

Groton Daily Independent

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Wednesday, Sept 10

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.
School Lunch: Vegetable soup ham sandwich
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; League 6:30 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Confirmation, 5:30 p.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Thursday, Sept 11

School Breakfast: Cereal
School Lunch: Chicken tacos.
Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main St.
Boys Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course, 10 a.m.
Volleyball at Roncalli ((7th-5, 8th-6; C-5, JV-6, V-7:30))

Friday, Sept. 12

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.
School Lunch: Garlic cheese bread, green beans.
Football hosts Milbank, 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 13

Soccer at Vermillion (Girls at 1 p.m., Boys at 2:30 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.

Israel Strikes Qatar

Israel claimed responsibility for an airstrike yesterday targeting Hamas leaders in Qatar. Hamas said the strike killed five members but not senior leaders, including its lead negotiator.

The strike on Hamas' residential headquarters marks Israel's first known attack on Qatari soil. Earlier this year, Iran fired missiles on Qatar's Al Udeid Air Base (which hosts roughly 8,000 to 10,000 US troops) in retaliation for US strikes amid Iran's 12-day war with Israel. No casualties were reported in that strike, with the US intercepting most projectiles. Yesterday's attack came after Hamas leaders met with Qatari officials to discuss a US-proposed ceasefire in Gaza. Israel said it acted alone, calling the attack retaliation after Hamas claimed responsibility for a gun attack at a Jerusalem bus stop.

Meanwhile, Israel called for a full evacuation of Gaza City, where an estimated 1 million Palestinians reside, ahead of an expanded ground operation. Israel controls roughly 40% of the city.

Nepal Unrest Deepens

Nepal's military began deploying troops late yesterday after protests escalated despite Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's resignation and the reversal of a social media ban that triggered the unrest. Four Cabinet ministers also resigned, leaving the government without clear leadership.

At least 22 people were killed a day earlier when security forces opened fire on demonstrators, many of them young, who had defied curfews across the capital and other cities. The protests erupted last week after authorities briefly banned social media platforms. Crowds yesterday set fire to the parliament building, the Supreme Court, and several lawmakers' homes—the wife of a former official was critically burned—as anger spread over corruption, restricted freedoms, and unmet demands for reform.

Protesters said they would continue until parliament is dissolved and new elections are called. Oli, a communist, had been elected to a fourth term in 2024; it's not clear who will replace him.

'Awe Dropping' Apple

Apple unveiled its thinnest phone yesterday at its annual product launch event in Silicon Valley. At 0.22 inches and 5.8 ounces, the iPhone 17 Air is almost 30% slimmer and roughly 0.2 ounces lighter than the iPhone 16, while offering nearly half an inch more display. The Air and its two sibling models—the more powerful iPhone 17 Pro and more affordable iPhone 17—are all powered by Apple's latest A19 chips.

The tech giant also announced upgrades to the Apple Watch and AirPods, with an emphasis on health tracking. The Series 11 watches rate sleep quality, detect sleep apnea, and use machine learning to monitor blood pressure. Meanwhile, the latest AirPods Pro tracks wearers' heart rate and up to 50 workout types. The earbuds also use Apple Intelligence to facilitate real-time language translations.

The self-titled "Awe Dropping" event came amid tariff pressures and concerns that Apple's AI is lagging (w/audio). The company's shares fell roughly 1.5% yesterday.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Sabrina Carpenter and Karol G tapped to headline 2026 Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival.

Singer D4vd cooperating with authorities after decomposed body found inside car belonging to him at Los Angeles impound lot.

Miles Davis' publishing catalog acquired by Reservoir Media ahead of 2026 events celebrating the 100th anniversary of Davis' birth; Reservoir also owns catalogs for Snoop Dogg, Joni Mitchell, De La Soul, and others.

Mural by street artist Banksy to be removed outside of London's Royal Courts of Justice; the artwork depicts a judge attacking a protester.

Science & Technology

Health and Human Services releases report on addressing childhood chronic diseases; focuses on poor diet, environmental exposures, and overmedication.

Engineers develop bottlebrush-shaped nanoparticles that deliver large chemotherapy payloads directly to cancer cells; standard approach carries eight drug molecules per particle, new technology transports hundreds.

Archaeologists uncover first direct evidence of brown bears being forced to fight gladiators in ancient Rome.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.4%, Nasdaq +0.4%).

Bureau of Labor Statistics revises jobs growth down by 911,000 for 12-month period ending in March; preliminary data will be finalized in February.

Anglo American and Teck Resources to merge into \$53B copper company; metal increasingly in demand for electric vehicles, AI data centers.

Nebius Group, a spinoff from Russian internet giant Yandex, sees shares surge nearly 50% after securing \$19.4B cloud computing deal with Microsoft.

Supreme Court agrees to hear arguments in November on whether President Donald Trump has the power to impose sweeping tariffs under federal law.

Politics & World Affairs

Justice Department charges man accused of killing a 23-year-old Ukrainian woman on Charlotte, North Carolina, transit system; suspect had 14 prior criminal cases, raising questions about his release from prison this year.

French President Emmanuel Macron appoints outgoing defense minister as new prime minister ahead of widespread "Block Everything" protests expected today.

Nation's Report Card, a test of over 65,000 US students in eighth and 12th grades, reveals reading, math, and science scores dropped to new low last year.

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Three golfers medal at Milbank Invite

Three Groton Area golfers received a medal at the Milbank Invitational Golf Tournament held Tuesday. Jace Johnson placed second with a 72 while Jarrett Erdmann was 15th with 73 and Haden Harder was 20th with a 90. Graham Rose was 37th with a 108.

Aberdeen Roncalli won the team title with a 321 followed by Watertown with a 338, Milbank 357, Sioux Valley 358, Sisseton 363, Groton 364 and Aberdeen Central 386.

Yardage	250	162	476	392	457	155	339	319	346	2896	313	472	350	163	458	326	298	382	168	2930	5826
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Par	4	3	5	4	5	3	4	4	4	36	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	36	72
2.. Jace Johnson	4	3	3	5	4	4	5	5	5	38	4	5	4	3	5	3	4	4	3	35	73
15. Jarrett Erdmann	4	5	4	5	6	4	6	8	5	47	4	6	3	6	5	5	3	6	5	43	90
20. Haden Harder	4	4	5	6	7	3	7	5	6	47	5	6	4	4	6	6	5	6	4	46	93
37. Graham Rose	4	4	3	6	7	4	9	7	7	51	7	8	7	6	5	6	5	6	7	57	108

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Groton Area Volleyball Stays Perfect With 3-1 Win at Webster

The Groton Area Tigers continued their unbeaten start to the season Tuesday night, defeating the Webster Bearcats 3-1 in a Northeast Conference volleyball clash on the road. With the win, the Tigers improved to 4-0 on the year, while Webster dropped to 2-3.

Groton came out strong, taking the opening set 25-19 behind a balanced offensive attack. Taryn Traphagen led the way early with five kills, while Chesney Weber added four. Rylee Dunker and Jaedyn Penning chipped in three kills apiece as the Tigers built a lead and held off Webster down the stretch.

"We were hitting the ball really hard at them," said Groton head coach Chelsea Hanson. "For the most part, the kills we earned were truly earned — they weren't because of anything breaking down on their side. They did a great job of keeping the ball alive."

The second set was tight early, featuring five ties and two lead changes, before Groton surged ahead behind strong serving and net play to claim a dominant 25-10 victory. Weber was a force in that frame with three ace serves and a kill, while Dunker added two kills.

"In that second set, we had just one mistake the whole way through," Hanson said. "Obviously, that's not sustainable, and we knew that. Sometimes high school kids don't always understand they can't ride that high forever. But when we're playing that clean, it's fun to watch."

Webster refused to go quietly, battling back in a thrilling third set. The game was tied five different times, and the lead changed hands multiple times. Groton held a slim 13-11 advantage and led much of the way before Webster clawed back, ultimately edging out a 26-24 win. Tevan Hanson and Traphagen each had three kills for the Tigers in the set.

"I would've liked to win that third set," Hanson admitted. "But at the end of the day, I told the girls a win's a win — whether it takes three, four, or five sets. I will quote the great Nicole Marzahn who said more games, more stats!"

Groton regrouped quickly in the fourth set, jumping out to a 6-1 lead and never looking back in a 25-17 clincher. Hansen tallied four kills in the set, and Dunker added three to seal the victory.

Match Stats

The Tigers finished with 10 ace serves on the night:

Chesney Weber – 4, McKenna Tietz – 3, Jaedyn Penning – 2, Sydney Locke – 1

In attacks, Groton went 130-of-154 with 54 total kills: Rylee Dunker – 25-30, 12 kills; Tevan Hanson – 23-27, 12 kills; Taryn Traphagen – 21-23, 11 kills; Kella Tracy – 5 kills; Jerrica Locke – 1 kill; Jaedyn Penning – 6 kills

Assists: Weber – 39, Locke – 5

Digs: Jerrica Locke – 17, Weber – 11, Sydney Locke – 10, Tietz – 10

Blocks: Tracy – 1 solo, 1 assist; Weber – 1 solo; Traphagen – 1 assist

Webster was led by Mallory Steiner and Carly Sannes, who each had four kills. Steiner added an ace and a block, while Sannes had two blocks. Other Bearcat contributors included Jaden Lorenzberg (2 kills), Sarah Zubke (2 kills), Jersey Johnson (1 ace), and Chloe Mammenga (1 kill).

Coach Hanson was pleased with her team's effort and balanced attack.

"When we're scoring points — really scoring points — that's what matters to me," she said. "We're not relying on other teams' mistakes to win games. Tonight, we had several players in double-digit kills, and that's the kind of offensive balance we want."

Upcoming Matches

The Tigers will face a tough test Thursday when they travel to Aberdeen to take on the 3-1 Roncalli Cavaliers.

Webster will host Clark-Willow Lake the same night.

Lower-Level Results

Junior Varsity — Groton def. Webster 2-1 (25-18, 23-25, 15-8)

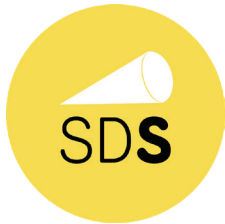
Groton leaders: McKenna Tietz 3 aces, 1 kill; Kinsley Rowen 2 kills; Tevan Hanson 1 ace; Sydney Locke 5 aces; Makenna Krause 5 kills, 2 aces; Emerlee Jones 7 kills, 1 ace; Elizabeth Cole 6 kills; Libby Althoff 4 kills, 3 aces; Neely Althoff 4 kills.

Webster leaders: Chloe Kvernevig 2 kills, 2 aces, 1 block; Cartney Hanson 4 kills.

C Match — Groton def. Webster 2-0 (25-14, 25-14)

Groton scorers: Neely Althoff 5 kills, 2 aces; Brooklyn Spanier 3 kills; Arianna Dinger 1 ace; Kinsley Rowen 2 kills, 1 ace; Audrey Davis 3 kills, 1 ace; Tori Schuster 1 ace; Ryelle Gilbert 3 aces; Rylen Ekern 2 aces, 1 kill; Addison Hoeft 6 kills.

Junior High: Groton won both matches 2-0.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Jackley calls for improved legal immigration policy while launching his campaign for Congress

Republican attorney general is seeking his party's nomination to run for South Dakota's lone US House seat

BY: SETH TUPPER

STURGIS — In a speech formally launching his campaign for Congress on Tuesday, South Dakota Republican Marty Jackley signaled a desire to bring workers into the country legally while preventing unauthorized immigration.

"We need to have a national immigration policy that considers public safety and the workforce," Jackley said. "We need to have E-Verify and visas working. I promise you I'll be committed to doing that as your congressman."

E-Verify is a web-based system that allows employers to confirm their employees' eligibility to work in the United States. The system has been beset with well-chronicled problems, including a Cato Institute study alleging thousands of people lost out on jobs because E-Verify incorrectly flagged them.

Jackley made his campaign announcement at the Loud American restaurant and bar in Sturgis, on the edge of the Black Hills, where many employers in the area depend on workers with visas to fill seasonal tourism jobs. A visa is a document granting foreigners permission to visit, work or study in the country.

Jackley serves as South Dakota's attorney general. He'll continue in that role through next year while running for Congress. There's an open race for the state's lone U.S. House seat next year, because Republican South Dakota Rep. Dusty Johnson is running for governor.

In Jackley's speech to a room packed with dozens of supporters, he touched on his crime-fighting credentials and his experience serving on a council that advised President Donald Trump on law enforcement issues.

On economic development, Jackley pledged to work toward a "fair playing field" and boasted of winning a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court case, *South Dakota v. Wayfair*, which paved the way for states to force certain online retailers to pay state sales taxes. Jackley said the ability to avoid sales taxes gave online retailers an unfair advantage over local stores.

He also recapped his record on government accountability, including his prosecution of six cases since last year against former state employees for allegations related to their work for state government.

In one of the highest-profile cases, Jackley won a guilty verdict at trial in April against a former Department of Social Services worker who stole \$1.8 million from the state over a 13-year period. In response to the rash of state employee crimes, Jackley also supported a package of four bills passed during this year's legislative session that expanded the investigatory authority of the state auditor; strengthened the Board of Internal Controls; instituted mandatory reporting requirements for state employees and penalties for failing to report; and established protections for whistleblowers.

"I brought legislation so that we can better protect the taxpayer dollars and what's been going on in Pierre, and I'll do the same thing if you send me to Washington," he said.

If Jackley wins, he would be the first person with roots in South Dakota's less populated West River region — the area west of the Missouri River — to represent the state in the U.S. House since Republican John Thune held the seat from 1997 to 2003. Thune, whose hometown is Murdo, is now the U.S. Senate majority leader.

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Jackley, 54, grew up in Sturgis and still has a ranch in the area, along with another ranch near Pierre. After earning an electrical engineering degree from South Dakota Mines, he added a law degree from the University of South Dakota. He served as the U.S. attorney for South Dakota from 2006 to 2009, and then as attorney general for the state from 2009 to 2019.

Term limits prevented him from seeking another consecutive term as attorney general in the 2018 elections. He sought the Republican nomination for governor that year and lost by 12 points in the primary election to Kristi Noem, who went on to serve as governor until leaving earlier this year to lead the U.S. Department of Homeland Security for Trump. Jackley ran for attorney general again in 2022 and was unopposed in the general election.

Besides Jackley, at least one other Republican — state Sen. Casey Crabtree of Madison — has formed a fundraising committee to potentially seek the U.S. House seat. That sets up a possible race in the primary election on June 2, 2026, to determine the Republican nominee before the general election on Nov. 3, 2026.

Democrats may have their own U.S. House primary race with at least three federal statements of candidacy filed so far by Scott Schlagel of Dell Rapids, and Billy Mawhiney and Nikki Gronli, both of Sioux Falls.

Jackley's candidacy for U.S. House creates an open race for attorney general next year. At least one person — Lance Russell, the Republican state's attorney of Fall River and Oglala Lakota counties — has announced his intention to seek the job.

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

\$500 million soybean processing plant opens in Mitchell

Facility helps create local markets for crops as China market dries up amid tariff tensions

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

MITCHELL — As China boycotts U.S. soybean purchases, a \$500 million processing plant south of Mitchell that will turn more of the state's crop into oils and livestock meal opened its doors Tuesday.

Tom Kersting, the CEO of South Dakota Soybean Processors, which manages the plant, said it will help stabilize prices and create local demand.

"If it wasn't for demand sources like this facility, it'd be very, very tough out there," Kersting said, calling China, until now, the number one buyer of South Dakota's exported beans.

China is avoiding U.S. soybeans this fall in response to tariffs imposed by President Donald Trump.

The High Plains Processing Plant is designed to crush about 35 million bushels of soybeans per year. South Dakota farmers produced about 238 million bushels last year. Kersting said the facility will produce soybean meal (animal feed) and soybean oil. The oil can be refined on-site into vegetable oil or a soybean-based diesel fuel, called renewable diesel.

"There's great demand for soybean oil from the renewable fuels industry," he said. "And soybean meal is the preferred high-protein feed additive for hogs, poultry, dairy — you name it."

Craig Weber is the president of the South Dakota Soybean Processors board. He said the project's impact will be most immediate on the gap between the bean price and what farmers actually receive. That gap is significantly impacted by transportation costs, and the new plant being in Mitchell reduces those costs for farmers in the region.

Still, farm advocates cautioned that one facility cannot fully offset the loss of the world's largest soybean buyer.

"No, it's not going to be enough," said Doug Sombke, president of South Dakota Farmers Union.

Sombke and a delegation of about 40 farmers were in Washington, D.C., earlier this week to express their concerns to Congress.

"It helps, yeah, but it's going to take a lot more," Sombke said. "Farmers are in a lot of trouble. We're going to lose farmers if we don't do something quick."

Governor Larry Rhoden, who spoke at the opening, called the project an example of the kind of value-added agriculture South Dakota should pursue.

"We're talking about enhancing our number one industry, which is agriculture," he said.

He also praised the plant's ability to process other oilseeds, like sunflowers, offering farmers more flexibility depending on circumstances in the crop markets.

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.

Former state employee sentenced for issuing herself a medical marijuana card

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF

A former South Dakota Department of Health employee was sentenced to two years of probation and a \$500 fine Tuesday in Hughes County Court for illegally issuing herself a medical marijuana card.

Alexandra Feiner, 24, of Pierre, had pleaded guilty earlier to one felony count of offering a false or forged instrument for filing, registering or recording.

The crime occurred in March 2024. By issuing a card to herself, Feiner illegally avoided both the medical provider certification requirement and a required fee.

She received a suspended imposition of sentence, which means she'll avoid two years in prison if she abides by the terms of her probation.

Feiner's case is one of six that Attorney General Marty Jackley has prosecuted against former state employees since last year for allegations related to their work for state government.

"There are 14,000 state government employees in South Dakota and the overwhelming majority work hard for South Dakota," Jackley said Tuesday in a news release. "The behavior of one should not reflect poorly on the majority."

The other five cases ranged from the illegal use of a foster family food voucher for a state employee's own expenses, to the stealing of \$1.8 million from the Department of Social Services over the course of 13 years.

In response to the run of prosecutions, Jackley supported a package of four bills passed during this year's legislative session that expanded the investigatory authority of the state auditor; strengthened the Board of Internal Controls; instituted mandatory reporting requirements for state employees and penalties for failing to report; and established protections for whistleblowers.

Gov. Larry Rhoden signed an executive order in April mandating the creation of a "secure standard reporting mechanism" for employees. The portal delivers whistleblower reports of malfeasance to the state's auditor and attorney general.

Lawmakers also passed legislation this year strengthening the ability of the Legislature's Government Operations and Audit Committee to conduct investigations and issue orders known as subpoenas requiring people to testify or supply information.

Last year, then-Gov. Kristi Noem added an extra internal control officer position to the executive branch and ordered state employees to undergo annual training aimed at preventing criminal activity.

US paid El Salvador \$4.76 million to detain up to 300 migrants in mega-prison

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration paid El Salvador \$4.76 million to detain up to 300 immigrant men for up to a year at a notorious mega-prison and barred the funds from being used to help asylum seekers, reproductive care or diversity initiatives, according to a court document filed Tuesday.

It's the first time the financial agreement has been made public after the White House initially said the deal amounted to \$6 million.

The payments were part of the Trump administration's aggressive immigration crackdown and decision to invoke a wartime law to remove Venezuelan nationals.

The four-page agreement between the United States and El Salvador verifies that the funds came out of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law, which gives financial assistance to security forces and is subject to a human rights law known as the Leahy Law.

That human rights law bars State's financial support of "units of foreign security forces" — which can include military and law enforcement staff in prisons — facing credible allegations of gross human rights violations.

"The purpose of this grant is to provide funds to be used by the Salvadoran law enforcement and corrections agencies for its law enforcement needs, which includes costs associated with detaining the 238 TdA members recently deported to El Salvador," according to the agreement.

Those who drafted the law raised concerns that those payments violated human rights laws, as more than 250 Venezuelan men were removed from the U.S. to the brutal prison, Centro de Confinamiento del Terrorismo, or CECOT, despite a federal judge's order barring such action.

Congressional Democrats have asked Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the White House for a copy of the financial agreement for months, over concerns the funds were being used in violation of human rights.

March flight to El Salvador

On March 15, the Trump administration sent 238 men to CECOT, after invoking the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to apply to Venezuelan nationals 14 and older who are suspected members of the gang Tren de Aragua.

The agreement, dated March 22, noted the men could be detained up to a year.

It also bars any of the \$4.76 million to be used to help asylum seekers seek legal counsel for the U.S. asylum process, for access to abortion, funds for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency that provides humanitarian assistance to Palestinians or for programs that promote diversity, equity and inclusion.

The men were released back to Venezuela as part of a prison swap in July, but they remained at CECOT for four months. Some of those detained, including Kilmar Abrego Garica, of Maryland, whose mistaken deportation captured national attention, detailed psychological and physical torture.

