA was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon reading of 118 degrees. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - Overnight thunderstorm rains of four and a half to seven inches drenched eastern Nebraska during the morning hours, pushing creeks out of their banks, and flooding fields, country roads and city streets. Totals ranged up to 6.97 inches south of Creston. It was also a soggy Labor Day for northern Florida. Jacksonville reported 6.82 inches of rain, and evening thunderstorms produced 2.75 inches of rain in one hour at Sandlewood. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2000: Houston and College Station, Texas recorded their hottest day on record when highs reached 109° and 112° respectively. Houston has tied their record on August 27th, 2011. Other daily record highs included: Wichita Falls, TX: 111°, Waco, TX: 111°, Dallas, (DFW), TX: 111°, Austin, (Bergstrom), TX: 110°, Austin (Camp Mabry), TX: 110°, Dallas, TX: 110°, Victoria, TX: 110°, San Antonio, TX: 109°, Shreveport, LA: 108°, Corpus Christi, TX: 107 °F.

2007: Hurricane Felix came ashore in the pre-dawn hours as a Category 5 storm on the northeastern coast of Nicaragua. At the time of its landfall, the maximum sustained surface winds were approximately 160 mph. Felix killed at least 130 people along the coast, with damage in Nicaragua totaling \$46.7 million.

2011: The center of Tropical Storm Lee moved ashore around sunrise. However, it would be a while before Lee would weaken to a depression as it remained nearly stationary while the southern half of the circulation was over water where it could continue to derive additional energy from the warm ocean. Lee brought torrential rains to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

2016: An EF1 tornado developed in the open country area north of Merna, Wyoming. The tornado caused tree damage along its 2.45-mile path. At its widest, the tornado produced sporadic tree damage approximately 300 yards across. The trees fell on some fence line but otherwise caused no property damage.



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## *Seeds of Hope* Guido Ministries

God, our Creator, reminds us in His Word that our hearts contain emotions, values, goals, desires — the sum total of who we are...

One of my dear physician-friends wrote a book entitled *The Body Reveals*. He began his medical career as a general surgeon then studied to become a cardiovascular surgeon. One day while we were talking, he said:

"Larry, the most disturbing part of my practice is that I cannot get people to look at their lives — what they are doing to themselves. People think they can do anything they want and then go to a physician for a prescription or some surgery and all of their problems will be corrected. That's not the way we work. There's a connection between our bodies and our minds, and we are very complex beings, because of the way God made us."

There's an intimate and complex connection between our heads, hearts, and bodies. God, our Creator, reminds us in His Word that our hearts contain emotions, values, goals, desires — the sum total of who we are.

And, Solomon said it so well: "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones."

Incidentally, this is the only time the word *medicine* is used in the Old Testament. So, we must listen to God's voice!

Our peace of mind directly affects our ability to maintain a life of wellness. Conversely, a troubled mind makes it difficult, if not impossible, to be healthy. A troubled mind makes it difficult to regain our health once we lose it. Jesus said, "My peace I leave with you!"

The most important lesson for us to learn from this verse is that God is in control. Whatever is, is a gift from Him to us, and He is somewhere in that gift. He is at work in our lives shaping us into His image. We must always remember that He will never leave us nor forsake us.

Today's Prayer: Lord, life is difficult. Sickness comes, doubts arise, and suffering hurts. Grant us strength, peace, and hope. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's scripture: "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones." Proverbs 17:22

*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: 09.02.25

7 17 35 40 64 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$336,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins  
51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.03.25

15 31 34 51 52 5

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$2,600,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 25  
Mins 52 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.03.25

11 15 19 40 48 3

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 40 Mins 51  
Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.03.25

8 13 21 27 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 40  
Mins 51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.03.25

7 32 39 50 61 4

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 9 Mins  
51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.03.25

3 16 29 61 69 22

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$1,700,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 9 Mins  
51 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS



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## Upcoming Groton Events

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

## News from the Associated Press

### Circle K and Guy Fieri Fire Up the Flavor with New Collaboration

CHARLOTTE, N.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Sep 3, 2025--

Circle K, the national convenience store chain, and chef, restaurateur, and Emmy Award-winning host Guy Fieri are teaming up to announce a new fresh food collaboration. The partnership will bring 11 new, exclusive Flavortown-inspired breakfast, lunch and dinner items to participating Circle K and Holiday Stationstores locations, with the first regional launch beginning this September.

Circle K and Guy Fieri team up to announce a new fresh food collaboration. The partnership will bring 11 new, exclusive Flavortown-inspired breakfast, lunch and dinner items to participating locations, with the first regional launch beginning this September.

"Our customers are looking for more from their convenience store experience, and we're answering that call by partnering with Guy Fieri to bring his iconic Flavortown creations to Circle K," said Gary Brant, Vice President North American Food Service at Circle K. "This collaboration is about redefining what people can expect from convenience store food, demonstrating our commitment to innovation and listening directly to our customers' cravings for high-quality, flavorful options on the go."

The new menu features a range of bold, "off-the-hook" options for breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks. Each item is crafted to deliver the authentic, craveable Flavortown experience Guy Fieri is known for. These exclusive culinary innovations are available first across participating Circle K and Holiday Stationstores locations in 10 states, including Alaska, Idaho, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

"Flavortown is as much a lifestyle as it is a place so when it comes to great food and flavor, it's all about finding it wherever you are," said Guy Fieri. "Starting now, together with Circle K, I'm bringing my Flavortown foods to your corner store, your highway stop and everywhere in between. Real flavor, real fast...let's go!"

The Circle K Flavortown menu includes:

Mac N' Cheese Burger: A beef patty topped with bacon, mac & cheese, and jalapeño American cheese. Sweet Heat Fried Chicken & Waffle Sandwich: A spicy breaded chicken sandwich with jalapeño American cheese, served between two waffles. Denver Omelet on a Cheddar Bun Sandwich: A cheddar bun filled with egg, ham, and cheese for a perfect grab-and-go breakfast. Candy Chaos Cookie: A wild mix of candy pieces, chocolate chips, potato chips, peanut butter chips, pecans, and pretzels.

About Alimentation Couche-Tard Inc.

Couche-Tard is a global leader in convenience and mobility, operating in 29 countries and territories, with close to 17,300 stores, of which approximately 13,200 offer road transportation fuel. With its well-known Couche-Tard and Circle K banners, it is one of the largest independent convenience store operators in the United States and it is a leader in the convenience store industry and road transportation fuel retail in Canada, Scandinavia, the Baltics, Belgium, as well as in Ireland. It also has an important presence in Luxembourg, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, as well as in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Approximately 149,500 people are employed throughout its network.

About Guy Fieri

Chef, restaurateur, and Emmy Award-winning television host Guy Fieri is one of the world's most recognizable and influential culinary stars. With a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, he is best known as the Mayor of Flavortown and the face of Food Network favorites Diners, Drive-Ins & Dives, Guy's Grocery Games, and the iconic culinary competition Tournament of Champions. His thriving business empire has grown to include over 80 restaurants worldwide, Hunt & Ryde vineyard, Santo tequila, and Knuckle Sandwich cigars.

## European leaders face tough choices as the UK and France host another meeting on Ukraine

By EMMA BURROWS European Security Correspondent

LONDON (AP) — European countries are stuck between a rock and a hard place as a coalition of countries meets in Paris on Thursday to discuss security guarantees for a postwar Ukraine.

The war is raging unabated, with no ceasefire in sight — and the crucial question of American involvement in ensuring Ukraine's future security remains unresolved.

For months, the so-called "coalition of the willing" has been meeting to discuss aid for Ukraine, including sketching out plans for military support in the event of a ceasefire to deter future Russian aggression.

The coalition leaders — French President Emmanuel Macron and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer — have insisted that any European "reassurance" force in Ukraine needs the backing of the United States. But while U.S. President Donald Trump has hinted his country will be involved, he has moved away from calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine and refrained from implementing tough additional economic measures to punish Moscow.

Although Trump said he is "disappointed" in Russian President Vladimir Putin and issued several threats to try to cajole him into negotiating an end to hostilities, none has worked. At a meeting with Putin in Alaska in August, Trump failed to persuade the Russian leader to stop fighting and has not yet managed to broker talks between Putin and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

While Trump and European leaders met in Washington after the Alaska summit — and U.S., European and NATO military chiefs held discussions on support for Ukraine — little concrete detail has emerged on the security guarantees to deter Moscow from a future conflict.

Former military generals and experts suggest Europe is in a bind — not knowing the level of support the U.S. is prepared to provide the coalition, the nature of any ceasefire or if the U.S. will abide by commitments made. It's also far from certain that Putin would agree to a cessation of hostilities, something Russian officials have invariably dismissed.

"Talking about detailed operational planning when you don't actually have your mission is, quite frankly, impossible," said Ed Arnold, an expert in European Security at the Royal United Services Institute in London and a former military planner.

Why Europeans believe a ceasefire is necessary

The "coalition of the willing" is a broad term for about 30 nations supporting Ukraine, but the so-called "reassurance force" that would provide security guarantees to Kyiv is a subset of that group.

The U.K., France and Estonia have all suggested they are ready to deploy troops to Ukraine to deter Putin from attacking again, while officials in Poland said Warsaw will not take part and will instead focus on bolstering NATO security in the east of Europe.

There is "no suggestion" that any troops will be deployed without a ceasefire because it's too risky, said François Heisbourg, special adviser at the Foundation for Strategic Research in Paris.

Despite Zelenskyy signaling his willingness to talk, a ceasefire agreement is not currently in the cards — not least because of the positions of the U.S. and Russian presidents.

At his Aug. 18 meeting with European leaders at the White House — three days after meeting Putin — Trump walked back his previous demands for a ceasefire in Ukraine and said he thought a peace agreement was preferable.

The comments marked a shift toward the Russian position from Trump and would allow Moscow to fight on in Ukraine while peace negotiations are underway.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov later suggested an end to hostilities was even further away, stating that Moscow will not accept Zelenskyy's signature on any peace agreement as Russia considers him to be an illegitimate president.

"If Putin doesn't want a ceasefire — and if Trump doesn't call for a ceasefire — what are the chances of a ceasefire happening?" asked Heisbourg.

What a European security guarantee for Ukraine could look like



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Even if a ceasefire or peace agreement for Ukraine were implemented, it's not clear it would be a sufficient deterrent to Putin and it would still be "very, very risky" for European nations to deploy troops, said Arnold at RUSI.

Such an operation hinges on the U.S. providing intelligence support and the deterrent effect of U.S. airpower in countries outside Ukraine.

The Western appetite to potentially shoot down Russian missiles violating a ceasefire or target launchers firing them from within Russia is "close to zero," said Heisbourg.

Any response to a ceasefire violation, he said, would likely depend on "how many Western soldiers the Russians would have actually killed...and nobody wants to think about that too much in advance."

In March, Starmer told allies that a force for Ukraine would need at least 10,000 troops, but that would potentially require around 30,000 troops when taking into account those on rotation and rest.

As a coalition leader, the U.K. should look at contributing a brigade of 5,000 soldiers which would become 15,000 when taking into account rest and rotation, said Arnold.

That figure would account for about 30% of the deployable capacity of the British Army, he said, and potentially create a "tricky" problem whereby the U.K. deploys more forces on behalf of non-NATO ally Ukraine than it does for NATO allies such as Estonia.

European officials have indicated that the troops could be involved in training Ukrainian soldiers and likely based away from the frontlines although the risk of Russian missile and drone strikes would remain high.

But there would be "zero credibility" if Western troops were put in various Ukrainian towns without a clear mission or purpose, said Ben Hodges, former commanding general of the U.S. Army in Europe.

"That will not impress the Russians at all," he added.

US as a reliable partner

European leaders are also grappling with the question of whether to take Trump and his officials at their word while also eyeing the rise of populist parties — particularly in the U.K., France and Germany — which may not share the same commitment to Ukraine as current political leadership.

That means the future of any security guarantees for Kyiv could be extremely fragile.

There is "absolutely no guarantee" that Trump will abide by commitments made to European nations over Ukraine, said Arnold, pointing to Trump's withdrawal from previous agreements, including the Paris climate agreement and Iran's nuclear deal.

That means European nations cannot rely on him ordering U.S. jets into action in the event of a ceasefire violation because "at one time he may say yes, at another time he may say no," Arnold said.

With NATO membership for Kyiv ruled out by Trump and a host of hurdles to overcome to implement security guarantees for Ukraine, European leaders may decide to navigate the situation by spending "a lot more money on weapons" for Kyiv, said Heisbourg.

Arnold agreed, adding that the best option could be to give Kyiv "loads of guns and loads of ammo."

"There's no easy way out," he said. "None of the options, especially for the Europeans, are good."

## Death toll in Lisbon streetcar crash rises to 17 as Portugal observes national day of mourning

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — The death toll in the crash of a famous Lisbon streetcar popular with tourists rose to 17 Thursday after two of the 23 injured people died, an emergency services official said.

The dead were all adults, Margarida Castro Martins, head of Lisbon's Civil Protection Agency, told reporters. She didn't provide their names or nationalities, saying that their families would be informed first.

Another 21 people were injured in Wednesday's crash, she said. They included Portuguese people as well as two Germans, two Spaniards and one person each from France, Italy, Switzerland, Canada, Morocco, South Korea and Cape Verde, she said.

The range of nationalities reflected how big a draw the renowned streetcar was for tourists who are packing the Portuguese capital during the summer season.

