

Groton Daily Independent

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Friday, October 3rd:

Senior Menu: Hamburger cabbage roll hotdish, mixed vegetables, pears, cornmeal muffin.

School Breakfast: Egg wraps.

School Lunch: Chicken fajita, santa fe corn.

- Football @ Roncalli (Dacotah Bank Stadium - 7pm)

Saturday, October 4th:

- Volleyball @ Redfield Tournament (9am vs. Redfield, 10am vs. North Central, 12pm vs. Madison, 3pm vs. Timber Lake)

Sunday, Oct. 5

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School 10:15 a.m.; Choir 6 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., and Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

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

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

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

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m. 5th Grade GBB, 4 p.m.

Peanuts was introduced to the world on October 2, 1950. Today we celebrate 75 years of Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and the rest of the beloved Peanuts gang. **#Snoopy75**



2nd Grade GBB Practice, 4 p.m.

Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

Monday, Sept. 6

Senior Menu: Sweet and sour pork, steamed rice, carrot and broccoli medley, corn, honey fruit salad.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.

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

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.

State Golf Tournament in Vermillion

MS Football vs. Roncalli in Groton (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.; JV at 6 p.m.)

4th Grade GBB, 4 p.m.

Volleyball hosts Mobridge-Pollock (Gym: 7th-4, 8th-5; Arena: C-4, JV-5, V-6:15).

Groton Daily Independent
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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.

Federal Firings Loom

The US government may begin permanently firing federal workers—estimated to be in the thousands—as soon as today, as the government enters its third shutdown day. The firings would be in addition to the hundreds of thousands of workers who are typically furloughed during temporary closures (see overview).

President Donald Trump yesterday warned of mass layoffs and cuts to federal agencies after Senate Democrats this week blocked a House-passed stopgap funding bill to maintain government spending mostly at 2025 levels through Nov. 21. At least 60 votes are needed in the Senate to pass a measure; Republicans hold 53 seats. The Senate returns today to vote again on the Republican-led, House-passed bill as well as alternative proposals. Democrats are seeking the reversal of Medicaid cuts and the extension of expiring Affordable Care Act tax credits.

Each federal department and agency has its own contingency plan for shutdowns. See the impact of furloughs [here](#). Explore what different agencies do [here](#).

UK Synagogue Attack

At least two people were killed and three were seriously wounded yesterday when an attacker drove into a crowd outside a synagogue in northwest England and assaulted them with a knife. Congregants were gathering for Yom Kippur, Judaism's holiest holiday.

British police fatally shot the suspect, who they said wore a vest initially believed to be an explosive device but later determined to be inoperable. Authorities identified the suspect as Jihad Al-Shamie, a 35-year-old British citizen of Syrian descent. Three unidentified individuals—two men in their 30s and a woman in her 60s—were arrested in connection with the attack. A motive has not been publicly disclosed.

The UK declared the incident a terrorist attack, and Prime Minister Keir Starmer pledged to increase security for Jewish communities (watch remarks). Israel's foreign minister accused British officials of allowing antisemitic and anti-Israeli sentiments to persist in the UK.

Yom Kippur is a solemn day when Jews fast, pray, and repent to atone for sins.

Good Grief! 'Peanuts' is 75

"Peanuts" marked its 75th anniversary yesterday, honoring the 1950 debut of Charles Schulz's iconic comic strip. The series introduced Charlie Brown, Snoopy, and their friends, who became international figures through newspapers, television specials, books, and more.

Schulz drew heavily on his own life, capturing humor and anxieties in simple scenes of children, a dog, and a bird. He produced the strip until his death in 2000, creating nearly 18,000 installments. The comic expanded from seven newspapers to more than 2,600 worldwide at its end, reaching an estimated 355 million readers across 75 countries and in 21 languages. Its television specials won Emmy Awards, while Snoopy became a star in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. See photos [here](#).

The "Peanuts" brand still earns about \$30M yearly. To honor the anniversary, the Charles M. Schulz Museum launched a yearlong retrospective, publishers released commemorative collections, Apple TV+ announced an extended partnership, and even farmers paid homage with themed corn mazes.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Sean "Diddy" Combs to be sentenced today in New York for his July conviction on prostitution-related charges; prosecutors are seeking an 11-year prison sentence.

Department of Homeland Security plans to send ICE agents to patrol Super Bowl LX following announcement that Puerto Rican artist Bad Bunny was selected to perform at the halftime show.

The 2025 WNBA Finals begin tonight (8:30 pm ET, ESPN) with the Las Vegas Aces taking on the Phoenix Mercury in a best-of-seven series.

Science & Technology

Perplexity AI launches artificial intelligence-powered web browser, Comet, for free worldwide; startup initially offered browser to select users for \$200 monthly.

Paleontologists revise evolutionary timeline for freshwater fish after analysis of 67-million-year-old ear bone fossil suggests they inherited their powerful hearing from marine ancestors.

Researchers determine costly, deadly wildfires have increased more than fourfold from 1980 to 2023; 43% of the most damaging fires occurred between 2013 and 2023, including 43 wildfires that each caused over \$1B in damage.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.1%, Dow +0.2%, Nasdaq +0.4%).

OpenAI raises valuation to record \$500B after completing \$6.6B secondary share sale, surpassing SpaceX as the world's most valuable startup.

Tesla reports record 497,099 deliveries in Q3, a 7.4% rise from a year ago; sales data comes as a \$7,500 federal tax credit for electric vehicles expired.

Berkshire Hathaway to pay \$9.7B for Occidental Petroleum's chemical unit; deal is Berkshire's largest since 2022 when it paid \$11.6B for insurer Alleghany.

Politics & World Affairs

White House asks nine colleges to agree to "compact" banning race and gender in admissions, freezing tuition, and capping international enrollment in exchange for federal funds.

President Donald Trump says the US is in "armed conflict" with drug cartels.

Eiffel Tower closes as thousands of people strike across France to demand higher taxes on the rich and denounce budget cuts and a hike in the retirement age.

Israel to deport hundreds of activists, including Greta Thunberg and Nelson Mandela's grandson, who were detained after Israeli navy intercepted 40 vessels attempting to deliver aid to Gaza (More)

The Ace of Hearts drawing was held Thursday at the Groton American Legion. Ida Lewison's name was drawn. (second week in a row her name was drawn). She picked Card #44 which was the King of Spades. Ticket sales for the week was \$875 so she got 10% of the sales - \$87. Jackpot was \$10,012.

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GT on **Football**
Dacotah Stadium
Vs. Roncalli Cavaliers
Fri., Oct. 3, 7 p.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE
YouTube
A production of the
Groton Daily Independent

For more info: GDILIVE.COM



GT on **Redfield Volleyball**
Tournament
vs. Redfield
Sat., Oct. 4, 9 a.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

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GT on **Redfield Volleyball**
Tournament
vs. North Central
Sat., Oct. 4, 10 a.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE
YouTube
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For more info: GDILIVE.COM



GT on **Redfield Volleyball**
Tournament
vs. Madison
Sat., Oct. 4, Noon

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

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GT on **Redfield Volleyball**
Tournament
vs. Timber Lake
Sat., Oct. 4, 3 p.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

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For more info: GDILIVE.COM



GT on **Redfield Volleyball**
Tournament
Finals
Sat., Oct. 4, 4 p.m.

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

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Letter to the Editor

Did you know, if you live in Groton, you are served by a locally owned and operated electric utility?

This week, we celebrate Public Power Week, a time to highlight the value of community-owned, not-for-profit electric utilities.

Public power communities, like Groton, offer five distinct advantages.

Accountability and transparency means citizens participate in the governance of the utility at the ballot box and through city council meetings. Utility business is conducted in the open, subject to open meetings, public records laws and local scrutiny.

Public power utilities provide financial support for local government, a direct benefit to their communities in the form of payments and contributions. Many utilities make in-kind contributions to the city in the form of free or reduced-cost services such as street lighting and electricity usage at city facilities including pools, parks and municipal offices.

Public power utilities provide more efficient municipal operations, keeping costs down through local scrutiny of operations. Oversight of the utility is local which keeps it focused on reliability, price and service.

Public power utilities tailor policies, programs and practices to serve the priorities of the local community. Decisions are made at the local level and reflect the values and choices of the community.

Public power utilities are owned by you, the citizens they serve, which means local management and control over decisions.

Heartland Energy provides wholesale power to the city of Groton. We are also proud to partner on a variety of programs and services to help the community thrive.

Cities like Groton are fortunate the leaders before them had the foresight to invest in the enduring success of their community by creating a public power utility.

Russell Olson, CEO

Heartland Energy

Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: SD Highway 44, mile marker 90, three miles east of Scenic, SD
When: 11:59 p.m., Wednesday, October 1, 2025

Vehicle 1: 2004 Honda Pilot
Driver 1: Under investigation, fatal injuries
Passenger 1a: Under investigation, fatal injuries
Passenger 1b: Under investigation, fatal injuries
Passenger 1c: Under investigation, fatal injuries
Passenger 1d: Under investigation, fatal injuries

Pennington County, S.D.- Five people died in a single vehicle crash late Wednesday evening, three miles east of Scenic, SD.

The names of the persons involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2004 Honda Pilot was traveling eastbound on SD Highway 44 near mile marker 90 and failed to negotiate a curve. The vehicle entered the north ditch and struck a concrete barrier. The vehicle then became engulfed in flames.

The driver and four passengers died at the scene.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary. Additional details will be released when they become available.

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

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Groton's Events



**Nov. 11: Veteran's Day Program,
2 p.m.**



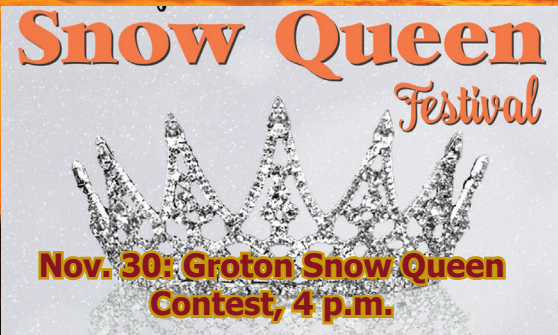
**Dec. 5: Tour of Trees at Wage
Memorial Library, 3:30-5:30 p.m.**



**Nov. 27:
Community
Thanksgiving
at the
Community
Center,
11:30 a.m.
to 1:30 p.m.**



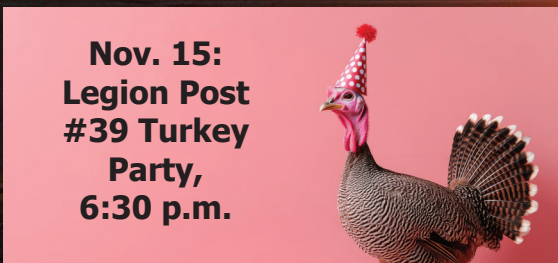
**Dec. 6: Olive Grove Holiday
Party, 6 p.m.**



**Nov. 30: Groton Snow Queen
Contest, 4 p.m.**



**Jan. 25, 2026:
88th Carnival
of Silver
Skates,
2 p.m. &
6:30 p.m.**



**Nov. 15:
Legion Post
#39 Turkey
Party,
6:30 p.m.**



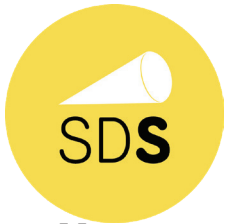
**Jan. 25, 2026:
Groton Robotics
Pancake Feed at
the Community
Center,
10 am. to 1 p.m.**

GROTON

Chamber of Commerce

120 N Main, Groton, SD 57445

605/397-8422 ~ GrotonChamber.com



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Harvest of stress: Soybean farmers await help as tariff dispute closes China market

Sen. Thune and US treasury secretary say government aid is likely

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR-OCTOBER 2, 2025 2:51 PM

SALEM — Spending 12 hours a day in his combine this week, harvesting amber rows of soybeans he planted in the spring, Andrew Streff has time to think — and it's hard not to think about the ongoing trade dispute with China.

The country is boycotting purchases of U.S. soybeans in response to President Donald Trump's tariffs. "China hasn't purchased any soybeans from the United States this year, thanks to the president," said Streff, who farms near Salem. "Our beans are the cheapest in the world, by about \$2 a bushel, but this trade war is keeping them out of China — our biggest customer."

Robert Lee is harvesting 300 acres of soybeans on his land near De Smet. He said many farmers are hesitant to blame Trump for bad bean prices.

"But the fact is, China imported 120 million metric tons of soybeans this year and not one bushel came from the U.S.," Lee said. "That's a direct result of this trade war."

Farmers were similarly affected by trade disputes during Trump's first term. Congress responded with \$28 billion of aid for farmers in 2018 and 2019, according to the Congressional Research Service. The relief paid for farmers' lost income by providing direct payments in its place.

U.S. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-South Dakota, said during a Sept. 26 public event in Rapid City that the federal government will probably have to help farmers again.

"I have talked to the president about this, because some of this is a result of tariff policies, trade relationships, etc. — China's not buying soybeans today," Thune said. "And so I think, inevitably, what's going to happen is they'll probably end up doing what we did a few years ago, because of loss of markets."

Thune said that's something "none of us want."

"But I think some of that tariff revenue that's coming in probably will end up heading in that direction," he said.

Trump's tariffs will increase federal tax revenues by an estimated \$171 billion this year, according to a Sept. 26 report from the Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan, tax policy research nonprofit.

On Thursday, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent confirmed that the Trump administration is considering aid to farmers. He said in an interview with CNBC that farmers "should expect some news on Tuesday" about "substantial support for our farmers, especially the soybean farmers."

Jerry Schmitz is the executive director of the South Dakota Soybean Association. He said U.S. soybean prices are down more than a dollar per bushel from last year, from over \$11 down to \$10, with South Dakota prices another 80 cents to \$1.35 lower. Local grain elevators are struggling because exports through the Pacific Northwest into Asian countries have slowed to a trickle.

Based on the number of soybean acres planted this year, Schmitz said a \$1 drop in price equates to about \$250 million of lost income for South Dakota farmers.

A tariff is a tax paid by importers, with the cost often passed along in prices charged to customers. Schmitz said the impact of tariffs on farmers goes beyond the obvious. An example is a rise in fertilizer prices, "partly due to inflation, but exacerbated by the tariffs."

Streff, the Salem-area farmer, also works as a commodities broker in Mitchell. He said farmers like him who locked in a price with a grain buyer months before harvest are doing better, but "you were gambling

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on the future.”

“A lot of farmers were hoping the president learned from the last time around,” he said. “But it didn’t surprise me — he campaigned on doing these tariffs. The U.S. elected someone who likes to pick fights with other countries, and now we’re in the middle of it.”

He said others waited to see how the crop would turn out and if trade relations with China would improve. They haven’t.

Farm leaders and state officials are creating new domestic soybean uses, including a \$500 million soybean processing plant in Mitchell that will mostly use soybeans to make renewable diesel and livestock feed.

Streff said that’s encouraging, but it won’t replace the demand of a country with 1.4 billion people who like soybean-fed pork.

“It’s not going to solve all our problems,” he said.

It’s a point Thune echoed while in Rapid City.

“We need to get the Chinese market back at some point because we sell a ton,” Thune said. “Sixty percent of our soybeans are exported, mostly to China. And so we’ve got to have those export 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.

How the federal shutdown is playing out across the government

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA, JENNIFER SHUTT, ASHLEY MURRAY AND SHAUNEEN MIRANDA-
OCTOBER 2, 2025**

WASHINGTON — The first federal government shutdown in seven years has left hundreds of thousands of workers furloughed and members of the public struggling to understand what’s open, what’s closed and what might be delayed.

States Newsroom’s Washington, D.C. Bureau scoured agency plans published by the Trump administration and the courts, and produced this guide to help you understand what’s going on:

Agriculture Department

The USDA plans to furlough about half, 42,300, of its nearly 86,000 employees, though workers at several programs for farm communities and rural areas will keep working without pay.

Operations will continue on some farm loans, certain natural resource and conservation programs, essential food safety operations related to public health and wildland firefighting activities.

Agriculture Department employees working on animal and plant health emergency programs — including African swine fever, highly pathogenic avian influenza, exotic fruit flies, new world screwworm and rabies — are exempt from furloughs.

But dozens of USDA programs addressing everything from disaster assistance processing to trade negotiations to long-term research on animal diseases will cease until Congress reaches a funding deal.

Employees working on those programs will be furloughed until the government is once again funded, but both working and non-working federal employees in all agencies are required to receive back pay under the law.