No protection from torture

The document was obtained through a lawsuit by Democracy Forward, which specifically argued the financial agreement between El Salvador and the U.S. "was created without any legal basis."

"The correspondence between the U.S. State Department and El Salvador confirms what we have long suspected: the Trump-Vance administration did nothing to meaningfully ensure that individuals disappeared from the U.S. to El Salvador's notorious CECOT prison were protected from torture, indefinite confinement, or other abuses," Skye Perryman, president and CEO of Democracy Forward, said in a statement. "The agreement did, however, go to lengths to ensure that the funds the U.S. provided to El Salvador not be used to provide reproductive health care or to assist asylum seekers in accessing resources and counsel."

That case is being overseen by District of Columbia Judge James Boasberg, who also ordered the Trump administration to turn around planes carrying men removed under the wartime law. Instead, the planes

landed in El Salvador.

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

RFK Jr. lists 100+ recommendations to 'Make America Healthy Again'

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration released its strategy to Make America Healthy Again on Tuesday, which officials hope will reduce chronic diseases and align federal policy with their beliefs.

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said during a briefing on the strategy the 128 "recommendations are things that I've been dreaming about my whole life."

Kennedy said he hoped to implement several of the changes before the end of the year, including defining what constitutes an ultra-processed food, updating water quality standards for forever chemicals known as PFAS and changing infant formula standards.

The report also includes potentially controversial elements that address access to vaccines, a topic several Republican senators rebuked Kennedy over during a lengthy hearing last week.

The 20-page strategy follows the MAHA Commission's release of its first report in May that outlined four areas of concern — nutrition, physical activity, environmental factors and "overmedicalization."

The proposals in the new report range in scope from issues that have largely been addressed to initiatives that are likely to cause concerns among doctors and reputable medical organizations.

For example, the strategy calls on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to "develop guidance on diagnostics and treatments for food allergies," even though doctors are already able to diagnose and treat those conditions.

The report also calls on the FDA to "improve regulatory processes for over-the-counter sunscreen, which has fallen behind other countries."

Vaccine plan to come

The White House Domestic Policy Council and HHS intend to draft a separate plan addressing the childhood vaccine schedule, vaccine injuries, vaccine science, "misaligned incentives" and "scientific and medical freedom."

Kennedy indicated during the briefing that he may seek to overhaul the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System, claiming that 99% of vaccine injuries are not reported, in part, because doctors are not compensated for doing so.

"We are recasting the entire program so that vaccine injuries will be reported; they will be studied; that individuals who suffer them will not be denied, or marginalized, or vilified, or gaslighted," Kennedy said. "They will be welcomed and we will learn everything we can about them."

The report doesn't include any plans to reduce pesticide use or to seek solutions to end mass shootings, though Kennedy and others at the event said those are issues the administration will look into.

"The firearms question is a complex question and it's not an easy question," Kennedy said. "The violence is what we're concerned with."

Kennedy said that guns have been around for a while and that they also exist in other countries that don't have nearly the number of mass shootings as the United States, before talking about psychiatric drugs, video games and social media.

"We are looking at that at NIH," Kennedy said, referring to the National Institutes of Health. "We are doing studies now. We're initiating studies to look at the correlation and the potential connection between overmedicating our kids and this violence."

Kennedy deferred a question about pesticides to White House Domestic Policy Council Director Vince

Haley, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin.

Haley referenced a section in the newly released report titled "cumulative exposure" that said USDA, EPA and NIH will use new approach methodologies "to improve methods for evaluating human health and environmental risks of chemical contaminants."

Rollins told reporters that pesticides require study before being approved and that they are needed to ensure a stable food supply.

"Is it a perfect process? Arguably there is no perfect process," Rollins said. "But it is a strong process that our farmers stand by. And a crop protection tool, such as pesticides, is absolutely essential for America not to compromise our food supply system at this point."

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.

Supreme Court rules Trump administration can refuse to spend \$4B in foreign aid for now

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Trump administration can temporarily hold on to \$4 billion in foreign aid funding approved by Congress, overturning a lower court's order and continuing a struggle over who controls the nation's purse strings.

The one-page ruling from the emergency docket, signed by Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr., came just one day after the administration appealed the lower court's ruling.

While the original lawsuit over withheld foreign aid began in February and stemmed from an executive order, the Trump administration sent Congress a rescissions request covering some of the spending in late August.

The proposal is part of the formal process laid out in a 1974 law that allows the president to ask lawmakers to cancel previously approved spending.

Congress typically has 45 days to approve, modify, or disagree with a rescissions request. During that time the president can legally freeze the funding and only has to spend it if lawmakers don't approve the plan.

This particular rescission request, however, was sent to lawmakers within 45 days of the end of the fiscal year, creating a dispute that complicated the nature of the original lawsuit.

That maneuver, sometimes called a pocket rescission, is considered illegal by the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office and several members of Congress, though White House budget director Russ Vought believes it's within the bounds of the law.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote in the Trump administration's appeal that the federal district court's order to spend the funding "requires the Executive Branch to rush to obligate the same \$4 billion that the President has just proposed rescinding between now and September 30, and thus puts the Executive Branch at war with itself."

"Just as the President is pressing for rescission and explaining to Congress that obligating these funds would harm U.S. foreign policy interests, his subordinates are being forced to proceed to identify and even negotiate with potential recipients," he added.

The Supreme Court's decision Tuesday doesn't address whether the justices agree with the administration that it can refuse to spend the billions in foreign aid since it sent the rescissions request close to the end of the fiscal year.

Roberts wrote "that the September 3, 2025 order of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, case Nos. 1:25-cv-400 and 1:25-cv-402, is hereby partially stayed for funds that are subject to the President's August 28, 2025 rescission proposal currently pending before Congress pending further order of the undersigned or of the Court. It is further ordered that a response to the application be filed on or before Friday, September 12th, 2025, by 4 p.m. (EDT)."

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.

State corrects record: 78 people arrested during 'Operation Prairie Thunder' saturation patrol

BY: JOHN HULT

The South Dakota Highway Patrol has revised its drug arrest numbers for a recent saturation patrol, saying it jailed fewer than half of the people its original terminology suggested.

Last week, Gov. Larry Rhoden gave South Dakota Searchlight and several other media outlets a list of arrests from the first saturation patrol conducted in Sioux Falls by his administration's "Operation Prairie Thunder" public safety campaign.

The list included 174 arrests for drugs, 44 of which involved felony drugs.

Over the weekend, however, The Dakota Scout newspaper reported that those arrest numbers did not square with the number of people who were arrested.

The governor's office did not dispute the newspaper's findings, even as Rhoden told the paper he was still pleased with the results.

The Highway Patrol said it uses the words "arrest" and "citation" interchangeably, and that a single person could be cited multiple times.

The agency has done so for years, Highway Patrol spokesman Brad Reiners said in an email to South Dakota Searchlight on Monday, including in its daily "rally tally" of arrests during the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally.

"The way they are counted fits our reporting system, but not necessarily the way the public perceives the numbers," Reiners wrote.

According to a statement released Tuesday afternoon, the Highway Patrol said that the 174 charges reported for the three-day saturation patrol in Sioux Falls were filed against 78 people.

Of those, 51 were booked into jail, and 27 were "arrested, cited and released with a notice to appear."

In a statement, Department of Public Safety spokesman Steve Long said the agency "apologizes for the confusion regarding the statistical reporting," and that in the future, Highway Patrol press releases will "accurately reflect the number of unique individuals arrested in addition to the number of total charges filed."

"Nonetheless, the results continue to reflect the significant positive impact Operation: Prairie Thunder has to reduce criminal activity," Long wrote.

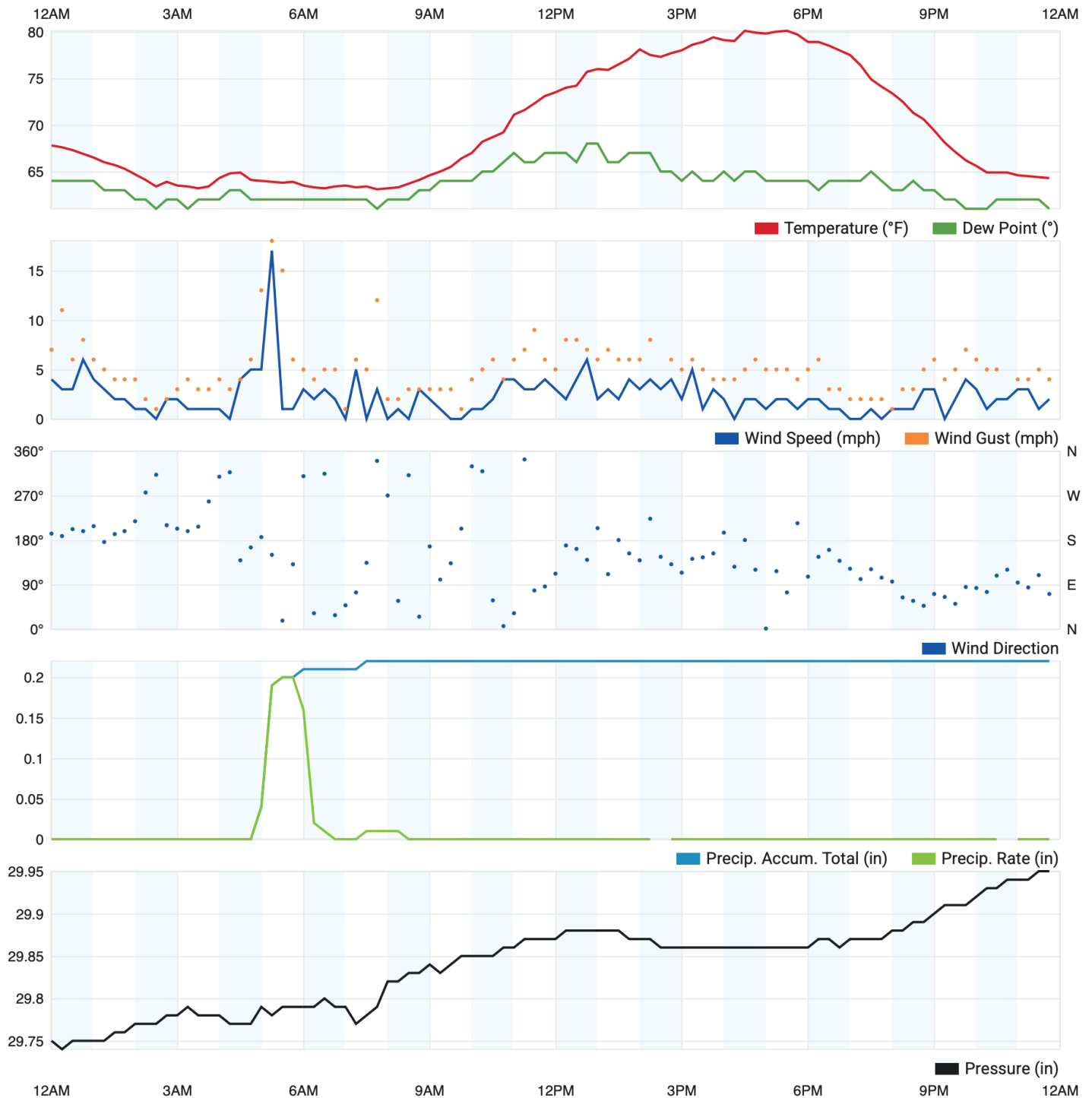
John is the senior reporter for South Dakota Searchlight. He has more than 15 years experience covering criminal justice, the environment and public affairs in South Dakota, including more than a decade at the Sioux Falls Argus Leader.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

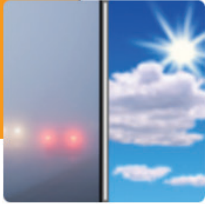
September 9, 2025



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Wednesday



High: 80 °F

Patchy Fog
then Mostly
Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 59 °F

Increasing
Clouds

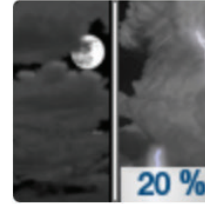
Thursday



High: 83 °F

Mostly Sunny

Thursday
Night



Low: 64 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance

Friday



High: 87 °F

Mostly Sunny

Today



Highs: 75-87°F

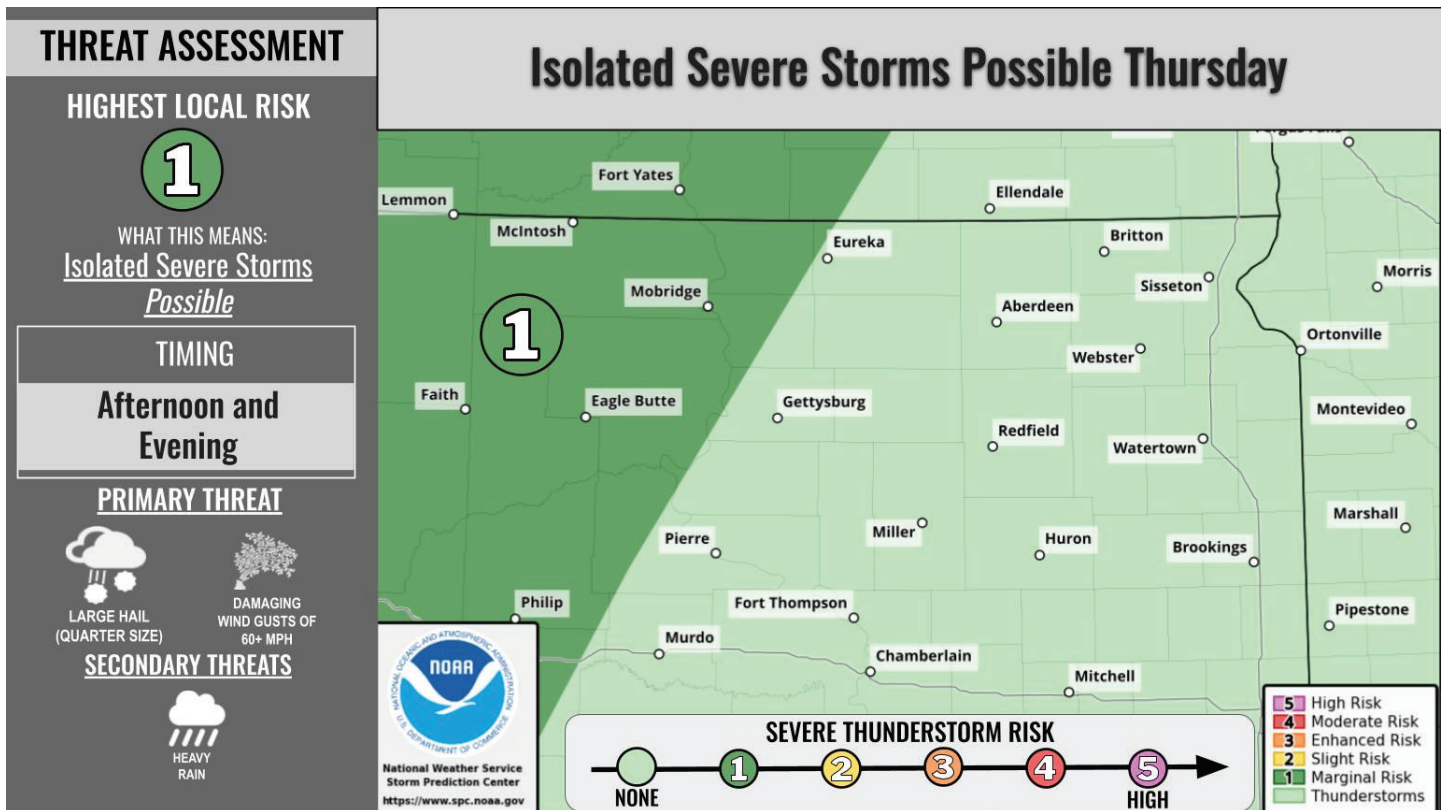
Lows: 55-63°F

Dense Fog Advisory for
north central and
northeastern SD and west
central MN until 9 AM CDT

Elevated smoke creating
milky skies



A Dense Fog Advisory is in effect this morning for north central and northeastern SD along with west central MN until 9 AM CDT. The fog will give way to somewhat milky skies later this morning due to elevated smoke. Expect highs in the mid 70s to high 80s, warmest in south central SD.



A Marginal Risk (level 1 out of 5) is in place over central SD Thursday afternoon and evening. The main threats will be hail of an inch in diameter and wind gusts of 60 mph. Locally heavy rain is also expected.

PATCHY FOG CAN SURPRISE YOU



Be ready for sudden changes in visibility



Turn on your low-beam headlights when approaching fog



Drive slowly, and keep your distance from other vehicles



Use extra caution on bridges and in valleys



weather.gov



Groton Daily Independent

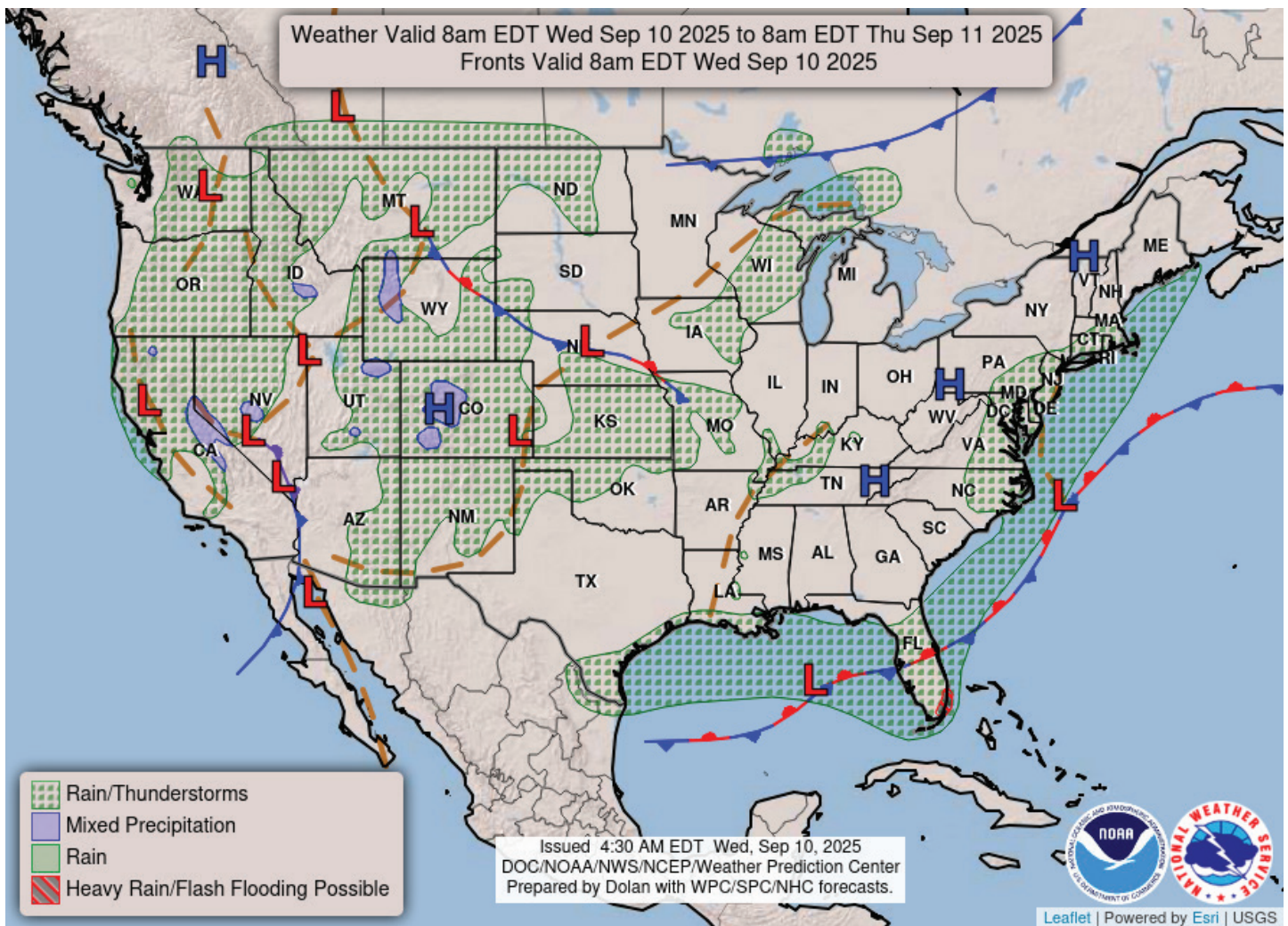
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 80 °F at 5:24 PM
Heat Index: 82 °F at 4:15 PM
Low Temp: 63 °F at 7:52 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 5:08 AM
Precip: : 0.22

Today's Info

Record High: 107 in 1931
Record Low: 27 in 1898
Average High: 77
Average Low: 49
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.68
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.24
Average Precip to date: 17.02
Precip Year to Date: 20.54
Sunset Tonight: 7:53 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:06 am



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Today in Weather History

September 10, 1961: In Webster between 1 and 2 am, a large farm implement was destroyed by a lightning-caused fire. Many farm implements, three cars, two trucks, as well as merchandise, were lost. Nearby buildings suffered damage from fire. The torrential rains helped reduce the spread of the fire.