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Portugal observed a national day of mourning Thursday after the capital's worst disaster in recent history. Though authorities gave no details about those killed, the transport workers' trade union SITRA said that the streetcar's brakeman, André Marques, was among the dead.

The 19th-century streetcar is one of Lisbon's big tourist attractions and is usually packed with foreigners at this time of year for its short and picturesque trip up and down one of the city's steep hills.

Teams of pathologists at the National Forensics Institute, reinforced by colleagues from three other Portuguese cities, worked through the night on autopsies, officials said. The injured were admitted to several hospitals in the Lisbon region.

The streetcar's crumpled wreckage was still on the downtown road where it crashed Thursday, cordoned off by police.

Detectives from Portugal's judicial police force, which investigates serious incidents, photographed the rails and the wreckage on the deserted road.

Officials declined to speculate on whether a faulty brake or a snapped cable may have caused the derailment.

The yellow-and-white streetcar, known as Elevador da Gloria, was lying on its side on the narrow road that it travels on, its sides and top crumpled. It crashed into a building where the road bends, leaving parts of the mostly metal vehicle crushed.

"It hit the building with brutal force and fell apart like a cardboard box," witness Teresa d'Avó told Portuguese television channel SIC. She described the streetcar as out of control and seeming to have no brakes, and said she watched passersby run into the middle of the nearby Avenida da Liberdade, or Freedom Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare.

The crash occurred at the start of the evening rush hour, around 6 p.m. local time. Emergency officials said all victims were pulled out of the wreckage in just over two hours.

The streetcar, technically called a funicular, is harnessed by steel cables and can carry more than 40 people, seated and standing. It is also commonly used by Lisbon residents.

The service, inaugurated in 1885, goes up and down a few hundred meters of a hill on a curved, traffic-free road in tandem with one going the opposite way. It goes between Restauradores Square and the Bairro Alto neighborhood renowned for its nightlife.

Lisbon's City Council halted operations of three other famous funicular streetcars in the city while immediate inspections were carried out.

The Elevador da Gloria is classified as a national monument.

Lisbon hosted around 8.5 million tourists last year, and long lines of people typically form for the brief rides on the popular streetcar.

Carris, the company that operates the streetcar, said that scheduled maintenance had been carried out. It offered its deepest condolences to the victims and their families in a social media post, and promised that all due diligence would be taken in finding the causes.

President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa offered his condolences to affected families, and Lisbon Mayor Carlos Moedas said the city was in mourning. "It's a tragedy of the like we've never seen," Moedas said.

Portugal's government announced that a day of national mourning would be observed Thursday.

"A tragic accident ... caused the irreparable loss of human life, which left in mourning their families and dismayed the whole country," it said in a statement.

European Union flags at the European Parliament and European Commission in Brussels flew at half-staff. Multiple EU leaders expressed their condolences on social media.

## 300,000 more people evacuated in eastern Pakistan after a new Indian flood alert

By ASIM TANVEER and BABAR DOGAR Associated Press

SHER SHAH, Pakistan (AP) — Officials say nearly 300,000 people have been evacuated in the past 48 hours from flood-hit areas of Pakistan's Punjab province following the latest flood alerts by India, officials

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said Wednesday.

The evacuations bring the total number of people displaced since last month to 1.3 million.

Floodwaters have submerged dozens of villages in Punjab's Muzaffargarh district, after earlier inundating Narowal and Sialkot, both near the border with India.

Authorities are also struggling to divert overflowing rivers onto farmlands to protect major cities, as part of one of the largest rescue and relief operations in the history of Punjab, which straddles eastern Pakistan and northwestern India.

Thousand of rescuers using boats are taking part in the relief and rescue operations, while the military has also been deployed to transport people and animals from inundated villages, said Arfan Ali Kathia, director-general of Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority.

A new flood alert was shared with Pakistan by neighboring India through diplomatic channels early Wednesday, Kathia said. It was the second such alert in 24 hours following heavy rains and water releases from dams in India.

Kathia said the Ravi, Chenab and Sutlej rivers are all in high flood following torrential rains and upstream discharges.

Rescuers are also using drones to find people stranded on rooftops in the flood-hit areas. Kathia said more than 3.3 million people across 33,000 villages in the province have been affected so far. Damages are still being assessed and all those who lost homes and crops would be compensated by the Punjab government, he said.

Landslides and flooding have killed at least 29 people in India's Punjab state, home to more than 30 million people.

Tent villages are being set up and food and other essential items are being supplied to the flood-affected people, he said, though many survivors complained about a lack of government aid.

There are about 40,000 people in the relief camps, according to the National Disaster Management Authority. It remains unclear where the rest are sheltering.

Noor Mohammad, a 54-year-old farmer in Sher Shah village near Muzaffargarh district, said he hasn't received any help.

"Frustrated over this dayslong situation, I sent my family members to stay with relatives in the nearby area," he said, standing on higher ground overlooking his flooded village.

Malik Ramzan, another displaced resident, said he chose to stay near his inundated home rather than enter a relief camp. "There are no livable facilities in the camps," he said. "Food isn't delivered on time, and we are treated like beggars," he said.

However, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif visited flood-hit areas in Muzaffargarh on Wednesday, meeting with displaced families at relief camps. Her visit came just hours after India issued the latest cross-border flood alert.

Last week's flooding mainly hit districts in Kasur, Bahawalpur and Narowal, where the deluge also submerged the shrine of Guru Nanak, located near the Indian border. However, authorities said the shrine is being reopened for pilgrims after water receded and the building was cleaned and restored.

Pakistan began mass evacuations last month after India released water from overflowing dams into low-lying border regions.

The latest floods are the worst since 2022 when climate-induced flooding killed nearly 1,700 people in Pakistan.

## Powerball jackpot jumps to \$1.7 billion after another night without a big winner

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The Powerball jackpot has jumped to an eye-popping \$1.7 billion, after yet another drawing passed without a big winner Wednesday.

The numbers selected were: 3, 16, 29, 61 and 69, with the Powerball number being 22.



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Since May 31, there have been 41 straight drawings without a big winner.

The next drawing will be Saturday night, with the prize expected to be the third-largest in U.S. lottery history.

Powerball's terrible odds of 1 in 292.2 million are designed to generate big jackpots, with prizes becoming ever larger as they repeatedly roll over when no one wins. Lottery officials note that the odds are far better for the game's many smaller prizes. There are three drawings each week.

The estimated \$1.4 billion jackpot from Wednesday night's drawing would have been for a winner who had opted to receive 30 payments over 29 years through an annuity. Winners almost always choose the game's cash option, which would have been an estimated \$634.3 million.

Powerball tickets cost \$2 and the game is offered in 45 states plus Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

## The president blamed AI and embraced doing so. Is it becoming the new 'fake news'?

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

Artificial intelligence, apparently, is the new "fake news."

Blaming AI is an increasingly popular strategy for politicians seeking to dodge responsibility for something embarrassing — among others. AI isn't a person, after all. It can't leak or file suit. It does make mistakes, a credibility problem that makes it hard to determine fact from fiction in the age of mis- and disinformation.

And when truth is hard to discern, the untruthful benefit, analysts say. The phenomenon is widely known as "the liar's dividend."

On Tuesday, President Donald Trump endorsed the practice. Asked about viral footage showing someone tossing something out an upper-story White House window, the president replied, "No, that's probably AI" — after his press team had indicated to reporters that the video was real.

But Trump, known for insisting the truth is what he says it is, declared himself all in on the AI-blaming phenomenon.

"If something happens that's really bad," he told reporters, "maybe I'll have to just blame AI."

He's not alone.

AI is getting blamed — sometimes fairly, sometimes not

On the same day in Caracas, Venezuelan Communications Minister Freddy Nájuez questioned the veracity of a Trump administration video it said showed a U.S. strike on a vessel in Caribbean that targeted Venezuela's Tren de Aragua gang and killed 11. A video of the strike posted to Truth Social shows a long, multi-engine speedboat at sea when a bright flash of light bursts over it. The boat is then briefly seen covered in flames.

"Based on the video provided, it is very likely that it was created using Artificial Intelligence," Nájuez said on his Telegram account, describing "almost cartoonish animation."

Blaming AI can at times be a compliment. ("He's like an AI-generated player," tennis player Alexander Bublik said of his U.S. Open opponent Jannik Sinner's talent on ESPN ). But when used by the powerful, the practice, experts say, can be dangerous.

Digital forensics expert Hany Farid warned for years about the growing capabilities of AI "deepfake" images, voices and video to aid in fraud or political disinformation campaigns, but there was always a deeper problem.

"I've always contended that the larger issue is that when you enter this world where anything can be fake, then nothing has to be real," said Farid, a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. "You get to deny any reality because all you have to say is, 'It's a deepfake.'"

That wasn't so a decade or two ago, he noted. Trump issued a rare apology ("if anyone was offended") in 2016 for his comments about touching women without their consent on the notorious "Access Hollywood" tape. His opponent, Democrat Hillary Clinton, said she was wrong to call some of his supporters "a basket of deplorables."

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Toby Walsh, chief scientist and professor of AI at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, said blaming AI leads to problems not just in the digital world but the real world as well.

"It leads to a dark future where we no longer hold politicians (or anyone else) accountable," Walsh said in an email. "It used to be that if you were caught on tape saying something, you had to own it. This is no longer the case."

Contemplating the 'liar's dividend'

Danielle K. Citron of the Boston University School of Law and Robert Chesney of the University of Texas foresaw the issue in research published in 2019. In it, they describe what they called "the liar's dividend."

"If the public loses faith in what they hear and see and truth becomes a matter of opinion, then power flows to those whose opinions are most prominent—empowering authorities along the way," they wrote in the California Law Review. "A skeptical public will be primed to doubt the authenticity of real audio and video evidence."

Polling suggests many Americans are wary about AI. About half of U.S. adults said the increased use of AI in daily life made them feel "more concerned than excited," according to a Pew Research Center poll from August 2024. Pew's polling indicates that people have become more concerned about the increased use of AI in recent years.

Most U.S. adults appear to distrust AI-generated information when they know that's the source, according to a Quinnipiac poll from April. About three-quarters said they could only trust the information generated by AI "some of the time" or "hardly ever." In that poll, about 6 in 10 U.S. adults said they were "very concerned" about political leaders using AI to distribute fake or misleading information.

They have reason, and Trump has played a sizable role in muddying trust and truth.

Trump's history of misinformation and even lies to suit his narrative predates AI. He's famous for the use of "fake news," a buzz term now widely known to denote skepticism about media reports. Leslie Stahl of CBS' "60 Minutes" has said that Trump told her off camera in 2016 that he tries to "discredit" journalists so that when they report negative stories, they won't be believed.

Trump's claim on Tuesday that AI was behind the White House window video wasn't his first attempt to blame AI. In 2023, he insisted that the anti-Trump Lincoln Project used AI in a video to make him "look bad."

In the spot titled "Feeble," a female narrator taunts Trump. "Hey Donald ... you're weak. You seem unsteady. You need help getting around." She questions his "manhood," accompanied by an image of two blue pills. The video continues with footage of Trump stumbling over words.

"The perverts and losers at the failed and once-disbanded Lincoln Project, and others, are using A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) in their Fake television commercials in order to make me look as bad and pathetic as Crooked Joe Biden," Trump posted on Truth Social.

The Lincoln Project told The Associated Press at the time that AI was not used in the spot.

## Trump says US strike targeting Venezuelan gang will cause cartels to think twice

By AAMER MADHANI, MATTHEW LEE and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Wednesday justified the lethal military strike that his administration said was carried out a day earlier against a Venezuelan gang as a necessary effort by the United States to send an unmistakable message to Latin American cartels.

Asked why the military did not instead interdict the vessel and capture those on board, Trump said the operation would cause drug smugglers to think twice about trying to move drugs into the U.S.

"There was massive amounts of drugs coming into our country to kill a lot of people, and everybody fully understands that," Trump said while hosting Polish President Karol Nawrocki at the White House. He added, "Obviously, they won't be doing it again. And I think a lot of other people won't be doing it again. When they watch that tape, they're going to say, 'Let's not do this.'"

Tuesday's strike was an astonishing departure from typical U.S. drug interdiction efforts at a time when Trump has ordered a major Navy buildup in the waters near Venezuela.

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Later Wednesday, Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned that such operations “will happen again.” Rubio said previous U.S. interdiction efforts in Latin America have not worked in stemming the flow of illicit drugs into the United States and beyond.

“What will stop them is when you blow them up, when you get rid of them,” Rubio said on a visit to Mexico.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on “Fox & Friends” that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro was running his country “as a kingpin of a drug narco-state.”

Hegseth said officials “knew exactly who was in that boat” and “exactly what they were doing.” But the Republican administration has not presented any evidence supporting Trump’s claim that operators of the vessel were from the Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua and were trying to smuggle in drugs.

“President Trump is willing to go on offense in ways that others have not seen,” said Hegseth, who declined to detail how the strike was carried out.

Venezuela’s government, which has long minimized the presence of Tren de Aragua in the South American country, limited its reaction to the strike to questioning the veracity of a video publicized by the Trump administration showing the attack. Communications Minister Freddy Nájuez suggested it was created using artificial intelligence and described it as an “almost cartoonish animation, rather than a realistic depiction of an explosion.”

Hegseth responded that the strike “was definitely not artificial intelligence,” adding he watched live footage from Washington as the strike was carried out.

Trump and administration officials have repeatedly blamed the gang for being at the root of the violence and illicit drug dealing that plague some American cities.