Agencies housed within the USDA have varying levels of furloughs. The Food and Nutrition Service, Office of the Inspector General and Natural Resources Conservation Service are among those with higher numbers of furloughed workers.

Commerce Department

The Department of Commerce will retain just over 19% of its nearly 43,000 employees during the shutdown, and most will have to stay on without pay, as outlined in its government funding lapse plan.

The department oversees a wide range of federal government activities — weather forecasting, issuing patents and trademarks, regulating fisheries, enforcing export laws, managing government-owned and

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-controlled spectrum frequencies, and collecting demographics and other population data.

Notably, the department houses the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and will continue providing "weather, water and climate observations, prediction, forecasting, warning and related support." But research activities will largely stop.

The U.S. Census Bureau, also part of the department, will cease most operations, including providing monthly economic indicators and updated data about disaster-impacted areas. Certain preparations for the 2030 Census will stop, as will any data collection for the American Community Survey.

Funding outside of annual appropriations may keep some U.S. Patent and Trademark Office units open, but the timelines will be variable, according to the department. When funding runs out, the office will continue "a bare minimum set of activities necessary to protect against the actual loss of intellectual property (IP) rights."

Defense Department

The Defense Department's contingency plan calls for the nearly 2.1 million military personnel to keep working as normal and says 406,500 of its roughly 741,000 civilian employees will work without pay, while the others will be furloughed.

The plan says the Defense Department believes operations to secure the U.S. southern border, Middle East operations, Golden Dome for America defense system, depot maintenance, shipbuilding and critical munitions are the "highest priorities" in the event of a shutdown.

Medical and dental services, including private sector care under the TRICARE health care program, would largely continue at the Defense Department, though "(e)lective surgery and other routine/elective procedures in DoW medical and dental facilities are generally not excepted activities, unless the deferral or delay of such procedures would impact personnel readiness or deployability."

Education Department

The Department of Education said it would furlough roughly 95% of employees outside its federal student aid unit.

The agency will continue disbursing Federal Direct Loans as well as Pell Grants, which help low-income students pay for college.

Borrowers still have to make payments toward their student loan debt during the shutdown.

Title I and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, grant funding would continue to be available as usual, according to the department. Title I provides funding for low-income school districts, while IDEA guarantees a free public education for students with disabilities.

But the agency is ceasing several operations, including any new grantmaking activities. Still, the department said the majority of its grant programs "typically make awards over the summer and therefore there would be limited impact on the Department's grantmaking."

The agency's Office for Civil Rights also has to pause investigations of any civil rights complaints.

Energy Department

The Energy Department will furlough a little over 8,100 of its 13,800 federal workers – nearly 60% of its workforce, according to its contingency plan.

The National Nuclear Security Administration would continue maintenance and safeguarding of nuclear weapons.

Some programs, like the medical isotope program, will require DOE to "produce additional isotopes in order to protect human life."

"The need to do this will depend on the length of the lapse and the stockpile of individual isotopes," according to DOE.

Certain programs are self-funded, such as the Bonneville Power Administration, which provides hydro-power in the Columbia River Basin of the Pacific Northwest.

Environmental Protection Agency

EPA, according to its contingency plan, will have the biggest percentage of federal employees furloughed. Nearly 90% of its workforce, or 13,400 out of 15,000, will be furloughed.

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Only agency activities that revolve around protecting human life, such as monitoring some Superfund sites and responding to emergency environmental disasters, will continue.

Some EPA functions that will halt include issuing of new grants, publishing new research, pausing of cleanup of Superfund sites that don't pose an imminent threat to human life, enforcement inspections and issuing of permits.

Health and Human Services Department

The department, one of the larger ones within the executive branch that houses many of the country's best-known public health agencies, has furloughed about 32,500 of its nearly 80,000 employees, according to its contingency plan.

Many of HHS' activities fall under the life and property or even the national security exceptions during a funding lapse, though dozens of programs will still be affected.

HHS officials plan to ensure "minimal readiness" at the Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response for "all hazards, including pandemic flu and hurricane responses."

Certain employees at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will keep working, albeit without pay, to monitor for any disease outbreaks. But the contingency plan says the CDC's "communication to the American public about health-related information will be hampered."

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services plans to keep 3,300, or about 53%, of its employees during the shutdown in order to keep running core programs.

Since many of the country's major health care programs are funded outside of the annual government funding process, they shouldn't be affected by the shutdown, even though the employees who run the programs often rely on full-year or stopgap spending bills for their salaries.

CMS' contingency plan says "the Medicare Program will continue during a lapse in appropriations" and that it has "sufficient funding for Medicaid to fund the first quarter of FY 2026," which includes October, November and December.

Additionally, it "will maintain the staff necessary to make payments to eligible states for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)."

Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Department of Housing and Urban Development's website opens with a message that reads: "The Radical Left in Congress shut down the government. HUD will use available resources to help Americans in need."

The department says the majority of its annual grant programs, including those that provide for emergency housing for people experiencing homelessness and people living with HIV/AIDS, "continue to operate in States and local communities across the country when such grant funding has already been obligated."

The agency also said many of its programs "addressing imminent threats to the health and welfare of HUD tenants and children will continue where such grant funding has already been obligated before the lapse occurs."

For as long as the funding remains available, "monthly subsidy programs such as the public housing operating subsidies, housing choice voucher subsidies, and multifamily assistance contracts will continue to operate," according to the department.

However, the agency said nearly all of its "fair housing activities" will halt during the shutdown.

Internal Revenue Service

The Internal Revenue Service will continue normal operations using supplemental funding enacted under the Democrats' 2022 budget reconciliation law, known as the Inflation Reduction Act.

The IRS will retain its 74,299 employees, according to the latest available shutdown contingency plan.

The Trump administration has shrunk the IRS significantly this year, down from its roughly 95,000 employees, and has turned over the agency's top leadership six times.

The agency processes about 180 million income tax returns each year.

The body that independently oversees the IRS will not operate at full capacity during the shutdown. Only 40% of employees in the department's Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration will remain on,

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with a small fraction required to stay without pay if necessary, according to the agency's plan.

As of Thursday afternoon Eastern time, the home page for that agency, [tigta.gov](https://www.tigta.gov), was blank except for the message "Due to a lack of apportionment of funds, this website is currently unavailable."

Interior Department

A little more than half of the federal workforce for the Interior Department will be furloughed – 31,000 out of 58,600 employees – according to its contingency plan.

Some services within the agency will continue, such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs' wildland fire management, but programs that provide social services to foster children and residential adults will pause.

As for national parks, the trails, open memorials and overlooks will generally remain open. The National Park Service will retain minimal staff to allow for visitors. But general maintenance, trash pick-up and educational programs, will cease during the shutdown.

Hunters or people seeking access to public lands will not be able to have their permits processed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services.

Justice Department

The Justice Department will keep a majority of its federal workers during the shutdown, according to its contingency plan. Out of roughly 110,000 employees, nearly 13,000 will be furloughed.

Because the judicial branch will continue to function, the Justice Department will retain most of its attorneys for criminal and civil litigation. Federal law enforcement agencies and their agents will continue to work, such as the FBI, Drug Enforcement Administration and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

A shutdown typically means that immigration cases would be rescheduled and courts not located in an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center will be shut down. But the Trump administration has prioritized the Executive Office for Immigration Review, housed within the Department of Justice, as essential.

The contingency plan points to the president's national emergency, "citing the threat to the national security and economy of the United States caused by illegal migration."

Labor Department

More than 75% of the Department of Labor's employees will be furloughed, according to the agency's contingency plan.

Several units will come to a halt, such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Veterans' Employment and Training Service, Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs, Office of Disability Employment Policy, Women's Bureau, Office of Administrative Law Judges, Administrative Review Board, and Benefits Review Board, as well as the Employees' Compensation Appeals Board.

The agency said it will continue to support states and other agencies when it comes to administering and paying unemployment insurance benefits.

The department notes that "unless excepted or exempt, agencies' technical assistance, compliance assistance, regulatory, policy, research, advisories, responding to inquiries, most oversight, hearing preparation, and cooperative activities will cease."

Job Corps centers that house students "will remain in operation while funds remain available," and "federal oversight of those centers related to safety and property will continue," per the department.

Homeland Security Department

Homeland Security will retain most of its workforce without pay. About 14,000 employees will be furloughed among its nearly 272,000 workforce, according to its contingency plan.

That means ports of entry will remain open for inspections from Customs and Border Protection, but there could be delays in paperwork at U.S. borders.

Most federal workers responsible for security at airports across the country – more than 61,000 Transportation Security Administration employees – would be required to work without pay.

Another agency within DHS that will remain most of its workforce is the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. About 21,000 employees out of 24,000 will continue to work.

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The office involved in departmental oversight, the Office of Inspector General, will pause its work on reports and investigations.

And the Trump administration's aggressive immigration crackdown will continue, with nearly all employees from Immigration and Customs Enforcement considered non-exempt, about 19,600 out of 21,000.

Several agencies within the Department of Homeland Security will remain running because they are fee-based, such as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Some visa programs within USCIS are tied to appropriations funding, so those programs will be suspended.

That includes E-Verify, which verifies immigration status; visas for foreign doctors; and visas for non-minister religious workers.

State Department

A little more than half the employees in the State Department will be furloughed, about 16,600 out of its nearly 27,000-employee workforce, according to its contingency plan.

Because visa and passport services are fee-funded, they will likely not be impacted. Consular operations will be affected and diplomatic visas will only be issued in "life or death" emergencies.

Social Security Administration

The program for America's seniors and some people with disabilities is largely funded outside of the annual government spending process, which makes it mostly exempt from shutdowns.

One big caveat is that the federal workers who administer the program are paid through one of the 12 congressional appropriations bills, which can cause issues during a funding lapse.

SSA's contingency plan says it will furlough about 6,200 of its nearly 52,000 employees until the government is fully operational again.

The agency plans to continue "accurate and timely payment of benefits" as well as taking applications, requests for appeal, issuing and replacing Social Security cards and fraud prevention activities, among others.

The SSA during the lapse will not conduct certain activities, including benefits verification, replacement of Medicare cards, or addressing overpayments processing during the funding lapse.

Transportation Department

Slightly more than 11,000 of the department's nearly 45,000 employees will be furloughed for the remainder of the government shutdown, but its leaders plan to keep several activities essential for the traveling public going during a shutdown, according to its contingency plan.

Air traffic control services and hiring, hazardous materials safety inspections, airport inspections and much more will continue, though many activities will cease.

Some agencies within the Transportation Department will see little impact on their staffing, even though workers will not be paid until the shutdown ends.

For example, no one at the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation will be furloughed.

Treasury Department

The department has individual contingency plans for its various components, including departmental offices, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, the Bureau of the Fiscal Service, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, the Internal Revenue Service, the Office of the Inspector General and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration.

Treasury officials expect to keep about 1,850 of its more than 2,700 employees working in the departmental offices without pay during the shutdown, in part to "support the president" with "market and economic updates, economic policy options and recommendations, including those related to national security incidents."

The Office of Inspector General, which oversees officials' actions for waste, fraud and abuse, will keep about 30 of its roughly 150 employees working throughout the shutdown and furlough the rest.

Department of Veterans Affairs

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Large parts of the Department of Veterans Affairs, including the processing and payout of benefits, are funded outside of the annual appropriations process and will continue through the shutdown.

The department projects 97% of its staff will continue to work, and most will be paid, according to its latest publicly available shutdown contingency plan.

Health care will continue uninterrupted at VA medical centers and outpatient clinics, and vets will still receive benefits, including compensation, pension, education and housing.

Veterans suicide prevention and homelessness programs will remain in operation, and the Veterans Crisis Line will continue to answer calls. The crisis line can be reached by dialing 988 followed by pressing 1, or by texting 838255.

The MyVA411 and PACT Act call centers will operate "as necessary to prevent disruption to mandatory VA benefit programs," according to the department's guide.

The National Cemetery Administration will continue to inter veterans and eligible family members, as well as schedule burials, determine eligibility and process headstone applications. However, headstone and marker installation and groundskeeping will cease, and the application assistance unit call center will be closed.

All Transition Assistance Programs, including career and financial counseling, are suspended, and the GI Bill hotline is not taking calls.

The department's whistleblower program is also not accepting or investigating complaints.

Executive Office of the President

The first Trump administration posted a contingency plan in March 2018, though it doesn't appear there is a current one and the White House did not respond to a request from States Newsroom about how it's implementing the shutdown.

The earlier three-page plan said the president planned to place "1068 of the 1759 EOP staff in furlough status ("Non-Excepted Staff"), while an estimated 691 EOP staff would continue to report to duty."

President Donald Trump continues to be paid during a shutdown, as are members of Congress, under the law.

Judicial branch

The Supreme Court will remain functioning during the shutdown, as well as the federal courts.

By using court fees, the judiciary branch can continue with paid operations until Oct. 17, according to the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Most proceedings and deadlines set in cases will continue, but if Department of Justice attorneys representing the executive branch are furloughed, then those cases will be rescheduled.

Supreme Court judges and federal judges will continue to be paid due to Article III of the U.S. Constitution that specifies judge's compensation "shall not be diminished" during their term.

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

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Suicide claims more Gen Z lives than previous generation

Black, Hispanic men account for most of the increase, a Stateline analysis finds

BY: TIM HENDERSON-OCTOBER 2, 2025 8:58 AM

Editor's note: If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org.

For Gen Z adults, the oldest of whom are now reaching their late 20s, suicide is taking more lives than 10 years ago when millennials were the same age, according to a Stateline analysis of federal death statistics.

The bulk of the increase, 85%, is among Black and Hispanic men, many in Southern and Midwestern states.

Experts disagree on the root causes of the growth in suicides, but they see a wave of untreated depression that can lead to suicidal thoughts, one that affected all age groups after the Great Recession but lingers on among young adults, especially non-white men.

Theories behind the increase range from bullying on social media, since Gen Z was the first generation to grow up with the internet, to economic despair, to cultural resistance to seeking help for depression.

Gen Z suicides have continued at a fast pace this year, with 1,148 in January and February, the latest months available from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about the same as in 2024. The CDC bases its data on death certificates.

Among those grappling with the crisis is Rodney Harris of the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, who has enlisted barbers and churches in his state to draw out stories of personal pain before they lead to a suicidal crisis. Harris is an associate professor in the school's Suicide Prevention Institute.

He's fighting a perception that you can shake off mental health issues on your own.

"The research tells us that we have got to find a live person to go to them, particularly Black and brown kids, because if we don't, they'll get lost," said Harris. "There's a perception that you're going to be strong and not complain about things, and that can keep you away from treatment."

Some visible signs of the crisis have shaken communities in recent weeks.

A bridge in majority-Hispanic Taos County, New Mexico, closed to pedestrians in September after a rash of suicides, including that of a teenager less than two weeks ago.

Also in September: A Black 21-year-old student hanged himself from a tree on a Mississippi university campus, authorities said, in a case that raised fears of lynching before his death was ruled a suicide.

For Julian "Wolf" Rivera, who died at 27 in 2019 in suburban Middletown, New York, there was a combination of issues, his mother said: pressure to support a growing family with a second child on the way, a night job in a warehouse that he found unfulfilling, discrimination he felt because of his Hispanic background despite being born and raised nearby by parents with a Puerto Rican heritage.

Rivera also struggled to accept and then to find help for his mental health issues, said his mother, Jessie Edmond.

"He was diagnosed with depression. He used to get angry. 'Why? Why do I need medicine to be normal?'" Edmond said. "He would take medicine, go to therapy, feel better and say, 'I don't need medicine anymore.' When he was in crisis he finally reached out, but nobody was taking patients. No one called him back."

Like many states, New York is facing the unexpected loss of millions of dollars for mental health programs as part of cutbacks by the Trump administration's Department of Government Efficiency task force. Federal grants for mental health crisis teams and drug treatment were cut by \$88 million in April, and more cuts are feared as President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act takes effect.

Among other things, the federal government in July ended an LGBTQ+-specific suicide helpline for people under 25.

A growing awareness of the suicide problem among young people led to federal responses, including a 2019 Congressional Black Caucus report on suicide among young Black people. But some of those programs are facing setbacks under the new Trump administration, and they could disappear or be forced to rely more on already stressed state funding.

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More despair

Suicides increased among Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native young adults, according to the Stateline analysis, with Native people having the highest rate in both 2014 and 2024. The number of suicides dropped slightly for white people, but increased as a rate because population fell as Gen Z took over the age bracket from the more numerous millennial generation.