September 10, 1975: Large hail up to the size of 2 inches in diameter damaged many acres of corn, flax, and millet fields during the evening. The area between Volga and Brookings received the most severe damage.

September 10, 1988: Lightning started fires in Todd County southwest of Mission that burned nearly 14,000 acres of grassland and 4000 acres of timber. The damages were more than 60,000 dollars.

1811: South Carolina was hit by a hurricane. The main highlight associated with the hurricane was a tornado that damaged downtown Charleston.

1919 - A hurricane struck the Florida Keys drowning more than 500 persons. (David Ludlum)

1960: The center of Hurricane Donna passed over the middle of the Florida Keys between 2, and 3 am on this day. Donna was a Category 5 hurricane over the Atlantic and a Category 4 at landfall. This storm caused the deaths of over 100 in Puerto Rico, 50 in the United States, and 63 in a jet crash. The plane crash occurred on August 29th as a French airliner was attempting to land at Dakar, Senegal during a "blinding rainstorm." The storm was likely a tropical disturbance at the time of the crash.

1961: On September 10th, the Television Infrared Observation Satellite observed an area of thunderstorms west-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands, suggesting a possible tropical cyclone. This storm is the first large tropical cyclone to be discovered on satellite imagery and would eventually become Hurricane Esther.

1987 - A late afternoon thunderstorm roared through Austin TX producing wind gusts to 81 mph, and 2.17 inches of rain in just sixty minutes. The high winds toppled six National Guard helicopters at the Robert Mueller Municipal Airport, and damaged or destroyed numerous other aircraft. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cool air sweeping into the north central U.S. brought snow to some of the higher elevations of Montana. The town of Kings Hill, southeast of Great Falls, was blanketed with six inches of snow. Tropical Storm Gilbert strengthened to a hurricane over the eastern Caribbean. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Light snow fell in Montana overnight, with three inches reported at Fairfield. Billings MT reported a record low of 33 degrees. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the northeastern U.S., with record highs of 86 degrees at Caribou ME and 90 degrees at Burlington VT. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1998: Tropical Storm Frances made landfall near Matagorda Bay, TX, causing the worst coastal flooding and beach erosion since Hurricane Carla in 1961. The storm's heavy rains ended a drought in East Texas but caused severe river flooding in parts of Texas and Louisiana. The highest rainfall total noted was 21.10 inches at Terrytown in southeast Louisiana. A major disaster declaration was issued for Cameron, Jefferson, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes in Louisiana.

2017: Hurricane Irma crossed the Florida Keys as a Category 4 storm.

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TRY IT - IT MAY SURPRISE YOU

An atheist confronted a young believer in a park and began to ridicule him for his faith in God. He dared the Christian to refute any of his arguments that he believed disproved the God of believers.

Quietly, another Christian, who had been watching the exchange between the atheist and the Christian, stepped forward and stood next to the young believer.

He did not say a word as he took an orange from his pocket and started to peel it. "What are you doing, fool? If you have something to say, then say it. Otherwise let 'the believer' defend his faith."

After he finished peeling the orange, he asked the atheist, "Tell me, is this orange sweet or sour?" Angrily the skeptic shouted and waved his fist and said, "How should I know. I haven't tried it."

"Then," said the Christian, "you would be wise to stop criticizing the Word of God until you've tried it."

Major General Lew Wallace is the author of Ben Hur, the most influential Christian novel of the nineteenth century. At one time in his life, he was considered to be an atheist. However, in answer to that statement, he wrote: "As a result of my own personal research and many years of study, I became convinced that Jesus Christ was not only the Savior of the world, but that He was my Savior, too, and being thus convinced, I wrote Ben Hur."

"Whosoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord," wrote the Psalmist.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for Your Word that no one can destroy or diminish. Our history shows Your faithfulness and love.

Scripture For Today: Whosoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the Lord. Psalm 107:43

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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Password _____

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paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.09.25

6 43 52 64 65 22

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$381,000,000

NEXT 2 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins
DRAW: 28 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

3 9 37 44 47 4

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,700,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 25 Mins 28
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.09.25

2 4 7 34 46 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 40 Mins 28
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.06.25

6 23 26 31 32

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 40 Mins 28
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

7 18 19 22 68 13

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 9 Mins 28
DRAW: Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.08.25

26 28 41 53 64 9

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$33,000,000

NEXT 17 Hrs 9 Mins 28
DRAW: 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

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Some high school volleyball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

EU commission president seeks sanctions, partial trade suspension against Israel over war in Gaza

STRASBOURG, France (AP) — The European Commission president said Wednesday she would seek sanctions and a partial trade suspension against Israel over the war in Gaza, an announcement that marked a sharp turnaround for Ursula von der Leyen, a longtime supporter of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The 27-nation EU is deeply divided in its approach to Israel and the Palestinians, and it's unclear whether a majority will be found to endorse the sanctions and trade measures.

Von der Leyen added that the commission "will set up a Palestine donor group next month," part of which will focus on Gaza's future reconstruction. She said the events in Gaza and the suffering of children and families "has shaken the conscience of the world."

The Gaza Health Ministry says 126 Palestinians, including 26 children, have died of causes related to malnutrition since international experts announced famine in Gaza City on Aug. 22.

"Man-made famine can never be a weapon of war. For the sake of the children, for the sake of humanity. This must stop," Von der Leyen said Wednesday, to applause in the European Parliament at its meeting in Strasbourg, France.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar, in a social media post, said Von der Leyen had succumbed to pressures that undermine Israel-Europe relations. He said her actions will embolden Hamas.

Warning Gaza City residents to evacuate

Von der Leyen's comments followed Israel's military warning on Tuesday to Gaza City residents to evacuate ahead of its plans to take control of what it portrays as Hamas' last remaining stronghold and where hundreds of thousands of people remain under conditions of famine.

An estimated 1 million Palestinians — around half of Gaza's overall population — live in the area of north Gaza around Gaza City, according to the Israeli military and the United Nations. Many are exhausted from moving multiple times and unsure if traveling south will be safer.

The warning came on Tuesday ahead of an Israeli strike targeting Hamas' leaders in Qatar, where negotiations over ending the war in Gaza appeared at a standstill. The warnings directed at Gaza City are the first calling for a full evacuation.

EU Commission plans to freeze Israel support

Von der Leyen also said she plans to freeze support to Israel given by the European Union's executive branch, which would not require the approval of the 27 member countries.

It was not immediately clear how much financial support the executive branch, known as the European Commission, provides to Israel and what it is used for.

"We will put our bilateral support to Israel on hold. We will stop all payments in these areas, without affecting our work with Israeli civil society or Yad Vashem," the Holocaust memorial, von der Leyen told EU lawmakers.

The commission also gives support to the Palestinian Authority.

War nears its 2-year anniversary

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people on Oct. 7, 2023, and killed some 1,200 people, mostly Israeli civilians. Forty-eight hostages are still held inside Gaza, around 20 of them believed to be alive.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 64,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. The ministry, which is under Gaza's Hamas government, does not differentiate between civilians and combatants but says around half of those killed were women and children. The U.N. and other international organizations see its figures as the most reliable statistics on war casualties.

Large parts of major cities in Gaza have been completely destroyed and around 90% of some 2 million Palestinians have been displaced.

Poland says it shot down Russian drones that violated its airspace during strikes on Ukraine

By CLAUDIA CIOBANU and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Poland said early Wednesday that multiple Russian drones entered and were shot down over its territory with help from NATO allies, describing the incident as an "act of aggression" carried out during a wave of Russian strikes on Ukraine.

Several European leaders said they believed Russia was intentionally escalating the war, and NATO was discussing the incident in a meeting. It came three days after Russia's largest aerial attack on Ukraine since the war began, an attack that for the first time hit a key government building in Kyiv.

"Russia's war is escalating, not ending," European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. "Last night in Poland we saw the most serious European airspace violation by Russia since the war began, and indications suggest it was intentional, not accidental."

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk wrote on social media that Polish airspace was violated by multiple Russian drones. "Those drones that posed a direct threat were shot down," Tusk said.

Defense Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz wrote on X that more than 10 objects crossed into Polish air space, but he did not specify an exact number. He thanked NATO Air Command and The Royal Netherlands Air and Space Force for supporting the action with F-35 fighter jets.

Polish airspace has been violated multiple times since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, but there has been nothing on this scale either in Poland or in any other Western nation along the eastern flank of NATO and the European Union.

Drones rattle Baltic NATO members

Leaders in the strategically located Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia — the NATO members that are most nervous about Russian aggression — expressed deep concerns.

"Russia is deliberately expanding its aggression, posing an ever-growing threat to Europe," Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda wrote on X. Estonia's foreign minister Margus Tsahkna said that the overnight attacks on Ukraine and violations of Polish airspace were "yet another stark reminder that Russia is not just a threat to Ukraine, but to all of Europe and NATO."

Bernard Blaszczyk, mayor of the village of Wyrki in Lublin region, told TVP Info that a house was hit by "either a missile or a drone, we don't know yet." He said people were inside the building but nobody was hurt.

The Polish armed forces said Wednesday morning that a search for possible crash sites is ongoing and urged people not to approach, touch or move any objects they see, warning that they may pose a threat and could contain hazardous material.

Warsaw's Chopin Airport suspended flights for several hours, citing the closure of airspace due to military operations.

Russian objects have entered Polish airspace before

Poland has complained about Russian objects entering its airspace during attacks on Ukraine before.

In August, Poland's defense minister said that a flying object that crashed and exploded in a cornfield in eastern Poland was identified as a Russian drone, and called it a provocation by Russia.

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In March, Poland scrambled jets after a Russian missile briefly passed through Polish air space on its way to a target in western Ukraine, and in 2022, a missile that was likely fired by Ukraine to intercept a Russian attack landed in Poland, killing two people.

NATO members vow support

NATO said its air defenses supported Poland, and chief spokesperson Allison Hart said the military organization's 32 national envoys will discuss the matter at a pre-planned meeting.

Col. Martin O'Donnell, NATO's Supreme Allied Powers Europe, said: "This is the first time NATO planes have engaged potential threats in Allied airspace."

Dutch Prime Minister Dick Schoof confirmed in a message on X that Dutch F-35 fighter jets stationed in Poland under NATO provided support to the Polish air force overnight.

"Let me be clear: the violation of Polish airspace last night by Russian drones is unacceptable. It is further proof that the Russian war of aggression poses a threat to European security," Schoof said in the Dutch language message on X.

German Patriot defense systems in Poland were also placed "on alert," and an Italian airborne early warning plane and an aerial refueler from NATO's Multinational Multi-Role Tanker Transport aircraft fleet were launched, O'Donnell said.

NATO, he said, "is committed to defending every kilometer of NATO territory, including our airspace."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a message on Telegram that the deployment of European aircraft to intercept the drones was an "important precedent."

Russia must know the response to escalation "will be a clear and strong reaction from all partners," Zelenskyy said.

Russian attacks hit central and western Ukraine

Ukraine's Air Force says Russia fired 415 strike and decoy drones, as well as 42 cruise missiles and one ballistic missiles overnight.

Ukrainian air defenses intercepted or jammed 386 drones and 27 cruise missiles, according to the report.

"At least eight enemy UAVs crossed Ukraine's state border in the direction of the Republic of Poland," the Air Force message said.

Russian drones injured three people in Ukraine's western Khmelnytskyi region, its head Serhii Tiurin wrote on Telegram early Wednesday morning. He said a sewing factory was destroyed, a gas station and vehicles were damaged, and windows in several houses were blown out.

One person was killed and one injured in Zhytomyr region overnight, regional administration head Vitalii Bunechko wrote on Telegram, while homes and businesses suffered damage.

In Vinnytsia region, Russian drones damaged "civilian and industrial infrastructure," according to regional head Natalia Zabolotna. Nearly 30 residential buildings were damaged and one person was injured.

In Cherkasy region, several houses and a power grid were damaged in a Russian attack. In Zolotonosha district, a shock wave destroyed a barn killing two cows, regional head Ihor Taburets wrote on Telegram.

The Russian Defense Ministry said in its morning report on Wednesday that it had destroyed 122 Ukrainian drones over various Russian regions overnight, including over the illegally annexed Crimea and areas of the Black Sea.

Nepalese army moves to restore order after protest violence intensifies

By BINAJ GURUBACHARYA Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal (AP) — Nepalese soldiers guarded the streets of the country's capital on Wednesday and ordered people to stay at home as they moved to restore order after tens of thousands of protesters stormed and set fire to government buildings and attacked politicians.

Armed troops guarding the main areas of Kathmandu appeared to give some sense of control returning to the city that was engulfed in violence and chaos in the previous days. Soldiers told residents about the curfew in place as they checked vehicles and people.

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The army had warned late Tuesday that security forces were committed to preserving law and order. The military is rarely mobilized in Nepal and had initially stayed in the barracks as police failed to control the situation. An army statement said 27 suspected looters have been arrested.

Earlier on Tuesday, the protests had grown increasingly violent as demonstrators set fire to government buildings and politicians' homes and attacked some leaders. As criticism of the country's political elite widened, the prime minister resigned, though it appeared to have little effect on the unrest.

Tens of thousands of protesters remained on the streets, blocking roads and storming government facilities. Army helicopters ferried some ministers to safety.

Also Tuesday, hundreds of inmates escaped from prisons in Kathmandu and other cities after police there abandoned their posts as a growing number of protesters attacked the security forces.

Anger over the social media ban was just the beginning

On Monday, demonstrations led by young people angry about the blocking of several social media sites gripped Kathmandu, with police opening fire on the crowds, killing 19 people. The social media ban was lifted on Tuesday, but the protests continued, fueled by rage over the deaths and accusations of political corruption.

President Ram Chandra Poudel, the ceremonial head of state, appealed to the protesters to pursue a peaceful resolution and stop further escalation. He accepted the resignation of Prime Minister Khadga Prasad Oli and tasked him with leading a caretaker government until a new one is in place, though Oli's position and whereabouts were not clear.

The demonstrations — dubbed the protest of Gen Z — began after the government blocked social media platforms, including Facebook, X and YouTube, saying those companies had failed to register and submit to government oversight.

The protests spiraled to reflect broader discontent.

Many young people are angry that the children of political leaders — so-called nepo kids — seem to enjoy luxury lifestyles and numerous advantages while most youth struggle to find work. With youth unemployment running at about 20% last year, according to the World Bank, the government estimates that more than 2,000 young people leave the country every day to seek work in the Middle East or Southeast Asia.

Political leaders, buildings and homes were targeted

Videos shared on social media show protesters beating up Nepali Congress party leader Sher Bahadur Deuba and his wife, Arzu Rana Deuba, the current foreign minister. Both appeared to be bleeding, while one video shows the party leader being helped to safety. The party is the country's largest and is part of the governing coalition.

Smoke was still rising Wednesday from the parliament building, presidential house, the central secretariat that houses the offices of the prime minister and key ministries, and the prime minister's official residence.

The building of Kantipur publication, Nepal's biggest media outlet, was torched and damaged. Car showrooms were also torched and burned-out vehicles dotted the streets.

In addition to the 19 fatalities, scores of people were wounded. Oli has ordered an investigation into the shootings and promised compensation to the families.

The government is seeking to regulate social media

The violence unfolded as Nepal's government pursues a broader attempt to regulate social media with a bill aimed at ensuring the platforms are "properly managed, responsible and accountable."

The proposal has been widely criticized as a tool for censorship and for punishing government opponents who voice their protests online.

The bill would require companies to appoint a liaison office or a point of contact in the country. Rights groups have called it an attempt by the government to curb freedom of expression and fundamental rights.

The registration requirement applied to about two dozen social networks widely used in Nepal. Those that didn't comply were blocked last week, though TikTok, Viber and three other platforms that registered were operating without interruption.

Qatar digs through the rubble of Israel's attack on Hamas leaders in Doha

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Qatari security forces and emergency fire personnel deployed Wednesday around the site of an Israeli attack the previous day on Hamas' political leaders who had gathered in the capital of the energy-rich Middle East country to consider a U.S. proposal for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip.

Tuesday's strike on a building in Doha killed at least six people in a neighborhood that is home to foreign embassies and schools.

The strike on the territory of a U.S. ally drew widespread condemnation from countries in the Mideast and beyond. It also marked a dramatic escalation in the region and risked upending talks aimed at ending the war and freeing hostages still held by Hamas in Gaza.

Buildings still standing

From a distance beyond the security cordon, the buildings that had housed the Hamas leadership in Doha could be seen still standing. But one room in particular appeared to have been the target of the strike — its walls were collapsed, and gray rubble could be seen inside.

Security forces and emergency personnel surrounded the site and blocked traffic as additional civil defense vehicles arrived.

A gas station to the side of the building, directly abutting the premises, did not appear to have suffered any fire damage. The windows of the building next to the one targeted remained intact, suggesting that whatever munitions the Israeli military used was a low yield weapon designed only to hit the building they suspected the Hamas leaders were meeting in.

Israel hasn't specified what it used to carry out the strike, beyond saying it employed precision-guided weapons meant to minimize collateral damage.

Hamas said in a statement Tuesday that its top leaders survived the strike but that five lower-level members were killed, including the son of Khalil al-Hayya — Hamas' leader for Gaza and its top negotiator — as well as three bodyguards and the head of al-Hayya's office. Hamas, which has sometimes only confirmed the assassination of its leaders months later, offered no immediate proof that al-Hayya and other senior figures had survived.

Hitting an American ally

Qatar maintains a major arsenal of air defense systems, including both American-made Patriot and Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD batteries.

However, it doesn't immediately appear that Qatari air defenses engaged during the attack, which occurred just before 4 p.m. on Tuesday.

Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Qatar's prime minister and foreign minister, said Tuesday night that "the Israeli enemy used weapons that were not detected by radar."

He did not elaborate but the statement suggests Israeli fighter jets could have launched so-called "stand-off" missiles at a distance to strike the site without actually entering Qatari airspace -- possible over the Persian Gulf.

The United States has said it warned Qatar before the strike. Qatar disputes that, with Sheikh Mohammed saying that "the Americans sent a message 10 minutes after the attacks took place, saying they were informed that there was going to be a missile attack on the state of Qatar."

Qatar is also home to the U.S. military's forward headquarters for its Mideast-based Central Command. The headquarters, located at the sprawling Al-Udeid Air Base, also has American-run radars and defense systems and recently hosted U.S. President Donald Trump on his tour of the region in May.

Stalled Gaza talks

Israel's attack in Qatar threatens to upend both negotiations over a ceasefire in Gaza and Israel's efforts to reach out to Gulf Arab states, New York-based think tank The Soufan Center said in an analysis Wednesday.

"The attack has profound strategic implications because by striking a Gulf Cooperation Council state,

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Israel risks undermining the Abraham Accords and unraveling the fragile normalization framework with Arab partners," the center said, referring to the 2020 diplomatic recognition deal between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

"Israel's strike on Qatar raises the uncomfortable question: if a state like Qatar, with its carefully cultivated neutrality and commitment to peacemaking, is punished for its role, who will dare step into the vacuum of mediation in the future?" the center asked.

Qatar's local media hewed tightly to government statements issued after the attack. Qatar is ruled by a hereditary emir and tightly restricts speech like other Gulf Arab nations.

Al Jazeera, the outspoken satellite news network funded by Qatar's government, described the attack in its headlines as a "brutal aggression." The Israeli government has banned Al Jazeera from operating in Israel or the West Bank amid the Israel-Hamas war, though its journalists still broadcast from the Gaza Strip.

The state-run Qatar News Agency noted that the country's ruling emir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, held a series of calls with world leaders, including Trump.

Sheikh Tamim condemned the attack and according to a readout of the call, said that Qatar holds Israel "responsible for its repercussions, in light of the policy of aggression they adopt that threatens the region's stability and obstructs efforts to de-escalate and reach sustainable diplomatic solutions."

Qatar Airways, a major East-West airline that operates out of the country's massive Hamad International Airport, sought to assure passengers their flights were safe and would not be interrupted.

South Korea sends plane to US to bring back workers detained in immigration raid

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean charter plane left for the U.S. on Wednesday to bring back Korean workers detained in an immigration raid in Georgia last week.

A total of 475 workers, more than 300 of them South Koreans, were rounded up in the Sept. 4 raid at the battery factory under construction at Hyundai's sprawling auto plant. U.S. authorities released video showing some being shackled with chains around their hands, ankles and waists, causing shock and a sense of betrayal among many in South Korea, a key U.S. ally.

South Korea's government later said it reached an agreement with the U.S. for the release of the workers.