The president on Tuesday repeated his claim — contradicted by a declassified U.S. intelligence assessment — that Tren de Aragua is operating under Maduro’s control.

In announcing the strike, Trump said the operation, which he said killed 11, was carried out in international waters. He also noted that the gang is designated by the U.S. government as a foreign terrorist organization.

Unlike its counterparts from Colombia, Brazil and Central America, Tren de Aragua has no large-scale involvement in smuggling cocaine across international borders, according to InSight Crime, which last month published a 64-page report on the gang based on two years of research.

“We’ve found no direct participation of TdA in the transnational drug trade, although there are cases of them acting as subcontractors for other drug trafficking organizations,” said Jeremy McDermott, a Colombia-based co-founder of InSight Crime, referring to the Venezuelan gang by its initials.

Still, with affiliated cells spread across Latin America, it would not be a huge leap for Tren de Aragua to one day delve deeper into the drug trade, he said. Meanwhile, the rhetoric from officials in Washington who would blame TdA as a proxy for all Venezuelan drug traffickers assures it will remain a target of intense U.S. government focus.

“It is almost impossible today to determine who is TdA and who is not,” said McDermott. “Deportations and statements from the United States suggest that TdA is now being used as a catch-all description for Venezuelan criminals acting abroad.”

Some international warfare experts are questioning the legality of the strike.

“Intentional killing outside armed conflict hostilities is unlawful unless it is to save a life immediately,” said Mary Ellen O’Connell, an expert on international law and the use of force at the University of Notre Dame Law School. “No hostilities were occurring in the Caribbean.”

Hegseth was opaque in his comments on Fox about whether Trump was looking to press for “regime change” in Venezuela.

“Well, that’s a presidential decision,” Hegseth said. He added that “anyone would prefer that” Maduro “would just give himself up. But that’s a presidential-level decision.”

The U.S. announced plans last month to boost its maritime force in the waters off Venezuela to combat threats from Latin American drug cartels.

Maduro’s government has responded by deploying troops along Venezuela’s coast and border with



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neighboring Colombia, as well as by urging Venezuelans to enlist in a civilian militia.

Ryan Berg, director of the Americas program at the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies, said Tuesday's strike clearly shows governments in the region, not only Maduro, the paradigm shift brought on by the U.S. decision to declare Tren de Aragua and Mexican cartels as foreign terrorist organizations.

"This is a United States that sees security differently," Berg said. "They've just demonstrated the ability to use deadly force in the Western Hemisphere, and they've already told Mexico that they're going to do the same thing on Mexican territory if they don't get the level of cooperation that they want."

The U.S. has a complicated legacy of sticking its hand in Latin American affairs, and American military interventions — particularly during the Cold War — played a major part in destabilizing governments and paving the way for coups in Guatemala, Chile and a number of Central American nations, which still grapple with the sometimes violent fallout.

In recent years, the U.S. has taken a more subtle approach, providing foreign assistance to many countries and security forces, but not making direct strikes like what was seen in Caribbean waters.

Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations Juan Ramón de la Fuente, who met with Rubio on Wednesday, underscored the importance of the Trump administration to operate in the region "without subordination" of other governments and "respecting sovereignty" of allies.

## Famed streetcar in Lisbon, Portugal, derails and crashes, killing 15 people

By BARRY HATTON Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — A picturesque electric streetcar that is one of Lisbon's big tourist attractions derailed and crashed Wednesday, killing 15 people and injuring 18 others, emergency services said.

Five of the injured were in serious condition and a child was among the injured, Portugal's National Institute for Medical Emergencies said in a statement, adding that an unknown number of foreigners were among the injured.

Authorities called it an accident, the worst in the city's recent history, and it cast a pall over Lisbon's charm for the millions of foreign tourists who arrive every year. Officials did not immediately provide a cause of the crash.

The yellow-and-white streetcar, which is known as Elevador da Gloria and goes up and down a steep downtown hill, was lying on its side on the narrow road that it travels on, its sides and top crumpled. It appeared to have crashed into a building where the road bends, leaving parts of the mostly metal vehicle crushed.

"It hit the building with brutal force and fell apart like a cardboard box..." Teresa d'Ávó told Portuguese TV channel SIC. She described the streetcar as out-of-control and seeming to have no brakes, and said she watched passersby run into the middle of the nearby Avenida da Liberdade, or Freedom Avenue, the city's main thoroughfare.

Several dozen emergency workers were at the scene but most stood down after about two hours.

Eyewitnesses told local media that the streetcar careened down the hill, apparently out of control. One witness said the streetcar toppled onto a man on a sidewalk.

Videos shared widely across social media of the moments after the accident showed what appeared to be heavy smoke in the air as people got out of a streetcar just in front of the one that crashed, some racing up the hill to the wreckage as people around yelled.

Carris, the company that operates the streetcar, said scheduled maintenance had been carried out. It offered its deepest condolences to the victims and their families in a social media post, and promised that all due diligence would be taken in finding the causes of the accident.

Lisbon's City Council suspended operations of other streetcars in the city and ordered immediate inspections, local media reported.

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President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa offered his condolences to affected families, and Lisbon Mayor Carlos Moedas said the city was in mourning. "It's a tragedy of the like we've never seen," Moedas said.

Portugal's government announced that a day of national mourning would be observed on Thursday. "A tragic accident ... caused the irreparable loss of human life, which left in mourning their families and dismayed the whole country," it said in a statement.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also sent her condolences. "It is with sadness that I learned of the derailment of the famous Elevador da Gloria," she wrote in Portuguese on X.

The crash reportedly occurred at the start of the evening rush hour, around 6 p.m. Emergency officials said all victims were pulled out of the wreckage in just over two hours.

An investigation into the causes will begin once the rescue operation is over, the government said.

SITRA, a trade union, wrote in a post on social media that one of its members died in the accident.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez wrote on X that he was "appalled by the terrible accident," while Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani wrote that he had met with the Portuguese foreign minister and expressed his "solidarity with the victims."

The U.S. Embassy Lisbon also offered its "deepest condolences to all affected," according to a post on X.

The streetcar, technically called a funicular, is harnessed by steel cables and can carry more than 40 people, seated and standing. It is also commonly used by Lisbon residents. The service up and down a few hundred meters (yards) of a hill on a curved, traffic-free road in tandem with one going the opposite way inaugurated in 1885.

It is classified as a national monument.

Lisbon hosted around 8.5 million tourists last year, and long lines of people typically form for the brief rides on the popular streetcar.

## Trump asks Supreme Court to quickly take up tariffs case and reverse ruling finding them illegal

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration took the fight over tariffs to the Supreme Court on Wednesday, asking the justices to rule quickly that the president has the power to impose sweeping import taxes under federal law.

The government called on the court to reverse an appeals court ruling that found most of President Donald Trump's tariffs are an illegal use of an emergency powers law.

It's the latest in a series of Trump administration appeals to a Supreme Court he helped shape, and one that is expected to put a centerpiece of the president's trade policy before the justices.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit left the tariffs in place for now, but the administration nevertheless called on the high court to intervene quickly in a petition filed electronically late Wednesday and provided to The Associated Press. It was expected to be formally docketed on Thursday.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer asked the justices to take up the case and hear arguments in early November.

"That decision casts a pall of uncertainty upon ongoing foreign negotiations that the President has been pursuing through tariffs over the past five months, jeopardizing both already negotiated framework deals and ongoing negotiations," he wrote. "The stakes in this case could not be higher."

But the stakes are also high for small businesses battered by tariffs and uncertainty, said Jeffrey Schwab, senior counsel and director of litigation at the Liberty Justice Center.

"These unlawful tariffs are inflicting serious harm on small businesses and jeopardizing their survival. We hope for a prompt resolution of this case for our clients," he said.

The businesses have twice prevailed, once at a federal court focused on trade and again with the appeals court's 7-4 ruling.

Their lawsuit is one of several challenging the tariffs and erratic rollout that have shaken global markets, alienated U.S. trading partners and allies and raised fears of higher prices and slower economic growth.

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But Trump has also used the levies to pressure the European Union, Japan and other countries into accepting new trade deals. Revenue from tariffs totaled \$159 billion by late August, more than double what it was at the same point the year before.

Most judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit found the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, did not let Trump usurp congressional power to set tariffs. The dissenters, though, said the law does allow the president to regulate importation during emergencies without explicit limitations.

The ruling involves two sets of import taxes, both of which Trump justified by declaring a national emergency: the tariffs first announced in April and the ones from February on imports from Canada, China and Mexico.

The Constitution gives Congress the power to impose taxes, including tariffs. But over the decades, lawmakers have ceded authority to the president, and Trump has made the most of the power vacuum.

Some Trump tariffs, including levies on foreign steel, aluminum and autos, weren't covered by the appeals court ruling. It also does not include tariffs Trump imposed on China in his first term that were kept by Democratic President Joe Biden.

Trump can impose tariffs under other laws, but those have more limitations on the speed and severity with which he could act.

The government has argued that if the tariffs are struck down, it might have to refund some of the import taxes that it's collected, delivering a financial blow to the U.S. Treasury.

## **Texas lawmakers approve letting private citizens sue abortion pill providers**

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Texas lawmakers on Wednesday approved letting private citizens sue abortion pill manufacturers, doctors and anyone who mails the medication, setting the state up to be the first to try to crack down on the most common abortion method.

The law would be the first of its kind in the U.S. and add another layer of abortion restrictions in Texas, which has some of the toughest in the country and already bans nearly all abortions.

The bill now goes to Republican Gov. Greg Abbott, an abortion opponent who is expected to sign it into law. It would take effect in December, though it is nearly certain to spark legal challenges from abortion rights supporters.

Supporters of the proposal, which passed a final vote in the GOP-controlled Texas Senate, call it a key tool to enforce the state's ban and protect women and fetuses. Opponents see it as not only another way to rein in abortion but intimidate providers outside Texas who are complying with the laws in their states. They also say it would encourage a form of vigilantism.

The measure would empower citizens to provide enforcement

Under the measure, Texas residents could sue those who manufacture, transport or provide abortion-inducing drugs to anyone in Texas for up to \$100,000. Women who receive the pills for their own use would not be liable.

Under the bill, providers could be ordered to pay \$100,000. But only the pregnant woman, the man who impregnated her or other close relatives could collect the entire amount. Anyone else who sues could receive only \$10,000, with the remaining \$90,000 going to charity.

Lawmakers also added language to address worries that women would be turned in for seeking to end pregnancies by men who raped them or abusive partners. For instance, a man who impregnated a woman through sexual assault would not be eligible.

The measure has provisions that bar making public the identity or medical details about a woman who receives the pills.

It wasn't until those provisions were added, along with the limit of a \$10,000 payment for people who



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aren't themselves injured by the abortion, that several major Texas anti-abortion groups backed the bill. Texas Right to Life, one of the state's most prominent anti-abortion groups, called it the "strongest pro-life law" in the country.

"This trend is killing tens of thousands of babies a year and harming their mothers, but today, our law became a blueprint for the rest of the country," said John Seago, the group's president.

The idea of using citizens rather than government officials to enforce abortion bans is not new in Texas. It was at the heart of 2021 law that curtailed abortion there months before the U.S. Supreme Court cleared the way for other state bans to take effect.

In the earlier law, citizens could collect \$10,000 for bringing a successful lawsuit against a provider or anyone who helps someone obtain an abortion. But that measure didn't explicitly seek to go after out-of-state providers.

"It is an attempt to turn a Texas abortion ban into a nationwide abortion ban," Democratic state Sen. Carol Alvarado said before the bill cleared a final vote. "If California or New York tried to impose their gun laws or climate policies on Texas, this legislature would be outraged."

Abortion pills have proliferated, even where they're banned

Pills are a tricky topic for abortion opponents. They were the most common abortion method in the U.S. even before the 2022 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that overturned Roe v. Wade and allowed states to enforce abortion bans.

They've become even more widely used since then. Their availability is a key reason that the number of abortions has risen nationally, even though Texas and 11 other states are enforcing bans on abortion in all stages of pregnancy.

The pills have continued to flow partly because at least eight Democratic-led states have enacted laws that seek to protect medical providers from legal consequences when they use telehealth to prescribe the pills to women who are in states where abortion is illegal.

Texas is already in legal fights over shield laws and abortion pills

Earlier this year a Texas judge ordered a New York doctor to pay more than \$100,000 in penalties for providing abortion pills to a Dallas-area woman.

The same provider, Dr. Maggie Carpenter, faces criminal charges from a Louisiana prosecutor for similar allegations.

New York officials are invoking their states' shield laws to block extradition of Carpenter and to refuse to file the civil judgment.

If higher courts side with Louisiana or Texas officials, it could damage the shield laws.

Meanwhile the attorneys general of Texas and Florida are seeking to join Idaho, Kansas and Missouri in an effort to get courts to roll back U.S. Food and Drug Administration approvals for mifepristone, one of the drugs usually used in combination for medication abortions, contending that there are safety concerns. They say it needs tighter controls because of those concerns.

If the states are successful, it's possible the drug could be distributed only in-person and not by telehealth.

Major medical organizations including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists say the drug is safe.

## With Israeli advance looming, Palestinians in Gaza City ask when to leave and where to go

By WAFAA SHURAF, JULIA FRANKEL and SALLY ABOU ALJOUD Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — As artillery and bombs pound around Gaza's largest city and Israel promises a punishing new offensive, Palestinians in the city are paralyzed with fear — unsure where to go, when to leave and if they will ever return.