Suicide became the second-highest cause of death for young Hispanics, surpassing homicide, and became the No. 1 cause of death for young Asians, surpassing accidents. Men have the highest rates, especially Black and Hispanic men, who together account for 85% of the total increase in suicide, 822 of 965.

Young white adults had a higher suicide rate in 2014 than Black or African American people, but by 2024 the rate for young Black adults was higher. Men have the highest suicide rates but the rate for women is growing faster, from about one-fifth of the rate for men to one-fourth in 2024.

The largest increases in suicide rates for the age group were in Georgia (up 65%), North Carolina and Texas (up 41%), Alabama (up 39%) and Ohio (up 37%).

The highest rate is in Alaska, which was also highest in 2014, up 34% to a rate of 49 suicides per 100,000 population, followed by New Mexico and Montana. The lowest rate was in New Jersey, with a rate of 6.9, a decrease of 31% since 2014, when it was ranked No. 47 behind California, New York and Massachusetts.

Harris' work in North Carolina was part of the federal Black Youth Suicide Prevention Initiative, under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The state, along with others, also used a one-year federal grant to enhance access to mental health services for young people.

North Carolina's health department has pledged to continue the work, Harris said. The state "remains committed to providing resources to communities which have been marginalized and where mental health challenges persist," a state health department spokesperson, James Werner, told Stateline in a statement.

The federal initiative was formed to reduce suicides among Black young people and children, with 15 states and the District of Columbia chosen to make state-specific policy plans: Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Tennessee.

North Carolina and Minnesota have released action plans based on the program. And other states have also taken action: Louisiana created promotional campaigns to reach young people at a rivalry college football game, and Oregon developed a youth-led suicide prevention coalition with matching funds from the state health department.

Georgia stands out for the biggest change in youth suicides; they rose 70% to 311 deaths in 2024. The state used two federal programs, the youth suicide prevention initiative and one from the U.S. Office of Minority Health to the medical school at Morehouse School of Medicine, to look for policy solutions to high suicide rates.

A report from the medical school outlining policy recommendations is nearing completion, said Susan McLaren, an assistant project director with the Georgia Health Policy Center at Georgia State University, which is evaluating the ideas.

The medical school is embracing the concept of "nothing about us without us" that brings in young people to lead decision-making about suicide prevention policies, McLaren said.

"The current crisis among our Black youth is a result of many things: stigma, lack of resources and treatment, and insufficient focus on creating safe spaces and dialogue to prevent and intervene in mental health challenges," McLaren said.

McLaren declined comment on funding issues, but the staff at the Office of Minority Health, which provided the Morehouse grant, has reportedly been slashed in a Trump administration reorganization.

Another federal program at SAMHSA, the Garrett Lee Smith State/Tribal Youth Suicide Prevention and Early Intervention Program, gives grants of up to \$735,000 to states and tribes to fight youth suicide. The program is named for the son of Republican U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith of Oregon. The younger Smith died the day before his 22nd birthday in 2004.

'No one magic answer'

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The overall crisis in suicide among youth has long puzzled researchers, but it's associated with an increase in untreated depression, said Dave Marcotte, a professor at American University in Washington, D.C., who wrote about the crisis in 2023 for the National Bureau of Economic Research.

Suicide rates for all age groups fell for decades before rising again starting in 2000, Marcotte said, and getting worse in the Great Recession. Rates for middle-aged people fell back again, but for young people the crisis never abated, he said.

"There's likely no one magic answer to this," Marcotte said. "Future job prospects for this generation are not what they were for older generations. Today's generation is not guaranteed a position in society that's better than their parents. That's one hypothesis."

Another theory: Those born after 1995, including Gen Z adults, are the first to spend their entire adolescence with smartphones and social media. Substituting in-person socializing with bullying-prone online chatting is a prime cause of young depression, said Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State University, who wrote an influential 2017 article in *The Atlantic* with the headline "Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation?"

Heavy users of social media are more likely to be depressed, Twenge told Stateline, even among marginalized groups. And politics seems to play little part, she argues. In a post this May, Twenge noted that increases in Black and Hispanic depression began in 2012, as President Barack Obama was about to be elected to a second term, and well before Donald Trump was elected for the first time.

That same year, though, saw virulently racist memes and hate speech become increasingly widespread on Facebook and Twitter as Obama ran for reelection.

Researcher Jonathan Haidt added another reason why today's youth might face more mental health challenges: When they were children, parents became more leery of letting them play unsupervised as fears of kidnapping and abuse increased. So they spent less time learning to interact face-to-face and more time in an adult online world they weren't prepared to handle.

"These two trends — overprotection in the real world and underprotection in the virtual world — are the major reasons why children born after 1995 became the anxious generation," wrote Haidt, a professor at New York University, in his 2024 book "The Anxious Generation."

Stateline reporter Tim Henderson can be reached at thenderson@stateline.org.

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

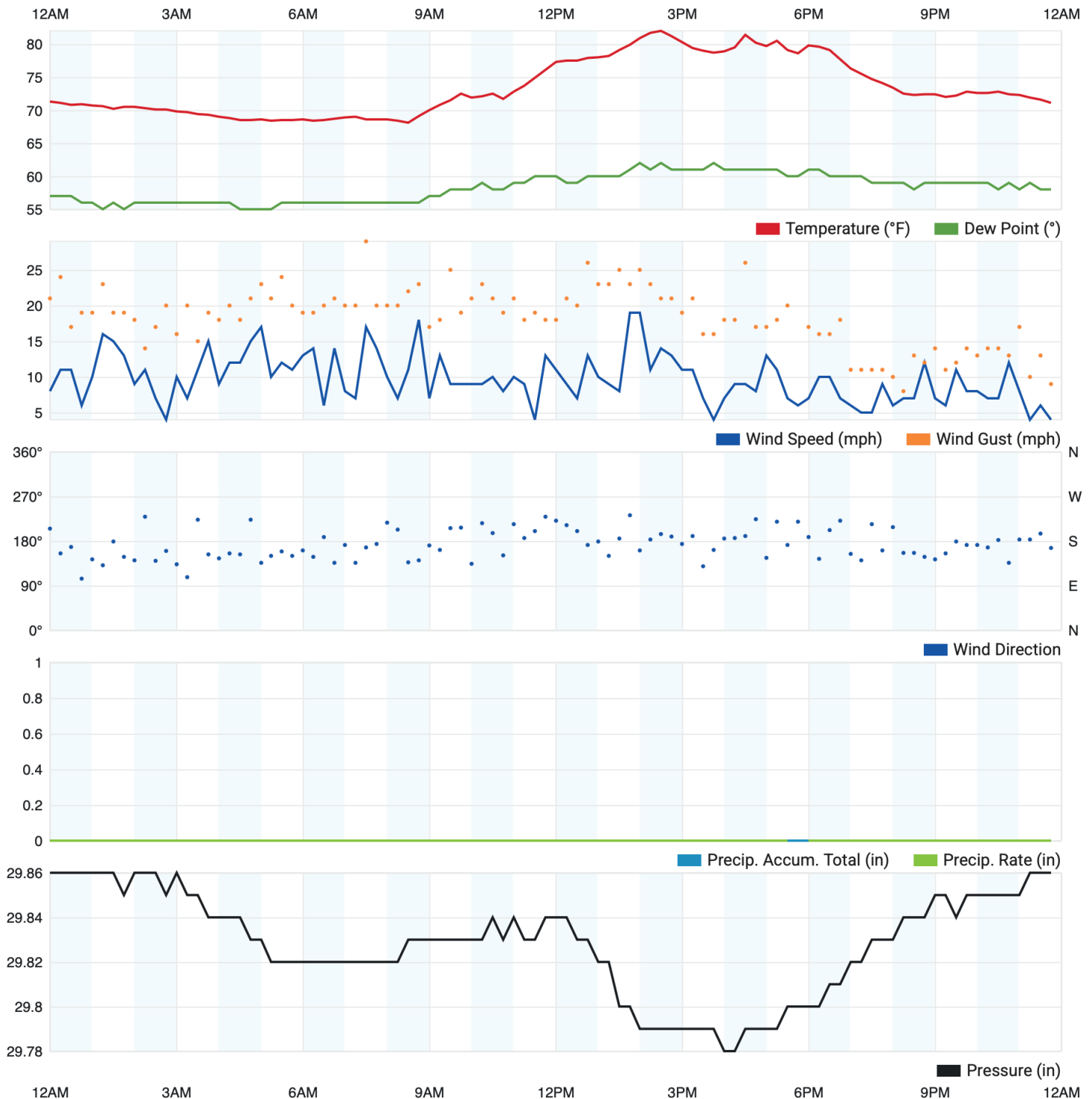
Tim Henderson covers demographics for Stateline. He has been a reporter at the Miami Herald, the Cincinnati Enquirer and the Journal News.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

October 1, 2025



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Today



High: 85 °F

Patchy Fog
then Sunny

Tonight



Low: 57 °F

Mostly Clear

Friday



High: 89 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Sunny
and Breezy

Friday Night



Low: 67 °F

Mostly Clear
and Breezy
then Partly
Cloudy

Saturday



High: 87 °F

Mostly Sunny



Windy Weekend On The Way

October 2, 2025
3:57 PM

Strong wind gusts expected both Saturday and Sunday.

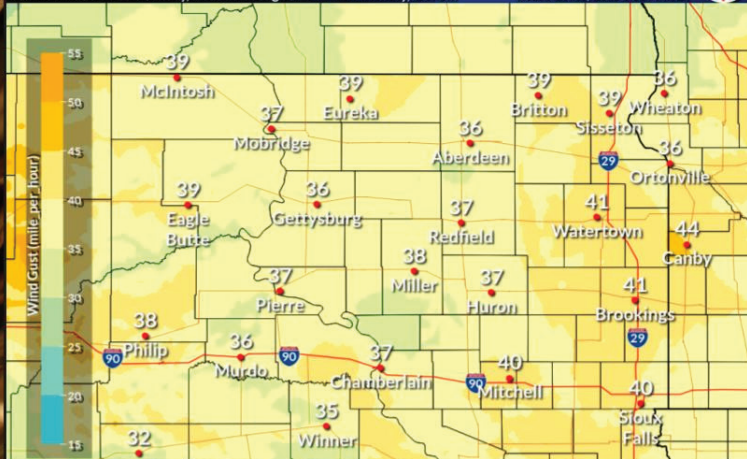
- Wind gusts of 40+ miles per hour may occur both Saturday and Sunday, with Sunday having stronger and more widespread strong winds.
- Winds will be out of the south on Saturday, before turning to the northwest Saturday night and Sunday morning behind a cold front.
- Strong winds are expected to diminish after Sunday evening.

Maximum Wind Gusts Sunday

Valid from 12 AM CDT Sunday, Oct 5th through 12 AM CDT Monday, Oct 6th

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD

Issued Oct 02, 2025 3:32 PM CDT



	Sat				Sun			
	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm
McIntosh	21	25	28	28	37	39	38	25
Ellendale	30	26	29	28	32	39	38	28
Eureka	31	21	23	24	32	39	39	28
Mobridge	29	21	23	24	32	37	37	25
Britton	35	33	33	35	38	39	37	29
Wheaton	26	28	28	33	35	36	33	29
Aberdeen	29	29	32	32	32	36	35	25
Sisseton	30	32	32	36	37	39	38	29
Eagle Butte	24	22	24	25	37	39	38	24
Gettysburg	29	23	24	25	30	36	36	25
Webster	32	36	38	38	38	39	38	29
Milbank	28	32	36	40	39	37	36	29
Redfield	29	32	38	36	33	37	37	28
Clark	32	37	41	41	40	38	38	28
Watertown	32	37	43	44	41	39	38	29
Pierre	25	21	22	23	32	37	35	28
Miller	31	35	37	36	35	38	36	26
Huron	28	33	41	39	38	31	31	24
Murdo	29	23	24	25	32	36	35	26
Kennebec	30	31	36	33	32	40	41	31

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

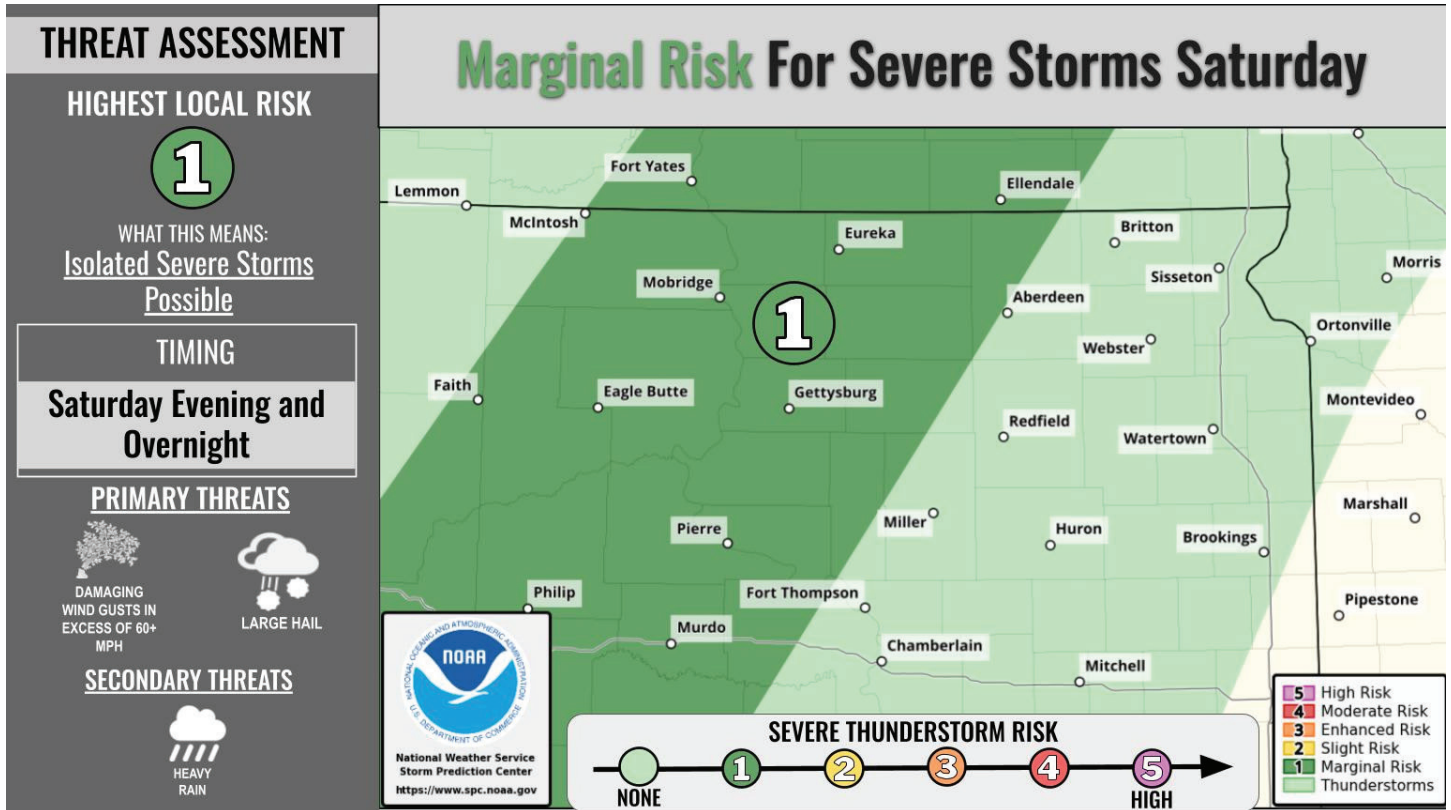


National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Winds both ahead and behind a cold front moving through this weekend will be strong, gusting to 40 miles per hour or higher. Sunday will have wider coverage of strong gusts, due in part to the cold front passing causing a shift in wind direction from south to northwest.

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There is a marginal risk for severe weather Saturday evening. An isolated stronger storm or two could produce winds in excess of 60mph and quarter sized hail.

Awareness and preparedness are key during excessively dry periods that coincide with field work.



Help prevent fire and assist rapid response in the case of fire...

- **Check the weather forecast.** If conditions are expected to be dry and windy, wait.
- Ensure the address is clearly visible from the road.
- Know the exact field identification and location.
- Access to water, fire extinguishers, and fire blankets.
- Access to equipment to create potential fire breaks.
- Maintain, clean, and monitor equipment for fire potential.
- Smoke detectors in buildings with alerts connected to a phone.
- Have a plan for all livestock.