Korean workers will be brought back home after days of detention

South Korean TV footage showed the charter plane, a Boeing 747-8i from Korean Air, taking off at Incheon International Airport, just west of Seoul. South Korea's Foreign Ministry said it was talking with U.S. officials about letting the plane return home with the released workers as soon as possible. But it said the plane cannot depart from the U.S. on Wednesday as South Korea earlier wished due to an unspecified reason involving the U.S. side.

The Korean workers are currently being held at an immigration detention center in Folkston in southeast Georgia. South Korean media reported that they will be freed and moved to Atlanta to take the charter plane.

South Korean officials said they've been negotiating with the U.S. to win "voluntary" departures of the workers, rather than deportations that could result in making them ineligible to return to the U.S. for up to 10 years.

The workplace raid by the U.S. Homeland Security agency was its largest yet as it pursues its mass deportation agenda. The Georgia battery plant, a joint venture between Hyundai and LG Energy Solution, is one of more than 20 major industrial sites that South Korean companies are currently building in the United States.

Many South Koreans view the Georgia raid as a source of national disgrace and remain stunned over it. Only 10 days earlier, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and U.S. President Donald Trump held their first summit in Washington on Aug. 25. In late July, South Korea also promised hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. investments to reach a tariff deal.

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Experts say South Korea won't likely take any major retaliatory steps against the U.S., but the Georgia raid could become a source of tensions between the allies as the Trump administration intensifies immigration raids.

South Korea calls for improvement in U.S. visa systems

U.S. authorities said some of the detained workers had illegally crossed the U.S. border, while others had entered the country legally but had expired visas or entered on a visa waiver that prohibited them from working. But South Korean experts and officials said Washington has yet to act on Seoul's yearslong demand to ensure a visa system to accommodate skilled Korean workers needed to build facilities, though it has been pressing South Korea to expand industrial investments in the U.S.

South Korean companies have been relying on short-term visitor visas or Electronic System for Travel Authorization to send workers needed to launch manufacturing sites and handle other setup tasks, a practice that had been largely tolerated for years.

LG Energy Solution, which employed most of the detained workers, instructed its South Korean employees in the U.S. on B-1 or B-2 short-term visit visas not to report to work until further notice, and told those with ESTAs to return home immediately.

During his visit to Washington, South Korean Foreign Minister Cho Hyun met representatives of major Korean companies operating in the U.S. including Hyundai, LG and Samsung on Tuesday. Cho told them that South Korean officials are in active discussions with U.S. officials and lawmakers about possible legislation to create a separate visa quota for South Korean professionals operating in the U.S., according to Cho's ministry.

Trump said this week the workers "were here illegally," and that the U.S. needs to work with other countries to have their experts train U.S. citizens to do specialized work such as battery and computer manufacturing.

Atlanta immigration attorney Charles Kuck, who represents four of the detained South Korean nationals, told The Associated Press on Monday that no company in the U.S. makes the machines used in the Georgia battery plant. So they had to come from abroad to install or repair equipment on-site — work that would take about three to five years to train someone in the U.S. to do, he said.

The South Korea-U.S. military alliance, forged in blood during the 1950-53 Korean War, has experienced ups and downs over the decades. But surveys have shown a majority of South Koreans support the two countries' alliance, as the U.S. deployment of 28,500 troops in South Korea and 50,000 others in Japan has served as the backbone of the American military presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

During a Cabinet Council meeting on Tuesday, Lee said he felt "big responsibility" over the raid and expressed hopes that the operations of South Korean businesses won't be infringed upon unfairly again. He said his government will push to improve systems to prevent recurrences of similar incidents in close consultations with the U.S.

Russian glide bomb attack in eastern Ukraine kills 24 people collecting their pensions

By HANNA ARHIROVA and ILLIA NOVIKOV Associated Press

DONETSK REGION, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian glide bomb struck a village in eastern Ukraine as people stood in line in the open air Tuesday morning to collect their monthly pension. The blast killed at least 24 people and injured 19 others, the Ukraine Emergency Service said.

In a related development, Poland's armed forces were on a heightened state of alert overnight Tuesday and early Wednesday because of what they described as "further massive airstrikes against targets located in Ukraine."

"To ensure the security of Polish airspace, the operational commander of the Polish armed forces has activated all necessary procedures. Polish and allied aircraft are operating in our airspace, and ground-based air defense and radar reconnaissance systems have reached the highest level of alert," the Operational Command of Poland's Armed Forces said in a statement posted on social media.

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It said the actions were "preventative" and designed to secure the country's airspace and protect people in "areas adjacent to the threatened area."

Warsaw's Chopin Airport warned passengers on its website that flight operations were on hold due to closure of the airspace over part of the country, but that the airport remained open.

The Russian glide bomb on Tuesday hit the Donetsk region village of Yarova at around 11 a.m. The village lies less than 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the front line. Donetsk regional head Vadym Filashkin said 23 of the dead were pensioners.

Yarova resident Hennadii Trush said his wife was killed in the blast as she waited to collect the pension of her bedridden mother-in-law. Afterward, Trush fled Yarova with his elderly mother, who was carried out on a stretcher.

In shock and with soot still on his face, Trush wept as he described the scene of the attack. "It was beyond words," he told The Associated Press. "Before, strikes landed on the outskirts. This time it was right in the center of the village."

It was the latest Russian attack to kill civilians. More than 12,000 Ukrainian civilians have been killed in the three-year war, the United Nations says.

"Frankly brutal," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on Telegram of Tuesday's attack, urging the international community to make Russia pay economically for its full-scale invasion through additional sanctions.

"The world should not remain silent," Zelenskyy wrote. "The world should not remain inactive. The United States needs a reaction. Europe needs a reaction. The G20 needs a reaction. Strong action is needed so that Russia stops bringing death."

With U.S.-led peace efforts making no headway in recent months, Russia has escalated its aerial barrages of Ukraine. On Sunday, Russia hit the capital, Kyiv, with drones and missiles in the largest aerial attack since the war began on Feb. 24, 2022.

'Whole village is on fire'

Pavlo Diachenko, head of communications for the Donetsk regional police, said he arrived at the scene in Yarova shortly after the strike.

"The picture was horrific — the whole village is on fire," he told AP. "Private houses were burning, and people tried to put out the flames with their own hands. There were many drones overhead."

Yarova is located north of the Donetsk city of Lyman, an area where Russia has intensified attacks recently as it probes for weaknesses in Ukrainian defenses and seeks to advance into northern parts of the region.

Despite the risks, many people remain in their homes because they have no means of relocating or they need to care for elderly relatives with disabilities.

Russia is escalating aerial attacks

Russia has been scaling up its aerial attacks, despite U.S. President Donald Trump's attempts to persuade Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin to agree to a ceasefire and enter peace talks with Zelenskyy — proposals that Ukraine has endorsed.

European Council President Antonio Costa rebuked the Kremlin for its repeated strikes on civilians.

"Is this what Russia means when it talks about peace?" Costa asked on social media. "When will President Putin accept to start peace talks already accepted by President Zelenskyy?"

The major barrages have prompted concerns that Ukraine is using up its air defenses quicker than they can be replaced by its Western allies.

U.S. and European officials met at the U.S. Treasury Department on Monday evening to discuss various forms of economic pressure to exert on Russia, including new sanctions and tariffs on Russian oil purchases, a person familiar with the meeting told AP.

The talks were expected to continue Tuesday.

Retirees stand in line for their pensions

Glide bombs are retrofitted Soviet weapons that have laid waste to eastern Ukraine for months. Some of them now weigh 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms), which is six times bigger than when they were first

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used in battle in 2022.

In Ukrainian villages, where there are no ATMs and older people are unfamiliar with digital banking, pensions are commonly delivered to the local post office on a certain day of every month. Retirees stand in line to pick up their pension in cash.

Photos and video of the scene posted on official Ukrainian channels showed bodies lying around a damaged white car with yellow branding that was parked beneath trees.

The vehicle damaged in the attack was a mobile post office, Ukrposhta's network development director for the Dnipro and Donetsk regions, Maksym Sutkovyi, said in a phone interview.

The village post office closed down just a week ago, he said, after the last two staff decided to evacuate. It was the only place where locals could collect their pension, top up a cell phone account or even buy some essential goods, he said.

The head of Ukraine's national postal service, Ukrposhta, said the company constantly changes security procedures. Ihor Smilianskyi said the car was parked under trees to reduce the risk of it being spotted by the enemy.

"But apparently, someone gave away the coordinates," Smilianskyi wrote on Facebook.

The territory was occupied by Russia in 2022, but was liberated by Ukraine's armed forces in a counter-offensive later the same year.

Victims show blast injuries, burns

The dead were taken to a local morgue. Multiple bodies lay in the intake hall as forensic teams tried to identify them. Many had died from blast injuries.

Zinaida Hrymailo went there to identify the body of her cousin, a 75-year-old woman killed in the strike. "They were all lying in one heap. My sister has been completely burned," Hrymailo said.

As the cousin died while collecting the pension, her paralyzed husband remained in the village all alone, according to Hrymailo.

Her cousin, she added, had been preparing to leave Yarova after collecting her pension. "Everything had been prepared, they were going to leave."

Israeli military urges full evacuation of Gaza City ahead of expanded military operation

By WAFAA SHURAF, SAMY MAGDY, and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's military told Gaza City residents on Tuesday to evacuate ahead of its planned offensive to take control of what it portrays as Hamas' last remaining stronghold and where hundreds of thousands of people remain struggling under conditions of famine.

The warning came hours before Israel launched a strike targeting Hamas' leaders in Qatar, intensifying its campaign against the militant group and endangering negotiations over ending the war in Gaza.

The alerts directed at Gaza City were the first calling for a full evacuation. Until now, the military has only told specific sections of the northern city to evacuate ahead of operations or strikes.

Associated Press reporters saw lines of cars and trucks leaving Tuesday, more than previous days. Children and adults sat atop mounds of blankets, pillows, chairs, and clothing piled high on trucks and wagons.

Residents with nowhere to go

In the wake of escalating hostilities and calls to evacuate Gaza City, the number of people leaving nearly doubled the daily average in recent weeks, a coalition of humanitarian groups monitoring the situation said Tuesday.

But many families remain stuck because of the cost of finding transportation and housing, said Site Management Cluster, which uses eyewitness accounts, social media and information from on the ground to track displacements.

"We were displaced two days ago, and here we are, my wife and I, unfortunately, sleeping in the street," said Hazem Abu Reyash. "There's no shelter, no tent, nothing, no water, no food."

An estimated 1 million Palestinians — around half of Gaza's overall population — live in the area of north

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Gaza around Gaza City, according to the Israeli military and the United Nations. Many are exhausted from moving multiple times and unsure if traveling south will be safer.

"There's no place for us. This is the second time we've been displaced, paying 800 shekels (\$240) for a vehicle and finding nothing," said Mohammad Ashraf. "We don't know if God will make things easier for us. God willing, they'll hit us with nuclear weapons and we'll find relief."

Israel says multiple towers destroyed in Gaza City

Israel said it has demolished 50 high-rise buildings in Gaza in the past two days. Israeli leaders accused Hamas of using the buildings for military infrastructure. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said demolishing the high-rises was "only the beginning of the main intensive operation — the ground incursion of our forces."

First responders rescued two survivors and pulled two bodies from one building on Tuesday, according to the civil defense, part of the Hamas-run Interior Ministry. It said others were trapped under the rubble.

The United Nations agency that oversees Palestinian refugees said Tuesday said the attacks on residential towers had left many families on the streets without shelter or basic necessities.

Israel is urging Palestinians to move to a designated humanitarian zone in the territory's south. Military spokesperson Col. Avichay Adraee warned last week that the full evacuation of Gaza City was "inevitable," saying families who leave would receive humanitarian assistance. But aid groups warned there was little infrastructure to support them.

Palestinians and hostage survivors protest Israeli operation

Dozens of Palestinians in Gaza City, including doctors and medical staff, gathered Tuesday to protest the Israeli warnings.

"We will never leave our land ... health care workers won't leave," said Dr. Muneer al-Boursh, the general director of Gaza's Health Ministry.

Dr. Rami Mhanna, managing director of Shifa Hospital, said that the facility remained open despite the unease and he didn't notice displacement around the hospital. "But the atmosphere is tense and there is great psychological pressure on the staff and patients," he told the AP after the evacuation warning.

In Jerusalem, families of hostages and former captives in Gaza pleaded with Israel to halt the Gaza City offensive.

"I was held captive by Hamas for 498 days and was released in a deal in February," Iair Horn, whose brother, Eitan, is still in captivity, told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. "If I was released through a deal, then apparently that's the right way to free the rest of the hostages who remain."

UN says it costs at least \$1,000 to evacuate to southern Gaza

The U. N. humanitarian agency said many displacement sites are overcrowded and that it can cost more than \$1,000 in transportation and other costs to move to southern Gaza.

An initiative headed by the U.N. to bring temporary shelters into Gaza said more than 86,000 tents and other supplies were still awaiting clearance to enter Gaza as of last week.

The Israeli defense body overseeing humanitarian aid to Gaza said 1,500 aid trucks mostly carrying food entered Gaza last week, and there are plans to bring in 100,000 tents in the coming weeks.

The war in Gaza began when Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people on Oct. 7, 2023, and killed some 1,200 people, mostly Israeli civilians. Forty-eight hostages are still inside Gaza, around 20 of them believed to be alive.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least more than 64,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. It says around half of those killed were women and children. Large parts of major cities have been completely destroyed and around 90% of some 2 million Palestinians have been displaced.

2 Palestinian teenagers killed in the West Bank

Two 14-year-old Palestinian boys were killed in the Israeli-occupied West Bank on Monday, according to the Ramallah-based Palestinian Health Ministry.

The Israeli military said the incident happened in Jenin when several people approached Israeli soldiers

in a way that "posed a threat." The area was under military closure and entry was prohibited at the time, the military said, without providing further information.

Ahmad Majarmeh, who lives in Jenin, said Israeli soldiers started shooting "randomly" at a group of people collecting belongings from their homes, which they were forced to leave months ago. Majarmeh said his nephew, Islam Majarmeh, was one of the boys killed.

Also in the West Bank, an Israeli investigation continued into two Palestinians who opened fire at a bus stop in Jerusalem on Monday, killing six people. It was the deadliest attack against civilians in Israel in nearly a year.

Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack, but Israel's Shin Bet internal security service said the two attackers had no known militant ties and no prior arrests.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said Tuesday he placed sanctions on the relatives and residents of the towns where the two attackers are from and canceled 750 work visas for its residents.

Kilmar Abrego Garcia wants asylum. The US wants to deport him. What to know

By BEN FINLEY Associated Press

Kilmar Abrego Garcia faces an uncertain future.

The Trump administration wants to deport him to the African nation of Eswatini. Abrego Garcia wants to apply for asylum to stay in the U.S.

Either path could begin with a long journey through the legal system.

Abrego Garcia, 30, became a flashpoint over President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown when he was wrongfully deported to his native El Salvador. The Trump administration claimed he was a member of the MS-13 gang, an allegation that Abrego Garcia denies and for which he wasn't charged.

The administration returned Abrego Garcia to the U.S. in June, but only to face human smuggling charges. Abrego Garcia's lawyers have called the case preposterous and vindictive.

Abrego Garcia was released from a Tennessee jail to await his trial last month. He was taken into immigration custody three days later and remains in a Virginia detention center.

Here's a look at what could happen next:

Fears of other countries

The Trump administration has proposed sending Abrego Garcia to Eswatini because it cannot legally send him to El Salvador.

Abrego Garcia fled El Salvador around 2011 because a local gang had extorted and terrorized him and his family, according to court documents. Abrego Garcia had settled in Maryland without documentation to join his older brother, who had become a U.S. citizen.

One day in 2019, Abrego Garcia sought work as a day laborer outside a Home Depot. A confidential informant told police that Abrego Garcia and other men outside the store were in MS-13 because of their clothing and tattoos, according to court documents.

Abrego Garcia was never charged but was turned over to Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He applied for asylum, but was denied because his request came more than a year after he entered the U.S.

However, an immigration judge granted him protection from being deported to El Salvador after Abrego Garcia demonstrated that he had a well-founded fear of gang persecution there.

Six years later, in the early days of the second Trump administration, ICE deported Abrego Garcia to a notorious El Salvador prison, violating the immigration judge's order. Following a Supreme Court order, the Trump administration returned him to the U.S., but only to face charges of human smuggling.

The Trump administration said last month that it intended to deport him to the African country of Uganda. Abrego Garcia notified the U.S. government that he fears being sent there over concerns of persecution or being sent on to El Salvador.

Last Friday, the Trump administration said it now intends to deport him to Eswatini.

A letter from ICE said his fears are "hard to take seriously, especially given that you have claimed (through

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your attorneys) that you fear persecution or torture in at least 22 different countries.”

Trump’s immigration court

The U.S. is supposed to follow a multi-step process for deporting someone to a nation that isn’t their home country, according to immigration attorneys.

For example, an immigration officer is supposed to conduct a reasonable fear interview, during which Abrego Garcia can raise concerns about persecution and torture. If the officer disagrees, Abrego Garcia can ask an immigration judge to review the decision. From there, Abrego Garcia can go to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

Immigration judges are part of the Justice Department and under the Trump administration’s authority. Trump has been firing immigration judges, many appointed by former President Joe Biden, as part of his immigration crackdown.

However, Abrego Garcia can contest a Board of Immigration Appeals decision in the federal courts, which are part of the nation’s independent judiciary.

‘You can’t win every case’

Even if Abrego Garcia thwarts deportation to Eswatini, he likely will face attempts to remove him to another country and then another, according to Memphis-based immigration attorney Andrew Rankin.

“By the law of averages, you can’t win every case,” he said.

Asylum, however, could place the focus solely back on El Salvador, where Abrego Garcia has previously shown a credible fear of gang persecution.

Abrego Garcia has filed a motion to reopen his 2019 immigration case and apply for asylum. His lawyers will likely argue he’s eligible because he’s been in the U.S. less than a year, Rankin said.

Asylum could provide a green card and a path to citizenship. But he’s taking a risk, Rankin said. If Abrego Garcia loses his bid, an immigration judge could remove his protection from being returned to El Salvador.

‘A traffic court setting’

Abrego Garcia’s motion to reopen his immigration case is still pending. If it’s denied, he can appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals. From there, he can go to the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia.

If he is allowed to request asylum, he’ll get a hearing. His lawyers and the government can present evidence and call witnesses.

“A very famous saying about immigration court is ‘Immigration court has death penalty consequences in a traffic court setting,’” said Rankin, the attorney.

For example, immigration judges have much wider discretion on scheduling, admitting evidence and issuing judgments, Rankin said. There can be little consistency between individual immigration courts.

“In traffic court, you’re deciding a speeding ticket, which at most affects insurance purposes,” Rankin said. “Whereas in immigration court, you’re deciding in this particular case whether someone’s going to go home to die. Or if they’re going to stay in the U.S.”

Attorney general could rule

Attorney General Pam Bondi has the authority to decide Abrego Garcia’s immigration case as the head of the Justice Department, immigration experts say. Such decisions are rare, but the Trump administration has shown a willingness to break with precedent.

Abrego Garcia’s attorneys in his Tennessee criminal case have criticized Bondi for what they say are prejudicial statements, claiming he can’t get a fair criminal trial.

César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández, an Ohio State University law professor, said a hypothetical ruling from Bondi would likely be appealed to the 4th Circuit.

The smartest thing for Bondi to do, the professor said, is to “work with a good group of Justice Department lawyers who are going to explain the factual basis for your conclusion.”

Rankin, the attorney in Memphis, said Abrego Garcia’s attorneys likely would attack any decision made by Bondi to deport him as “a political hit job.”

“It would destroy any credibility that this is a prosecution for the American people and not a prosecution

for Donald Trump," Rankin said.

Killing of former Auburn professor at city park shakes community

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

AUBURN, Ala. (AP) — Flowers and memorial messages were tied to the gate of Kiesel Park in Auburn to remember retired veterinary professor Julie Gard Schnuelle, who was attacked and killed there over the weekend.

Gard Schnuelle's killing at a city park has rattled the college town of 83,757 people. The sprawling green space, in a rural-feeling area of the city about 4 miles (6 kilometers) from the university campus, is popular with dog walkers and exercisers because of its fields and 2 miles (3 kilometers) of walking trails.

Authorities said Gard Schnuelle, 59, died after being stabbed multiple times. Her body was found in a wooded area of the park. Police have charged Harold Rashad Dabney III, 28, with capital murder. Court documents indicate that investigators believe Dabney killed Gard Schnuelle during an attempted robbery and then left in her red Ford F-150 truck. He was being held without bond.

People who came to the park Tuesday said they were shocked by the killing at the placid location.

"Horried and couldn't believe it happened in broad daylight," said Paul Holm, who came to the park to the walk. "This is a beautiful place where you can go for peace. Now, I'm going to be thinking where did it happen."