Israel has declared Gaza City, in the north of the territory, to be a combat zone while the military moves forward with plans to overtake it in a campaign to push Hamas into submission. Parts of the city are already considered "red zones," where Palestinians have been ordered to evacuate ahead of expected

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heavy fighting.

That has left residents on edge, including many who returned after fleeing the city in the initial stages of the Israel-Hamas war. With Israeli bulldozers razing the ground in occupied neighborhoods and Israeli leaders supporting the mass relocation of Palestinians from Gaza, departing the city now could mean leaving for good. Moving costs thousands of dollars and finding space in the overcrowded south to pitch a tent feels impossible. But staying behind, they say, could be deadly.

"The Israeli forces, when they mark any area by red color and they request the people to leave, they really will destroy it," said Mohammed Alkurdi, who is sheltering in Gaza City along with hundreds of thousands of other Palestinians.

"So it's like you decide whether to live or die. It's very simple like that."

An impossible choice between staying and fleeing

Since Israel declared the area a combat zone on Friday, a small fraction — some 14,840 Palestinians of the nearly 1 million the U.N. estimates are in Gaza City — have left their homes in the city as of Monday, most to flee south, according to the Site Management Cluster, a joint humanitarian body that coordinates assistance for people in displacement sites.

A fraction of them, about 2,200, have moved to new places within Gaza City after being displaced by Israeli attacks.

Alkurdi, a project manager and consultant, said he can hear Israeli forces from the apartment where he's sheltering as they "erase the area completely."

Zeitoun was once Gaza City's largest neighborhood, filled with markets, schools and clinics. Over the last month, large swaths of it and the neighboring area of Sabra have been flattened, according to satellite photos reviewed by The Associated Press from early August and early September. The photos show that entire blocks that have been pummeled or bulldozed into empty, sandy lots.

"It's not something partial like before. It's 100%," he said. "The house, I'm telling my friends, it keeps dancing all the day. It keeps dancing, going right and left like an earthquake."

Many of the people in the city moved back to the north during a ceasefire in January, hoping to find their homes intact. Alkurdi's home was completely destroyed, so he's now living alone in a western area of the city. His children and wife were able to leave Gaza last year. He said he would flee south if his home fell under an evacuation order.

Amjad Shawa, the director of the Palestinian NGO network, left his home in the upscale Rimal neighborhood in the early days of the war and also returned there with his family in January. He, like Al Kurdi, said his family would likely leave Gaza City if their area receives an evacuation order.

But leaving this time would be different, he said. "Gaza will be leveled and destroyed. Last time, I had my car. There was fuel. Everyone had his income, his money."

Back then, the cities of Rafah and Khan Younis still stood in southern Gaza.

Now, after months of bombardment, "there is no Rafah. Almost no Khan Younis," Shawa said.

Leaving is nearly impossible for some

For others — medical workers, older and sick people — leaving Gaza City is nearly impossible.

"The elders, they're saying we will die here," Shawa said. "This has pushed the other members of the family to stay, not to leave."

"My aunt is elderly and can't walk, and my mother also struggles with mobility. We have so many belongings and no way to manage them. It feels unthinkable," said Norhan Almuzaini, medical program officer in northern Gaza for the group Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Amal Seyam is the general director of the Women's Affairs Center in Gaza. Originally from the Tuffah neighborhood in eastern Gaza City, her home was destroyed by bombardment. For nearly four months, she has been sheltering in the Nasr neighborhood in the city's west, where she stays alongside her colleagues inside the women's center.

Seyam has been displaced five times since the war began — three times within the city and twice to the south, in Rafah and Khan Younis. Each time, she fled with nothing.

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When asked if she would consider leaving Gaza City, she said: "I will only leave when everyone who needs me here leaves. As long as there's a woman who needs me, I am staying. All of Gaza feels like it's in the red zone now anyway. The bombing is happening meters from us, not kilometers."

She paused, her voice breaking into tears.

"Many people have started packing. Many have already left. Do you know what displacement means? It means moving once again, building your life once again, buying new things, blankets, tents, all over again."

Dire conditions persist throughout Gaza

Those who have left Gaza City over the past few months have found dire conditions elsewhere in Gaza. Their arrival has crowded already overflowing tent camps and sent prices of basic goods up.

Iman El-Naya, from Khan Younis, fled Gaza City three months ago. "The beach is crowded. Everywhere is crowded. There's no hygiene. It's a struggle to get water and food."

"I go and stand in line for water. Getting bread is a struggle. Everything is even more expensive after the people from the north came here."

Shorouk Abu Eid, a pregnant woman from Gaza City, was displaced to Khan Younis four months ago. She said the arrival of more people from the north is creating an even more tragic situation.

"There is no privacy, no peace of mind. Places I used to walk to in five or 10 minutes are taking me around an hour now because of the congestion. There's barely 10 centimeters between tents."

Jamal Abu Reily lamented that the bathrooms are overflowing and that there's so little room for new arrivals.

"How are we going to all fit here? he asked. "Where are they going to stay? In the sea?"

## Judge reverses Trump administration's cuts of billions of dollars to Harvard University

By COLLIN BINKLEY and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge in Boston on Wednesday ordered the Trump administration to reverse its cuts of more than \$2.6 billion in research funding for Harvard University, delivering a significant victory to the Ivy League school in its battle with the White House.

U.S. District Judge Allison Burroughs ruled the cuts amounted to illegal retaliation for Harvard's rejection of the Trump administration's demands for changes to Harvard's governance and policies.

The government had tied the funding freezes to Harvard's delays in dealing with antisemitism, but the judge said the university's federally backed research had little connection to discrimination against Jews.

"A review of the administrative record makes it difficult to conclude anything other than that (the government) used antisemitism as a smokescreen for a targeted, ideologically-motivated assault on this country's premier universities," Burroughs wrote. The country must fight antisemitism, she wrote, but it also must protect the right to free speech.

The ruling reverses a series of funding freezes that later became outright cuts as the Trump administration escalated its fight with the nation's wealthiest university. The administration also has sought to prevent the school from hosting foreign students and threatened to revoke its tax-exempt status in a clash watched widely across higher education.

The restoration of federal money would revive Harvard's sprawling research operation and hundreds of projects that sustained cuts. But whether Harvard actually receives the federal money remains to be seen. The government plans an immediate appeal, White House spokeswoman Liz Huston said in a statement, calling Burroughs an "activist Obama-appointed judge."

"To any fair-minded observer, it is clear that Harvard University failed to protect their students from harassment and allowed discrimination to plague their campus for years," Huston said. "Harvard does not have a constitutional right to taxpayer dollars."

Harvard President Alan Garber foreshadowed potential battles to come even as he said the ruling validates Harvard's fight for academic freedom.



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"Even as we acknowledge the important principles affirmed in today's ruling, we will continue to assess the implications of the opinion, monitor further legal developments, and be mindful of the changing landscape in which we seek to fulfill our mission," Garber wrote in a campus message.

Harvard's research scientists said they had been watching the case closely but feared their funding would not be restored anytime soon.

"Many of us are worried that the federal government is going to appeal this decision or find other ways to obstruct the delivery of research dollars, despite the judge's clear statement that the funding terminations were illegal," said Rita Hamad, director of a center that researches the impact of social policies on health.

Beyond the courthouse, the Trump administration and Harvard officials have been discussing a potential agreement that would end investigations and allow the university to regain access to federal funding. President Donald Trump has said he wants Harvard to pay no less than \$500 million, but no deal has materialized, even as the administration has struck agreements with Columbia and Brown.

Wednesday's federal court ruling should embolden Harvard's administration, said historian Kirsten Weld, president of Harvard's chapter of the American Association of University Professors, which also prevailed in a lawsuit over the funding cuts. "We hope this decision makes clear to Harvard's administration that bargaining the Harvard community's rights away in a compromise with the government is unacceptable," Weld said.

Harvard's lawsuit accused the Trump administration of waging a retaliation campaign against the university after it rejected a series of demands in an April 11 letter from a federal antisemitism task force.

The letter demanded sweeping changes related to campus protests, academics and admissions. It was meant to address government accusations that the university had become a hotbed of liberalism and tolerated anti-Jewish harassment on campus.

Harvard President Alan Garber pledged to fight antisemitism. But, he said, no government "should dictate what private universities can teach, whom they can admit and hire, and which areas of study and inquiry they can pursue."

Trump officials moved to freeze \$2.2 billion in research grants the same day Harvard rejected the administration's demands. Education Secretary Linda McMahon declared in May that Harvard would no longer be eligible for new grants, and weeks later, the administration began canceling contracts with Harvard.

As Harvard fought the funding freeze in court, individual agencies began sending letters announcing that the frozen research grants were being terminated under a clause allowing grants to be scrapped if they no longer align with government policies. Harvard has moved to self-fund some of its research but warned it can't absorb the full cost of the federal cuts.

The judge's order reverses all of Harvard's federal funding freezes and cuts since April 14, and it bars the government from future cuts that violate Harvard's constitutional rights or run afoul of federal law.

Burroughs sided with the university's argument that the cuts amounted to retaliation in violation of its First Amendment rights and that the government put unconstitutional conditions on Harvard's federal money.

"As pertains to this case, it is important to recognize and remember that if speech can be curtailed in the name of the Jewish people today, then just as easily the speech of the Jews (and anyone else) can be curtailed when the political winds change direction," the judge wrote.

Burroughs also agreed with Harvard's claim that the government failed to follow steps prescribed by Congress to cut federal money under Title VI of the Higher Education Act, a federal law that forbids discrimination in education.

The Trump administration denied the cuts were made in retaliation, saying the grants were under review even before the April demand letter was sent. It argues the government has wide discretion to cancel contracts for policy reasons.

"It is the policy of the United States under the Trump Administration not to fund institutions that fail to adequately address antisemitism in their programs," it said in court documents.

In a separate lawsuit filed by Harvard, Burroughs previously blocked the Trump administration's efforts to prevent the school from hosting international students.

## Chicago prepares for an influx of National Guard troops and immigration agents

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago community leaders forged ahead Wednesday with preparations for the influx of National Guard troops and immigration agents the city is expecting, advising residents about their rights and organizing protests with fresh urgency.

Details about the operation are scant, but President Donald Trump has amped up the rhetoric about crime in the nation's third-largest city, saying an immigration crackdown and National Guard deployment are planned despite the objections of local leaders and a federal court ruling that a similar deployment in Los Angeles was illegal.

The preparations seem familiar in the Democratic stronghold that's often found itself in Trump's crosshairs. Still, leaders of schools, churches and community groups — particularly in the city's immigrant enclaves and Black and Latino neighborhoods — say there's increased gravity and coordination in preparing for the expected troop deployment and its accompanying deluge of attention.

Here's how Chicago is preparing.

Protesters say they're ready

Even without knowing what will unfold, Chicago's energetic activist networks circulated "emergency protest" schedules, vowing to demonstrate within hours of federal intervention.

Organizers from immigrant rights groups, unions, clergy and anti-violence organizations said they're working together more than ever.

"We have a stronger broader movement preparing to mobilize," said Lawrence Benito, head of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. "People still have to go about their lives. We're making sure folks are prepared and we're ready to respond."

Immigrant communities have been on high alert since Trump took office for the second time in January and kicked off a nationwide immigration enforcement operation in Chicago.

Activists say they've already offered countless know-your-rights training sessions and have added hours for a hotline where people can report immigration arrests. Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson recently signed an executive order reiterating the city's longtime sanctuary policies, which bar local police from coordinating with federal immigration agents.

Trump's plans for Chicago

Trump signaled this week that he's ready to order federal authorities to mobilize and combat crime in Chicago despite the objections of Johnson and Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker. Trump hasn't given a timeline for the Chicago operation, and he muddled the outlook again on Wednesday by suggesting New Orleans as the next possible location.

Trump's administration indicated that it would soon expand immigration operations in Chicago, and the Department of Homeland Security requested limited logistical support at the Naval Station Great Lakes outside the city.

The administration deployed the National Guard to Los Angeles over the summer and as part of his unprecedented law enforcement takeover in Washington, D.C., where he has direct legal control. His administration plans to appeal the California deployment ruling.

Trump has often singled out Chicago and other Democrat-led cities. Recently, his administration started playing up the city's daily crime log, including using shootings over Labor Day weekend as justification for sending in troops.

"I want to go into Chicago and I have this incompetent governor," Trump said Wednesday.

He and Pritzker have traded barbs for days about the issue. Pritzker, a two-term governor and frequent Trump critic, has been floated as a possible 2028 presidential contender.

"I can't live in a fantasy land where I pretend Trump is not tearing this country apart for personal greed and power," Pritzker posted Wednesday on X. At an event later in the day, he told reporters his office had not received any additional information from the federal government.

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There has been little outward support for Trump's plans in Chicago, with only a handful of Republicans and conservative leaders saying they'd welcome the intervention.

Johnson and Pritzker have repeatedly pointed to the city's drop in crime, and asked for more federal funding for prevention programs instead.

Echoing a trend in other major U.S. cities, Chicago's violent crime has dropped significantly overall, though it remains a persistent issue in parts of the city.

A damper on Mexican Independence Day celebrations

Chicago is home to a large and thriving Mexican community, and the threat of the troop deployment and immigration crackdown has put a damper on Mexican Independence Day celebrations planned over the next two weeks.

Organizers acknowledged the threat of immigration arrests might keep some people at home, but they're boosting security measures and inviting more allies. It's a similar tactic that activists tried for annual May Day protests, when fears about public gatherings were also high.