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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88 °F at 5:46 PM

Low Temp: 58 °F at 7:52 AM

Wind: 9 mph at 1:48 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 95 in 1922

Record Low: 20 in 1894

Average High: 67

Average Low: 39

Average Precip in Oct.: .24

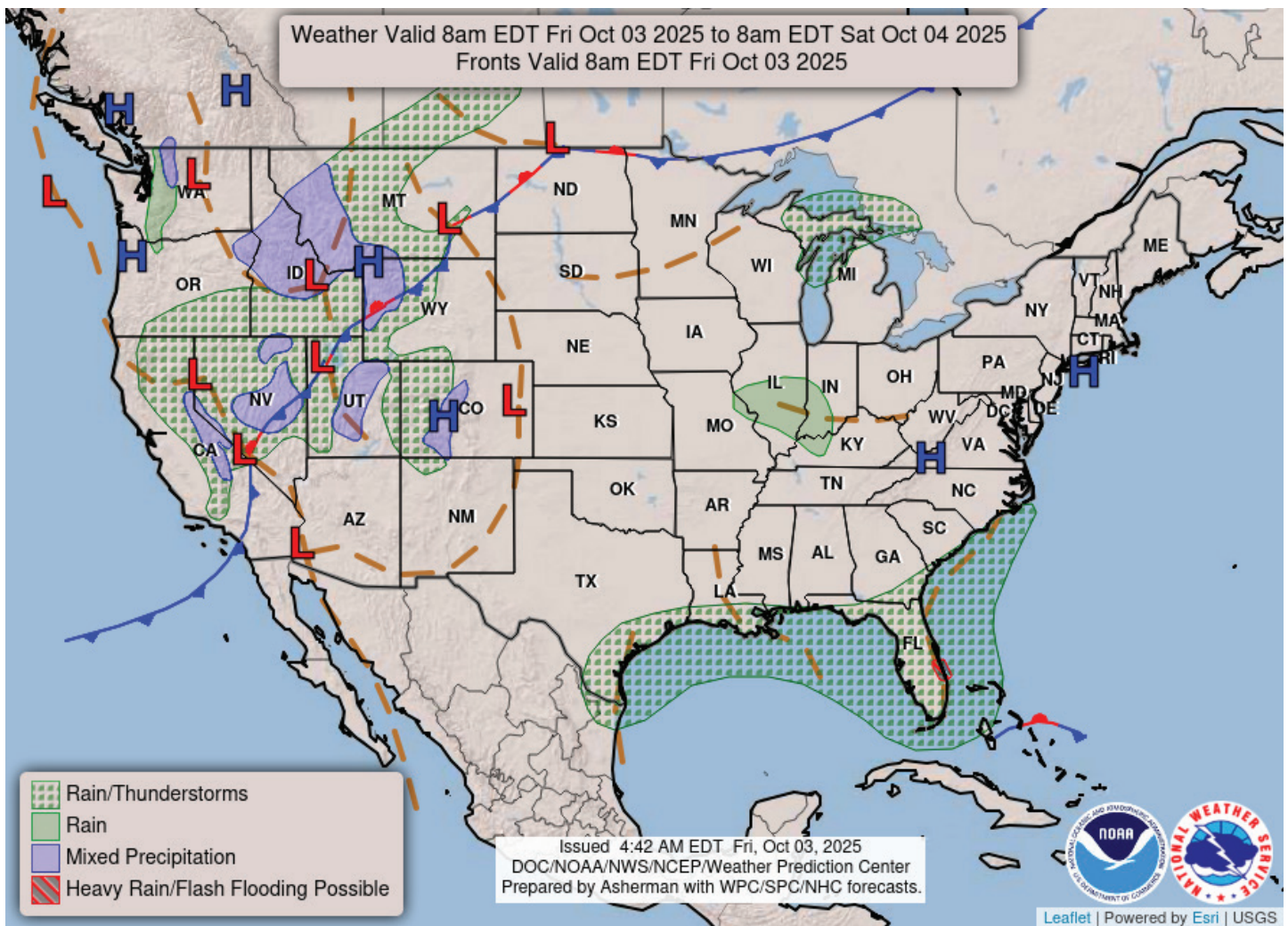
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 18.57

Precip Year to Date: 22.92

Sunset Tonight: 7:09 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:34 am



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Today in Weather History

October 3, 1985: High winds of 60 to 75 mph occurred across much of western South Dakota from the late afternoon of the 3rd into the early morning hours of the 4th. The winds blew down power lines and caused power outages for many locations in the Black Hills. The strong winds uprooted trees in Rapid City and blew the roof off of a barn near Newell in Butte County.

1780: A hurricane, which formed on October 1st, destroyed the port city of Savanna-la-Mar on the island of Jamaica on this day. By some estimates, this storm caused 3,000 deaths. This storm is documented in the Jamaica Archives and Record Department.

1841 - An October gale, the worst of record for Nantucket, MA, caught the Cap Cod fishing fleet at sea. Forty ships were driven ashore on Cape Cod, and 57 men perished from the town of Truro alone. Heavy snow fell inland, with 18 inches near Middletown, CT. (David Ludlum)

1903: An unusual late-season tornado moved northeast from west of Chatfield, Minnesota, passing through and devastating St. Charles, Minnesota. Seven people were killed, and 30 injured as 50 homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed.

1912 - The longest dry spell of record in the U.S. commenced as Bagdad, CA, went 767 days without rain. (David Ludlum)

1964 - Hurricane Hilda struck Louisiana spawning many tornadoes, and claimed twenty-two lives. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1979: An F4 tornado struck the towns of Windsor, Windsor Locks, and Suffield in Connecticut, causing an estimated \$400 million in property damage, on this day. The New England Air Museum, which housed more than 20 vintage aircraft, was destroyed. This tornado also caused a United Airlines flight to abort a landing at the Bradley International Airport because the pilot saw the tornado.

1986 - Remnants of Hurricane Paine deluged Oklahoma and southeastern Kansas with 6 to 10 inch over-night rains. Hardy, OK, was drenched with 21.79 inches. Heavy rain between September 26th and October 4th caused 350 million dollars damage in Oklahoma. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Twenty-five cities in the Upper Midwest, including ten in Iowa, reported record low temperatures for the date. Duluth MN, Eau Claire, WI, and Spencer, IA, dipped to 24 degrees. Temperatures warmed into the 80s in the Northern and Central High Plains Region. At Chadron, NE, the mercury soared from a morning low of 29 degrees to an afternoon high of 88 degrees. Temperatures soared above 100 degrees in southern California. The high of 108 degrees at Downtown Los Angeles was a record for October. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Cold Canadian air invaded the north central U.S. bringing an end to the growing season across those states. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the southwestern U.S. Phoenix, AZ, reported a record high of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold weather prevailed from the Pacific Northwest to the Upper Mississippi Valley. A dozen cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Bismarck, ND, and Williston, ND, with readings of 16 degrees above zero. An upper level weather disturbance brought snow to parts of Idaho, Wyoming and Montana, with five inches reported at West Yellowstone, MT. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2002: Hurricane Lili made landfall between White Lake and Vermilion Bay, Louisiana as a Category 1 storm.

2015: Unprecedented rainfall fell throughout South Carolina from October 1st — 5th, 2015. Storm total amounts greater than 20" were observed in Columbia and Sumter.

2017: The City of Houston had the wettest year on record with 73.51 inches. The previous wettest year was in 1900 when 72.86 inches were measured.

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Alcohol leads
people to act
independently of
God's wisdom...

Is it wrong for Christians to drink?

Does the Bible forbid drinking? Was the alcohol content of wine any different in Biblical times than it is today? Was it really wine at the Lord's Supper or unfermented grape juice? What is the correct position for church members to take when it comes to attending functions where alcoholic beverages are served?

There never has been a time or place in my life when alcohol was not part of someone's agenda. In fact, the thesis I wrote for my Master of Theology degree addressed this topic. The program took two years, and I visited some of the greatest libraries in the world looking

for a definitive answer. I did much of my research at Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, and the Graduate Theological Union which were near the seminary I attended.

However, Solomon, who no doubt hosted many events that included alcoholic beverages, presents his observations about the consequences of drinking. It seems to eliminate any reason to look any further for an answer: "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise." The consequences for alcohol abuse are obvious.

Alcohol is a depressant. It allows what we consider sacred or reserved, valuable or private, personal and private, hidden and buried deep within us an opportunity to escape and harm ourselves and others. A mocker is someone who becomes arrogant and ridicules God by word and deed. The mocker has no need for anyone, including God, and can do it all by myself. And the brawler is one who is indiscreet, obnoxious, and has no shame.

So, the first part of the verse leads to the second: Alcohol leads people to act independently of God's wisdom. Anyone who allows their behavior to be altered one way or another by any depressant is unwise, hence, ungodly. A wise person once said to me: "A wise person will not get drunk, and a drunk person is not wise."

Today's Prayer: Help us, Father, to realize the dangers that await us if we compromise Your wisdom. May we avoid the use of alcohol and the negative consequences that follow. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise." Proverbs 20:1

You never know who's carrying a heavy load. If this brought peace to your heart, take a moment to pass it on to someone who might need a little light and love today.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 09.30.25

4 8 27 37 63 14

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$520,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 11 Mins 47 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.01.25

12 28 42 44 48 3

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$4,070,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 26 Mins 46 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.02.25

16 21 26 34 48 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 41 Mins 47 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.01.25

5 8 23 24 26

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$38,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 41 Mins 46 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.01.25

3 29 38 56 65 7

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins 46 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 10.01.25

8 17 22 28 55 14

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$195,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins 47 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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News from the Associated Press

PREP VOLLEYBALL

Arlington def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-15, 25-12, 27-29, 25-20
Bon Homme def. Menno, 25-10, 25-11, 25-11
Brandon Valley def. Aberdeen Central, 25-16, 25-14, 25-16
Bridgewater-Emery def. Wessington Springs, 25-13, 25-11, 25-11
Britton-Hecla def. Milbank, 25-17, 32-30, 25-13
Burke def. Boyd County, Neb., 25-16, 25-16, 25-20
Chester def. Beresford, 25-9, 25-11, 25-12
Clark-Willow Lake def. Aberdeen Roncalli, 25-15, 25-17, 25-23
Colman-Egan def. Castlewood, 25-21, 18-25, 25-17, 25-17
Dakota Valley def. Pierce, Neb., 25-15, 20-25, 25-22, 17-25, 15-10
Dell Rapids St Mary's def. Iroquois-Lake Preston, 25-7, 25-22, 25-13
Dell Rapids def. Lennox, 25-17, 20-25, 25-9, 25-21
Deubrook def. Oldham-Ramona-Rutland, 25-17, 25-8, 25-16
Estelline-Hendricks def. DeSmet, 19-25, 26-24, 25-23, 25-21
Ethan def. Freeman, 25-21, 25-16, 25-23
Faulkton def. Aberdeen Christian, 21-25, 25-23, 25-23, 25-21
Florence-Henry def. Tri-State, N.D., 25-16, 25-10, 25-9
Great Plains Lutheran def. Deuel, 25-22, 25-18, 19-25, 22-25, 15-9
Gregory def. Chamberlain, 25-13, 25-16, 25-19
Hamlin def. Redfield, 25-14, 25-12, 25-15
Harding County def. Faith, 25-17, 25-22, 25-20
Harrisburg def. Sioux Falls Jefferson, 25-13, 25-8, 25-15
Ipswich def. Gettysburg, 25-21, 25-11, 25-18
Irene-Wakonda def. Centerville, 25-14, 25-20, 21-25, 17-25, 16-14
Kadoka def. Jones County, 25-12, 25-17, 25-17
Kimball-White Lake def. Hanson, 25-22, 18-25, 8-25, 25-23, 15-13
Langford def. Waubay/Summit, 18-25, 25-21, 16-25, 25-22, 15-11
Miller def. Parkston, 18-25, 25-20, 25-15, 21-25, 15-11
Mitchell def. Sioux Falls Roosevelt, 25-21, 23-25, 23-25, 25-18, 15-12
Mobridge-Pollock def. Stanley County, 25-20, 25-18, 25-11
Parker/Marion def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-18, 25-19, 25-7
Platte-Geddes def. Lyman, 22-25, 25-12, 25-16, 25-23
Rapid City Christian def. Hill City, 28-26, 25-16, 29-27
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket def. James Valley Christian School, 25-8, 25-7, 25-21
Sioux Falls Christian def. Yankton, 25-15, 25-14, 25-13
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Huron, 25-22, 25-16, 24-26, 25-13
Sioux Falls Lutheran def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-7, 25-8, 25-16
Sioux Falls Washington def. Tea, 25-18, 26-24, 25-12
Sioux Valley def. Flandreau, 25-13, 25-15, 25-7
Thunder Basin, Wyo. def. Rapid City Central, 25-22, 25-19, 23-25, 25-21
Tri-Valley, Idaho def. McCook Central-Montrose, 26-24, 18-25, 25-18, 25-18
Wall def. Newell, 25-15, 25-16, 25-12
Warner def. Herreid-Selby, 25-18, 25-14, 25-16
Waverly-South Shore def. Wilmot, 25-12, 25-12, 25-16

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

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Mahpiya Luta Red Cloud 52, St. Francis Indian 0
Marty 56, Flandreau Indian 14
McLaughlin 58, Tiospa Zina 0
Todd County 50, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte/Tiospaye Topa 0
White River 50, Crazy Horse 0

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

UK police release names of Manchester synagogue attack victims as police probe suspect's links

By DANICA KIRKA, KWIYEON HA and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — Police on Friday identified the two men who were killed in a car and knife attack on a synagogue in northwest England on the holiest day of the Jewish year, as Britain's chief rabbi said an "unrelenting wave" of antisemitism lay behind the crime.

Greater Manchester Police said local residents Adrian Daulby, 53, and Melvin Cravitz, 66, died in the attack on the Heaton Park Congregation Synagogue in the Manchester suburb of Crumpsall. Three other people are hospitalized in serious condition.

Police shot and killed a suspect seven minutes after he rammed a car into pedestrians outside the synagogue on Thursday morning and then attacked them with a knife. He wore what appeared to be an explosives belt, which was found to be fake.

The assault took place as people gathered at the Orthodox synagogue on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement and the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, the head of Orthodox Judaism in Britain, said the attack was the result of "an unrelenting wave of Jew hatred" on the streets and online.

"This is the day we hoped we would never see, but which deep down, we knew would come," he wrote on social media.

Attacker was not known to police

Police identified the attacker as Jihad Al-Shamie, a 35-year-old British citizen of Syrian descent who entered the United Kingdom as a young child and became a citizen in 2006. Al-Shamie translates into English as "the Syrian," and authorities are unsure whether that is his birth name.

Police said the crime is being investigated as a terrorist attack. Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said the attacker was not previously known to police or to Prevent, a national counterterrorism program that tries to identify people at risk of radicalization.

Mahmood said "it's too early to say" whether the attacker acted alone or was part of a cell.

Police said they are still probing the attacker's motive. Officers arrested three people Thursday on suspicion of the preparation or commission of acts of terrorism. They are two men in their 30s and a woman in her 60s.

Religious and political leaders condemned the attack and pledged to reassure Britain's Jewish community, which numbers about 300,000.

Police said extra officers would be on the streets of Manchester on Friday and through the weekend to reassure the community.

Recorded antisemitic incidents in the U.K. have risen sharply since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel and Israel's ensuing war against Hamas in Gaza, according to Community Security Trust, an advocacy group for British Jews. More than 1,500 incidents were reported in the first half of the year, the second-highest six-month total reported since the record set over the same period a year earlier.

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Calls for pro-Palestinian protests to be canceled

Prime Minister Keir Starmer denounced the "vile" assailant who "attacked Jews because they are Jews." He promised British Jews that he would do "everything in my power to guarantee you the security that you deserve."

He said the country would come together "to wrap our arms around your community and show you that Britain is a place where you and your family are safe, secure and belong."

Some politicians and religious leaders claimed pro-Palestinian demonstrations, which have been held regularly since the war in Gaza began, had played a role in spreading hatred of Jews. Some say chants such as "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" incite violence. Others, including Jews who support the protests, say they want a ceasefire, an end to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas.

Mirvis, the chief rabbi, urged authorities to "get a grip on these demonstrations. They are dangerous."

"You cannot separate the words on our streets, the actions of people in this way, and what inevitably results, which was yesterday's terrorist attack," he told the BBC.