Gwnstavus Dowdell, who brought his dog Tiger, said he tried to go the park Sunday but it was closed. The park was temporarily closed to the public over the weekend while investigators gathered evidence.

"I Googled the place to see what was going on. When I saw what happened the day before, I was shocked. While she was walking her dog? It just doesn't make sense," Dowdell said.

Gard Schnuelle, a large animal veterinarian, was a 1996 graduate of the veterinary school and a faculty member from 2003 until her retirement in 2021. She specialized in cattle reproduction. She recently served as Area Veterinarian in Charge with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for Alabama and Mississippi. She remained active with the veterinary school even after her retirement.

"Dr. Schnuelle was an extremely enthusiastic and energetic person," said Calvin M. Johnson, dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Auburn University. "She was a fabulous teacher. The students really responded to her enthusiasm, and it motivated to them to excel."

He said there is a feeling of "absolute shock" and sadness on the vet school campus. He said the park is a beloved place where faculty and students frequently go to to walk or take a break.

Gard Schnuelle often went there to run, sometimes fielding calls about hospital cases as she made her way through the park, Johnson said.

"Auburn is a very safe community. We are a very tight-knit veterinary college. Everyone knows everyone," he said. "When something like this happened, we just were jolted. We were completely taken off guard."

A handwritten note left with flowers at the park read, "always an example forever an inspiration."

Gard Schnuelle had gone to the park to walk her dog. The dog was found safe and returned to her family, WRBL reported.

Police have given limited public information about the killing and why they suspect Dabney. Lee County Coroner Daniel Sexton told The Associated Press that Gard Schnuelle died from multiple sharp force injuries.

A judge scheduled a preliminary hearing next month in the case. Lee County District Attorney Jessica Ventiere told AP that her office intends to seek the death penalty.

Andrew Stanley, a defense attorney appointed to represent Dabney, declined to comment Monday, noting that the case was in its early stages.

Bill Birmingham, the pastor of a nondenominational Christian church in Auburn, came with a small group to pray at the park. He said there were noticeably fewer people there Tuesday.

"We come out to pray just for things to be peaceful," he said.

Missouri Republicans advance Trump-backed plan to redraw US House districts

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri's Republican-led House turned aside Democratic objections Tuesday and passed a plan backed by President Donald Trump to redraw the state's congressional districts so that Republicans could win an additional seat in the closely divided chamber.

The rare mid-decade redistricting plan, which now heads to the state Senate, is aimed at bolstering Republicans' national prospects in next year's U.S. House elections, where Democrats need to gain just three seats to take control. By reshaping a Democratic-held Kansas City district, Republicans could win seven of Missouri's eight congressional seats.

Missouri's effort comes after a similar move by Republican-led Texas and a counter-offensive in Democratic-led California, which still needs voter approval. Other states, including Republican-led Indiana and Florida and Democratic-led Maryland and New York, could follow with their own revisions in what's emerging as a national redistricting battle.

U.S. House districts were redrawn across the country after the 2020 census to account for population changes. The current redistricting push is being done for partisan advantage, a process known as gerrymandering.

"This is cheating," said state Rep. Yolonda Fountain Henderson, one of many Democrats who denounced the measure. "It's like when President Trump says, we jump."

Trump wants to retain a congressional majority to advance his agenda. But historically, the party opposing the president has gained seats in the midterm elections, as Democrats did during Trump's first term and then proceeded to impeach him.

Missouri lawmakers are meeting in a two-prong special session called by Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe.

The House on Tuesday also passed a measure that — if approved by the Senate and statewide voters — would make it harder to pass citizen-led initiatives amending the state constitution by requiring a majority vote from each congressional district instead of a simple statewide majority. That comes after Missouri's initiative process has been used in recent years to win voter approval of amendments on abortion rights, marijuana legalization and Medicaid expansion.

In a statement after the House votes, Kehoe thanked Republicans for "ensuring that the values of Missourians are represented clearly and effectively."

Revised Missouri map could help Republicans gain a House seat

Republicans already hold six of Missouri's eight U.S. House seats, with Democrats representing districts in Kansas City and St. Louis.

The GOP plan targets a Kansas City district held by Democratic U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver by stretching it eastward into Republican-heavy rural areas and reducing the number of Black and minority voters in the district. Other parts of Kansas City would be added to two predominantly rural districts represented by Republicans.

Cleaver, who turns 81 in October, served as Kansas City's first Black mayor from 1991-1999 and won election to the U.S. House in 2004. He asserted that Republicans are creating an atmosphere of "intimidation" and "division" and pledged to challenge the new map in court.

"It's one of those moments that, frankly, I never thought I would experience," Cleaver said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

Missouri House Minority Leader Ashley Aune, a Democrat from Kansas City, denounced the Republican plan as "hyperpartisan gerrymandering" done along racial lines.

"Under these new maps, they are erasing Emanuel Cleaver from Congress essentially," Aune said.

If the revised districts also pass the Senate, Aune said she expects an initiative petition drive to try to force a public referendum on the legislation. That could delay the changes from taking effect and potentially overturn them.

Although the primary Kansas City district would expand significantly, the state's congressional districts

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overall would be more compact — and competitive — under the revised map, Republican lawmakers said. Kehoe has defended the revised map as a means of amplifying conservative voices in Congress.

It's "a congressional map that will better represent Missouri in Washington, D.C.," said sponsoring state Rep. Dirk Deaton, a Republican.

Some Republicans join Democrats in opposing new districts

The Missouri House passed the revised districts on a 90-65 vote. Thirteen Republicans, including House Speaker Jon Patterson of suburban Kansas City, joined Democrats in voting against the revised map. But only a couple spoke against it during two days of debate.

"Using our raw political power to tilt the playing field to our side, regardless of the party, is wrong," Republican state Rep. Bryant Wolfen said.

Leading up to the House vote, three Democratic state lawmakers staged a sit-in in the House chamber for several days and nights to protest that the special session began while most members were absent. Former Vice President Kamala Harris ordered pizza and chicken wings delivered to them in a show of support.

Republicans are "bending a knee to Donald Trump and pushing through these racist, gerrymandered districts," said Rep. Ray Reed, of St. Louis, one of those who slept in the chamber.

The Missouri NAACP has sued seeking to invalidate the special session. The state lawsuit asserts there is no extraordinary circumstance to justify the session and that the state constitution prohibits redistricting without new census data or a ruling invalidating the current districts.

Missouri Attorney General Catherine Hanaway, who took office Monday, said she doesn't think there is any constitutional prohibition on mid-decade redistricting.

Israeli strike in Qatar targets Hamas leaders as they weigh Gaza ceasefire proposal

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Israel struck the headquarters of Hamas' political leadership in Qatar on Tuesday as the group's top figures gathered to consider a U.S. proposal for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip. The strike on the territory of a U.S. ally marked a stunning escalation and risked upending talks aimed at winding down the war and freeing hostages.

The attack angered Qatar, an energy-rich Gulf nation hosting thousands of American troops that has served as a key mediator between Israel and Hamas throughout the 23-month-old war and even before. It condemned what it referred to as a "flagrant violation of all international laws and norms" as smoke rose over its capital, Doha. Other key U.S. allies in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, promised their support to Qatar.

Hamas said in a statement its top leaders survived the strike but that five lower-level members were killed, including the son of Khalil al-Hayya — Hamas' leader for Gaza and its top negotiator — three bodyguards, and the head of al-Hayya's office. Hamas, which has sometimes only confirmed the assassination of its leaders months later, offered no immediate proof that al-Hayya and other senior figures had survived.

The United States said Israel alerted it before the strike. But American officials sought to distance the U.S. from the attack. The White House said President Donald Trump believes the strike was an "unfortunate incident" that didn't advance peace in the region. Press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Trump spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and "made his thoughts and concerns very clear."

She also told reporters that Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff passed along a warning to the Qataris. But Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Majed al-Ansari derided the warning, saying in a post on X that it came just as "the explosions from the Israeli strikes were being heard."

Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, lashed out at Netanyahu for "dragging the region to a place where it unfortunately cannot be repaired."

Asked at a news conference if cease-fire talks would continue, Sheikh Mohammed said that after the strike, "I don't think there's anything valid" in the current talks. But he stopped short of saying Qatar would

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end its mediation efforts, saying "we will do whatever we can to stop this war."

A member of Qatar's Internal Security Force was also killed by the Israeli strike and others were wounded, Qatar's Interior Ministry said.

Hamas has survived numerous assassinations of top leaders and still shows cohesion in Gaza, despite having suffered major blows in Israel's campaign, triggered by the militant group's Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel.

As the strike in Qatar threatens to derail ceasefire talks, Israel is gearing up for a major offensive aimed at taking over Gaza City. That escalation has been met with heavy international condemnation and opposition within Israel from those who fear it will doom the remaining hostages.

The U.N. Security Council scheduled an emergency meeting for Wednesday at the request of elected council members Algeria, Pakistan and Somalia.

Israel had long threatened Hamas in Qatar

Surveillance footage aired by Al Jazeera showed the strike happened in Doha's diplomatic quarter at a series of buildings that housed Hamas' political wing. An Egyptian official said the strike came when a meeting by Hamas officials over the talks had been scheduled for the site. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to talk to reporters.

Israel has long threatened to strike Hamas leaders wherever they are. While it has often welcomed Qatar's role as a mediator, alongside Egypt, it has also accused the Gulf nation of not putting enough pressure on the group.

In contrast to previous Israeli operations against senior militants abroad, Netanyahu was quick to publicly claim the strike, saying: "Israel initiated it, Israel conducted it and Israel takes full responsibility."

He said the decision was made Monday after a shooting attack in Jerusalem that killed six people and an attack on Israeli forces in Gaza that killed four soldiers.

The Israeli military said it used "precise munitions and additional intelligence" in the strike, without elaborating. It was not immediately clear how it carried out the attack.

Hamas said the attack showed that Netanyahu and his government "do not want to reach any agreement and are deliberately seeking to thwart all opportunities." It said it also held the United States responsible for the strike.

Egypt, another key mediator with Hamas, also condemned the attack, saying it targeted Palestinian leaders who had met "to discuss ways to reach a ceasefire agreement." It said the strike was a "direct assault" on Qatar's sovereignty.

In Israel, the main group representing families of the hostages expressed "deep concern and great fear" after the strike. "The prospect of their return now faces greater uncertainty than ever, with one thing absolutely certain — their time is running out," the Hostages and Missing Families Forum said in a statement.

Ceasefire negotiations in doubt

Earlier this week, Trump said he was giving his "last warning" to Hamas regarding a possible ceasefire, as the U.S. advanced a new proposal that Arab officials said included the immediate release of all the hostages.

A senior Hamas official called it a "humiliating surrender document," but the militant group said it would discuss the proposal and respond within days.

The proposal, presented by Witkoff, calls for a negotiated end of the war and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza once the hostages are released and a ceasefire is established. That's according to Egyptian and Hamas officials familiar with the talks, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door discussions.

Hamas has said it will only release the remaining 48 hostages, around 20 of whom are believed to be alive, in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and a complete Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. Netanyahu has rejected those terms, saying the war will continue until all the hostages are returned and Hamas has been disarmed, with Israel maintaining open-ended security control over Gaza.

Mediators had previously focused on brokering a temporary ceasefire and the release of some hostages,

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with the two sides then holding talks on a more permanent truce. Witkoff walked away from those talks in July, after which Hamas accepted a proposal that mediators said was almost identical to an earlier one that Israel had approved.

International outrage

The war in Gaza has already left Israel increasingly isolated internationally, with even many of its Western allies calling for it to end the war and do more to address the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, parts of which are experiencing famine.

Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the United Arab Emirates' foreign minister, expressed "full solidarity with our dear Qatar" shortly after the attack.

The United Arab Emirates recently warned Israel that any move to annex the occupied West Bank would threaten the Abraham Accords, a landmark agreement brokered by Trump during his first term in which the two nations normalized relations.

Trump hopes to expand those accords to include regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia, but those prospects have dimmed as the war has ground on.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman described the strike as a "criminal act and a flagrant violation of international law" in a phone call with Qatar's ruler.

Chicagoans change routines as immigration crackdown looms.

Some carry passports and avoid stores

By CHRISTINE FERNANDO, JOHN O'CONNOR and SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The streets in some of Chicago's liveliest neighborhoods are quiet these days. Public schoolteachers want online learning for families scared to venture out. And houses of worship are urging people to carry identification everywhere they go.

As the nation's third-largest city awaits a much-hyped federal intervention, residents are making changes in their daily routines. President Donald Trump has promised Chicago will see a surge in deportations and National Guard troops as he targets Democratic strongholds. While the feeling of being vulnerable isn't new, especially among immigrants, many say this time the fear is deeper and the preparations more drastic.

Even Sam Sanchez, a Chicago restaurant owner who voted for Trump, criticized the Republican's plans for the city. As a naturalized U.S. citizen from Mexico, he is also taking precautions.

"They're profiling," he said of federal agents. "My wife and I went to a wedding and I told my wife, 'Bring your citizenship papers.'"

Slower business traffic

There is a noticeable drop in street food vendors in Chicago's Little Village neighborhood, and businesses report less foot traffic. The largely Mexican enclave features a two-mile stretch of businesses and restaurants that is often noted as one of Chicago's highest-grossing shopping districts after Michigan Avenue.

"The streets that were busy are dying down," said Galilea Mendez, 25, who visits from the suburbs.

The neighborhood has been subject to immigration enforcement before.

Residents are quick to recall a 2007 daytime raid that locked down a popular shopping mall and increased enforcement in 2019 during Trump's first term. Another wave of trepidation came in January when the Trump administration launched a nationwide operation from Chicago.

But things feel more intense now.

Laura Padilla, who has sold clothes in the area for more than 20 years, said that since Trump's second term, the streets are "dead."

Another longtime clothing merchant in the neighborhood, Xochitl Martinez, said Trump should focus on improving the lives of Latinos.

"He has to support Latinos so we can work, so stores can open, so more sales can happen, so we can prosper more and lift up our families and lift up the country," Martinez said.

Celebrations for Mexican Independence Day, which Chicago commemorates for weeks with car caravans, parades and festivals, have been muted. One festival was canceled while others added security.

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Immigration attorneys say their clients are afraid to attend appointments, including at court. Churches with large immigrant populations are starting to notice an attendance dip.

Fabio Fernandez, owner of 3W-We Will Win, an art and T-shirt company in the predominantly Latino Pilsen neighborhood, said a mood of anxiety and uncertainty permeates. He has seen fewer customers. "We shouldn't fear or feel like we can't walk the same streets that we usually roam," he said.

Recent arrests

Fueling Chicagoans' fear is the lack of information about what the Trump administration plans to do.

Calls to an activists' emergency hotline to report immigration arrests have jumped in recent days, including details that couldn't be confirmed or were mistaken.

"The deportation machine has always existed for decades," said Antonio Gutierrez with Organized Communities Against Deportations. "This feels unprecedented."

A handful of weekend immigration arrests launched the city's vocal immigrant rights groups into action. Activists said five people in a predominantly Latino area, including a longtime flower vendor, were targeted by armed and masked federal agents.

Federal officials said ongoing U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement activity resulted in the detention of 13 people with previous criminal arrests on Monday and Tuesday. The Department of Homeland Security on Monday announced a new operation in Chicago because of its so-called sanctuary laws, which limit cooperation between local police and federal agents.

It was unclear what role the operation would play in the broader threats of federal intervention, but activists and elected officials said it felt like things were ramping up.

"They're gathering steam," Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker said Tuesday.

Pritzker and Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson object to any federal surge and have promised to sue.

Some Chicagoans carry passports

Attorneys and activists have encouraged immigrants to carry documents and share their whereabouts for months. The message has spread recently to U.S. citizens and in Black and LGBTQ enclaves.

Vianney Alarcon, 42, says she has started carrying her passport when she leaves her North Side home. Her parents keep their green cards with them.

"It's just disheartening," she said.

Roughly 20% of Chicago's 2.7 million people are foreign born. Most come from Mexico, China and India, according to Census estimates. Racially, white, Black and Latino residents each comprise roughly one-third of the city, with a smaller number of Asian residents.

A group of pastors, imams and rabbis urged all residents this week to carry identification, film encounters and protest. The guidance comes after the U.S. Supreme Court lifted a restraining order barring immigration authorities in Los Angeles from stopping people solely based on things including race.

"We will fight for this city," said the Rev. Otis Moss III of Trinity United Church of Christ, the influential Black church once attended by former President Barack Obama.

Teachers want online learning

Despite the widespread unpopularity of remote learning, the Chicago Teachers Union wants schools to offer it for students who fear being targeted by immigration agents.

Union President Stacy Davis Gates said Chicago should follow Los Angeles' lead; the city's schools offered offering online options amid an immigration crackdown earlier this year.

"Because they had the infrastructure for online learning they were able to direct young people to those spaces," she said.

Chicago Public Schools leaders said the district will continue classes in person, but they will reassess as needed.

"In-person instruction continues to provide the strongest foundation for learning," officials said.

In letters to parents, district officials have reiterated that schools don't coordinate with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement or ask for immigration status. School leaders noted that children who felt unsafe walking home could duck into a church or firehouse and create neighborhood text groups.

Teachers in the district that is predominantly Black and Latino have been passing out flyers informing

families of their rights.

"We know that being informed is the best way to empower our communities to stay safe," said Linda Perales, a special education teacher.

Supreme Court to quickly consider if President Donald Trump has power to impose sweeping tariffs

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court granted an unusually quick hearing on President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on Tuesday, putting a policy at the center of his economic agenda squarely before the nation's highest court.

The justices will hear the case in November, a lightning-fast timetable by the Supreme Court's typical standards, and rule at some point after that. The tariffs will stay in place in the meantime.

The court agreed to take up an appeal from the Trump administration after lower courts found most of his tariffs illegal.

The small businesses and states that challenged them also agreed to the accelerated timetable. They say Trump's import taxes on goods from almost every country in the world have nearly driven their businesses to bankruptcy. "Congress, not the President alone, has the power to impose tariffs," attorney Jeffrey Schwab with the Liberty Justice Center said.

Two lower courts have agreed that Trump didn't have the power to impose all the tariffs under an emergency powers law, though a divided appeals court left them in place.

The Trump administration asked the justices to intervene quickly, arguing the law gives him the power to regulate imports and striking down the tariffs would put the country on "the brink of economic catastrophe."

The case will come before a court that has been reluctant to check Trump's extraordinary flex of executive power. One big question is whether the justices' own expansive view of presidential authority allows for Trump's tariffs without the explicit approval of Congress, which the Constitution endows with the power to levy tariffs. Three of the justices on the conservative-majority court were nominated by Trump in his first term.

While the tariffs and their erratic rollout have raised fears of higher prices and slower economic growth, Trump has also used them to pressure 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 a year earlier.

Solicitor General D. John Sauer has argued that the lower court rulings are already affecting those trade negotiations. If the tariffs are struck down, the U.S. Treasury might take a hit by having to refund some of the import taxes it's collected, Trump administration officials have said. A ruling against them could even threaten the nation's ability to reduce the flow of fentanyl and efforts to end Russia's war against Ukraine, Sauer argued.

The administration did win over four appeals court judges who found the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, or IEEPA, lets the president regulate importation during emergencies without explicit limitations. In recent decades, Congress has ceded some tariff authority to the president, and Trump has made the most of the power vacuum.

The case 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.

It doesn't include his levies on foreign steel, aluminum and autos, or the 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.

Macron appoints Defense Minister Lecornu as France's latest prime minister

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday appointed Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu as new prime minister and tasked him with immediately trying to get the country's fractious political parties to agree on a budget for one of the world's biggest economies.

Lecornu, 39, was the youngest defense minister in French history and architect of a major military buildup through 2030, spurred by Russia's war in Ukraine. A longtime Macron loyalist, Lecornu is now France's fourth prime minister in barely a year.

A former conservative who joined Macron's centrist movement in 2017, Lecornu has held posts in local governments, overseas territories and during Macron's yellow vest "great debate," when he helped manage mass anger with dialogue. He also offered talks on autonomy during unrest in Guadeloupe in 2021.

His rise reflects Macron's instinct to reward loyalty, but also the need for continuity as repeated budget showdowns have toppled his predecessors and left France in drift.

Macron's quick decision to name Lecornu comes ahead of a day of mass disruption planned Wednesday by a protest movement called "Block Everything" that prompted the government to deploy an exceptional 80,000 police to keep order.

Legislators toppled Lecornu's predecessor François Bayrou and his government in a confidence vote on Monday, a new crisis for Europe's second-largest economy.

Bayrou gambled that lawmakers would back his view that France must slash public spending to rein in its huge debts. Instead, they seized on the vote to gang up against the 74-year-old centrist who was appointed by Macron last December.