Teresa Fraga, who is organizing an event in the city's heavily Mexican Pilsen neighborhood, said the event has hired more security, lawyers and neighborhood patrols.

"It's a dark cloud that is hanging over our heads," she said. "But we are planning a safe event."

Worries in Black neighborhoods

Worries are also high in many of the city's Black neighborhoods, where organizations have been busy advising residents about what their rights are should they interact with law enforcement.

Dozens of Black churches plan to take part in "Resistance Sunday" this weekend, to disseminate information about legal rights during traffic stops and other encounters.

"We need resources, not troops," said the Rev. Marshall Hatch, a prominent civil rights activist. "We're not interested in this charade of troops."

Johnson and other Black mayors have called Trump's targeting of Democratic cities racist. And Trump has often used racist narratives about urban crime when talking about the unprecedented deployment of troops in the nation's capital.

"The president's threats to send federal troops to Chicago are a clear blatant attack on the Black community and the immigrant community," the Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression said in a statement.

City schools prepare

Chicago's public school system suggested that families create phone trees to quickly share information and organize walk-to-school groups to "provide safety in numbers."

"We know that the potential of increased federal presence is creating anxiety and fear about safety at school and safety within the broad community," Chicago Public Schools wrote in a letter to parents.

Members of the Chicago Teachers Union planned to distribute materials at schools this week with tips on legal rights and creating a buddy system on the school commute.

## Florida plans to become first state to eliminate all childhood vaccine mandates

By CURT ANDERSON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Florida plans to become the first state to eliminate vaccine mandates, a longtime cornerstone of public health policy for keeping schoolchildren and adults safe from infectious diseases.

State Surgeon General Dr. Joseph Ladapo, who announced the decision Wednesday, cast current requirements in schools and elsewhere as "immoral" intrusions on people's rights that hamper parents' ability to make health decisions for their children.

"People have a right to make their own decisions, informed decisions," Ladapo, who has frequently clashed with the medical establishment, said at a news conference in Valrico. "They don't have the right to tell you what to put in your body. Take it away from them."



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Florida's move, a significant departure from decades of public policy and research that has shown vaccines to be safe and the most effective way to stop the spread of communicable diseases, especially among schoolchildren, is a notable embrace of the Trump administration's agenda led by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a longtime anti-vaccine activist.

Dr. Rana Alissa, chair of the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said removing vaccines puts students and school staff at greater risk.

"When everyone in a school is vaccinated, it is harder for diseases to spread and easier for everyone to continue learning and having fun," Alissa said in an email. "When children are sick and miss school, caregivers also miss work, which not only impacts those families but also the local economy."

Democratic state Rep. Anna Eskamani, who is running for Orlando mayor, said in a social media post that scrapping vaccines "is reckless and dangerous" and could cause outbreaks of preventable disease.

"This is a public health disaster in the making for the Sunshine State," Eskamani said on the social platform X.

Amid turmoil at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention caused by Kennedy's extensive restructuring and downsizing, the Democratic governors of Washington, Oregon and California announced Wednesday that they had created an alliance to safeguard health policies, contending that the administration is politicizing public health decisions. The partnership plans to align immunization plans based on recommendations from respected national medical organizations, according to a joint statement from the states' governors.

Vaccines have saved at least 154 million lives globally over the past 50 years, the World Health Organization reported in 2024. The majority of those were infants and children.

"Vaccines are among the most powerful inventions in history, making once-feared diseases preventable," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general.

In Florida, vaccine mandates for child day care facilities and public schools include shots for measles, chickenpox, hepatitis B, diphtheria-tetanus-acellular pertussis, polio and other diseases, according to the state Health Department's website.

Ladapo didn't give a timeline for the changes but said the department can scrap its own rules for some vaccine mandates, though others would require action by the Florida Legislature. He did not specify any particular vaccines but repeated several times that the effort would end "all of them. Every last one of them."

The American Medical Association issued a statement saying Florida's plan to end vaccine mandates "would undermine decades of public health progress."

"While there is still time, we urge Florida to reconsider this change to help prevent a rise of infectious disease outbreaks that put health and lives at risk," said Dr. Sandra Adamson Fryhofer, an AMA trustee.

Under Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis, Florida resisted imposing COVID vaccines on schoolchildren during the pandemic, requiring "passports" for places that draw crowds, school closures and mandates that workers get the shots to keep their jobs.

"I don't think there's another state that's done as much as Florida. We want to stay ahead of the curve," the governor said.

DeSantis also announced the creation of a state "Make America Healthy Again" commission Wednesday modeled after similar initiatives that Kennedy established at the federal level.

The commission would look into such things as allowing informed consent in medical matters, promoting safe and nutritious food, boosting parental rights in medical decisions about their children and eliminating "medical orthodoxy that is not supported by the data," DeSantis said. The commission will be chaired by Lt. Gov. Jay Collins and Florida first lady Casey DeSantis.

The commission's work will help inform a large "medical freedom package" to be introduced in the Legislature next session, which would address the vaccine mandates required by state law and make permanent the recent state COVID decisions relaxing restrictions, DeSantis said.

## What to know about Venezuela's Tren de Aragua gang as Trump justifies attack

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The deadly U.S. military attack on a boat accused of carrying drugs in the Caribbean this week is the latest in a series of extraordinary measures that President Donald Trump has taken to combat the threat he sees from the Tren de Aragua gang.

The White House has offered few details on Tuesday's attack and insists the 11 people aboard were members of the gang. The criminal organization, which traces its roots to a Venezuelan prison, is not known for having a big role in global drug trafficking but for its involvement in contract killings, extortions and human smuggling.

U.S. officials have yet to explain how the military determined that those aboard the vessel were Tren de Aragua members. The strike represents a paradigm shift in how the U.S. is willing to combat drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere and sends a clear message to governments in the region as well as transnational drug cartels.

Here's a look at Tren de Aragua:

The gang's operations spread beyond Venezuela

Tren de Aragua originated more than a decade ago at an infamously lawless prison with hardened criminals in Venezuela's central state of Aragua. The gang has expanded in recent years as more than 7.7 million Venezuelans fled economic turmoil and migrated to other Latin American countries or the U.S.

Trump and administration officials have consistently blamed the gang for being at the root of the violence and illicit drug dealing that plague some U.S. cities. Trump has repeated his claim — contradicted by a declassified U.S. intelligence assessment — that Tren de Aragua is operating under Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro's control.

The size of the gang is unclear. Countries with large populations of Venezuelan migrants, including Peru and Colombia, have accused the group of being behind a spree of violence in the region.

Authorities in Chile first identified the gang's operations in 2022. Prosecutors and investigators have said the group initially engaged primarily in human trafficking, controlling unauthorized border crossings and sexual exploitation, but over time, members have expanded their activities to more violent crimes, such as kidnapping, torture, extortion and control of drug trafficking routes.

Still, unlike other criminal organizations from Colombia, Central America and Brazil, Tren de Aragua has no large-scale involvement in smuggling cocaine across international borders, according to InSight Crime, a think tank that last month published a 64-page report on the gang based on two years of research.

"We've found no direct participation of TdA in the transnational drug trade, although there are cases of them acting as subcontractors for other drug trafficking organizations," said Jeremy McDermott, a Colombia-based co-founder of InSight Crime.

McDermott added that with affiliated cells spread across Latin America, it would not be a huge leap for the gang to one day delve into the drug trade.

Landlocked Bolivia and Colombia, with access to the Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea and a border with Venezuela, are the world's top cocaine producers.

Trump has designated Tren de Aragua a foreign terrorist organization

On his first day in office, Trump took steps to designate the gang a foreign terrorist organization alongside several Mexican drug cartels. The Biden administration had sanctioned the gang and offered \$12 million in rewards for the arrest of three of its leaders.

Trump's executive order accused the gang of working closely with top Maduro officials — most notably the former vice president and one-time governor of Aragua state, Tareck El Aissami — to infiltrate migration flows, flood the U.S. with cocaine and plot against the country.

In March, Trump also declared the group an invading force, invoking an 18th century wartime law that allows the U.S. to deport noncitizens without any legal recourse. Under the Alien Enemies Act, the administration sent more than 250 Venezuelan men to a maximum-security prison in El Salvador, where they

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remained incommunicado and without access to an attorney until their July deportation to Venezuela.

A U.S. appeals court panel this week ruled that Trump cannot use that law to speed deportations of people his administration accuses of being Tren de Aragua members. The decision is destined for a show-down at the Supreme Court.

Trump cites the gang in justifying the military strike

The U.S. has not released the names and nationalities of the 11 people killed Tuesday. It also has not offered an estimate of the amount of drugs it says the boat was carrying.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday told reporters the U.S. military will continue lethal strikes on suspected drug trafficking vessels, but he dodged questions on details of the strike, including if the people in the boat were warned before the attack.

But, he said, Trump "has a right, under exigent circumstances, to eliminate imminent threats to the United States."

"If you're on a boat full of cocaine or fentanyl or whatever, headed to the United States, you're an immediate threat to the United States," he told reporters in Mexico City during a visit to Latin America.

Venezuela's government, which has long minimized the presence of Tren de Aragua in the South American country, limited its reaction to the strike to questioning the veracity of a video showing the attack. Communications Minister Freddy Nández suggested it was created using artificial intelligence and described it as an "almost cartoonish animation, rather than a realistic depiction of an explosion."

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth responded that the strike "was definitely not artificial intelligence," adding he watched live footage from Washington as the strike was carried out.

The strike shows that the U.S. government is "quite literally deadly serious" in its targeting of drug traffickers, said Ryan Berg, director of the Americas program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank.

But he questioned whether the link to Tren de Aragua has more to do with the "familiarity" that Americans now have with the gang.

"I certainly hope that the U.S. government has the intelligence and we are not shooting first and asking questions later," Berg said.

## Trump suggests National Guard could go into New Orleans, a blue city in a red state

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump suggested Wednesday that New Orleans could be his next target for deploying the National Guard to fight crime, potentially expanding the number of cities around the nation where he may send federal law enforcement.

Trump has already said he plans to send the National Guard into Chicago and Baltimore following his administration deploying troops and federal agents to patrol the streets of Washington, D.C., last month.

"So we're making a determination now," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office during a meeting with Polish President Karol Nawrocki. "Do we go to Chicago? Do we go to a place like New Orleans, where we have a great governor, Jeff Landry, who wants us to come in and straighten out a very nice section of this country that's become quite, you know, quite tough, quite bad."

Trump now frequently boasts about turning Washington into a "safe zone." The White House reports more than 1,760 arrests citywide since the president first announced he was mobilizing federal forces on Aug. 7.

But Washington is a federal district subject to laws giving Trump power to take over the local police force for up to 30 days. The decision to use troops to attempt to quell crime in other Democratic-controlled cities around the country would represent an important escalation.

"So we're going to be going to maybe Louisiana, and you have New Orleans, which has a crime problem. We'll straighten that out in about two weeks," Trump said. "It'll take us two weeks, easier than D.C."

Trump's latest comments came a day after he declared "We're going in" and suggested that the National



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Guard might soon be headed for Chicago, the nation's third-largest city, and Baltimore. That's despite state and local officials, as well as many residents, both places staunchly opposing the idea.

But New Orleans is a predominately Democratic-leaning city in a red state run by Landry, a Republican — and reflection of Trump floating federal intervention along ideological lines.

"Crime is down in New Orleans," City Councilmember Oliver Thomas, who is also a mayoral candidate, said via text message. "That would seem to be very political or a major overreaction!"

Councilmember Jean-Paul Morrell said it is "ridiculous to consider sending the National Guard into another American city that hasn't asked for it."

"Guardsmen are not trained law enforcement. They can't solve crimes, they can't interview witnesses and they aren't trained to constitutionally police," Morrell said in a statement. "NOPD is doing a great job with the existing resources they have. Marching troops into New Orleans is an unnecessary show of force in effort to create a solution to a problem that doesn't exist."

Landry, though, posted on social media, "We will take President @realDonaldTrump's help from New Orleans to Shreveport!" while House Majority Leader Steve Scalise, whose district includes the conservative suburbs outside of New Orleans, praised Trump's efforts in Washington.

"The citizens of New Orleans, and the millions of tourists who come here, deserve that same level of security," Scalise wrote in a social media post. "We should all be in favor of increased safety for our citizens and lower crime."

Louisiana Attorney General Liz Murrill said in a statement that people "continue to die in New Orleans because 'leaders' refuse to accept the resources that are available to them."

"If your gut reaction is to reject the President's offer for assistance without condition, perhaps you're the problem - not him," Murrill said.

The City of New Orleans struck a more conciliatory tone, staying in a statement, "our federal and state partnerships have played a significant role in ensuring public safety, particularly during special events" and that local officials "remain committed to sustaining this momentum." New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell was indicted last month on federal fraud charges and is set to be arraigned in the coming weeks.

Trump, meanwhile, has repeatedly railed against Democratic Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker for not requesting that the National Guard be deployed.

"We could straighten out Chicago. All they have to do is ask us to go into Chicago. If we don't have the support of some of these politicians, but I'll tell you who is supporting us, the people of Chicago," Trump said Wednesday.

Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson have been adamant in saying Chicago doesn't need or want military intervention. In Baltimore, Mayor Brandon Scott and Maryland Gov. Wes Moore have remained similarly opposed.

In Washington, Mayor Muriel Bowser has said Trump's decision to take over her city's police force and flood streets with hundreds of federal law enforcement agents and National Guard troops has succeeded in reducing violent crime — but she's also argued that similar results could have been achieved simply by having more city police officers in service.