Mahmood, the home secretary, said 40 people were arrested on Thursday evening at protests that were unrelated to the synagogue attack and were organized in response to the Israeli navy's interception of a flotilla attempting to break Israel's blockade of Gaza.

She said it was "dishonorable" that the protests had not been canceled after the Manchester attack.

Police in London urged organizers to call off a protest planned for Saturday to oppose the banning of the group Palestine Action. Organizers said they would not cancel the demonstration.

Munich Airport temporarily shut after drone sightings, another mysterious overflight in EU airspace

By MATTHIAS SCHRADER Associated Press

MUNICH (AP) — Munich Airport was temporarily shut down overnight after several drone sightings in the area, the latest mysterious drone overflights in the airspace of European Union member countries, officials said.

Germany's air traffic control restricted flights at the airport shortly after 10 p.m. on Thursday and then halted them altogether, airport operators said in a statement. Seventeen flights were unable to take off, affecting almost 3,000 passengers, while 15 arriving flights were diverted to three other airports in Germany and one in Vienna, Austria.

Flights in and out of the airport resumed at 5 a.m. (0300 GMT), said Stefan Bayer, a spokesman for Germany's federal police at Munich airport. Authorities were not immediately able to provide any information about who was responsible for the overflights.

A statement from the airport early Friday said there had been "several drone sightings," without elaborating. Bayer said it wasn't immediately clear how many drones might have been involved. He said police, airline employees and "regular people around the airport" were among witnesses who reported the drone sightings.

After the closure of the runways, federal police deployed helicopters and other means to try to track down the drones, but no signs of them could be found, Bayer said.

Hundreds of stranded passengers spent the night in cots set up in terminals or were taken to hotels and blankets, drinks and snacks were distributed to them, the German news agency dpa reported.

The incident was the latest in a series of incidents of mysterious drone sightings over airports as well as other critical infrastructure sites in the EU in several European Union member countries. A drone incident in Oslo, the capital of Norway, which is a NATO member but not part of the EU, also affected flights there late last month.

It wasn't immediately clear who has been behind the flyovers, but European authorities have expressed concerns Russia could be behind them. Russian authorities have rejected claims of involvement in recent drone incidents in Denmark.

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Officials in Russia and close ally Belarus acknowledged last month that some drones used as part of Russia's war in Ukraine had entered the territory of EU and NATO member Poland, prompting a scramble by Polish and NATO allies in which fighter jets were deployed to shoot them down.

The drone overflights were major focus of a summit of EU and European leaders in Copenhagen, Denmark, this week. Authorities have vowed to step up measures to minimize and thwart the threat posed by drones.

Separately, a Russia-linked oil tanker that authorities in France detained — and which had been suspected of possible involvement in the drone incursions over Denmark — was back at sea on Friday.

A thorough search by French Navy commandos that boarded the ship found no drones, no drone-launching equipment and no evidence that drones had taken off from the vessel, according to an official with knowledge of the investigation who spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss it publicly.

The ship-tracking website Marine Traffic showed that the tanker was navigating at sea again on Friday morning, heading southwest from the French Atlantic coast where it was detained and apparently bound for the Suez Canal.

French authorities said before it departed that the tanker's captain will go on trial in February over the crew's alleged refusal to cooperate when French authorities stopped and boarded it.

An investigation led by the French Navy concluded that the ship, coming from Russia and heading to India with a "large oil shipment," was flying no flag, French prosecutor Stéphane Kellenberger.

The tanker's name has changed several times and it's now known as "Pushpa" or "Boracay." Its route from a Russian oil terminal into the Atlantic took it past the coast of Denmark.

What to know about the attack at a synagogue in England on Yom Kippur

LONDON (AP) — A man drove a car into people and stabbed them outside a synagogue in northwest England on Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year.

Two people were killed and at least three were hurt in the attack on Thursday at the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue in Manchester. The attacker was shot and killed by police, who called his actions a terrorist attack.

Here's what to know:

The attack

Police were called to the synagogue in the Manchester suburb of Crumpsall, about 200 miles (320 kilometers) northwest of London, shortly after 9:30 a.m. Thursday by a member of the public.

The attacker rammed a car into pedestrians, then attacked them with a knife, and wore what appeared to be an explosives belt. He was shot dead by police seven minutes after they were called to the site. The bomb belt was later found to be fake.

Police praised the "quick response" of the witness as well as the bravery of security guards and worshippers for preventing the suspect from entering the synagogue.

The victims

Greater Manchester Police said two people were killed by the attacker: Adrian Daulby, 53, and Melvin Cravitz, 66, both members of the local Jewish community.

Three people were hospitalized in serious condition. One person sustained a stab wound while a second was struck by the car driven by the attacker. A third person arrived at a hospital with an injury that may have been sustained as officers stopped the attacker.

The suspect

Police said the man responsible for the attack was Jihad Al-Shamie, a 35-year-old British citizen of Syrian descent who came to the U.K. as a young child and became a citizen in 2006.

Authorities said he was not previously known to police or the security services. Al-Shamie translates into English as "the Syrian" and authorities are unsure whether that is his birth name.

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Three other people — two men in their 30s and a woman in her 60s — have been arrested on suspicion of preparing or committing acts of terrorism. They are in custody but have not been charged.

Act of terrorism

Around six hours after the incident, the Metropolitan Police in London, which leads counterterrorism policing operations across the U.K., confirmed that the incident is being treated as a terrorist attack. Assistant Commissioner Laurence Taylor said police forces across the country are stepping up patrols at synagogues and other Jewish sites “to provide reassurance to all those communities who have been affected by this incident.”

Police said they are still working to determine the motive behind the attack. But it took place on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement and most solemn day in the Jewish calendar. Synagogues are filled with people on the holy day.

Government response

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer returned early from a summit of European leaders in Copenhagen, Denmark, to London where he chaired an emergency security meeting. Afterward, he condemned the “vile individual” for attacking Jews “because they are Jews.” He also promised that he would do everything in his power to guarantee the security of the Jewish population, “starting with a more visible police presence.”

Jewish community’s reaction

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis said the attack was “the day we hoped we would never see, but which deep down, we knew would come,” and urged authorities to stem a rising tide of antisemitism in Britain. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that “weakness in the face of terrorism only brings more terrorism. Only strength and unity can defeat it.”

King’s shock

King Charles III said he and his wife, Queen Camilla, were “deeply shocked and saddened to learn of the horrific attack in Manchester, especially on such a significant day for the Jewish community.”

Politicians from across the political spectrum also condemned the attack, as did Muslim, Christian and other religious leaders.

Rising antisemitism

The U.K. has traditionally been a safe country for Jewish people though antisemitic incidents in the U.K. have risen following Hamas’ Oct. 7 attack on Israel and Israel’s ongoing military campaign in Gaza, according to the Community Security Trust, which monitors antisemitism in the U.K.

Starmer acknowledged that antisemitism is “a hatred that is rising once again, and Britain must defeat it once again.”

Schlittler strikes out 12 in postseason debut as Yankees beat Red Sox 4-0 to win Wild Card Series

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Rookie right-hander Cam Schlittler struck out 12 in eight dominant innings and the New York Yankees beat the Boston Red Sox 4-0 on Thursday night to win their AL Wild Card Series in a deciding third game.

Taking his place in Yankees-Red Sox rivalry lore, the 24-year-old Schlittler overpowered Boston with 100 mph heat in his 15th major league start and pitched New York into a best-of-five Division Series against AL East champion Toronto beginning Saturday.

“A star is born tonight. He’s a special kid, man,” Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. “He is not afraid. He expects this.”

Amed Rosario and Anthony Volpe each had an RBI single in a four-run fourth as New York became the first team to lose the opener of a best-of-three Wild Card Series and come back to advance since Major League Baseball expanded the first round of the playoffs in 2022.

“It felt like the most pressure-packed game I’ve ever experienced — World Series, clinching games,

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whatever," Boone said.

Schlittler, who debuted in the majors July 9, grew up a Red Sox fan in Walpole, Massachusetts — but has said several times he wanted to play for the Yankees. He had faced Boston only once before, as a freshman at Northeastern in a 2020 spring training exhibition.

Schlittler said he spoke about the moment Wednesday with Yankees great Andy Pettitte, a five-time World Series champion and winner of a record 19 postseason games.

"I woke up and I was locked in, so I knew exactly what I needed to do to go out there, especially against my hometown team," Schlittler said.

He outpitched Connelly Early, a 23-year-old left-hander who debuted on Sept. 9 and became Boston's youngest postseason starting pitcher since 21-year-old Babe Ruth in 1916.

Schlittler struck out two more than any other Yankees pitcher had in his postseason debut, allowing just five singles and walking none. He threw 11 pitches 100 mph or faster — including six in the first inning.

Schlittler threw 75 of 107 pitches for strikes, starting 22 of 29 batters with strikes and topping out at 100.8 mph. David Bednar worked around a leadoff walk in the ninth as the Red Sox failed to advance a runner past second base.

Bucky Dent threw out the ceremonial first pitch on the 47th anniversary of his go-ahead, three-run homer for New York at Fenway Park in an AL East tiebreaker game, and the Yankees went on to vanquish their longtime rivals the way they often used to.

New York, which arrived packed for a late-night flight to Toronto, won its second straight after losing eight of nine playoff meetings with Boston dating to 2004 and edged ahead 14-13 in postseason games between the teams.

The Red Sox cost themselves in the fourth with a defense that committed a big league-high 116 errors during the regular season.

New York's rally began when Cody Bellinger hit a soft fly into the triangle between center fielder Cedanne Rafaela, right fielder Willyer Abreu and second baseman Romy González. The ball fell just in front of Rafaela, 234 feet from home plate, as Bellinger hustled into second with a double.

Giancarlo Stanton walked on a full count and with one out Rosario grounded a single into left, just past diving shortstop Trevor Story, to drive in Bellinger with the first run.

Jazz Chisholm Jr.'s single loaded the bases, and Volpe hit a grounder just past González, who had been shifted toward second, and into right for an RBI single and a 2-0 lead.

Austin Wells hit a potential double-play grounder that first baseman Nathaniel Lowe tried to backhand on an in-between hop. The ball glanced off his glove and into shallow right field for an error as two runs scored.

"We didn't play defense," Boston manager Alex Cora said. "They didn't hit the ball hard, but they found holes and it happened fast."

Yankees third baseman Ryan McMahon made the defensive play of the game when he caught Jarren Duran's eighth-inning foul pop and somersaulted over the railing into Boston's dugout, then emerged smiling and apparently unhurt.

Up next

RHP Luis Gil (4-1, 3.32 ERA) or RHP Will Warren (9-8, 4.44) will likely start the Division Series opener Saturday for the Yankees at Toronto, which is expected to go with RHP Kevin Gausman (10-11, 3.59) or RHP Shane Bieber (4-2, 3.57).

Indonesian crews pull 3 bodies from rubble of collapsed school with more than 50 boys still missing

By NINIEK KARMINI and DAVID RISING Associated Press

SIDOARJO, Indonesia (AP) — The bodies of three boys were pulled early Friday from beneath the rubble of a school that collapsed in Indonesia and with more than 50 students still unaccounted for the death toll was expected to rise, authorities said.

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Rescue crews had been working by hand since the collapse of the school Monday as they searched for survivors, but with no more signs of life detected by Thursday they turned to heavy excavators equipped with jackhammers to help them progress more rapidly.

The structure fell on top of hundreds of people in a prayer hall at the century-old al Khoziny Islamic boarding school in Sidoarjo on the eastern side of Indonesia's Java island.

The students were mostly boys in grades seven to 12, between the ages of 12 and 19. Female students were praying in another part of the building and managed to escape, survivors said.

Eight students have been confirmed dead and about 105 injured, many with head injuries and broken bones, and 55 remain unaccounted for.

Two of the bodies found Friday were in the prayer hall area and one was found closer to an exit as if he had been attempting to escape, according to Suharyanto, the head of Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency, who goes by one name as is common in Indonesia.

Authorities have said the building was two stories, but two more levels were being added without a permit. Police said the old building's foundation apparently was unable to support two floors of concrete and collapsed during the pouring process.

School officials have not yet commented.

Crews worked in the hot sun Friday to break up and remove large slabs of concrete, with the smell of decomposing bodies a grim reminder of what they would find underneath.

Suharyanto told reporters at the scene that the recovery efforts were expected to be complete by the end of Saturday.

Sean 'Diddy' Combs' is set to be sentenced and faces the possibility of years in prison

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sean "Diddy" Combs faces sentencing Friday in a sordid criminal case that could keep him locked up for years.

The hip-hop mogul was convicted in July of flying people around the country for sexual encounters, including his girlfriends and male sex workers, in violation of the federal Mann Act.

A jury acquitted Combs, 55, of more serious racketeering conspiracy and sex trafficking charges that could have put him away for life.

Prosecutors say he should spend more than 11 years in prison for his conviction on two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution. Combs' lawyers want him freed now, saying the long sentence sought by prosecutors is "wildly out of proportion" to the crime.

U.S. District Judge Arun Subramanian, who will decide the sentence, has signaled that Combs is unlikely to be freed soon. He twice rejected bail for the rapper, who has been jailed at a federal detention center in Brooklyn since his arrest a year ago.

The sentencing comes after a nearly two-month trial featuring testimony from women who described being beaten, threatened, sexually assaulted and blackmailed by Combs.

A former girlfriend, R&B singer Casandra "Cassie" Ventura, said Combs ordered her to have "disgusting" sex with strangers hundreds of times during their decade-long relationship.

The jury was repeatedly shown video clips of Combs dragging and beating Cassie in a Los Angeles hotel hallway after one of those multiday sexual marathons, which she referred to as "freak-offs" during her four days of testimony.

A woman who testified under the pseudonym "Jane" told jurors she too was subjected to violence and felt obligated to perform sexually with male sex workers at drug-fueled "hotel nights" while Combs watched and sometimes filmed.

To support their racketeering case, prosecutors also brought on witnesses who testified about other violent acts. A former personal assistant testified that Combs raped her. One of Cassie's friends told the jury Combs dangled her from a 17th floor balcony. The rapper Kid Cudi testified that Combs broke into

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his home after learning he and Cassie were dating.

Although the jury acquitted Combs of racketeering, the judge can still consider that testimony as he decides the sentence.

Subramanian is also considering letters submitted by Combs and some of his accusers.

In his letter to the judge Thursday, Combs promised he would never commit another crime if released, saying, "The old me died in jail and a new version of me was reborn."

In her letter, Cassie called Combs a manipulative abuser who has "no interest in changing or becoming better."

"He will always be the same cruel, power-hungry, manipulative man that he is," she wrote.

A former personal assistant who said Combs raped her in 2010 asked Subramanian to deliver a sentence "that takes into account the ongoing danger my abuser poses to me, and to others." The former assistant, who testified under the pseudonym "Mia," is expected to speak at Friday's sentencing.

Combs will address the court, according to court filings. His defense team is also planning to play a 15-minute video.

Combs' lawyers say the sexual encounters were consensual and that being in jail has hastened Combs' sobriety and forced him to learn from his misbehavior. They have said there is no need for him to remain behind bars because he has already been punished enough.

At a court hearing last week, Combs seemed buoyant, as he told his mother and children that he is "getting closer to going home."

Taylor Swift's 'The Life of a Showgirl' is out now. Here's what to know

By MARIA SHERMAN AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Lights, camera, action. Taylor Swift's 12th studio album, "The Life of a Showgirl," has arrived. Are you ready for it?

Swift announced her latest era back in August, when she began teasing the release.

Here's everything you need to know ahead of its drop date: how to stream, which variants exist, and of course, how the album came together. Enjoy the show!

How to listen to Swift's "The Life of a Showgirl"

"The Life of a Showgirl" is streaming on all major platforms, including Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon Music.

Fans were able to pre-save the album ahead of its release on Oct. 3. Pre-saving ensures the new music automatically appears in a fan's library the moment it is available. It is also a way for an artist to promote streams ahead of the drop date.

Spotify announced Monday that Swift's album surpassed five million pre-saves on their platform to become the most pre-saved album in its history. The previous title holder? Her 2024 album "The Tortured Poets Department."

In addition to the many streaming options, there will also be a digital-download variant of "The Life of a Showgirl" available via iTunes, featuring a new cover image and a nearly three-minute "exclusive video from Taylor herself detailing inspirations behind the album" labeled "A Look Behind the Curtain."

What physical variants are there?