The demise of Bayrou's short-lived minority government heralds renewed uncertainty and a risk of prolonged legislative deadlock for France as it wrestles with pressing challenges, including budget difficulties and, internationally, wars in Ukraine and Gaza and the shifting priorities of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Drafting a budget will be a top priority for Lecornu, and normally a new prime minister would form the new government before negotiating the national spending in Parliament. However, Macron has asked Lecornu to consult with all of the political parties in Parliament first to try to agree on a budget before assembling his team.

"The prime minister's action will be guided by the defense of our independence and our power, serving the French and the political and institutional stability for the unity of our country," Macron said in a statement.

When the yellow vest movement against social injustice erupted, prompting months of sometimes violent demonstrations in the streets, Lecornu was chosen by Macron to lead the so-called "great debate" across the country aimed at appeasing tensions.

A minister of overseas territories from 2020 to 2022, Lecornu faced virus-related rioting and strikes in the Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, offering to discuss some autonomy for the territory affected by long-running frustrations over inequality with the French mainland.

The 413 billion euros (\$435 billion) defense spending package Lecornu championed for 2024-2030 represents the most significant spending hike in France in half a century. The money aimed to modernize France's nuclear arsenal, augment intelligence spending and develop more remote-controlled weapons.

RFK Jr.'s latest 'Make America Healthy Again' report calls for more scrutiny of vaccines and autism

By AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration directed the nation's public health and environmental agencies to prioritize investigations into vaccine injuries, prescription drug use and autism's causes in its latest "Make America Healthy Again" report released Tuesday.

The 20-page report, overseen by Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., echoes

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many of the talking points Kennedy and those in his wide-ranging and politically diverse "MAHA" movement have united around. The document promises to put an end to childhood diseases and to make children healthier, but does not lay out regulatory changes to ensure an overhaul of Americans' health.

Among the report's recommendations is a call for more rigorous government investigations into vaccine injuries, a move that could stir more uproar as lawmakers raise alarm over how the health secretary's anti-vaccine policies have thrown the nation's public health agency into weeks of tumult.

Kennedy promised to "recast the entire program" for investigating vaccine injuries as he joined administration officials to unveil the MAHA report. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention investigates injuries that are reported by individuals or providers.

"They will be welcomed and we will learn everything we can about them so we can improve the safety of these products," Kennedy said of people who report vaccine injuries. He added that doctors are not currently compensated for filing complaints for vaccine injuries.

A bipartisan group of senators has raised alarm over Kennedy's actions at the CDC, which was thrown into chaos last month when Kennedy abruptly fired his hand-picked director and other top leaders walked out on the job, citing disagreements over immunization recommendations. Last week, senators grilled Kennedy over his anti-vaccine agenda and leadership of the public health agencies.

The Trump administration's cuts to federal health programs, including Medicaid, as well as Kennedy's anti-vaccine rhetoric, could ultimately lead to worse health outcomes for children, Dr. Susan J. Kressly, the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said in a statement.

"It lacks details on how the Administration plans to address those issues and omits key drivers that harm children's health, including gun violence and environmental hazards," Kressly said of the report. "We also cannot ignore the fact that this report is being published in the context of other recent harmful actions by the Administration and Congress that undermine many of the report's recommendations."

An earlier version of the report was first leaked and publicized in August. Slight changes have been made to the final draft, which was developed by a "MAHA" commission that included Kennedy and other members of the president's cabinet. Despite pledging "radical transparency," the commission never held a public meeting ahead of the report's release.

Among the differences in the final version of the report released on Tuesday is a call for the National Institutes of Health to use personal medical records and health insurance claims data to investigate the cause of diseases and disorders, including autism.

"The NIH will link multiple datasets, such as claims information, electronic health records, and wearables data, into a single integrated dataset for researchers studying the causes of, and developing treatments for, the chronic disease crisis," the report says.

Kennedy has vowed for months that he would unveil the cause of autism, a complex developmental disorder that impacts the brain, by September. He has promised to execute a massive research effort to identify the disorder's causes, but has stayed mum on details regarding who is conducting that research and when it will be released.

Last month, President Donald Trump pressed Kennedy for his findings during a cabinet meeting.

Those who have spent decades researching autism have found no single cause. Besides genetics, scientists have identified various possible factors, including the age of a child's father, the mother's weight, and whether she had diabetes or was exposed to certain chemicals.

Trump ordered his first action as a result of the MAHA report's recommendations on Tuesday evening, signing a memorandum to beef up enforcement of pharmaceutical ads that run across TVs, websites and social media accounts. Administration officials said during a call on Tuesday that they would be sending "hundreds" of letters to pharmaceutical companies that have run misleading ads.

The "MAHA" report addressed a number of other issues, including ultraprocessed food consumption, water quality, fluoride and the use of prescription drugs in children. Agencies, including the health department and the Department of Justice, should increase enforcement and oversight of prescription drug ads, especially those published by social media influencers and telehealth companies, the report says.

The National Institutes of Health, which is facing a 40% cut to its budget, is tasked with undertaking much of the MAHA-related research in the report.

Princeton doctoral student kidnapped in Iraq has been freed. 'We both started sobbing,' sister says

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Princeton University graduate student who was kidnapped in Iraq in 2023 while doing research there has been freed and turned over to U.S. authorities, her family and officials said Tuesday.

Elizabeth Tsurkov, who holds Israeli and Russian citizenship, spent more than 900 days in custody after disappearing in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital, as she was pursuing a doctorate focused on sectarianism in the region.

She was turned over to the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad after having been "tortured for many months," President Donald Trump said in a social media post in which he identified her captors as from Kataib Hezbollah, part of a coalition of Iranian-backed militias that are officially part of Iraq's armed forces but in practice often act on their own. The U.S. government listed the group, which has not claimed the kidnapping, as a terrorist organization in 2009.

Tsurkov's sister, Emma, a U.S. citizen who has campaigned for her release, said she was in Washington for meetings this week when she heard the news from Adam Boehler, the U.S. special presidential envoy for hostage affairs.

The sisters were able to connect by phone and expect to be reunited in the next 24 hours, though the details were still being worked out, Emma Tsurkov said.

"I heard her voice for the first time in 2 1/2 years and still couldn't believe it, and I just melted on the floor," she said in an interview with The Associated Press. "I heard her voice and she heard mine, and it was the most joyous experience of my life, and we both started sobbing and screaming."

What Iraqi officials say about Tsurkov's release

Two Iraqi militia officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the case, said Tsurkov's release came about as a result of negotiations and not through a military operation to free her.

The officials said one of the conditions for her release had been the withdrawal of U.S. forces currently stationed in Iraq — which had been agreed upon between Washington and Baghdad last year — and that the U.S. and Israel would not launch strikes on Iraq.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he spoke with Tsurkov's family and told them "the entire state of Israel is happy to see her return home."

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammad Shia al-Sudani said in a post on X that Tsurkov's release was the "culmination of extensive efforts exerted by our security services over the course of many months."

"We reaffirm, once again, that we will not tolerate any compromise in enforcing the law and upholding the authority of the state, nor will we allow anyone to undermine the reputation of Iraq and its people," he said.

Al-Sudani came to power in 2022 with the backing of a coalition of Iran-linked Shiite parties, but since then has sought to balance relations between Washington and Tehran. In a recent interview with the AP, he said he sought closer ties with the Trump administration.

One of the most complicated issues for al-Sudani is how to handle the Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of mostly Shiite, Iran-backed militias that formed to fight the Islamic State group. This coalition was formally placed under the control of the Iraqi military in 2016, although in practice it still operates with significant autonomy. Kataib Hezbollah is part of the PMF.

The Iraqi parliament was recently considering legislation that would solidify the relationship between the military and the PMF, drawing objections from Washington. The legislation has not moved forward to a vote.

An Iraqi army spokesperson said in a statement that "following exceptional security and intelligence efforts," authorities were able to "locate the place" where Tsurkov was being held, "reach it, and subse-

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quently hand her over to the United States Embassy, which will in turn arrange for her reunion with her sister, who holds American citizenship."

Tsurkov disappeared in March 2023

An expert on regional affairs widely quoted over the years by international media, Elizabeth Tsurkov entered Iraq on a Russian passport to pursue her research.

She made her last post on Twitter, now known as X, on March 21, 2023, when she recirculated a photograph of pro-Kurdistan protesters in Syria. Emma Tsurkov said it was her understanding that her sister went to a coffee shop in Baghdad's central neighborhood of Karradah, days after having spinal cord surgery, and did not return.

The only direct proof of life of Elizabeth Tsurkov during her captivity was a video broadcast in November 2023 on an Iraqi television station and circulated on pro-Iranian social media purporting to show her. But officials from multiple countries have confirmed in recent months that she was alive.

There were reports last spring that negotiators were close to a deal, with talks having centered on an exchange, but Emma Tsurkov said at the time that no agreement appeared imminent.

Trump on Friday signed an executive order allowing for the U.S. to designate nations as state sponsors of wrongful detention, using the threat of associated sanctions to deter countries from taking Americans into custody.

One of the provisions specifically noted that the order would apply to cases in which a government is responsible for or complicit in "the unjust or unlawful detention of third country nationals in which cases the United States has a national interest."

Man faces federal charge in killing of Ukrainian woman on Charlotte train

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and ERIK VERDUZCO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department on Tuesday charged a man accused of fatally stabbing a Ukrainian refugee on a North Carolina commuter train last month with a federal crime that could carry the death penalty.

The federal charge comes amid growing questions about why Decarlos Brown Jr. was on the street despite 14 prior criminal arrests before he was accused of pulling out a knife and killing 23-year-old Iryna Zarutska in an apparently random attack captured on video.

The case has become latest flashpoint in the debate over whether cities such as Charlotte are adequately addressing violent crime, mental illness and transit safety. The Trump administration says the killing shows how local leaders, judges and policies in Democratic-led cities are failing to protect their residents from violent crime.

"Iryna Zarutska was a young woman living the American dream — her horrific murder is a direct result of failed soft-on-crime policies that put criminals before innocent people," said Attorney General Pam Bondi said in a statement. "We will seek the maximum penalty for this unforgivable act of violence — he will never again see the light of day as a free man."

Zarutska had been living in a bomb shelter in Ukraine before coming to to the U.S. to escape the war, according to relatives, who described her as determined to build a safer life.

Video released Friday shows Zarutska entering a light-rail train on Aug. 22 and taking a seat in front of Brown, who was seated behind her. Minutes later, without any apparent interaction, he pulls out a pocketknife, stands and slashes her in the neck, investigators said. Passengers scream and scatter as she collapses.

He is charged federally with causing death on a mass transportation system, which carries up to life in prison or the death penalty. Russ Ferguson, the U.S. attorney for the western district of North Carolina, said additional charges could be brought as the investigation continues.

The federal case will run parallel with the state case charging Brown with first-degree murder.

The death penalty is also a potential punishment for people convicted of first-degree murder in North

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Carolina. However, the state has not carried out an execution since 2006. Legal challenges over the use of lethal injection drugs and a doctor's presence at executions have in part delayed action.

Brown had cycled through the criminal justice system for more than a decade including serving five years for robbery with a dangerous weapon in Mecklenburg County, according to court records. He was arrested earlier this year after repeatedly calling 911 from a hospital, claiming people were trying to control him. A judge released him without bail.

His mother told local television she sought an involuntary psychiatric commitment this year after he became violent at home. Doctors diagnosed him with schizophrenia.

Court records show a judge ordered a psychological exam in July at the request of his public defender to determine whether he was capable of contributing to his own defense. It wasn't clear if the exam was scheduled or why it didn't happen before the late August attack.

The Mecklenburg County public defender's office did not answer a call Tuesday.

The Trump administration has repeatedly blamed Democrats for what they say is out-of-control crime and violence in blue cities. The White House highlighted the case during Tuesday's press briefing while Trump has repeatedly spoken about the killing, saying in one social media post: "Criminals like this need to be LOCKED UP."

"Americans have to feel safe in the in the cities that they live in," Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said on Fox News. "And this is a stark example of how leftist liberal policies are failing."

Charlotte has increased security along its transit lines in response to the fatal stabbing, Mayor Vi Lyles said in a letter to the city's residents. The Democratic mayor's letter was also critical of the court system, echoing some of the critics of the city's response.

Lyles called the killing "a tragic failure by the courts and magistrates," saying the city's officers arrest people who are then quickly released.

The state auditor, Republican Dave Boliek, said his office would audit Charlotte's transit system, looking at its safety and security budget and private security contracts.

Apple has unveiled its iPhone 17 lineup, including the first iPhone Air. Here's what's new

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Apple's iPhone 17 lineup is here. The tech giant on Tuesday unveiled four new models that mark the latest editions to its marquee product.

That includes the introduction of the iPhone Air, which Apple says is its thinnest smartphone yet. And, as seen in years past, its newest phones boast better cameras, longer lasting batteries and a handful of other upgrades across the board. The latest devices come with a new A19 chip, which will particularly help power Apple's artificial intelligence features.

Tuesday's lineup mark the first phones Apple has released since President Donald Trump returned to the White House and unleashed a barrage of tariffs impacting goods that businesses sell and consumers buy every day. Some analysts speculated that California-based Apple may raise iPhone prices leading up to Tuesday's announcement. But for the most part, Apple is sticking with the same price tags it's slapped on its newest iPhones over recent years, just weeks after Google also held steady on prices for its new Pixel smartphones.

Here's what to know about the iPhone 17, which officially hits stores Sept. 19 — and other gadget updates. iPhone 17 prices

Apple's going price for the iPhone 17 begins at about \$800 — compared to \$1,100 and \$1,200 for its iPhone 17 Pro and Pro Max models. The iPhone Air will start at \$1,000.

Most of that aligns with the pricing Apple has rolled out with its new iPhones over the last five years — with the exception of the Pro, which is \$100 more expensive this year. But that still falls within the \$800 to \$1,200 range that the company has outlined between its most basic and top offerings since 2020.

Apple's latest iPhone lineup arrives as companies across industries face rising costs from Trump's new

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punishing tariffs on imports from around the world. And the Trump administration has also repeatedly insisted that iPhones should be made in the U.S., rather than in the company's current manufacturing hubs overseas. But analysts stress that this is an unrealistic demand that would take years to pull off — and could result in doubling, or even tripling, iPhone's current average price of \$1,000.

A camera revamp and longer battery life

In addition to better camera quality on its front and back facing lenses, iPhone 17's front camera has been upgraded across its lineup to have a wider field of view and new sensor, allowing you to take landscape photos and other selfie orientations without having to rotate your phone.

iPhone's new Air offering also gives users the option to record videos using the front and back cameras simultaneously. Meanwhile, the iPhone 17 Pro and Pro Max added a more powerful telephoto lens, among other improvements.

Apple also boasted longer battery life across its iPhone 17 lineup. It said that its new iPhone Air, in particular, would be the tech giant's most power-efficient iPhone yet.

What about AI?

The iPhones Apple rolled out last year were the first the company designed with a wide range of new AI features. The iPhone 17 lineup announced Tuesday doesn't make as many leaps as its predecessor — but each phone will come with Apple's latest operating system, iOS 26, which will feature incremental AI advances.

Previewed at its developers conference in June and set to also launch next week, iOS 26 will include capabilities like allowing you to take a screenshot and get a breakdown of what's on your screen, as well as more live translation offerings. Apple on Tuesday also pointed to other features powered with AI that are specific to the iPhone 17 line, such as its new "Center Stage" feature for its front-facing camera.

Still, Apple is playing a bit of catchup in the AI arena overall, and has run into some recent missteps. While the iPhone 16 has proven to be popular, the models didn't sell quite as well as analysts had anticipated because Apple failed to deliver all the AI-fueled improvements it had promised, including a smarter and more versatile Siri assistant. The Siri improvements have been pushed back until next year.

New AirPods and Apple Watches also unveiled

In addition to the iPhone 17, Apple also unveiled other gadget updates on Tuesday — including AirPods Pro 3, Apple Watch Series 11 and Apple Watch Ultra 3.

Among updates to Apple's newest AirPods is live translation, which uses on-device AI to translate when other languages are spoken around the person using them. Similar live translation offerings have been previously rolled out by rival Google, for its Pixel products. Apple's AirPods Pro 3 will be priced at \$249.

Apple's boasted a new "sleep score" tracking feature and hypertension notifications for its Series 11 smart watch. The hypertension feature flags for potential high blood pressure — taking data from the heart rate sensor and analyzing it for patterns related to hypertension. Apple on Tuesday noted that this is still pending approval from the Food and Drug Administration.

Meanwhile, Apple says its latest high-end sports watch — the Ultra 3 — now features the biggest display and longest battery life seen in any of the company's watches, among other updates. Available starting Sept. 19, the Ultra 3 is priced at \$799, while the Series 11 is \$399. Apple's latest update to the Apple Watch SE, its simplest watch offering, will be \$249.

What to know about the Israeli strike aimed at Hamas leaders in Qatar

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

An Israeli strike that targeted top Hamas leaders Tuesday as they gathered in the Gulf nation of Qatar marked a major escalation against the militant group and could upend negotiations aimed at ending the war in Gaza and returning Israeli hostages.

It could also spark a diplomatic crisis with Qatar, a U.S. ally hosting thousands of American troops that has served as a key mediator between Israel and Hamas for several years, even before the latest war.

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Hamas said its top leaders survived, while acknowledging the deaths of two lower-ranking members and three bodyguards. The militant group, which has sometimes only confirmed the killing of its leaders months later, offered no immediate proof that senior figures were still alive.

Qatar said a member of its internal security forces was killed and others were wounded.

The strike came as Hamas leaders based in the Qatari capital, Doha, were weighing a new ceasefire proposal from the Trump administration. The White House said Israel had informed the U.S. before the strike and that it had in turn warned the Qataris.

President Donald Trump distanced himself from the strike, saying in a social media post that "this was a decision made by Prime Minister Netanyahu, it was not a decision made by me," and that bombing Qatar "does not advance Israel or America's goals."

Here's what to know:

Why Hamas leaders were meeting in Qatar

Nearly all of Hamas' top leaders in Gaza, including the two architects of the Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war, have been killed. But part of the group's senior leadership, including Khalil al-Hayya, Mahmoud Darwish and Khaled Meshaal, have long resided abroad, mainly in Qatar and Turkey.

Israel has threatened to target Hamas leaders wherever they are, but until now had steered clear of Qatar, likely because of the Gulf nation's close ties to the United States and its role as a mediator.

Hamas has survived the assassination of several top leaders since it was established in the 1980s, but it has never faced an onslaught on the scale of Israel's response to the Oct. 7 attack.

The war has killed over 64,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians but says women and children make up around half of the dead. Entire towns and neighborhoods have been bombed to rubble, 90% of the population of 2 million has been displaced, often multiple times, and parts of the territory are experiencing famine.

The Hamas-run government and police have largely vanished, but the group is still able to mount guerrilla-style attacks on Israeli forces. Four soldiers were killed Monday when a bomb was thrown into a tank.

Hamas-led militants abducted 251 people in the Oct. 7 attack and killed some 1,200, mostly civilians. Forty-eight hostages are still inside Gaza, around 20 of them believed to be alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefires or other deals.

They are Hamas' last bargaining chip, and the militants say they will release them only in return for Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal.

Impact on ceasefire negotiations

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the war until all the hostages are returned and Hamas has been disarmed. Even then, he says Israel will maintain open-ended security control over Gaza.

Israelis have held mass protests accusing Netanyahu of prolonging the war for political reasons. They want a ceasefire that would return the hostages, and many fear that further escalation could doom the surviving captives, held in tunnels and other secret locations around Gaza.

Earlier this week, Trump said he was giving his "last warning" to Hamas, while Israel is in the initial stages of another major offensive in Gaza City. Hamas said it received a new U.S. ceasefire proposal calling for the immediate release of all the remaining hostages in return for talks on ending the war and the withdrawal of Israeli forces.

Israel said it accepted the deal, while a senior Hamas official, Bassem Naim, described it as a "humiliating surrender document" offering no guarantees that Israel would end the war or leave Gaza. Still, Hamas said it would discuss the proposal with other armed groups and respond within days.

Those discussions were underway when the explosions rang out in Doha.

Hamas already harbored deep mistrust of Israel and the United States after Israel ended a ceasefire in March that Trump helped broker. The Doha strike plunges the talks into even greater uncertainty.

The final decision on the hostages, in any case, is likely to be made by Hamas' battered but still intact armed wing inside Gaza that is holding them. It's led by Ezzedin al-Haddad, a veteran commander who

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has gone deep underground.

Hamas' surviving leaders are likely to further limit their communications in the wake of the strike, which could slow the negotiations even if they continue.

Regional implications

Israel has carried out multiple strikes against top militants, as well as Iranian generals and nuclear scientists, as the war sparked by the Oct. 7 attack has convulsed the region over the past two years.

But the strike in Qatar, a close U.S. ally that had cultivated close ties with President Donald Trump — even giving him a free replacement for Air Force One — shocked the region and could deepen Israel's already unprecedented international isolation.