She said Wednesday that Trump's law enforcement powers in the city don't need to be extended beyond 30 days, saying, "We don't need a presidential emergency."

## Wall Street steadies itself as Alphabet rallies and pressure eases from the bond market

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street steadied on Wednesday after Alphabet and other technology stocks rallied. It also got some relief from easing pressure from the bond market, where the latest discouraging report on the U.S. job market bolstered expectations that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates soon to support the economy.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.5% to break the two-day losing slide it had been on since setting its latest all-time

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high. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 24 points, or 0.1%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 1%.

Google's parent company was one of the strongest forces lifting the market and jumped 9.1% after avoiding some of the worst-case scenarios in its antitrust case. A federal judge on Tuesday ordered a shake-up of Google's search engine but did not force a sale of its Chrome browser.

Because Alphabet is one of Wall Street's most valuable companies, its stock movements carry much more weight on the S&P 500 and other indexes than the typical company's.

Also helping to steady Wall Street was a calming bond market. A day earlier, yields climbed worldwide on worries about governments' abilities to repay their growing mountains of debt, as well as concerns that President Donald Trump's pressure on the Federal Reserve to cut short-term interest rates could lead to higher inflation in the long term.

Such worries have pushed investors to demand higher yields before lending money to governments. And when bonds are paying more in interest, investors feel less need to pay high prices for stocks, which are riskier investments.

On Wednesday, Treasury yields retreated following the latest report on the U.S. job market to come in weaker than expected. The 10-year Treasury yield fell to 4.22% from 4.28% late Tuesday, for example.

The report showed that U.S. employers were advertising 7.2 million job openings at the end of July, fewer than economists had forecast. The number bolsters the sense on Wall Street that the job market may be ossifying into a low-hire, low-fire state.

A weakened job market could push the Federal Reserve to cut its main interest rate for the first time this year at its next meeting, which is scheduled for later this month. That's the widespread expectation among traders, with the next big data point coming on Friday via an update on U.S. hiring during August.

Lower interest rates could give the job market and overall economy a boost. The downside is that they can also push inflation higher when Trump's tariffs may be set to raise prices for all kinds of imports.

Trading on Wall Street was mixed outside of tech stocks, which benefited from the Alphabet ruling. Apple rose 3.8% after analysts highlighted how the ruling will still allow it to sign lucrative search deals with Google.

"This is a relief, an outcome that is much better than feared for Google and for Apple," according to Chris Marangi, co-chief investment officer of value at Gabelli Funds.

Macy's jumped 20.7% for one of the market's bigger gains after the retailer reported stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected. The owner of Bloomingdale's delivered the best growth in an important measure of sales in three years, and it also raised its forecasts for sales and profit this fiscal year.

American Bitcoin, a bitcoin treasury and mining company linked to the Trump family, rose 16.5% in a manic first day of trading after completing its merger with Gryphon Digital Mining. Its stock price more than doubled at one point, and its movements were so frenetic that trading was halted several times through the day.

Campbell's rose 7.2% after the company behind the Goldfish and V8 brands reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. It also said, though, that customers are continuing to be "increasingly deliberate" and that tariffs may help drag its overall earnings lower in its upcoming fiscal year.

On the losing end of Wall Street was Dollar Tree, even though the retailer likewise reported a better profit than analysts expected. A chunk of that performance came because of the timing of tariffs, which could drag down its results in the current quarter.

Analysts also said expectations were high for the value retailer coming into its report. Its stock fell 8.4%, slicing into its gain for the year that came into the day at a stellar 48.6%.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 32.72 points to 6,448.26. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 24.58 to 45,271.23, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 218.10 to 21,497.73.

In stock markets abroad, European indexes climbed following a weaker finish across much of Asia.

Japan's Nikkei 225 fell 0.9% amid uncertainty about the political future of Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

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## Rubio says US and Mexico will strengthen security collaboration

By MATTHEW LEE and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico and the United States on Wednesday agreed during U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to keep collaborating on cross-border security, including fighting the trafficking of drugs, guns and fuel, but made clear it would be done from their respective sides of the border, respecting each other's sovereignty at a time of heightened concerns over U.S. intervention in the region.

What had initially been advertised as the signing of a broad security agreement but it evolved into a reaffirmation of the collaboration Mexico and the U.S. have said they've been doing all along.

The priorities remain stopping fentanyl and other drugs from flowing into the U.S., and preventing high-powered guns bought in U.S. gun shops from being smuggled into Mexico, while continuing to control migration, which has fallen dramatically. The new development was the establishment of a "high-level implementation group" for that continued collaboration.

"This is a high-level group that will meet and coordinate on a regular basis to make sure that all the things we are working on, all the things we have agreed to work on, are happening, are being implemented," Rubio said.

"It's the closest cooperation we've ever had, maybe between any country, but definitely between the U.S. and Mexico," Rubio said.

Mexico Foreign Affairs Secretary Ramón de la Fuente said, "It's fundamental to show to U.S. society, Mexican society, that yes, models of cooperation, of collaboration can be built that work, that give results."

Rubio spoke after meeting with Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum to stress the importance the U.S. places on cooperating with Washington on security, trade and migration. Rubio will visit Ecuador on Thursday on his third trip to Latin America since taking office. Sheinbaum has voiced fears of the U.S. encroaching on Mexican sovereignty.

Gunboat diplomacy

The meeting came a day after President Donald Trump dramatically stepped up his administration's military role in the Caribbean with what he called a deadly strike on a Venezuelan drug cartel.

Trump has alienated many in the region with persistent demands and threats of sweeping tariffs and massive sanctions for refusing to follow his lead, particularly on migration and the fight against drug cartels. Likely to heighten those concerns is the U.S. having deployed warships to the Caribbean and elsewhere off Latin America and announcing a lethal strike on an alleged Tren de Aragua gang vessel said to be carrying narcotics.

Rubio continued defending the strike without addressing details, including whether those aboard the boat were warned before being fired upon. Trump said all 11 were killed.

"The president, under his authority as commander in chief, has a right under exigent circumstances to eliminate imminent threats to the United States," Rubio said.

His Mexican counterpart, de la Fuente, emphasized his country's preference for "nonintervention, peaceful solution of conflicts."

The U.S. has a complicated legacy of sticking its hand in Latin American affairs, and American military interventions — particularly during the Cold War — played a major part in destabilizing governments and paving the way for coups in Guatemala and Chile.

In recent years, the U.S. has taken a more subtle approach, providing foreign assistance to many countries, including training security forces, but not making direct strikes like what was seen Tuesday in Caribbean waters.

Mexico's president pushes back on Trump saying she's not ready to target cartels

Trump has demanded, and so far won, some concessions from Sheinbaum's government, which is eager to defuse his tariff threats, although she has fiercely defended Mexico's sovereignty.

Sheinbaum again rejected Trump's suggestion that she is afraid of confronting Mexico's cartels because they have so much power.

"We respect a lot the Mexico-United States relationship, President Trump, and no, it's not true this affirmation that he makes," she said.



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In a State of the Nation address this week marking her first year in office, she said, "Under no circumstance will we accept interventions, interference or any other act from abroad that is detrimental to the integrity, independence and sovereignty of the country."

Sheinbaum has gone after Mexican drug cartels and their fentanyl production more aggressively than her predecessor. The government has sent the National Guard to the northern border and delivered 55 cartel figures long wanted by U.S. authorities to the Trump administration.

In a statement released after their meeting, the State Department extolled what it said was a reaffirmation of already robust security cooperation in a region that is now concerned with the prospect of greater U.S. military invention. It said Rubio thanked Sheinbaum for helping secure the shared border.

The U.S. statement made only a brief mention of one issue causing friction between the two nations: Trump's threat to impose hefty tariffs on Mexican imports into the United States.

The word "tariff" appeared only once in the statement and then in the context of Rubio emphasizing to Sheinbaum "the importance of resolving trade and non-trade barriers to further the prosperity of both of our nations."

## Epstein survivors implore Congress to act as push for disclosure builds

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Survivors of Jeffrey Epstein's sexual abuse made their voices heard Wednesday on Capitol Hill, pressuring lawmakers to force the release of the sex trafficking investigation into the late financier and pushing back on President Donald Trump's effort to dismiss the issue as a "hoax."

In a news conference on the Capitol lawn that drew hundreds of supporters and chants of "release the files," the women shared — some publicly for the first time — how they were lured into Epstein's abuse by his former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell. They demanded that the Trump administration provide transparency and accountability for what they endured as teenagers.

It was a striking stand as the push for disclosure of the so-called Epstein files reaches a pivotal moment in Washington. Lawmakers are battling over how Congress should delve into the Epstein saga while the Republican president, after initially signaling support for transparency on the campaign trail, has been dismissing the matter as a "Democrat hoax."

"No matter what you do it's going to keep going," Trump said Wednesday. He added, "Really, I think it's enough."

But the survivors on Capitol Hill, as well as at least one of Trump's closest allies in Congress, disagreed. Some of the women pleaded for Trump to support their cause.

"It feels like you just want to explode inside because nobody, again, is understanding that this is a real situation. These women are real. We're here in person," said Haley Robson, one of the survivors who said she is a registered Republican.

Epstein killed himself in a Manhattan jail while awaiting trial in 2019 on charges that said he sexually abused and trafficked dozens of underage girls. The case was brought more than a decade after he secretly cut a deal with federal prosecutors in Florida to dispose of nearly identical allegations. Epstein was accused of paying underage girls hundreds of dollars in cash for massages and then molesting them.

Maxwell, Epstein's longtime confidant and former girlfriend, was convicted in 2021 and sentenced to 20 years in prison for luring teenage girls for him to abuse. Four women testified at her trial that they were abused by Epstein as teens in the 1990s and early 2000s at his homes in Florida, New York and New Mexico. The allegations have also spawned dozens of lawsuits.

A Trump ally crosses party lines

Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, who is usually closely aligned with Trump, described her support for a bill that would force the Justice Department to release the information it has compiled on Epstein and Maxwell as a moral fight against sexual predation.

"This isn't one political party or the other. It's a culmination of everyone working together to silence

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these women and protect Jeffrey Epstein and his cabal," Greene said at the news conference.

She also told reporters that she had spoken with Trump on Wednesday to tell him that he should host the survivors in the Oval Office, "not any of Jeffrey Epstein's rich, powerful friends."

Greene is one of four Republicans — three of them women — who have defied House GOP leadership and the White House in an effort to force a vote on their bill. House Speaker Mike Johnson is trying to quash the effort by putting forward his own resolution and arguing that a concurrent investigation by the House Oversight Committee is the best way for Congress to deliver transparency.

"I think the Oversight probe is going to be wide and expansive, and they're going to follow the truth wherever it leads," Johnson, R-La., said.

He added that the White House was complying with the committee to release information and that he had spoken with Trump about it Tuesday night. "He says, 'Get it out there, put it all out there,'" Johnson told reporters.

The Oversight Committee on Tuesday night released what it said was the first tranche of documents and files it has received from the Justice Department on the Epstein case. The folders posted on Google Drive contained hundreds of image files of years-old court filings related to Epstein, but contained practically nothing new.

Warnings from the White House

Meanwhile, the White House was warning House members that support for the bill to require the DOJ to release the files would be seen as a hostile act. Rep. Thomas Massie, a Kentucky Republican who is pressing for the bill, said that the White House was sending that message because "They've dug in."

"They decided they don't want it released," he said. "It's a political threat."

But with Trump sending a strong message and Republican leadership moving forward with an alternative resolution, Massie was left looking for support from at least two more Republicans willing to cross political lines. It would take six GOP members, as well as all House Democrats, to force a vote on their bill. And even if that passes the House, it would still need to pass the Senate and be signed by Trump.

Survivors speak out

Still, the survivors saw this moment as their best chance in years to gain some justice for what had been done by Epstein. One survivor, Chauntae Davies said that she remembered feeling powerless when she saw how Epstein was connected to some of the most rich and powerful people in the world. Davies said she once traveled to Africa with Epstein on a trip that included former President Bill Clinton and other notable figures.

"He bragged about his powerful friends, including current President Donald Trump. It was his biggest brag, actually," Davies said.

Now, the women say it's time to reveal a full accounting of everyone involved or complicit in Epstein's behavior. Several of them are compiling a list of people who may have been involved, but are still deliberating whether to release that publicly, fearing potential repercussions.

Bradley Edwards, an attorney who has represented many of the survivors, refuted the notion that Epstein kept a list of clients, but said others were still involved.

"His scheme was to personally abuse women," Edwards said. "When they reached a certain age, he did farm a section of them, some of them, out to some of his friends. That doesn't mean all of his friends."

Ultimately, the women said they spoke out in hope that lawmakers and federal officials would act to ensure that abusers like Epstein are not let off lightly or allowed to continue their abuse. They were especially affronted that Maxwell had recently been moved to a minimum-security prison camp in Texas.

"Justice and accountability are not favors from the powerful. They are obligations decades overdue" Jess Michaels, a survivor who said she was first abused by Epstein in 1991, told the rally on the Capitol lawn. "This moment began with Epstein's crimes. But it's going to be remembered for survivors demanding justice, demanding truth, demanding accountability."

## Iran increased stockpile of near weapons-grade uranium before Israeli attack, UN agency says

By STEPHANIE LIECHTENSTEIN Associated Press

VIENNA (AP) — A confidential report by the United Nations' nuclear watchdog circulated to member states and seen by The Associated Press said Wednesday that Iran increased its stockpile of uranium enriched to near weapons-grade levels before Israel launched its military attack on June 13.