Target is once again a major partner with Swift. Their stores are carrying three CD variants, titled as "It's Frightening," "It's Rapturous" and "It's Beautiful" editions. There is also an exclusive vinyl release, "The Crowd Is Your King" edition in "summertime spritz pink shimmer vinyl." Many Target locations will remain open past midnight on the day of release for superfans to pick up in real time.

There are a number of other vinyl variants as well: "The Tiny Bubble in Champagne Collection," which features two vinyl variants described as "under bright lights pearlescent vinyl" and "red lipstick & lace transparent vinyl."

There is also "The Baby That's Show Business Collection," in two colorways: "lovely bouquet golden

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vinyl" and "lakeside beach blue sparkle vinyl."

Then there's "The Shiny Bug Collection" in "violet shimmer marbled vinyl" and "wintergreen and onyx marbled vinyl."

And of course, there is the standard LP and cassette, in "sweat and vanilla perfume Portofino orange vinyl."

Artwork varies throughout.

What do we know about the album so far?

Swift partially announced her 12-track new album "The Life of a Showgirl" on the "New Heights" podcast hosted by Travis Kelce — Swift's fiancé and Kansas City Chiefs tight end — and his brother, Jason Kelce, the former Philadelphia Eagles center.

In the full episode, Swift revealed she worked on the album in Sweden while she was on the "Eras Tour" — flying between dates to record, truly embodying the album's title, "The Life of a Showgirl." The entire album was completed with producers Max Martin and Shellback, who Swift previously collaborated with on 2012's "Red," 2014's "1989" and 2017's "Reputation." Her frequent producing partner Jack Antonoff was not mentioned.

She described the release as full of "bangers." "I care about this record more than I can even overstate," she said, agreeing with Travis Kelce when he described the release as "a lot more upbeat" than 2024's "The Tortured Poets Department."

Across the album, there is only one feature listed: the title track, "The Life of a Showgirl," will include Sabrina Carpenter.

Trump no longer distancing himself from Project 2025 as he uses shutdown to further pursue its goals

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is openly embracing the conservative blueprint he desperately tried to distance himself from during the 2024 campaign, as one of its architects works to use the government shutdown to accelerate his goals of slashing the size of the federal workforce and punishing Democratic states.

In a post on his Truth Social site Thursday morning, Trump announced he would be meeting with his budget chief, "Russ Vought, he of PROJECT 2025 Fame, to determine which of the many Democrat Agencies, most of which are a political SCAM, he recommends to be cut, and whether or not those cuts will be temporary or permanent."

The comments represented a dramatic about-face for Trump, who spent much of last year denouncing Project 2025, The Heritage Foundation's massive proposed overhaul of the federal government, which was drafted by many of his longtime allies and current and former administration officials.

Both of Trump's Democratic rivals, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, made the far-right wish list a centerpiece of their campaigns, and a giant replica of the book featured prominently onstage at the Democratic National Convention.

"Donald Trump and his stooges lied through their teeth about Project 2025, and now he's running the country straight into it," said Ammar Moussa, a former spokesperson for both campaigns. "There's no comfort in being right — just anger that we're stuck with the consequences of his lies."

Shalanda Young, director of the Office of Management and Budget under Biden, said the administration had clearly been following the project's blueprint all along.

"I guess Democrats were right, but that doesn't make me feel better," she said. "I'm angry that this is happening after being told that this document was not going to be the centerpiece of this administration."

Asked about Trump's reversal, White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson said, "Democrats are desperate to talk about anything aside from their decision to hurt the American people by shutting down the government."

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Project what?

Top Trump campaign leaders spent much of 2024 livid at The Heritage Foundation for publishing a book full of unpopular proposals that Democrats tried to pin on the campaign to warn a second Trump term would be too extreme.

While many of the policies outlined in its 900-plus pages aligned closely with the agenda that Trump was proposing — particularly on curbing immigration and dismantling certain federal agencies — others called for action Trump had never discussed, like banning pornography, or Trump's team was actively trying to avoid, like withdrawing approval for abortion medication.

Trump repeatedly insisted he knew nothing about the group or who was behind it, despite his close ties with many of its authors. They included John McEntee, his former director of the White House Presidential Personnel Office, and Paul Dans, former chief of staff at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

"I know nothing about Project 2025," Trump insisted in July 2024. "I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal. Anything they do, I wish them luck, but I have nothing to do with them."

Trump's campaign chiefs were equally critical.

"President Trump's campaign has been very clear for over a year that Project 2025 had nothing to do with the campaign, did not speak for the campaign, and should not be associated with the campaign or the President in any way," wrote Susie Wiles and Chris LaCivita in a campaign memo. They added, "Reports of Project 2025's demise would be greatly welcomed and should serve as notice to anyone or any group trying to misrepresent their influence with President Trump and his campaign — it will not end well for you."

Trump has since gone on to stock his second administration with its authors, including Vought, "border czar" Tom Homan, CIA Director John Ratcliffe, immigration hard-liner Stephen Miller and Brendan Carr, who wrote Project 2025's chapter on the Federal Communications Commission and now chairs the panel.

Heritage did not respond to a request for comment Thursday. But Dans, the project's former director, said it's been "exciting" to see so much of what was laid out in the book put into action.

"It's gratifying. We're very proud of the work that was done for this express purpose: to have a doer like President Trump ready to roll on Day One," said Dans, who is currently running for Senate against Lindsey Graham in South Carolina.

Trump administration uses the shutdown to further its goals

Since his swearing in, Trump has been pursuing plans laid out in Project 2025 to dramatically expand presidential power and reduce the size of the federal workforce. They include efforts like the Department of Government Efficiency and budget rescission packages, which have led to billions of dollars being stalled, scrapped or withheld by the administration so far this year.

They are now using the shutdown to accelerate their progress.

Ahead of the funding deadline, OMB directed agencies to prepare for additional mass firings of federal workers, rather than simply furloughing those who are not deemed essential, as has been the usual practice during past shutdowns. Vought told House GOP lawmakers in a private conference call Wednesday that layoffs would begin in the next day or two.

They have also used the shutdown to target projects championed by Democrats, including canceling \$8 billion in green energy projects in states with Democratic senators and withholding \$18 billion for transportation projects in New York City that have been championed by Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries in their home state.

Dreaming of this moment

The moves are part of a broader effort to concentrate federal authority in the presidency, which permeated Project 2025.

In his chapter in the blueprint, Vought made clear he wanted the president and OMB to wield more direct power.

"The Director must view his job as the best, most comprehensive approximation of the President's mind," he wrote. Vought described OMB as "a President's air-traffic control system," which should be "involved in all aspects of the White House policy process," becoming "powerful enough to override implementing

agencies' bureaucracies."

Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, said on Fox News Channel that Vought "has a plan, and that plan is going to succeed in further empowering Trump. This is going to be the Democrats' worst nightmare."

House Speaker Mike Johnson echoed that message, insisting the government shutdown gives Trump and his budget director vast power over the federal government and the unilateral power to determine which personnel and policies are essential and which are not.

Schumer has handed "the keys of the kingdom to the president," Johnson said Thursday. "Because they have decided to vote to shut the government down, they have now effectively turned off the legislative branch ... and they've turned it over to the executive."

Young said the Constitution gives the White House no such power and chastised Republicans in Congress for abandoning their duty to serve as a check on the president.

"I don't want to hear a lecture about handing the keys over," she said. "The keys are gone. They're lost. They're down a drain. This shutdown is not what lost the keys."

Dingler, Pérez lead Tigers past Guardians 6-3 and into AL Division Series against Mariners

By JOE REEDY AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Dillon Dingler hit a tiebreaking homer in the sixth inning, Wenceel Pérez drove in a pair of runs in a four-run seventh and the Detroit Tigers defeated the Cleveland Guardians 6-3 on Thursday in the deciding Game 3 of their AL Wild Card Series.

It is the second straight season the Tigers have won a Wild Card Series on the road. Detroit heads to Seattle for the first two games of a best-of-five Division Series, with Game 1 on Saturday.

It was also a little bit of sweet revenge for the Tigers after their season ended in Cleveland last year with a loss in Game 5 of the ALDS.

"I don't think it needs to be any sweeter than what it feels like right now because you have to earn these wins," manager A.J. Hinch said. "You have to earn the opportunity to play in October. You've got to earn a full-series win over a good team, a hot team, a team that we know well."

The AL West champion Mariners, the second seed, took four of six regular-season meetings with the Tigers, who are the third AL wild card.

José Ramírez drove in Cleveland's first run with a single. The AL Central champion Guardians were 1 1/2 games back in early July before completing the biggest comeback in division or league play in baseball history.

However, they ran out of steam in the playoffs as Detroit turned the page after posting the second-worst record in the majors in September (7-17).

"It stinks for it to end that way. I couldn't be more proud of them, of what we accomplished," Cleveland manager Stephen Vogt said. "It's not enough. We want more. And I think that's really the message, is let this sting. We're close. We are really close. We're not quite there yet."

The game was tied 1-all with two outs in the sixth when Dingler got an elevated changeup from Joey Cantillo on a 1-1 count and drove it 401 feet into the bleachers in left-center to put the Tigers on top.

It was also the first postseason hit and RBI for the Tigers catcher.

"I was able to get a pitch to hit and do a little damage," Dingler said. "I feel like the momentum in the series was the biggest thing. The team with the biggest momentum or the most momentum was the one that was going to carry on."

Detroit then broke it open in the seventh by sending 10 batters to the plate and scoring four times to make it 6-1.

With one out and the bases loaded, Pérez lined a base hit to right off Erik Sabrowski to drive in Javier Báez and Parker Meadows. Hunter Gaddis came in and gave up RBI singles to Spencer Torkelson and Riley Greene, which brought in Kerry Carpenter and Pérez.

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Kyle Finnegan got the win, retiring all four batters he faced in relief. Cantillo took the loss.

"When Wenceel got the hit — I don't know why, in baseball, it seems like one good thing happens and then two, three, four, five at-bats in a row were exceptional," Hinch said. "We wanted to get even more greedy and do more. But it was nice to separate and breathe a little bit. But knowing they weren't going to give in."

The Tigers opened the scoring in the third. With one out and runners on the corners, Carpenter hit a grounder down the first-base line that deflected off C.J. Kayfus' glove when he tried to backhand it. The ball rolled into foul territory near the stands as Meadows scored. Carpenter went to second and Gleyber Torres advanced to third on what the official scorer ruled a double.

The Guardians tied it in the fourth. George Valera led off with a double to the right-field corner and scored on Ramírez's base hit on a knuckle curve by starter Jack Flaherty on a full count.

The single was the 40th hit of Ramírez's postseason career, making him the fifth player in franchise history to reach that mark.

In the eighth inning, Detroit reliever Will Vest dropped a throw while covering first base on Ramírez's grounder for an error that allowed Brayan Rocchio and Steven Kwan to score. Vest quickly recovered the ball near the dugout, however, and threw out Ramírez trying to reach second on the play.

Man kills 2 in car ramming and stabbing attack at English synagogue on Jewish holy day

By BRIAN MELLEY, PAN PYLAS and IAN HODGSON Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — An assailant drove a car into people outside a synagogue Thursday in northern England and stabbed two of them to death in what police called a terrorist attack on the holiest day of the Jewish year.

Officers shot and killed the suspect at the synagogue in Manchester, police said, though authorities took some time to confirm he was dead because he was wearing a vest that made it appear as if he had explosives. Police later said he did not have a bomb.

The Metropolitan Police force in London, which leads the nation's counter-terrorism policing operations, declared the rampage a terrorist attack. The assault took place as people gathered at an Orthodox synagogue in an outer neighborhood of Manchester on Yom Kippur, the day of atonement and the most solemn day in the Jewish calendar.

Authorities said the man believed responsible was a 35-year-old British citizen of Syrian descent named Jihad Al-Shamie, who entered the U.K. as a young child and became a citizen in 2006. An initial check of records showed he was not part of a U.K. counter-terror program that tries to identify people at risk for being radicalized.

Police also said three people were arrested on suspicion of acts of terrorism. They are two men in their 30s and a woman in her 60s.

Police said the two people killed were Jewish. Authorities were working to formally identify them and determine the motive for the attack.

At least three people were hospitalized in serious condition, officials said. One person sustained a stab wound while a second was struck by the car involved in the attack. A third person arrived at a hospital with an injury that may have been sustained as officers stopped the attacker. A fourth injured person was taken to the hospital, but their injuries and condition were not available.

Denouncements of the attack and concern for Jewish communities

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer denounced the "vile" assailant who "attacked Jews because they are Jews." He promised the Jewish community that he would do "everything in my power to guarantee you the security that you deserve, starting with a more visible police presence."

"I promise you that over the coming days, you will see the other Britain, the Britain of compassion, of decency, of love," Starmer said. "I promise you that this Britain will come together to wrap our arms around your community and show you that Britain is a place where you and your family are safe, secure

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and belong.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel grieved with the Jewish community in the U.K.

“Our hearts are with the families of the murdered, and we pray for the swift recovery of the wounded,” he said. “As I warned at the UN: Weakness in the face of terrorism only brings more terrorism. Only strength and unity can defeat it.”

Antisemitic incidents in the U.K. have hit record levels following Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel and Israel’s ensuing military campaign in Gaza, according to Community Security Trust, an advocacy group for British Jews that works to eliminate antisemitism.

More than 1,500 incidents were reported in the first half of the year, the second-highest six-month total reported since the record set over the same period a year earlier.

“This is every rabbi’s or every Jewish person’s worst nightmare,” said Rabbi Jonathan Romain, of Maidenhead Synagogue and head of the Rabbinic Court of Great Britain. “Not only is this a sacred day, the most sacred in the Jewish calendar, but it’s also a time of mass gathering.”

Witnesses describe a car driving toward the synagogue and then a stabbing attack

Greater Manchester Police said they were called to the Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue around 9:30 a.m., shortly after services had begun.

Chief Constable Stephen Watson said the man drove directly at pedestrians outside the synagogue and then attacked them with a knife.

Chava Lewin, who lives next to the synagogue, said she heard a bang and thought it might be a firework until her husband ran inside their house and said there had been a “terrorist attack.”

A witness told her that she saw a car driving erratically crash into the gates of the house of worship.

“She thought maybe he had a heart attack,” Lewin said. “The second he got out of the car, he started stabbing anyone near him. He went for the security guard and tried to break into the synagogue.”

Minutes later, police fired shots at the assailant.

Video on social media showed police with guns pointed at a person lying on the ground beneath a blue Star of David on the brick wall of the synagogue.

A bystander could be heard on the video saying the man had a bomb and was trying to detonate it. When the man tried to stand up, a gunshot rang out and he fell to the ground.

On the sidewalk outside the synagogue gate nearby, the body of another person lay in a pool of blood.

Watson credited security guards and congregants for their bravery in preventing the assailant from getting inside the prayer service.

Police later detonated an explosive to get into the man’s car.

Manchester was the site of Britain’s deadliest attack in recent years, the 2017 suicide bombing at an Ariana Grande concert that killed 22 people.

Authorities declare an emergency

Immediately after the attack, police declared “Plato,” the national code word used by police and emergency services when responding to a “marauding terror attack.”

Starmer, who flew back to London early from a summit of European leaders in Copenhagen, Denmark, to chair a meeting of the government’s emergency committee, said additional police officers would be deployed at synagogues across the U.K.

King Charles III said he and Queen Camilla were “deeply shocked and saddened” to learn of the attack “on such a significant day for the Jewish community.”

“Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected by this appalling incident, and we greatly appreciate the swift actions of the emergency services,” he said on his social media feed.

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Cubs beat Padres 3-1 to win Wild Card Series, advance to NL Division Series against Brewers

By JAY COHEN AP Baseball Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Pete Crow-Armstrong hit an RBI single off a shaky Yu Darvish, and the Chicago Cubs shut down Fernando Tatis Jr. and the San Diego Padres for a clinching 3-1 victory in Game 3 of their NL Wild Card Series on Thursday.

Backed by a raucous crowd of 40,895 at Wrigley Field, Chicago used its stellar defense to advance in the postseason for the first time since 2017. Michael Busch hit a solo homer, and Jameson Taillon pitched four shutout innings before manager Craig Counsell used five relievers to close it out.

"This group's battle-tested," Cubs shortstop Dansby Swanson said. "This group can grind it out. This group never backs down from and shies away from anything. This is such an amazing thing to be a part of."

After Brad Keller faltered in the ninth — allowing Jackson Merrill's leadoff homer and hitting two batters with pitches — Andrew Kittredge earned the save by retiring Jake Cronenworth on a bouncer to third and Freddy Fermin on a flyball to center field.