Key American allies, including Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, strongly condemned Tuesday's strike.

Qatar's prime minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, called it an act of "state terror" and accused Netanyahu of "barbarism." He said Qatar would "spare no effort" to try to end the war in Gaza but that there was nothing "valid" about the current talks in the wake of the Israeli attack.

In addition to hosting thousands of U.S. forces at the Al Udeid military base, Qatar has also served as a key mediator, not only with Hamas but the Afghan Taliban and other armed groups.

Critics accuse Qatar of bolstering Islamist groups across the region to extend its own influence. Qatar denies those allegations, saying it is focused on regional stability and that its mediation efforts are undertaken with the full knowledge and support of the U.S.

Georgia governor's electric mobility dream for Georgia tested after South Koreans detained in raid

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Can Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp be tough on immigration and still encourage foreign investment?

Kemp has courted foreign investment to his state but also once offered to use his own pickup truck to round up "criminal illegals." Those two stances collided this past week when immigration authorities raided a battery plant and detained foreign workers, putting Kemp in a tough spot.

Some 475 people were held in the raid, including more than 300 South Koreans, at the construction site for a battery plant that will be operated by HL-GA Battery Co., a joint venture between Hyundai and LG Energy Solution slated to open next year. The battery plant is part of a \$7.6 billion complex planned to eventually employ 8,500 people. It was announced and then expanded after trips by Kemp to South Korea to court officials at Hyundai and other firms.

The detentions sparked questions in South Korea about its relationship with the United States, especially when Hyundai and its partners. Hyundai has said it's investing \$26 billion in the United States from 2025 to 2028. That includes not only the plant in Ellabell, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Savannah where Hyundai Motor Group makes electric vehicles, but a separate \$5 billion battery joint venture in Cartersville, Georgia, a steel mill in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, a robotics hub and expansion of the Hyundai plant in Montgomery, Alabama and the Kia Corp. plant in West Point, Georgia.

Kemp has voiced support for immigration enforcement but been restrained in the raid's aftermath.

"In Georgia, we will always enforce the law, including all state and federal immigration laws. All companies operating within the state must follow the laws of Georgia and our nation," the governor's office said Friday in a written statement.

Kemp can't run again for governor in 2026 and passed up a U.S. Senate race, but has entertained talk of a 2028 run for president. He hasn't yet said anything about whether the raid will have a long-term impact on Hyundai's investments. On Friday, his office said only that the state Department of Public Safety had coordinated with ICE to support the raid.

Kemp's office didn't immediately respond to further questions Tuesday.

This is his second term as governor and he's declared a goal of making Georgia the "electric mobility

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capital of America. " But the Republican has also talked tough on illegal immigration, saying in a 2018 ad that "I've got a big truck, just in case I've got to round up some criminal illegals and take them home myself," and backing a state law that requires local jails to check the immigration status of prisoners.

The raid comes as Kemp has been aligning more closely with President Donald Trump's administration on immigration enforcement and other issues. The governor has a long history of asserting his independence from Trump, which has at times led to headline-grabbing conflict. But Kemp last month announced he would mobilize 75 National Guard soldiers to provide support to Immigration and Customs Enforcement operations in Georgia. He followed that by announcing he would send more than 300 National Guard members to take part in Trump's law enforcement takeover in Washington, D.C.

Like most governors, Kemp seeks foreign investment, which has built up most of the auto industry in the South. Kemp has journeyed twice to South Korea to meet with Hyundai and other big investors in Georgia, including electric battery maker LG Group.

Kemp disputes claims that tax dollars were subsidizing the jobs of those detained. His administration says none of the \$2.1 billion in projected state and local incentives for the Hyundai complex directly benefits subcontractors who employ detainees.

"Without exception, the Department of Economic Development expects anyone doing business in Georgia to follow federal and state laws," the department said.

Kemp has welcomed green energy investment and jobs, but has clashed with Democratic U.S. Sen. Jon Ossoff over who should get credit for Georgia's green energy boom.

Kemp sharply disputes that incentives signed by President Joe Biden spurred investment, saying industries were already coming to Georgia before the Inflation Reduction Act was passed in 2022. But if anything, the rush accelerated after Biden signed his climate law.

The 33 additional projects announced by the end of 2024 were the most nationwide, according to E2, an environmental business group. Exact figures differ, but projects in Georgia top \$20 billion, pledging more than 25,000 jobs. Hyundai has continued investing even as Trump and congressional Republicans rolled back electric vehicle incentives.

Michigan judge tosses case against 15 accused fake electors for President Donald Trump in 2020

By ISABELLA VOLMERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A Michigan judge dismissed criminal charges Tuesday against a group of people who were accused of attempting to falsely certify President Donald Trump as the winner of the 2020 election in the battleground state, a major blow to prosecutors as similar cases in four other states have been muddled with setbacks.

District Court Judge Kristen D. Simmons said in a court hearing that the 15 Republicans accused will not face trial. The case has dragged through the courts since Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, a Democrat, announced the charges over two years ago.

Simmons said she saw no intent to commit fraud in the defendants' actions. Whether they were "right, wrong or indifferent," they "seriously believed" there were problems with the election, the judge said.

"I believe they were executing their constitutional right to seek redress," Simmons said.

Each member of the group, which included a few high profile members of the Republican Party in Michigan, faced eight charges of forgery and conspiracy to commit election forgery. The top felony charges carried a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison.

Supporters, friends and family crowded in the hallway outside the courtroom cheered when the judge said the cases would be dismissed. Defendants leaving the courtroom cried and hugged friends and family. One woman wept as she hugged another and said, "We did it."

Investigators said the group met at the Michigan GOP headquarters in December of 2020 and signed a document falsely stating they were the state's "duly elected and qualified electors." President Joe Biden won Michigan by nearly 155,000 votes, a result confirmed by a GOP-led state Senate investigation in 2021.

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Electors are part of the 538-member Electoral College that officially elects the president of the United States. In 48 states, electors vote for the candidate who won the popular vote. In Nebraska and Maine, elector votes are awarded based on congressional district and statewide results.

One man accused in the Michigan case had the charges against him dropped after he agreed to cooperate with the state attorney general's office in October 2023. The other 15 defendants pleaded not guilty and have maintained that their actions were not illegal.

Reaction to the dismissal

Prominent Michigan MAGA activist and former Michigan Republican Party Co-Chair Meshawn Maddock was one of the accused. Her attorney, Nicholas Somberg, told reporters after the hearing that the case brought by the attorney general's office was a waste of money and a "malicious prosecution."

"There needs to be major consequences for the people who brought this," he said.

"We all knew from day one that we had done nothing illegal or wrong," Maddock said in a written statement. "Yes, we volunteered to be an Alternate Elector in support of Donald J. Trump. That is not a crime, as much as Nessel wanted it to be one."

Nessel called Simmons' ruling "disappointing" and a "very wrong decision" during a virtual news conference and said evidence would support criminal charges if the case had been brought before a jury. She said the group members knew their actions did not follow proper election procedure and specifically sought to circumvent the rules.

"They knew they were not electors," Nessel said of the group. "They knew Donald Trump lost, but then they lied anyway. And that is a crime."

Nessel said her office is considering appealing the decision to a higher court, which she could do. But the legal threshold to overturn the ruling is high under Michigan law and would center on whether Simmons abused her discretion in dismissing the charges after hearing evidence.

Judge says the case was about intent

Simmons, who was originally appointed by Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2019 and reelected to her nonpartisan position the next year, took nearly a year to say whether there was sufficient evidence to bring the cases to trial following a series of lengthy preliminary hearings. In her remarks Tuesday, Simmons said the case was not about who won the 2020 election, but about the intent of the people charged.

"This is not an election interference case," she said.

The judge noted that the group appeared in public about the effort and posed for photos after the meeting. "Typically people who are seeking to defraud or deceive the public do not gather and make a spectacle. That would be weird," Simmons said, prompting chuckles in the courtroom.

The judge said Maddock appeared to have direct contact with the Trump campaign and that she could have entertained her culpability, but Maddock's public statements at the time led the judge to believe she was seeking "redress" from her state senators in presenting them with an "alternate" choice of electors.

"The prosecution would like the court to believe that these named defendants were savvy or sophisticated enough to understand fully the electoral process," Simmons said in the hearing. "This alternate document doesn't state it's an official document of the state of Michigan, doesn't contain a certificate of vote, no one attempted to forge the governor's signature, no one attempted to create a fake seal."

Kahla Crino, an assistant attorney general, contested the judge's finding on intent, saying to reporters that the group was aligned with the actual language of the document they signed, it was not contingent on the election results and it "directly impaired on legitimate government function."

Around two dozen people gathered outside of the courtroom Tuesday morning, bearing signs in support of the defendants. One read, "End political lawfare." Defendants and their lawyers crowded into a small courtroom in downtown Lansing for the hearing, with a handful appearing over a video call. Two of the defendants' attorneys said their clients could not appear because of medical reasons. Most of the accused are over the age of 70.

Outside court after the hearing, Republican state Rep. Matt Maddock, husband to Meshawn Maddock, promised "retribution" against the attorney general.

"They're going to pay for what they did to these people," he told reporters.

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Marian Sheridan, one of the people charged, said her life has been on hold for two years as she waited for the judge's decision. She insists the plan was to act as a "backup."

"I've always been proud of my reputation," she said. "In such a short time, you have friends and family who believe somehow that you are a criminal."

Prosecutors in Nevada, Georgia, Wisconsin and Arizona have also filed criminal charges related to the fake electors scheme. None of the cases have neared the trial stage and many have been bogged down by procedural and appellate delays.

The effort to secure fake electors was central to the federal indictment against Trump that was abandoned earlier this year shortly before Trump took office for his second term.

AP finds major disaster declarations are taking longer under Trump

By DAVID A. LIEB/AP, SOPHIE BATES/AP, M.K. WILDEMAN/ AP, ALEX ROZIER/MISSISSIPPI TODAY and ILLAN IRELAND/MISSISSIPPI FREE PRESS undefined

TYLERTOWN, Miss. (AP) — As an ominous storm approached Buddy Anthony's new home, he took shelter in his Ford F-250 pickup parked under a nearby carport.

Seconds later, a tornado tore apart the one-story brick house and damaged the truck while lifting it partly in the air. Anthony emerged unhurt. But he had to replace his vehicle with a used truck that became his home while waiting for President Donald Trump to issue a major disaster declaration allowing federal money to flow to individuals reeling from loss. That took weeks.

"You wake up in the truck and look out the windshield and see nothing. That's hard. That's hard to swallow," Anthony said.

Disaster survivors are having to wait longer to get aid from the federal government, according to a new Associated Press analysis of decades of data. On average, it took less than two weeks for a governor's request for a presidential disaster declaration to be granted in the 1990s and early 2000s. That rose to about three weeks during the past decade under presidents from both major parties. It's taking more than a month, on average, so far during Trump's current term, the AP found.

The delays mean individuals must wait to receive federal aid for daily living expenses, temporary lodging and home repairs. Delays in disaster declarations also can hamper recovery efforts by local officials uncertain whether they will receive federal reimbursement for cleaning up debris and rebuilding infrastructure. The AP collaborated with Mississippi Today and Mississippi Free Press on the effects of these delays for this report.

"The message that I get in the delay, particularly for the individual assistance, is that the federal government has turned its back on its own people," said Bob Griffin, dean of the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at the University at Albany in New York. "It's a fundamental shift in the position of this country."

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said Trump is making sure federal tax dollars "are spent wisely to supplement state actions, not replace them," during disasters.

"President Trump provides a more thorough review of disaster declaration requests than any Administration has before him," Jackson said in a statement to the AP. "Gone are the days of rubber stamping FEMA recommendations — that's not a bug, that's a feature."

Americans expect government help after disasters. About three-fourths of people want the U.S. government to play a major role in providing aid to communities and helping them rebuild after natural disasters, according to a June poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The wait for disaster aid has grown as Trump remakes government

The Federal Emergency Management Agency often consults immediately with communities to coordinate their initial disaster response. But direct payments to individuals, nonprofits and local governments must wait for a major disaster declaration from the president, who first must receive a request from a state, territory or tribe. Major disaster declarations are intended only for the most damaging events that are

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beyond the resources of states and local governments.

Trump has approved more than two dozen major disaster declarations since taking office in January, with an average wait of almost 34 days after a request. That ranged from a one-day turnaround after July's deadly flash flooding in Texas to a 67-day wait after a request for aid because of a Michigan ice storm. The average wait is up from a 24-day delay during his first term and is nearly four times as long as the average for former Republican President George H.W. Bush, whose term from 1989-1993 coincided with the implementation of a new federal law setting parameters for disaster determinations.

The delays have grown over time, regardless of the party in power. Former Democratic President Joe Biden, in his last year in office, averaged 26 days to declare major disasters — longer than any year under former Democratic President Barack Obama.

FEMA did not respond to the AP's questions about what factors are contributing to the trend.

Others familiar with FEMA noted that its process for assessing and documenting natural disasters has become more complex over time. Disasters have also become more frequent and intense because of climate change, which is mostly caused by the burning of fuels such as gas, coal and oil.

The wait for disaster declarations has spiked as Trump's administration undertakes an ambitious makeover of the federal government that has shed thousands of workers and reexamined the role of FEMA. A recently published letter from current and former FEMA employees warned the cuts could become debilitating if faced with a large-enough disaster. The letter also lamented that the Trump administration has stopped maintaining or removed long-term planning tools focused on extreme weather and disasters.

Shortly after taking office, Trump floated the idea of "getting rid" of FEMA, asserting: "It's very bureaucratic, and it's very slow."

FEMA's acting chief suggested more recently that states should shoulder more responsibility for disaster recovery, though FEMA thus far has continued to cover three-fourths of the costs of public assistance to local governments, as required under federal law. FEMA pays the full cost of its individual assistance.

Former FEMA Administrator Pete Gaynor, who served during Trump's first term, said the extra scrutiny on requests for disaster declarations is "probably the right thing to do, because I think the declaration process has become the 'easy button' for states."

In Mississippi, frustration festered during the wait for aid

The tornado that struck Anthony's home in rural Tylertown on March 15 packed winds up to 140 mph (225 km/hr). It was part of a powerful storm system that wrecked homes, businesses and lives across multiple states.

Mississippi's governor requested a federal disaster declaration on April 1. Trump granted that request 50 days later, on May 21, while approving aid for both individuals and public entities.

On that same day, Trump also approved eight other major disaster declarations for storms, floods or fires in seven other states. In most cases, more than a month had passed since the requests and about two months since the date of those disasters.

On July 22, Trump issued another big batch of major disaster declarations covering seven states. Those included requests related to March storms in Michigan and Oregon that took about two months for governors to submit and an additional two months to approve.

If a presidential declaration and federal money had come sooner, Anthony said he wouldn't have needed to spend weeks sleeping in a truck before he could afford to rent the trailer where he is now living. His house was uninsured, Anthony said, and FEMA eventually gave him \$30,000.

In nearby Jayess, Dana Grimes had insurance but not enough to cover the full value of her damaged home. After the eventual federal declaration, Grimes said FEMA provided about \$750 for emergency expenses, but she is now waiting for the agency to determine whether she can receive more.

"We couldn't figure out why the president took so long to help people in this country," Grimes said. "I just want to tie up strings and move on. But FEMA — I'm still fooling with FEMA."

Jonathan Young said he gave up on applying for FEMA aid after the Tylertown tornado killed his 7-year-old son and destroyed their home. The process seemed too difficult, and federal officials wanted paperwork

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he didn't have, Young said. He made ends meet by working for those cleaning up from the storm.

"It's a therapy for me," Young said, "to pick up the debris that took my son away from me."

Quick aid for individuals has long been a FEMA goal

Historically, presidential disaster declarations containing individual assistance have been approved more quickly than those providing assistance only to public entities, according to the AP's analysis. That remains the case under Trump, though declarations for both types are taking longer.

About half the major disaster declarations approved by Trump this year have included individual assistance.

Some people whose homes are damaged turn to shelters hosted by churches or local nonprofit organizations in the initial chaotic days after a disaster. Others stay with friends or family or go to a hotel, if they can afford it.

But some insist on staying in damaged homes, even if they are unsafe, said Chris Smith, who administered FEMA's individual assistance division under three presidents from 2015-2022. If homes aren't repaired properly, mold can grow, compounding the recovery challenges.

That's why it's critical for FEMA's individual assistance to get approved quickly — ideally, within two weeks of a disaster, said Smith, who's now a disaster consultant for governments and companies.

"You want to keep the people where they are living. You want to ensure those communities are going to continue to be viable and recover," Smith said. "And the earlier that individual assistance can be delivered ... the earlier recovery can start."

After the Tylertown tornado, faith-based groups served food and laid tarps on homes while local residents helped each other with power saws to clear downed trees.

"That's the only thing that got us through this storm, neighbors helping neighbors," said Les Lampton, a volunteer firefighter and insurance agent in Walthall County, where Tylertown is located. "If we waited on the government, we were going to be in bad shape."

Delays in federal aid can hamper local recovery efforts

Unlike individual assistance programs that provide cash upfront, FEMA's public assistance programs reimburse governmental entities only after their bills are paid — and only if they followed guidelines for hiring and documenting the work.

Because that process can take months or years, a delay in a presidential disaster declaration may have little effect on when a local government ultimately gets reimbursed.

But delayed approvals still can carry consequences. Long waits can stoke uncertainty and lead cost-conscious local officials to pause or scale-back their recovery efforts.

In Walthall County, officials initially spent about \$700,000 cleaning up debris, then suspended the cleanup for more than a month because they couldn't afford to spend more without assurance they would receive federal reimbursement, said Royce McKee, the county emergency manager. Meanwhile, rubble from splintered trees and shattered homes remained piled along the roadside, creating unsafe obstacles for motorists and habitat for snakes and rodents.

When it received the federal declaration, Walthall County took out a multi-million-dollar loan to pay contractors to resume the cleanup.

"We're going to pay interest and pay that money back until FEMA pays us," said Byran Martin, an elected county supervisor. "We're hopeful that we'll get some money by the first of the year, but people are telling us that it could be (longer)."

The night before the Tylertown tornado, a twister also tore through Rolla, Missouri, a college town of about 20,000 people. It knocked out electricity for 80% of the municipal utility's customers and damaged 120 power poles.

Crews worked to restore power within a couple weeks, racking up hefty bills paid from the utility's reserve funds. As the wait for a presidential disaster declaration kept growing, "we were getting a little nervous," said Rodney Bourne, general manager of Rolla Municipal Utilities.

The utility now is seeking FEMA reimbursement for about \$1 million, intentionally holding its claim just under the agency's large-project threshold in hopes of expediting the process, he said.

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Delays in federal declarations also can force local officials to choose between needed repairs — perhaps fixing some roads and culverts washed out by floods while delaying other projects, said David Fogerson, a public safety consultant who retired last year as Nevada's emergency management chief.

"For a lot of the smaller states and smaller jurisdictions, when you get that, 'Yep, this is a disaster declaration, we've got federal money coming,' it helps you feel better, more confident about spending that money," he said.

France's prime minister is ousted as the nation drifts into turmoil

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Another prime minister gone. Another crisis unfolding. In France, what once shocked is now routine.

Prime Minister François Bayrou submitted his resignation Tuesday after losing a crushing confidence vote in parliament. The third toppling of a head of government in 14 months leaves President Emmanuel Macron scrambling for a successor and a nation caught in a cycle of collapse.

Bayrou, 74, lasted just nine months in office. Even that was three times longer than his predecessor.

He gambled on a budget demanding over €40 billion in savings. The plan froze welfare, cut civil-service jobs, and even scrapped two public holidays that many French see as part of their national rhythm.

Bayrou warned that without action the national debt, which is now 114% of GDP, would bring "domination by creditors" as surely as by foreign powers.

Instead, he united his enemies. The far right of Marine Le Pen and a left-wing alliance voted him down, 364 to 194. By the time lawmakers cast their ballots, Bayrou already had invited allies to a farewell drink.

Macron appears boxed in

The president has promised to name a new prime minister "in the coming days." It will be his fourth in under two years.

There are several possible replacements, among them: Defense Minister Sébastien Lecornu, Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin, former Socialist premier Bernard Cazeneuve and Finance Minister Eric Lombard.

Speculation has grown around Lombard, who has roots in Socialist governments, as Macron considers a leftward shift in order to secure a strong enough coalition.

But the problem is not the personnel. It is the arithmetic.

Whoever takes the job will face the same trap that consumed Bayrou: Pass a budget in a parliament that cannot agree.

Since Macron's snap election in 2024, parliament has been split into three rival blocs: far left, centrists, and far right. None commands a majority. France has no tradition of coalition-building and every budget becomes a battle.

But Macron's room to maneuver is shrinking and new elections could hand Le Pen even greater power. Le Pen, convicted of embezzlement and barred from office for five years, is appealing her sentence from January. In the meantime, she promotes her protégé Jordan Bardella as a ready prime minister — a scenario Macron has every reason to avoid.