The report by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency said that as of June 13, Iran had 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of uranium enriched up to 60%, an increase of 32.3 kilograms (71.2 pounds) since the IAEA's last report in May.

The report stated that this figure is "based on the information provided by Iran, agency verification activities between 17 May 2025 and 12 June 2025 (the day preceding the start of the military attacks), and estimates based on the past operation of the relevant facilities."

That material is a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

According to the IAEA, approximately 42 kilograms of 60% enriched uranium is theoretically enough to produce one atomic bomb, if enriched further to 90%.

IAEA calls for inspections to resume

The confidential report also said Iran and the IAEA have not reached an agreement on resuming inspections of sites affected by Israeli and U.S. bombing in June.

It remains unclear just how much the Israeli and U.S. strikes disrupted Iran's nuclear program. Israel targeted Iranian nuclear and military sites, saying it could not allow Tehran to develop atomic weapons and that it feared the Islamic Republic was close. Iran has long maintained that its program is peaceful.

On June 22, the U.S. dropped bunker-buster bombs on nuclear sites.

On July 2, Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian signed a law adopted by the Iranian Parliament to suspend all cooperation with the agency.

The only site inspected since the war has been the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, which operates with Russian technical assistance. Inspectors watched a fuel replacement at the plant on Aug. 27 and 28.

The director general of the U.N. nuclear watchdog, Rafael Grossi, said that "technical modalities to enable the full resumption of Agency inspection should be concluded without delay," the report stated.

The report stated that while the withdrawal of UN inspectors from Iran during the war "was necessary given the overall security situation," Tehran's subsequent decision to cut cooperation with the IAEA was "deeply regrettable."

As of June 13, Iran's total enriched uranium stockpile was 9874.9 kilograms (21,770.4 pounds) which represents an increase of 627.3 kilograms (1,382.9 pounds) since the last report in May, the report said.

The IAEA said that since June 13, it has "not been able to conduct the in-field activities required to collect and verify Iran's declarations used to estimate the changes to the previously reported stockpile."

The IAEA also reported that inspectors have not been able to verify Iran's near bomb-grade stockpile for over two and a half months, which it called "a matter of serious concern."

Iran is legally obliged to cooperate with the IAEA under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

More negotiations ahead

The report detailed the discussions between Iran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog to resume inspections over the past month and a half, stating that a technical team from the IAEA held discussions in Tehran with Iranian officials on Aug. 11.

The report states that on Aug. 14, Iran sent a letter providing a detailed draft of a "new arrangement," under which the IAEA would have to submit its requests for inspections of undamaged facilities "on a case by case basis."

With regard to damaged sites, the report states that Iran "undertook to provide the Agency with a report 'up to one month after the finalization of this Arrangement.'" According to the Iranian proposal, only after the submission of such a report would Iran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog negotiate a new arrangement



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for cooperation.

The IAEA chief made clear to Iran that any cooperation arrangement must be in accordance with Tehran's nuclear safeguards agreement that it has with the U.N. nuclear watchdog.

The report said that discussion between Iran and the IAEA will continue in Vienna "in the next few days."

The report by the IAEA comes at a sensitive time as France, Germany and the United Kingdom on Aug. 28 started the process of reimposing sanctions on Iran.

The process, termed a "snapback" by the diplomats who negotiated it into Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, was designed to be veto-proof at the U.N. and could take effect in a month.

The move set a 30-day clock ticking for sanctions to return unless the West and Iran reach a diplomatic agreement.

European nations have said they would be willing to extend the deadline if Iran resumes direct negotiations with the U.S. over its nuclear program, allows U.N. nuclear inspectors access to its nuclear sites, and accounts for the over 400 kilograms of highly enriched uranium the U.N. watchdog says it has.

So far, none of these conditions have been met by Iran.

## 'Ketamine Queen' pleads guilty to selling fatal dose to Matthew Perry

By ANDREW DALTON and ITZEL LUNA Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A woman branded as the "Ketamine Queen" pleaded guilty Wednesday to selling Matthew Perry the drug that killed him, becoming the fifth and final defendant charged in Perry's overdose death to admit guilt.

Jasveen Sangha pleaded guilty to five federal charges, including providing the ketamine that led to Perry's death. Her trial had been planned to start later this month.

Perry's mother, Suzanne Perry, and his stepfather, "Dateline" reporter Keith Morrison, sat in the audience. It was their first time attending court proceedings since the announcement of the indictments one year ago.

Wearing tan jail garb, Sangha stood in court Wednesday next to her attorney Mark Geragos as she repeated "guilty" five times when U.S. District Court Judge Sherilyn Peace Garnett asked for her pleas.

Before that, she answered "yes, your honor" to dozens of procedural questions, hedging slightly when the judge asked if she knew the drugs she was giving to co-defendant and middleman Erik Fleming were going to Perry.

"There was no way I could tell 100%," she said. She later added, to a similar question on vials of ketamine she gave to Fleming, that "I didn't know if all of them or some of them" were bound for Perry. The comments didn't affect her plea agreement.

Prosecutors had cast Sangha, a 42-year-old citizen of the U.S. and the U.K., as a prolific drug dealer who was known to her customers as the "Ketamine Queen," using the term often in press releases and court documents.

Making good on a deal she signed on Aug. 18, Sangha pleaded guilty to one count of maintaining a drug-involved premises, three counts of distribution of ketamine, and one count of distribution of ketamine resulting in death.

"She feels horrible about all of this. Nobody wants to be in the chain of causation for lack of a better term," Geragos said outside the federal courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. "She feels horrible and she's felt horrible since day one."

Sangha admitted to selling drugs directly to 33-year-old Cody McLaury, who died from an overdose in 2019. McLaury had no connection to Perry.

Prosecutors agreed to drop three other counts.

Geragos, whose other clients have included Michael Jackson, Chris Brown and the Menendez brothers, told the judge that the deal was reached "after a robust back-and-forth with the government."

The final plea deal came a year after federal prosecutors announced the indictments in Perry's Oct. 28, 2023 death after a sweeping investigation.

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Sangha is scheduled to be sentenced on Dec. 10. She could get up to 65 years in prison. The judge is not required to give her a shorter term because of the plea agreement, but prosecutors said they will ask for less than the maximum. None of the co-defendants have been sentenced. Sangha has been in custody for about a year, while her co-defendants have been released on bond.

"I thought the government was turning the responsibility in this case on its head," Geragos said outside court. "I think that most people, if you talk to them about this case, their biggest problem with it is, 'why is she in custody and the people, whether it's medical professionals or the people who are actually ingesting the drug, or the people who were administering the drug are out?'"

Geragos suggested that he would provide mitigating evidence before sentencing.

Sangha and Dr. Salvador Plasencia, who pleaded guilty in July, had been the primary targets of the investigation. Three others — Dr. Mark Chavez, Kenneth Iwamasa and Fleming — pleaded guilty in exchange for their cooperation.

Perry was found dead in his Los Angeles home by Iwamasa, his assistant. The medical examiner ruled that ketamine, typically used as a surgical anesthetic, was the primary cause of death.

Sangha presented a posh lifestyle on Instagram, with photos of herself with the rich and famous in cities around the globe. Prosecutors said she privately presented herself as a dealer who sold to the same kind of high-class customers.

Perry had been using ketamine through his regular doctor as a legal, but off-label, treatment for depression, which has become increasingly common. Perry, 54, sought more ketamine than his doctor would give him, and his search for more led him to Sangha through his friend Fleming about two weeks before his death, prosecutors said.

Fleming messaged Perry's assistant saying her ketamine was "amazing" and that she deals only "with high end and celebs."

Perry bought large amounts of ketamine from Sangha, including 25 vials for \$6,000 in cash four days before his death, prosecutors said.

Perry struggled with addiction for many years, dating back to his time on "Friends," when he became one of the biggest stars of his generation as Chandler Bing. He starred alongside Jennifer Aniston, Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow, Matt LeBlanc and David Schwimmer for 10 seasons from 1994 to 2004 on NBC's megahit series.

## Trump can't use Alien Enemies Act to deport Venezuelan gang members, court rules

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal appeals court panel has ruled that President Donald Trump cannot use an 18th-century wartime law to speed the deportations of people his administration accuses of being in a Venezuelan gang. The decision blocking an administration priority is destined for a showdown at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Two judges on a three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in the ruling Tuesday, agreed with immigrant rights lawyers and lower court judges who argued the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 was not intended to be used against gangs such as Tren de Aragua, which the Republican president had targeted in March.

Lee Gelernt, who argued the case for the ACLU, said the administration's use of "a wartime statute during peacetime to regulate immigration was rightly shut down by the court. This is a critically important decision reining in the administration's view that it can simply declare an emergency without any oversight by the courts."

Abigail Jackson, a White House spokeswoman, said the majority erred in second-guessing the president.

"The authority to conduct national security operations in defense of the United States and to remove terrorists from the United States rests solely with the President," Jackson said. "We expect to be vindicated on the merits in this case."

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The administration deported people designated as Tren de Aragua members to a notorious prison in El Salvador and argued that American courts could not order them freed.

In a deal announced in July, more than 250 of the deported migrants returned to Venezuela.

The Alien Enemies Act was only used three times before in U.S. history, all during declared wars — in the War of 1812 and the two world wars.

The administration unsuccessfully argued that courts cannot second-guess the president's determination that Tren de Aragua was connected to Venezuela's government and represented a danger to the United States, meriting use of the act.

In a 2-1 ruling, the judges said they granted the preliminary injunction sought by the plaintiffs because they "found no invasion or predatory incursion" in this case.

The decision bars deportations from Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi. In the majority were U.S. Circuit Judges Leslie Southwick, who was nominated by Republican President George W. Bush, and Irma Carrillo Ramirez, who was nominated by Democratic President Joe Biden. Andrew Oldham, a Trump nominee, dissented.

The majority opinion said Trump's allegations about Tren de Aragua did not meet the historical levels of national conflict that Congress intended for the act.

"A country's encouraging its residents and citizens to enter this country illegally is not the modern-day equivalent of sending an armed, organized force to occupy, to disrupt, or to otherwise harm the United States," the judges wrote.

In a lengthy dissent, Oldham complained his two colleagues were second-guessing Trump's conduct of foreign affairs and national security, realms where courts usually give the president great deference.

"The majority's approach to this case is not only unprecedented—it is contrary to more than 200 years of precedent," Oldham wrote.

The panel did grant the Trump administration one legal victory, finding the procedures it uses to advise detainees under the Alien Enemies Act of their legal rights were appropriate.

The ruling can be appealed to the full 5th Circuit or directly to the Supreme Court, which is likely to make the ultimate decision on the issue.

The Supreme Court has already gotten involved twice before in the tangled history of the Trump administration's use of the AEA. In the initial weeks after Trump's March declaration, the court ruled that the administration could deport people under the act, but unanimously found that those targeted needed to be given a reasonable chance to argue their case before judges in the areas where they were held.

Then, as the administration moved to rapidly deport more Venezuelans from Texas, the high court stepped in again with an unusual, post-midnight ruling that they couldn't do so until the 5th Circuit decided whether the administration was providing adequate notice to the immigrants and could weigh in on the broader legal issues of the case. The high court has yet to address whether a gang can be cited as an alien enemy under the AEA.

## Judge orders search shakeup in Google monopoly case, but keeps hands off Chrome and default deals

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A federal judge on Tuesday ordered a shake-up of Google's search engine in an attempt to curb the corrosive power of an illegal monopoly while rebuffing the U.S. government's attempt to break up the company and impose other restraints.

The 226-page decision made by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, D.C., will likely ripple across the technological landscape at a time when the industry is being reshaped by breakthroughs in artificial intelligence — including conversational "answer engines" as companies like ChatGPT and Perplexity try to upend Google's long-held position as the internet's main gateway.

The innovations and competition being unleashed by AI also reshaped the judge's approach to the remedies in the nearly five-year-old antitrust case brought by the U.S. Justice Department during President



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Donald Trump's first administration and carried onward by President Joe Biden's administration.

"Unlike the typical case where the court's job is to resolve a dispute based on historic facts, here the court is asked to gaze into a crystal ball and look to the future. Not exactly a judge's forte," Mehta wrote.

The judge is trying to rein in Google by prohibiting some of the tactics the company deployed to drive traffic to its search engine and other services. The ruling also will pry open some of the prized databases of closely guarded information about search that have provided Google with a seemingly insurmountable advantage.

The handcuffs being slapped on Google will preclude contracts that give its search engine, Gemini AI app, Play Store for Android and virtual assistant an exclusive position on smartphone, personal computers and other devices.

But Mehta stopped short of banning the multi-billion dollar deals that Google has been making for years to lock in its search engine as the default on smartphones, personal computers and other devices. Those deals, involving payments of more than \$26 billion annually, were one of the main issues that prompted the judge to conclude Google's search engine was an illegal monopoly, but he decided banning them in the future would do more harm than good.

The judge also rejected the U.S. Justice Department's effort to force Google to sell its popular Chrome browser, concluding it was an unwarranted step that "would be incredibly messy and highly risky."

Partially because he is allowing the default deals to continue, Mehta is ordering Google to give its current and would-be rivals access to some of its search engine's secret sauce — the data stockpiled from trillions of queries that it used to help improve the quality of its search results. That is a measure that Google had also fiercely opposed, contending it was unfair and would raise privacy and security risk for the billions of people who have posed questions to its search engine — sometimes delving into sensitive issues.