Next up for Chicago is a matchup with the NL Central champion Brewers in a compelling Division Series, beginning with Game 1 on Saturday in Milwaukee.

Counsell managed the Brewers for nine years before he was hired by the Cubs in November 2023, and he has been lustily booed in Milwaukee ever since he departed.

"It's going to be a great atmosphere," Counsell said. "It's Cubs-Brewers. That's going to be as good as it gets. It's always a great atmosphere when the two teams play each other."

It was another painful ending for San Diego after it made the postseason for the fourth time in six years but fell short of a pennant again. The Padres forced a decisive Game 3 with a 3-0 victory on Wednesday, but their biggest stars flopped in the series finale.

"There's a lot of hurt guys in that clubhouse, but we left it all out on the field, and there's no regrets on anybody's part," manager Mike Shildt said. "Just disappointed."

Tatis went 0 for 4 with three strikeouts, including a flyball to right that stranded runners at second and third in the fifth. Machado, who hit a two-run homer in Game 2, bounced to Swanson for the final out of the eighth, leaving a runner at third.

"It's not fun at all. We definitely missed an opportunity," Tatis said.

Darvish also struggled against his former team. The Japanese right-hander was pulled after the first four Cubs batters reached in the second inning, capped by the first of Crow-Armstrong's three hits.

Jeremiah Estrada came in and issued a bases-loaded walk to Swanson, handing the Cubs a 2-0 lead. Estrada limited the damage by striking out Matt Shaw before Busch bounced into an inning-ending double play.

Taillon allowed two hits and struck out four. Caleb Thielbar got two outs before Daniel Palencia wiggled out of a fifth-inning jam while earning his second win of the series. Drew Pomeranz handled the seventh before Keller worked the eighth.

The Cubs supported their bullpen with another solid day in the field. Swanson made a slick play on Luis Arraez's leadoff grounder in the sixth, and then turned an inning-ending double play following a walk to Machado.

Crow-Armstrong, who went 0 for 6 with five strikeouts in the first two games of the series, robbed Machado of a hit with a sliding catch in center in the first.

"It's just the next step for us," Busch said. "You set out a goal before each and every year to do stuff like this, and you celebrate it, and it's been fun to celebrate and continue to celebrate it tonight, but there's a lot of work ahead."

Up next

Chicago went 7-6 against Milwaukee this season, outscoring the Brewers 60-56. The NL Central rivals last played in August, when the Cubs won three times in a five-game series.

Putin praises Trump but warns supplies of US long-range missiles to Ukraine will badly hurt ties

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin warned the United States that supplies of long-range missiles to Ukraine will seriously damage relations between Moscow and Washington but will not change the situation on the battlefield, where the Russian army is making slow but steady advances.

The potential supply of U.S. Tomahawk cruise missiles to Kyiv will signal a “qualitatively new stage of escalation, including in relations between Russia and the U.S.,” Putin said at a forum of international foreign policy experts in Russia’s Black Sea resort of Sochi.

The Russian leader noted that even though Tomahawk missiles will inflict damage on Russia if supplied to Ukraine, Russian air defenses will quickly adapt to the new threat. “It will certainly not change the balance of force on the battlefield,” he added, emphasizing that the Russian military is continuously making gains against Ukraine.

Asked about Trump dismissing Russia as a “paper tiger” because of its failure to defeat its smaller neighbor after more than 3 1/2 years of fighting, Putin argued that Russia has faced all the NATO allies backing Kyiv.

“We are fighting against the entire bloc of NATO and we keep moving, keep advancing and feel confident and we are a paper tiger; what NATO itself is?” he said. “A paper tiger? Go and deal with this paper tiger then.”

A White House official who was not authorized to publicly discuss the issue and spoke on condition of anonymity said Russia’s economy and reputation have taken a battering because of the war as Putin has repeatedly rejected proposals for a peace deal that would have benefited his country.

Putin hails Alaska’s summit with Trump and reaffirms nuclear pact’s extension offer

At the same time, Putin hailed U.S. President Donald Trump’s efforts to help negotiate peace in Ukraine and described their August summit in Alaska as productive.

“It was good that we made an attempt to search for and find possible ways to settle the Ukrainian crisis,” he said, adding that he felt “comfortable” talking to Trump.

Putin also reaffirmed his offer to the U.S. to extend their last remaining nuclear arms control pact for one more year after it expires in February. The 2010 New START treaty limits each country to no more than 1,550 deployed nuclear warheads and 700 deployed missiles and bombers.

“If they don’t need it, we don’t need it either,” he said, adding that “we feel confident about our nuclear shield.”

While praising Trump and trying to emphasize potential common interests, the Russian president sent a stern warning to Ukraine’s Western allies against trying to seize ships that carry Russian oil to global markets. He argued that would amount to piracy and could trigger a forceful response while sharply destabilizing the global oil market.

Threatening a forceful response to Western “piracy,” mocking drone claims

Asked about the detention of an oil tanker off France’s Atlantic coast, which President Emmanuel Macron linked to Russia’s so-called shadow fleet of aging tankers of uncertain ownership that are avoiding Western sanctions, Putin cast it as an attempt by Macron to distract public attention from his country’s own internal problems and mockingly likened the French leader to Napoleon.

He strongly warned the West against such action, arguing that it defies international maritime law and risks triggering military confrontation. “It’s piracy, and how do you deal with pirates? You destroy them,” he said.

Putin also scoffed at Western claims of possible Russian involvement in recent drone flights over Denmark, casting them as part of purported NATO efforts to “inflare tensions to boost the defense spending.”

Intrusions into NATO’s airspace blamed on Russia reached an unprecedented scale last month. A swarm of Russian drones flew into Poland, Estonia complained about an intrusion by Russian fighter jets and numerous unidentified drones were sighted over Denmark, Germany and other countries in what some

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European officials described as Moscow testing NATO's response.

European defense ministers have agreed to develop a "drone wall" along their borders to better detect, track and intercept drones violating Europe's airspace.

Putin dismissed Western allegations of Russia's purported aggressive plans against NATO allies as "non-sense" aimed at distracting public attention from domestic problems.

"We are carefully watching the growing militarization of Europe," he said. "Is all of this just words or is it time for us to take countermeasures? No one should have doubt that Russia's countermeasures will not take a long time to come."

Putin's reaction to Charlie Kirk's assassination

Asked about Charlie Kirk's assassination, Putin called it a "heinous crime" that reflected a "deep split" in American society. He hailed Kirk as a hero killed for promoting the same conservative values that Russia shares.

Putin also praised Michael Gloss, an American and the son of a deputy CIA chief, who joined the Russian military and was killed in action in Ukraine in 2024. He said he had awarded Gloss with a medal, which he handed to Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff during his visit to Moscow.

The Russian leader likened Gloss to Kirk, saying they championed similar "traditional" values. "He gave his life while defending those values as a Russian soldier, and Kirk gave his life while fighting for the same values in the United States," Putin said.

In response to questions about Gloss, the CIA said in a statement that the agency "considers Michael's passing to be a private family matter — and not a national security issue. The entire CIA family is heartbroken for their loss."

At one point during the four-hour event televised live, Putin, a former Soviet KGB officer and one-time head of Russia's top domestic security agency, misspoke and referred to himself as "the CIA director" while describing a meeting with President George W. Bush and his administration officials. "The future director," Putin quipped as the audience broke into laughter.

A decade after the refugee crisis that shook Europe, a Syrian family becomes German

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Nearly a decade after fleeing Syria's civil war, Rahaf Alshaar sat on her couch in a leafy suburb of Berlin sipping Arabic coffee spiced with cardamom.

When she, her husband and their three daughters arrived in Germany as refugees, they adapted quickly to their new country: learning the language, finding jobs and attending school.

"It was a lot of hard work, but I'm proud of what we achieved," Alshaar, 44, told The Associated Press in a recent interview.

Earlier this year, the whole family became German citizens and bought a house with a nice garden.

"We are Germans," said 52-year-old Basem Wahbeh, Alshaar's husband.

Their family arrived among an influx of migrants from war-torn Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan who took refuge in Germany, peaking at more than 1 million in 2015. The arrival of so many asylum-seekers in a single year strained the country's resources and brought consequences that Germany is still wrestling with a decade later, most notably the rise of far-right anti-immigration parties.

Even though the family's integration into German society was a success, it was not without sacrifice. They and many others had to leave behind their homes, culture and language, sometimes shedding traditions dear to them.

Germany opens its doors

On Aug. 31, 2015, as Europe faced what was by then being called the refugee crisis, Chancellor Angela Merkel opened Germany's borders to migrants. Facing criticism at home and abroad, Merkel famously promised citizens that "we will manage it."

Refugees were initially welcomed with applause as they arrived at train stations. German families opened

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their homes to put them up for months as overwhelmed cities struggled to find accommodation.

In a massive effort, schools and community colleges quickly created tens of thousands of "welcome classes" for children and integration classes for adults to help them study German, get a job and find a home in their new country.

"A lot of things worked out surprisingly well," said Jonas Wiedner, an expert on migration from the Berlin Social Science Center.

He noted migrants' employment figures compare roughly to those of Germans, politicians acted quickly to offer help and money to local communities integrating the new arrivals and "civil society was very involved from the outset and has really achieved great things."

Germany became the top asylum destination in Europe, with its total population rising by 1.2% in 2015 — the highest since 1992 — because of immigration, according to the Federal Statistical Office.

Over time, as more asylum-seekers arrived looking for better prospects, not necessarily fleeing danger, the surge of immigration fueled economic anxieties and xenophobic resentment among some Germans.

Starting a new life in Europe

Before the outbreak of Syria's civil war in 2011, the Wahbeh family had a good life. He worked for many years at a company that made cookies, chocolate and juices while his wife raised their daughters. But as the war intensified, so did concerns about their family's safety.

In December 2012, a bomb hit oldest daughter Rajaa's elementary school while she was in class. She wasn't injured, but the close call convinced them to leave.

"No more school. We have to leave," Alshaar told her husband.

Alshaar and Wahbeh said the new beginning in Germany was difficult: They didn't know the language, the winters were much colder than back home and the authorities initially did not recognize their university degrees.

Determined to succeed, they enrolled in German classes and initially took internships to get into the job market. Alshaar, who is a civil engineer by training, found a stable job at the transportation ministry and put her three daughters in a good high school.

"I'm really proud, and I was also lucky to have good people around me," Germans who helped them as refugees and have become good family friends, Alshaar said. But she also encountered hostility as a foreigner, specifically for wearing a hijab.

The rise of polarization

Anger over migration has propelled the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany party, or AfD, which would be the second largest party if an election were held today, according to polls. Voters elsewhere in Europe have increasingly been empowering far-right nationalist parties that promise to restrict immigration.

"It is a highly contentious political issue and has repeatedly provided ammunition for the far right," Wiedner said.

In a recent poll that asked how well Germany "coped overall with the influx of almost 1.5 million refugees between 2015 and 2020," only 21% answered "good," 41% said "less good" and 37% said "not at all." The data were collected by Forsa Institute on behalf of RTL Germany from Aug. 22 to 25. They questioned 1,006 people and the margin of error was plus/minus 3 percentage points.

During Germany's election campaign at the beginning of this year, AfD's candidate for chancellor, Alice Weidel, called for closing the borders to undocumented migration and large-scale deportations of asylum-seekers, making clear she has no problem with the politically charged term "remigration."

Though many Germans have expressed their outrage in protests against the anti-immigration stance of the AfD, Chancellor Friedrich Merz from the center-right Christian Democrats also campaigned on the promise of ending "uncontrolled migration." Once the new government was in power, it quickly boosted border controls to curb migration to Germany and started to speed up deportations of rejected and criminal asylum-seekers.

Alshaar said she has been watching the rise of the far right with concern but at the same time doesn't want to let herself be intimidated because she feels her family has done everything right, even if integrat-

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ing into German society wasn't always easy.

Adapting to a new home

Germans asked her more than once if she had been forced to wear the hijab. At an appointment on a construction site outside Berlin, Alshaar was shown the middle finger.

Looking at a picture of her arrival in Germany — after an odyssey from Damascus to Lebanon, Egypt and finally Berlin — wearing a white headscarf tightly tucked around her face, Alshaar paused, ran a hand through her long, chestnut brown hair and said it took years of internal struggle before she decided to remove the hijab two years ago.

"It was difficult ... because I had been wearing a headscarf for more than 30 years," she said.

Her three daughters don't want to wear a hijab. On the contrary, they look German, feel German and speak German without a trace of an accent.

Rajaa, 20, has finished high school and is applying to art schools, Razan, 17, will start her senior year after summer vacation and 13-year-old Raneen, who was elected class representative last year, will be in eighth grade soon.

"Many of my friends didn't even know that I'm from Syria and were surprised when I told them so," Rajaa said.

The parents are grateful to Germany for giving them a place to rebuild and relieved that their daughters have integrated so well, though Alshaar said it's important to her that her family still speaks Arabic at home, watches Syrian TV series and celebrates Muslim holidays.

Despite the fall of Bashar Assad's regime last year, they have no plans to return to their home country. But Alshaar said wistfully that she and her husband will always be homesick for Syria.

"I don't want my daughters to grow up with this feeling of homesickness because it will always make them feel like they're not complete," she said.

FDA approves another generic abortion pill, prompting outrage from conservatives

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal officials have approved another generic version of the abortion pill mifepristone, a regulatory formality that quickly triggered pushback from anti-abortion groups and politicians aligned with the Trump administration.

Drugmaker Evita Solutions announced on its website that the Food and Drug Administration signed off on its low-cost form of the pill, which is approved to end pregnancies through 10 weeks.

Students for Life Action, which opposes abortion, in a statement Thursday called the approval "a stain on the Trump presidency and another sign that the deep state at the FDA must go."

Republican Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri also criticized the move in a post on X, stating, "I have lost confidence in the leadership at FDA."

A spokesperson for the agency said the FDA "has very limited discretion in deciding whether to approve a generic drug," and added that FDA officials do not "endorse any product."

The criticism comes as Republican President Donald Trump's top health officials, including Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., face growing pressure from abortion opponents to reevaluate mifepristone, which was approved 25 years ago and has repeatedly been deemed safe and effective by FDA scientists.

In a letter to Republican attorneys general last month, Kennedy and FDA Commissioner Dr. Marty Makary pledged to conduct a full review of the drug's safety.

Under Makary and Kennedy, the FDA has repeatedly delayed decisions on vaccines, ultimately narrowing the terms of approval for this year's COVID-19 shots. That type of political intervention was previously highly unusual at the FDA, where career scientists typically make such decisions.

The FDA approved the original version of mifepristone in 2000 and gradually eased access over time. That included approving the first generic pill, from drugmaker GenBioPro, in 2019.

In 2021, the FDA under Democratic President Joe Biden permitted online prescribing and mail-order de-

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livery of the drug, greatly expanding access. Abortion opponents have been fighting the change ever since.

Approval of generic drugs is typically a rote process at the FDA, with multiple copycat versions usually approved after the patent on the original drug expires. In most cases, generic drugmakers only need to show that their drug matches the ingredients and formula used in the original medication.

"This is exactly how our system is supposed to work, and it has worked this way for decades," said Mini Timmaraju of Reproductive Freedom for All. "Career scientists and civil servants at the FDA did their jobs."

The FDA typically approves such applications within 10 months. But filing documents posted to the FDA's website show that Evita Solutions filed its application to market mifepristone four years ago.

On its website, Evita states that it "believes that all people should have access to safe, affordable, high-quality, effective, and compassionate abortion care."

The company said in an email that the drug is expected to launch in January of next year.

Approval of a second generic is unlikely to affect access to the pill, which is typically taken with another drug, misoprostol. The combination accounts for roughly two-thirds of all U.S. abortions. Mifepristone dilates the cervix and blocks the hormone progesterone, while misoprostol causes the uterus to cramp and contract.

Access to mifepristone is restricted across large sections of the country because of state laws that ban abortion — including medication abortion — or impose separate restrictions on the drug's use. Those laws are subject to a number of ongoing lawsuits that are winding their way through the legal system.

Restrictions on the pill are not supported by most major medical societies, including the American Medical Association.

Goodall's influence spread far and wide. Those who felt it are pledging to continue her work

By CHRISTINA LARSON and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

In her 91 years, Jane Goodall transformed science and humanity's understanding of our closest living relatives on the planet — chimpanzees and other great apes. Her patient fieldwork and tireless advocacy for conservation inspired generations of future researchers and activists, especially women and young people, around the world.