The president has ruled out another election for now, but Le Pen insists he must call one. Leftist fire-brand Jean-Luc Mélenchon has urged a rewrite of the Constitution to weaken what he calls a "presidential monarchy."

With just 18 months left in his term-limited presidency and his approval rating at 15%, the risk for Macron is existential. Even fresh calls for his resignation can be heard, though Macron has ruled it out.

Why it matters

France is the eurozone's second-largest economy, its only nuclear power and a permanent United Nations Security Council member. Prolonged instability reverberates far beyond its borders.

France's political difficulty weakens Europe's hand against Russia. It rattles investors and undermines the credibility of EU fiscal rules.

At home, it chips away at trust in the state itself. France's welfare system — pensions, health care,

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education — is not just policy. It is identity. Each attempt to trim the structure feels like an assault on the model of solidarity that defines modern France.

Anger rising in the streets

On Monday night, about 11,000 demonstrators feted Bayrou's ouster outside town halls in "Bye Bye Bayrou" farewell drinks.

Some came for celebration. Many stayed to organize.

Wednesday has been declared a day of action under the slogan "Block Everything." Protesters plan to shut fuel depots, highways, and city centers. The government is deploying 80,000 police.

France has seen mass uprisings before: pensions in 2023, the Yellow Vests in 2018. The current movement echoes the latter, which at their peak brought France to a standstill. Analysts warn that if Macron once again ignores popular discontent, unrest could spiral.

But this time the anger runs perhaps deeper. It is not just about one reform. It is about austerity, inequality and the sense that governments keep collapsing while nothing changes.

The budget presents a trap

The numbers are stark. France's deficit stands at nearly 6% of GDP, which is about €198 billion. EU rules demand it be cut below 3%.

Bayrou's cure was cuts that fell on workers and retirees. Voters saw this as unfair. After years of tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, patience has snapped.

Earlier this year, the lower house passed a rich tax proposal — a 2% levy on fortunes above €100 million. It would have hit fewer than 2,000 households but raised €25 billion annually. Yet Macron's pro-business allies, historically wary of scaring off investment, killed it in the Senate.

Bayrou pressed on with cuts that hit the working and middle classes the most.

For many, the contrast was glaring: austerity for millions, protection for billionaires.

History repeating

Four prime ministers in under two years. A debt crisis grinding the economy. A nation paralyzed by political deadlock. It sounds like France today. In fact, it was France in the late 1950s, when the Fourth Republic collapsed under the weight of drift and division.

Charles de Gaulle built the Fifth Republic, bolstering the presidency to end the revolving-door governments of the Fourth. The new constitution gave the president powers to dissolve parliament, call referendums and appoint the prime minister.

Seven decades later, the system designed to guarantee stability is confronting the same storm.

Gabriel Attal, himself a fallen premier, calls the current cycle of collapse "an absolutely distressing spectacle" and has urged the appointment of a coalition mediator — a role France's system wasn't supposed to need. His warning is stark: No republic can keep discarding leaders every few months without threatening its survival.

French politics is fractured into three hostile camps. With no tradition of compromise, unlike Germany or Italy, stalemate has become the rule.

"The question posed now is that of the survival of our political system," political analyst Alain Duhamel told Le Monde. "In 1958 there was an alternative in the form of de Gaulle. Like him or detest him, he unquestionably had a project."

Today, there is no de Gaulle. Only an embattled president, a divided parliament, and a Republic waiting to prove it can still hold.

J.J. McCarthy rallies the Vikings in the fourth quarter of his debut for a 27-24 win over the Bears

By ANDREW SELIGMAN AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — J.J. McCarthy's long-awaited debut for the Minnesota Vikings was looking more like a nightmare.

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Even so, coach Kevin O'Connell could sense things were going to change. And he told his quarterback that at halftime.

"You are going to bring us back to win this game," O'Connell said he told McCarthy.

McCarthy did just that in the fourth quarter, throwing for two touchdowns and running for another, and the Vikings rallied for a season-opening 27-24 win over the Chicago Bears on Monday night.

Chicago's Caleb Williams had his first career rushing touchdown and threw for a score in Ben Johnson's debut as the Bears' head coach.

McCarthy delivered down the stretch after struggling through the first three quarters in his first meaningful game since Michigan beat Washington for college football's national championship at the end of the 2023 season. He sat out last year because of a knee injury after the Vikings drafted him with the No. 10 overall pick.

Now, Minnesota is counting on McCarthy.

"I felt poise from the very beginning," O'Connell said.

O'Connell, in fact, was so confident in his quarterback that he told McCarthy at halftime he was going to lead the Vikings to a win.

"The look in his eye was fantastic," O'Connell said. "The best thing was just the belief I felt from the team, from the unit, and ultimately, that doesn't get done without him in the second half."

McCarthy felt empowered by his coach's prediction.

"That guy is one of the best — if not the best — coaches, in my opinion, in the National Football League," he said. "Any kind of compliments or belief like that, it means the world. That just gave me the confidence to go out there and just execute the ball plays and have a fast arm and make quick, decisive decisions. And it worked out."

Strong finish

Things weren't looking good for McCarthy after Nahshon Wright returned an interception 74 yards for a touchdown to give Chicago a 17-6 lead in the third quarter. But he turned it around in the fourth.

McCarthy connected with Justin Jefferson for a 13-yard touchdown. His 2-point conversion pass failed.

Minnesota then needed just three plays to grab the lead, with McCarthy throwing a 27-yard TD pass to Aaron Jones. The conversion pass to Adam Thielen put the Vikings on top 20-17 with 9:46 remaining.

McCarthy made it a 10-point game with about three minutes left when he faked a handoff and turned up the right side for a 14-yard touchdown run. Chicago then went 65 yards for a score, with Williams throwing a 1-yard TD pass to Rome Odunze with just over two minutes remaining, but the Vikings hung on to beat the Bears for the eighth time in the past nine games.

"We don't win this game unless J.J. plays the way he did in the second half," O'Connell said. "Most importantly, he kept the belief of this football team behind him, and now, we know it's possible. You hope to not be in these circumstances very often. But this team's made of the right stuff."

McCarthy completed 13 of 20 passes for 143 yards. He grew up in the Chicago area and the first game he attended at Soldier Field was against the Vikings 18 years ago.

Jefferson and Jones each had 44 yards receiving.

Will Reichard kicked two field goals, including a 59-yarder near the end of the first half that matched a Soldier Field record.

Letdown for Bears

Williams, coming off a shaky rookie season after being drafted with the No. 1 overall pick, completed 21 of 35 passes for 210 yards and a score. The 2022 Heisman Trophy winner also ran for a 9-yard TD in the first quarter. He said the way Johnson called the game was not the issue for the Bears.

"It's not a play-call thing, it's not anything like that," Williams said. "It's just being able to go out there and execute the plays that are called and be able to execute them at a high level. That's something that we take pride in and today that didn't happen."

One thing the Bears will have to clean up is the penalties. They committed 12 for 127 yards.

"We made too many mistakes there late in the game, myself included," Johnson said. "There were a number of things I could have done better, there were a number of things a lot of guys could have done

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better.”

Injuries

Vikings: LB Blake Cashman left with a hamstring injury and will have an MRI. ... O’Connell said CB Jeff Okudah would be evaluated for a concussion after he was hurt at the end of the game. ... S Harrison Smith (illness) did not travel with the team. ... OT Christian Darrisaw, coming back from a torn ACL last season, was inactive.

Bears: The Bears were missing three important defensive players, with CB Jaylon Johnson (groin), CB Kyler Gordon (hamstring) and LB T.J. Edwards (hamstring) inactive.

Up next

Vikings: Host Atlanta on Sunday.

Bears: Visit defending NFC North champion Detroit on Sunday.

Takeaways from AP’s investigation into how US tech companies enabled China’s digital police state

By DAKE KANG and YAEL GRAUER Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Across China, tens of thousands of people tagged as troublemakers are trapped in a digital cage, barred from leaving their province and sometimes even their homes by the world’s largest digital surveillance apparatus. Most of this technology came from companies in a country that has long claimed to support freedoms worldwide: the United States.

Over the past quarter century, American tech companies to a large degree designed and built China’s surveillance state, playing a far greater role in enabling human rights abuses than previously known, an Associated Press investigation found. They sold billions of dollars of technology to the Chinese police, government and surveillance companies, despite repeated warnings from the U.S. Congress and in the media that such tools were being used to quash dissent, persecute religious sects and target minorities.

Most of the companies that responded said they fully complied with all laws, sanctions and U.S. export controls governing business in China, past and present. Here are key findings:

America brought ‘predicative policing’ to China

U.S. companies introduced systems that mine a vast array of information — texts, calls, payments, flights, video, DNA swabs, mail deliveries, the internet, even water and power use — to unearth individuals deemed suspicious and predict their movements. But this technology also allows Chinese police to threaten friends and family and preemptively detain people for crimes they have not even committed. The AP found a Chinese defense contractor, Huadi, worked with IBM in 2009 to design the main policing system for Beijing to censor the internet and crack down on alleged terrorists, the Falun Gong religious sect, and even villagers deemed troublesome. IBM referred to any possible relationship it may have had with Chinese government agencies as “old, stale interactions”: “ ... If older systems are being abused today — and IBM has no knowledge that they are — the misuse is entirely outside of IBM’s control, was not contemplated by IBM decades ago, and in no way reflects on IBM today.” Huadi did not respond.

US tech enabled the Xinjiang crackdown

American surveillance technologies allowed a brutal mass detention campaign in the far west region of Xinjiang — targeting, tracking and grading virtually the entire native Uyghur population to forcibly assimilate and subdue them. IBM agents in China sold its i2 software to the Xinjiang police, China’s Ministry of State Security, and many other Chinese police units throughout the 2010s, leaked emails show. One agent, Landasoft, subsequently copied and deployed it as the basis for a predictive policing platform that tagged hundreds of thousands of people as potential terrorists. IBM said it has no record of its i2 software ever being sold to the Public Security Bureau in Xinjiang, was not aware of any interaction between Landasoft and that bureau and cut ties with Landasoft in 2014. Landasoft did not respond.

Some tech companies even specifically addressed race in their marketing. Dell and a Chinese surveillance firm promoted a “military-grade” AI-powered laptop with “all-race recognition” on its official WeChat account in 2019. And until contacted by AP in August, biotech giant Thermo Fisher Scientific’s website marketed

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DNA kits to the Chinese police as “designed” for the Chinese population, including “ethnic minorities like Uyghurs and Tibetans.” The Xinjiang government said that it uses surveillance technologies to prevent terrorism, and that Western countries also use such technology, calling the U.S. “a true surveillance state.”

Companies pitched tech to control citizens

Though the companies often claim they aren’t responsible for how their products are used, some directly pitched their tech as tools for Chinese police to control citizens, marketing materials from IBM, Dell, Cisco, and Seagate show. Their sales pitches — made both publicly and privately — cited Communist Party catchphrases on crushing protest, including “stability maintenance,” “key persons,” and “abnormal gatherings,” and named programs that stifle dissent, such as “Internet Police,” “Sharp Eyes” and the “Golden Shield.” IBM, Dell, Cisco and Seagate said they adhere to all relevant laws.

American tech laid the foundation for Chinese surveillance

American technology laid the foundation for China’s surveillance apparatus that Chinese companies have since built on and in some cases replaced. Intel and Nvidia helped China’s three biggest surveillance companies make their camera systems AI-powered. Contracts to maintain existing IBM, Dell, HP, Cisco, Oracle, and Microsoft software and gear remain ubiquitous, often with third parties. And to this day, concerns remain over where technology sold to China will end up, with former U.S. officials and national security experts criticizing a deal struck this summer for Nvidia to sell chips used in artificial intelligence to China, saying the technology would fall into the hands of the Chinese military and intelligence. Nvidia said in 2022 that Chinese surveillance firms Watix and GEOAI used its chips to train AI patrol drones and systems to identify people by their walk, but told the AP those relationships no longer continue. Nvidia said it does not make surveillance systems or software, does not work with police in China and has not designed the H20 chips for police surveillance, and the White House and Department of Commerce did not respond to requests for comment.

Big loopholes in sanctions remain

Some U.S. companies ended contracts in China over rights concerns and after sanctions. IBM said it has prohibited sales to Tibet and Xinjiang police since 2015, and suspended business relations with defense contractor Huadi in 2019. Nvidia and Intel also ended partnerships with China’s top two surveillance companies in 2019. However, sanctions experts noted that the laws have significant loopholes and often lag behind new developments. For example, a ban on military and policing gear to China after the 1989 Tiananmen massacre does not take into account newer technologies or general-use products that can be applied in policing. They also noted that the law around export controls is complicated.

A cautionary tale

What started in China more than a decade ago could be seen as a cautionary tale for other countries at a time when the use of surveillance technology worldwide is rising sharply, including in the United States. Emboldened by the Trump administration, U.S. tech companies are more powerful than ever, and President Donald Trump has rolled back a Biden-era executive order meant to safeguard civil rights from new surveillance technologies. As the capacity and sophistication of such technologies has grown, so has their reach. Surveillance technologies now include AI systems that help track and detain migrants in the U.S. and identify people to kill in the Israel-Hamas war. China, in the meantime, has used what it learned from the U.S. to turn itself into a surveillance superpower, selling technologies to countries like Iran and Russia.

“Because of this technology ... we have no freedom at all,” said Yang Caiying, now in exile in Japan, whose family has been trapped in an increasingly tight noose of surveillance for the past 16 years. “At the moment, it’s us Chinese that are suffering the consequences, but sooner or later, Americans and others, too, will lose their freedoms.”

Takeaways from an AP analysis about longer delays in approving US disaster aid

By DAVID A. LIEB, SOPHIE BATES and M.K. WILDEMAN Associated Press

TYLERTOWN, Miss. (AP) — Survivors of major natural disasters in the U.S. are having to wait longer to

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get aid from the federal government, according to a new Associated Press analysis of decades of data.

On average, it took less than two weeks for a governor's request for a major disaster declaration to be granted by presidents in the 1990s and early 2000s. That rose to about three weeks during the past decade under presidents from both major parties. It's taking more than a month, on average, so far during President Donald Trump's current term, the AP found.

The delays mean individuals must wait to receive federal aid for daily living expenses, temporary lodging and home repairs. Delays in disaster declarations also can hamper recovery efforts by local officials uncertain whether they will receive federal reimbursement for cleaning up debris and rebuilding infrastructure. The AP collaborated with Mississippi Today and Mississippi Free Press on the effects of these delays for this report.

The federal government plays a major role after disasters

Americans expect government help after disasters. About three-fourths of people want the U.S. government to play a major role in providing aid to communities and helping them rebuild after natural disasters, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency often helps communities coordinate their immediate disaster response. But direct payments to individuals, nonprofits and local governments must wait for a major disaster declaration from the president, who first must receive a request from a state, territory or tribe.

Major disaster declarations are intended only for the most damaging events that are beyond the resources of states and local governments. In such cases, FEMA provides two general categories of aid, for individuals and public entities. Presidents can approve disaster aid for either or both purposes. Requests coordinated through a state are approved on a county-by-county basis, depending on the level of damage and need.

How long is it taking to declare major disasters?

Trump has approved more than two dozen major disaster declarations since taking office in January, with an average wait of almost 34 days after a request. The average wait is up from a 24-day delay during his first term and is nearly four times as long as the average for former Republican President George H.W. Bush, whose term from 1989-1993 coincided with the implementation of a new federal law setting parameters for disaster determinations.

The delays have grown over time, regardless of the party in power. Former Democratic President Joe Biden, in his last year in office, averaged 26 days to declare major disasters — longer than any year under former Democratic President Barack Obama.

A powerful storm system that affected a wide swath of the southern, central and eastern U.S. provides one example of the recent delayed declarations. After tornadoes struck on March 15, Mississippi's governor requested a federal disaster declaration on April 1. Trump granted that request 50 days later, on May 21.

On that same day, Trump also approved eight other major disaster declarations for storms, floods or fires in seven other states. In most cases, more than a month had passed since those requests and about two months since the dates of those disasters.

What's causing it to take longer to declare disasters?

White House spokeswoman Abigail Jackson said in a statement that "President Trump provides a more thorough review of disaster declaration requests than any Administration has before him." She said Trump wants to make sure tax dollars are spent wisely to supplement, not replace, state responses to disasters.

Others familiar with FEMA noted that its process for assessing and documenting natural disasters has become more complex over time, and disasters have become more frequent and intense in a changing climate.

The wait for disaster declarations has spiked as Trump's administration undertakes an ambitious makeover of the federal government that has shed thousands of workers and reexamined the role of FEMA. A recently published letter from current and former FEMA employees warned the cuts could become debilitating if faced with a disaster on the scale of Hurricane Katrina, which struck 20 years ago.

Delayed disaster declarations are affecting lives

When a tornado with winds up to 140 mph (225 kph) struck Tylertown, Mississippi, Buddy Anthony took shelter in his new pickup truck parked underneath a carport at his house. The tornado destroyed his home

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and damaged his truck. As he waited for aid from a federal disaster declaration, Anthony spent weeks sleeping in a used truck he bought as a replacement.

His house was uninsured, Anthony said, and FEMA eventually gave him \$30,000. But if federal aid had been available sooner, Anthony said he wouldn't have had to sleep so long in his truck before he could afford to rent a trailer home.

Historically, presidential disaster declarations containing individual assistance have been approved more quickly than those providing assistance only to public entities, according to the AP's analysis. That remains the case under Trump, though declarations for both types of assistance are taking longer.

Public entities are also affected by federal aid delays

Unlike individual assistance programs that provide cash upfront, FEMA's public assistance programs reimburse governmental entities only after their bills are paid — and only if they followed guidelines for hiring and documenting the work.

Because that process can take months or years, a delay in a presidential disaster declaration may have little effect on when a local government ultimately gets reimbursed. But delayed approvals still can carry consequences. Long waits can stoke uncertainty and lead local officials to scale back recovery efforts.

Walthall County, Mississippi, which includes Tylertown, initially spent about \$700,000 cleaning up debris. But it suspended the cleanup for more than a month because the county couldn't afford to spend anymore without assurance it would receive federal reimbursement under a disaster declaration. In the meantime, the rubble from splintered trees and shattered homes remained piled along the roadside, creating unsafe obstacles for motorists and habitat for snakes and rodents, county Emergency Manager Royce McKee said.

Today in History: September 10, Clarence Thomas' Supreme Court nomination hearings begin

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 10, the 253rd day of 2025. There are 112 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 10, 1991, the Senate Judiciary Committee opened hearings on the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court. The proceedings would become a watershed moment in the discussion of sexual harassment when Anita Hill, a law professor who had previously worked under Thomas, came forward with allegations against him.

Also on this date:

In 1608, John Smith was elected president of the Jamestown colony council in Virginia.

In 1846, Elias Howe received a patent for his sewing machine.

In 1960, running barefoot, Abebe Bikila of Ethiopia won the Olympic marathon in Rome, becoming the first Black African to win Olympic gold.

In 1960, Hurricane Donna, a dangerous Category 4 storm blamed for 364 deaths, struck the Florida Keys.

In 1963, 20 Black students entered Alabama public schools following a standoff between federal authorities and Alabama Gov. George C. Wallace.

In 1979, four Puerto Rican nationalists imprisoned for a 1954 attack on the U.S. House of Representatives and a 1950 attempted killing of President Harry S. Truman were freed from prison after being granted clemency by President Jimmy Carter.

In 1987, Pope John Paul II arrived in Miami, where he was welcomed by President Ronald Reagan and first lady Nancy Reagan as he began a 10-day tour of the United States.

In 2005, teams of forensic workers and cadaver dogs fanned out across New Orleans to collect the corpses left behind by Hurricane Katrina.

In 2008, the Large Hadron Collider at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) was powered up for the first time, successfully firing the first beam of protons through its 17-mile (27-kilometer) underground ring tunnel.

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In 2022, King Charles III was officially proclaimed Britain's monarch in a pomp-filled ceremony two days after the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

Today's Birthdays: Scientist-author Jared Diamond is 88. Singer José Feliciano is 80. Former Canadian first lady Margaret Trudeau is 77. Political commentator Bill O'Reilly is 76. Rock musician Joe Perry (Aerosmith) is 75. Actor Amy Irving is 72. Sen. Cynthia Lummis, R-Wyoming, is 71. Actor-director Clark Johnson is 71. Actor Kate Burton is 68. Film director Chris Columbus is 67. Actor Colin Firth is 65. Cartoonist Alison Bechdel is 65. Baseball Hall of Famer Randy Johnson is 62. Actor Raymond Cruz is 61. Rapper Big Daddy Kane is 57. Film director Guy Ritchie is 57. Actor Ryan Phillippe (FIHL'-ih-pee) is 51. Ballerina Misty Copeland is 43. Former MLB All-Star Joey Votto is 42.