The Justice Department's antitrust chief, Gail Slater, hailed the decision as a "major win for the American people," even though the agency didn't get everything it sought. "We are now weighing our options and thinking through whether the ordered relief goes far enough," Slater wrote in a post.

In its own post, Google framed Mehta's ruling as a vindication of its long-held position that the case never should have been brought. The decision "recognizes how much the industry has changed through the advent of AI, which is giving people so many more ways to find information," wrote Lee-Anne Mulholland, Google's vice president of regulatory affairs. "This underlines what we've been saying since this case was filed in 2020: Competition is intense and people can easily choose the services they want."

The Mountain View, California, company has already vowed to appeal the judge's monopoly findings issued 13 months ago that led to Tuesday's ruling.

"You don't find someone guilty of robbing a bank and then sentence him to writing a thank you note for the loot," said Nidhi Hegde, executive director of the American Economic Liberties Project.

Investors seemed to interpret the ruling as a relatively light slap on the wrist for Google, as the stock price of its corporate parent, Alphabet Inc., surged more than 7% in extended trading. That would translate into a nearly \$200 billion increase in Alphabet's market value, if the shares follow a similar trajectory in Wednesday's regular trading session.

Allowing the default search deals to continue is more than just a victory for Google. It's also a win for Apple, which receives more than \$20 billion annually from Google, and other recipients of the payments.

In hearings earlier this year, Apple warned the judge that banning the contracts would deprive the company of money that it funnels into its own innovative research. The Cupertino, California, company also cautioned that the ban could have the unintended consequence of making Google even more powerful by pocketing the money it had been spending on deals while most consumers will still end up flocking to Google's search engine anyway.

Others, such as the owners of the Firefox web browser, asserted that losing the Google contracts would threaten their future survival by depriving them of essential revenue.

Apple's shares rose 3% in extended trading after the ruling came out.

Mehta refrained from ordering a sale of Chrome because he decided there wasn't adequate proof the browser served as an essential ingredient in Google's search monopoly, making a divestiture "a poor fit

for this case.”

Chrome would have been a hot commodity had the judge forced Google to put it on the auction block. Perplexity submitted an unsolicited \$34.5 billion offer to buy Chrome last month. And during court testimony earlier this year, a ChatGPT executive left no doubt that service’s owner, OpenAI, would be interested in buying Chrome, too.

But the judge decided forcing Google to open up parts of its search data to rivals such as DuckDuckGo, Bing, and others will offer the best and fairest way to foster more compelling competition. In doing so, Mehta still narrowed the scope of the Justice Department’s request and will limit the access to Google’s search index and query histories.

While the wrangling over Mehta’s ruling continues, Google is facing another potentially debilitating threat in another antitrust case brought by the Justice Department targeting the digital ad empire that was built up around its search engine. After different federal judge in Virginia declared that some of the technology underlying the ad network to be an illegal monopoly earlier this year, the Justice Department plans to make its case for another proposed breakup in a trial scheduled to begin later this month.

## Marsquakes indicate a solid core for the red planet, just like Earth

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Scientists revealed Wednesday that Mars’ innermost core appears to be a solid hunk of metal just like Earth’s.

The Chinese-led research team based their findings on seismic readings from NASA’s InSight lander on Mars, which recorded more than 1,300 marsquakes before shutting down in 2022. The spacecraft landed on a broad plain near Mars’ equator in 2018.

Previous studies pointed to liquid at the heart of the red planet. The latest findings indicate the inner core, while small, is indeed solid and surrounded by molten metal — a liquid outer core.

The Martian inner core extends from the planet’s center out to a radius of approximately 380 miles (613 kilometers), according to the scientists whose findings appeared in the journal *Nature*.

It’s likely composed of iron and nickel, the same ingredients as Earth’s core, but quite possibly also enriched with lighter elements like oxygen.

Mars’ liquid outer core is bigger, stretching from 380 miles (613 kilometers) to as much as 1,100 miles (1,800 kilometers) from the planet’s center.

Crystallization of Mars’ inner core may have occurred in the past and still be occurring today, one of the lead investigators, Daoyuan Sun of the University of Science and Technology of China, said in an email.

Mars’ core initially would have been entirely liquid. It’s unclear whether the liquid outer core contains any solid material like droplets or whether there might be “a mushy zone” near the boundary between the inner and outer cores, he added.

For their study, Sun and his team relied primarily on 23 marsquakes recorded by InSight, all of them relatively weak. The epicenters were 740 miles to 1,465 miles (1,200 kilometers to 2,360 kilometers) away from the lander.

“Our results suggest that Mars has a solid inner core making up about one-fifth of the planet’s radius — roughly the same proportion as Earth’s inner core. However, this similarity may be just coincidental,” Sun said.

While praising the results, the University of Maryland’s Nicholas Schmerr, who was not involved in the study, said questions regarding Mars’ core are far from settled. With InSight out of action, there will be no new recordings of marsquakes to further reveal the red planet’s insides, he noted.

“There are a lot of details about the exact shape of the inner core and composition of the inner and outer core of Mars that will require a network of InSight like seismometer stations to resolve,” Schmerr said in an email.

More detailed modeling is necessary to develop a clearer picture of how the inner core formed and “what it reveals about the history of Mars’ magnetic field,” said Sun.

At present, Mars lacks a magnetic field, possibly because of the slow crystallization of the planet's solid core, Schmerr added.

## China's military parade reveals new hypersonic missiles, drone submarines and ICBMs

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Soldiers in pristine and pressed uniforms marched in lockstep, their boots clacking a steady cadence on the pavement and their eyes following leader Xi Jinping as he drove by in review. Helicopters flew overhead, forming the numbers 8 and 0 in honor of the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II.

There was no shortage of pageantry at Wednesday's military parade in Beijing, but beyond the spectacle, it also provided the first good look at China's latest military hardware. New missiles, drones and other high-tech equipment have been added to its arsenal as part of a massive modernization program with the goal, according to the official parade announcers, of producing a force "with both nuclear and conventional capabilities able to deter wars in all battle spaces."

Here are some of the highlights:

### New nukes

China's nuclear arsenal still lags far behind that of the United States and Russia, but it has been rapidly expanding. In its annual report to Congress on China, the U.S. Department of Defense estimated that Beijing now has more than 600 warheads and will have more than 1,000 by 2030.

The parade featured many of the missiles capable of delivering those warheads, from air, sea and land. China's official Xinhua News Agency said it was the first time the military's "triad of strategic nuclear forces was presented in a concentrated fashion," calling it "China's strategic trump card for safeguarding national sovereignty and defending national dignity."

The display of the three systems together is noteworthy, said Meia Nouwens, senior fellow for Chinese security and defense policy at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.

"All of that, of course, goes back to this key point about deterrence and the messaging that the PLA (People's Liberation Army) and Xi Jinping are seeking to send to the U.S. and other partners and allies in the region and further afield," she said.

Among the nuclear-capable missiles seen was the DF-61, a new intercontinental ballistic missile which can be fired from a mobile launching platform. Details on its capabilities are scant, but its predecessor has a range of more than 12,000 kilometers (7,500 miles) and can carry multiple warheads. It also debuted the newest variant of the silo-based DF-5, the DF-5C, whose range has been estimated at 20,000 kilometers.

Also featured were the JL-1 air-launched long-range missile and the JL-3 sea-launched missile, both of which are also nuclear-capable.

### More missiles

The parade saw the debut of other new missiles, including several designed to attack ships. These are likely of particular interest to the U.S., whose naval power is a key component of its Asia-Pacific defense strategy.

China claims the self-governing democracy of Taiwan as its own, and Xi has not ruled out taking the island by force. In the event of a Chinese invasion, if the U.S. were to come to Taiwan's aid, China would need to hold off the U.S. Navy long enough to consolidate control of the island.

China has already built the world's largest navy, though it is still well behind the U.S. in the number of aircraft carriers it has. It could use missiles, however, to try to keep American carriers out of effective range.

The parade showcased for the first time the YJ-15, YJ-17, YJ-19 and YJ-20 anti-ship missiles, all capable of operating at long ranges and hypersonic, making them difficult to intercept.

It also displayed missiles meant to intercept incoming anti-ship missiles, including the HQ-16C and HQ10A, and presented the aircraft-carrier version of the J-35 stealth multirole fighter for the first time.



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"These are capabilities that are increasingly meant to signal to the United States they should think twice about entering into a conflict, if there ever is one, in support of Taiwan," Nouwens said.

Drones from above, drones from below

Seven types of reconnaissance and attack aerial drones were on display that were not immediately identified by official commentators, but some of which appeared to be new.

A small surface drone ship was also on display but not identified, as well as carrier-based uncrewed helicopters.

China also showed off two submarine drones, the older-model HSU001 and debuting the much larger AJX002. China's official Xinhua News Agency called them "cutting-edge surprise weapons for naval combat" designed for "covert deployment and blockade, autonomous detection and identification, and swarm-networked attacks."

"Long gone are the days where China was reliant on Russia or other foreign systems," wrote Mick Ryan, a retired Australian army major general and analyst at the Lowy Institute, in a research note on the drones and other systems on display. "This level of indigenous capacity infers high levels of sustainability in any future conflict."

Still, he cautioned, "newer does not always mean better."

"While most Western military equipment has been tested in Iraq, Ukraine and elsewhere, none of China's new kit has."

## The weapons and military units on display in China's major parade

BEIJING (AP) — Some of the weapons and military units in China's major parade were being displayed for the first time.

The parade on a central Beijing avenue Wednesday marked the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II. Troops marched by President Xi Jinping, who heads the military as the chairman of the Central Military Commission.

New units and equipment

Marching in the parade were traditional People's Liberation Army units from the navy and army, but also new ones like the cyberspace unit. The new unit is in charge of cybersecurity defense measures, according to the official Xinhua news agency, and also participated in live-fire drills.

Another debut was the information support force, created in 2024 to build network information systems to support military combat readiness.

Much of the weaponry and equipment in the parade was being shown to the public for the first time, according to Chinese military officials. This included hypersonic missiles designed to take out ships at sea. These weapons are of particular concern to the U.S. Navy, which patrols the western Pacific from its 7th Fleet headquarters in Japan.

Also shown were underwater drones including the AJX002, a long, black tube-shaped craft that looks like a narrow submarine with a rear propeller, and a new intercontinental ballistic missile, the DF-61, which could carry nuclear warheads to distant targets.

Others included land, sea and air-based strategic weapons, advanced precision warfare equipment and drones. Warplanes and helicopters flew in formation in the skies overhead.

It's the first major military parade in China since 2019 on the 70th anniversary of the founding of communist China.

The parade aimed to instill pride in China's populace and assure them that the country is strong enough to ward off any attack. But China's growing military strength also concerns its Asian neighbors and the United States.

Russia and North Korea headline guest list

U.S. and Western European heads of state are staying away, as are the leaders of Japan, India and South Korea.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made a rare foreign trip to attend. He was joined by Russian President

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Vladimir Putin and the president of Iran, among others.

In all, about two dozen foreign leaders attended, including several from Southeast Asia and a few from Africa and South Asia. Indonesia President Prabowo Subianto arrived early Wednesday after being delayed by protests in his country over lawmakers' perks.

Parade mainly for invited guests

The event was highly choreographed and tightly controlled. It wasn't the kind of parade where crowds line the streets to watch.

Barriers were set up to keep the public one block away and commercial buildings along the parade route were emptied and closed until the parade ended. The subway system running along Chang'An Avenue was shut Tuesday night into Wednesday morning.

For most people, the only way to watch was on television or a livestream.

## Today in History: September 4, the 1949 Peekskill Riots

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 4, the 247th day of 2025. There are 118 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 4, 1949, more than 140 people were injured following a performance by singer Paul Robeson in Peekskill, New York, as an anti-Communist mob attacked departing concertgoers.

Also on this date:

In 1781, Los Angeles was founded by Spanish settlers under the leadership of Governor Felipe de Neve.

In 1944, during World War II, British troops liberated Antwerp, Belgium.

In 1957, Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus ordered Arkansas National Guardsmen to prevent nine Black students from entering all-white Central High School in Little Rock.

In 1972, U.S. swimmer Mark Spitz became the first to win seven medals at a single Olympic Games, winning a seventh gold at the Munich Olympics in the 400-meter medley relay.

In 1972, the longest-running game show in U.S. history, "The Price is Right," debuted on CBS.

In 1974, the United States established diplomatic relations with East Germany.

In 1998, Google was founded by Stanford University Ph.D. students Sergey Brin and Larry Page.

In 2016, elevating the "saint of the gutters" to one of the Catholic Church's highest honors, Pope Francis canonized Mother Teresa, praising her radical dedication to society's outcasts and her courage in shaming world leaders for the "crimes of poverty they themselves created."

In 2018, the Senate Judiciary Committee began confirmation hearings for future Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh on a day that saw rancorous exchanges between Democrats and Republicans.

Today's Birthdays: Golf Hall of Famer Raymond Floyd is 83. Golf Hall of Famer Tom Watson is 76. Actor Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs is 72. Actor Khandi Alexander is 68. Actor-comedian Damon Wayans Sr. is 65. Baseball Hall of Famer Mike Piazza is 57. DJ-musician-producer Mark Ronson is 50. Actor Wes Bentley is 47. Actor Max Greenfield is 46. Singer-actor Beyoncé is 44. Actor-comedian Whitney Cummings is 43. Actor-comedian Kyle Mooney (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 41.