Her death on Wednesday set off a torrent of tributes for the famed primate researcher, with many people sharing stories of how Goodall and her work inspired their own careers. The tributes also included pledges to honor Goodall's memory by redoubling efforts to safeguard a planet that sorely needs it.

Making space in science for animal minds and emotions

"Jane Goodall is an icon — because she was the start of so much," said Catherine Crockford, a primatologist at the CNRS Institute for Cognitive Sciences in France.

She recalled how many years ago Goodall answered a letter from a young aspiring researcher. "I wrote her a letter asking how to become a primatologist. She sent back a handwritten letter and told me it will be hard, but I should try," Crockford said. "For me, she gave me my career."

Goodall was one of three pioneering young women studying great apes in the 1960s and 1970s who began to revolutionize the way people understood just what was -- and wasn't -- unique about our own species. Sometimes called the "Tri-mates," Goodall, Dian Fossey and Biruté Galdikas spent years documenting the intimate lives of chimpanzees in Tanzania, mountain gorillas in Rwanda, and orangutans in Indonesia, respectively.

The projects they began have produced some of the longest-running studies about animal behavior in the world that are crucial to understanding such long-lived species. "These animals are like us, slow to mature and reproduce, and living for decades. We are still learning new things about them," said Tara Stoinski, a primatologist and president of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. "Jane and Dian knew each other and learned from each other, and the scientists who continued their work continue to collaborate today."

Goodall studied chimpanzees — as a species and as individuals. And she named them: David Greybeard, Flo, Fifi, Goliath. That was highly unconventional at the time, but Goodall's attention to individuals cre-

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ated space for scientists to observe and record differences in individual behaviors, preferences and even emotions.

Catherine Hobaiter, a primatologist at St. Andrews University who was inspired by Goodall, recalled how Goodall carefully combined empathy and objectivity. Goodall liked to use a particular phrase, "If they were human, we would describe them as happy," or "If they were human, we would describe them as friends -- these two individuals together," Hobaiter said. Goodall didn't project precise feelings onto the chimpanzees, but nor did she deny the capacity of animals besides humans to have emotional lives.

Goodall and her frequent collaborator, evolutionary biologist Marc Bekoff, had just finished the text of a forthcoming children's book, called "Every Elephant Has a Name," which will be published around early 2027.

Inspiring scientists and advocates for nature around the world

From the late 1980s until her death, Goodall spent less time in the field and more time on the road talking to students, teachers, diplomats, park rangers, presidents and many others around the world. She inspired countless others through her books. Her mission was to inspire action to protect the natural world.

In 1991, she founded an organization called Roots & Shoots that grew to include chapters of young people in dozens of countries.

Stuart Pimm, a Duke University ecologist and founder of the nonprofit Saving Nature, recalled when he and Goodall were invited to speak to a congressional hearing about deforestation and extinction. Down the marble halls of the government building, "there was a huge line of teenage girls and their mothers just waiting to get inside the room to hear Jane speak," Pimm said Thursday. "She was mobbed everywhere she went -- she was just this incredible inspiration to people in general, particularly to young women."

Goodall wanted everyone to find their voice, no matter their age or station, said Zanagee Artis, co-founder of the youth climate movement Zero Hour. "I really appreciated how much Jane valued young people being in the room -- she really fostered intergenerational movement building," said Artis, who now works for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

And she did it around the world. Roots & Shoots has a chapter in China, which Goodall visited multiple times.

"My sense was that Jane Goodall was highly respected in China and that her organization was successful in China because it focused on topics like environmental and conservation education for youth that had broad appeal without touching on political sensitivities," said Alex Wang, a University of California, Los Angeles expert on China and the environment, who previously worked in Beijing.

What is left now that Goodall is gone is her unending hope, perhaps her greatest legacy.

"She believed hope was not simply a feeling, but a tool," Rhett Butler, founder of the nonprofit conservation-news site Mongabay, wrote in his Substack newsletter. "Hope, she would tell me, creates agency."

Carrying forward her legacy

Goodall's legacy and life's work will continue through her family, scientists, her institute and legions of young people around the globe who are working to bridge conservation and humanitarian needs in their own communities, her longtime assistant said Thursday.

That includes Goodall's son and three grandchildren, who are an important part of the work of the Jane Goodall Institute and in their own endeavors, said Mary Lewis, a vice president at the institute who began working with the famed primatologist in 1990.

Goodall's son, Hugo van Lawick, works on sustainable housing. He is currently in Rwanda. Grandson Merlin and granddaughter Angelo work with the institute, while grandson Nick is a photographer and filmmaker, Lewis said. "She has her own family legacy as well as the legacy through her institutes around the world," said Lewis.

In addition to her famed research center in Tanzania and chimpanzee sanctuaries in other countries, including the Republic of Congo and South Africa, a new cultural center is expected to open in Tanzania late next year. There also are Jane Goodall Institutes in 26 countries, and communities are leading conservation projects in several countries, including an effort in Senegal to save critically endangered Western chimpanzees.

But it is the institute's youth-led education program called Roots & Shoots that Goodall regarded as her enduring legacy because it is "empowering new generations," Lewis said.

The blame game is on at federal agencies, where political messages fault Democrats for the shutdown

By ALI SWENSON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Army veteran Samuel Port couldn't believe what he was reading in his latest weekly newsletter emailed from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

It blamed Senate Democrats for the federal shutdown, saying they were blocking a stopgap bill to fund the government "due to unrelated policy demands." It then listed various disruptions to veterans' resources.

In Port's view, the finger-pointing was inappropriate from a federal agency and lacked the context that Republicans, too, could have taken steps to keep the government funded. He said it wore away any trust he had left in the VA to offer services without a political agenda.

"This blatant propaganda being spat out was astonishing," said Port, a Virginia-based volunteer for the progressive advocacy organization Common Defense. "Then the astonishment turned into just anger that we're being politicized like this."

Port is among a growing number of Americans whose routine interactions with the federal government this week have been met with partisan messaging. As a Senate deadlock keeps the federal government unfunded, with no end in sight, some traditionally apolitical federal agencies are using their official channels to spread a coordinated political message: It's the Democrats' fault.

The rhetoric, popping up in bright-red webpage banners, email autoreplies and social media posts, lays blame on the political party that is out of power in Washington when both sides are refusing to accommodate the other.

Democrats, who have minorities in both the U.S. Senate and House, have demanded that a set of expiring health insurance tax credits be extended before they sign on to any deal. Republicans, who need several Democratic votes in the Senate, said those negotiations should wait until after the funding measure passes.

Experts say the communication strategy from across the federal government reflects how aligned President Donald Trump's entire administration has become in targeting his political opponents.

Far more partisan than the straightforward alerts that typically grace agency websites during shutdowns, the messages are in keeping with Trump's pattern of requiring loyalty and obedience at all levels of government.

"There's really been a consistent and sustained effort to try to pull the entire bureaucracy in sync with what the president wants," said Don Kettl, a professor emeritus and former dean of the University of Maryland School of Public Policy. "The big risk here is that it erodes the fundamental trust that people have in government's ability to be impartial."

Several government websites blame Democrats

Many internet users noticed the first political postings from government agencies on Tuesday, before the shutdown began. The website of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development displayed a message warning that "The Radical Left are going to shut down the government and inflict massive pain on the American people unless they get their \$1.5 trillion wish list of demands."

That afternoon, employees across the federal government reported receiving messages from their agencies noting Trump's general opposition to a shutdown.

It's difficult to know with certainty how many federal agencies and departments are promoting the partisan language across websites, social media accounts and email messages. Of the 15 executive departments in Trump's Cabinet, at least 10 posted messages this week that blamed Democrats or the "radical left" for the shutdown on their official websites or social media accounts.

The website of the Small Business Administration placed its message in a red banner that took up the entire screen on a smartphone. It said actions from Senate Democrats are preventing the agency "from serving America's 36 million small businesses." Other websites, including that of the Food and Drug Ad-

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ministration, told visitors that mission-critical activities would continue "during the Democrat-led government shutdown."

Several other federal agencies and departments maintained politically neutral messages, noting simply that there might be delays in services or updates because of the lapse in funding.

Employee out-of-office messages are changed

At the Department of Education, out-of-office email messages were reset Wednesday with language blaming Democrats for the shutdown.

"On September 19, 2025, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 5371, a clean continuing resolution," the message said. "Unfortunately, Democrat Senators are blocking passage of H.R. 5371 in the Senate which has led to a lapse in appropriations."

Some employees tried to change it to something nonpartisan only to see it reverted, according to an employee who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of retribution.

The White House isn't shying away from the politics, displaying a by-the-second ticker on its website adding up the length of time for which "Democrats Have Shut Down the Government."

Concerned citizens calling the White House comment line on Wednesday also heard a political voicemail message. In the recording, press secretary Karoline Leavitt repeats Trump's false claim that Democrats forced the government shutdown fight because they want to fund health care for illegal immigrants.

Could the messaging violate federal law?

Ethics watchdogs said the political messages from government agency websites and emails exceed the level of partisanship they have seen in the past from the civil service.

Multiple experts said the messages also violate a 1939 law called the Hatch Act, which restricts certain political activities by federal employees. Kathleen Clark, a government ethics lawyer and law professor at Washington University, said they are "aimed at pursuing partisan political advantages" and therefore violate the law.

On Thursday, Democrats on the House Oversight Committee sent a letter to the Office of Special Counsel calling for an investigation into the messages for "apparent violations of the Hatch Act."

Donald K. Sherman, executive director of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, said he doesn't think the messages violate the Hatch Act because they discuss the Democratic Party related to a policy difference rather than an election or a candidate. Still, he said, the postings might violate other ethics laws and are "wildly inappropriate."

Veterans Affairs spokesman Pete Kasperowicz defended his agency's email message, saying it was "100% factual."

HUD Secretary Scott Turner said in a Wednesday night interview with NewsNation that he's not worried about the Hatch Act allegations against his agency. He called them a "distraction" to deflect from "irresponsible actions on the Hill" and how "Americans are being impacted greatly by this government shutdown."

Asked about the HUD website banner Thursday morning, House Speaker Mike Johnson said it shared "the objective truth."

"There are 44 Democrats in the Senate — and by the way every Democrat in the House except one — who voted to shut the government down," Johnson said in a press conference outside his office. "They are the ones that made that decision. The White House, the executive branch, take no pleasure in this."

Fundraiser for family of Michigan church gunman raises more than \$275,000

By ISABELLA VOLMERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — An online fundraiser for family members of the man who opened fire in a Michigan church and set it ablaze has raised over \$275,000 as of Thursday in what the organizer described as a "whirlwind of love and forgiveness."

On Sunday, Thomas "Jake" Sanford, 40, drove his pickup truck into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chapel in Grand Blanc Township, near Flint, shot at the congregation and set the building on fire.

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The attack killed four people, injured eight others and left the church destroyed. Police killed Sanford at the scene.

Dave Butler, a Utah resident and lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, watched news coverage of the attack for hours. The following day, he considered that Sanford's family were also victims of the attack.

"We understand that there is a family that needs to be taken care of," he said.

Butler set up the fundraiser on the platform GiveSendGo on Tuesday morning. He leveraged media connections from his participation in podcasts about the Latter-day Saints faith to help promote the fundraiser.

Donations poured in and the effort quickly drew attention, too, highlighting many people being far more familiar with efforts to raise money online for victims of mass shootings in the U.S.

Authorities have not discussed Sanford's motive for the attack this week, though they have described it as an "act of targeted violence" by Sanford alone. Longtime friends have said he expressed hatred toward the faith known widely as the Mormon church after living in Utah, where he dated but later broke up with a woman who was a member of the faith.

Butler's original goal was to raise \$10,000 to help the family through the next few months.

He said many members of the faith have articulated that contributing felt like the right way to respond to the tragedy.

"I feel like I'm responding to an attack against us in the right way. Not to get revenge, not to get justice, not to blame the wrong people," Butler said.

Over 7,000 people contributed to the fundraiser for the Sanford family in the 48 hours since it was posted, raising more money than any of the verified online fundraisers for the churchgoers who were killed or injured in the attack. Many left messages saying that they are members of the wider church.

"Another Latter-Day Saint here, praying for this family to feel loved and supported during these challenging times," wrote a donor who did not list a name.

An attorney for the Sanford family did not return a message left by The Associated Press on Thursday. In a previous written statement release by their attorney, family members said, "No words can adequately convey our sorrow for the victims and their families."

Forgiveness is a mandate for members of the faith, said Deidre Nicole Green, assistant professor of Latter-day Saint/Mormon Studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. She said Joseph Smith's Book of Doctrine and Covenants states that "it is up to God to forgive who God wants to forgive, but as human beings, we're required to forgive everyone – even our enemies."

"There is still some nuance that could apply to different situations," Green said. "In one passage in the Book of Mormon, we're told we need to forgive those who repent or when a perpetrator is seeking forgiveness."

Green teaches a class on forgiveness and has conducted research among women members of the faith who survived the genocide in Rwanda and in post-apartheid South Africa. Green said a Rwandan woman felt compelled to forgive her father's killer because she wanted to break the cycle of violence.

"She talked about how without forgiveness, there is this ongoing cycle of retaliation where the sense of justice gets lost," Green said. "So in that sense, forgiveness was necessary for justice."

Butler pointed to several tenets of his faith that have likely inspired contributors, including the Christian ideal of forgiveness and turning "the other cheek."

"The Epistle of James says to care for the widows and the orphans," Butler said. "Jesus says, 'Blessed are those that mourn. They shall be comforted.'"

Lisa Louis, who was in the chapel when her father, Craig Hayden, was fatally shot, said she instantly forgave the gunman "with my heart" after looking into his eyes.

Butler said he is in contact with the Sanford family and believes the messages left by many donors online were meaningful to them.

"The event is awful. There's no way around it," Butler said. "I hope that healing can come soon and that this can be part of the experience of healing."

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On eve of sentencing, Combs tells judge he has been 'reborn,' asks for mercy

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On the eve of his sentencing, Sean "Diddy" Combs wrote a federal judge Thursday proclaiming himself to be a new man after realizing that he was "broken to my core."

Combs, 55, told Judge Arun Subramanian that with his mind clear of drugs and alcohol after a year in jail, he can see how rotten he had become before his September 2024 arrest in a case that led to his conviction on two prostitution-related counts. His sentencing hearing is set to begin Friday morning.

"Over the past year there have been so many times that I wanted to give up. There have been some days I thought I would be better off dead. The old me died in jail and a new version of me was reborn. Prison will change you or kill you — I choose to live," he said.

A jury in July acquitted Combs of sex trafficking and racketeering conspiracy charges, but he still faces the possibility of years in jail.

Combs' lawyers say he should go free this month, arguing his year behind bars has been enough of a penalty, while prosecutors want at least 11 years in prison.

In his letter, Combs wrote that he had "no one to blame for my current reality and situation but myself."

"In my life, I have made many mistakes, but I am no longer running from them," he wrote. "I am so sorry for the hurt that I caused, but I understand that the mere words 'I'm sorry' will never be good enough as these words alone cannot erase the pain from the past."

Combs apologizes for attacking girlfriend

Combs apologized for hitting, kicking and dragging then-girlfriend Casandra "Cassie" Ventura at a Los Angeles hotel in 2016 — an attack captured on security camera.

"The scene and images of me assaulting Cassie play over and over in my head daily," Combs wrote. "I literally lost my mind. I was dead wrong for putting my hands on the woman that I loved. I'm sorry for that and always will be."

That footage was shown repeatedly during his two-month trial, which also included testimony from women who said Combs had beaten, threatened, blackmailed or sexually assaulted them.

In her letter to the judge ahead of sentencing, Ventura dismissed Combs' claims of remorse.

"I know that who he was to me — the manipulator, the aggressor, the abuser, the trafficker — is who he is as a human," she wrote. "He has no interest in changing or becoming better. He will always be the same cruel, power-hungry, manipulative man that he is."

Ventura noted that Combs had denied her allegations of assault until the footage of the beating emerged, and she urged the judge to issue a sentence that "reflects the strength it took for victims of Sean Combs to come forward."

"I hope that your decision considers the many lives that Sean Combs has upended with his abuse and control," she wrote.

Combs also apologized to a woman who testified under the pseudonym "Jane," saying that "after hearing her testimony, I realized that I hurt her."

Jane told the jury Combs had chased her around her home, put her in a chokehold, punched her in the head, kicked her as she lay in a ball on the ground, dragged her by her hair and then pressured her into having sex with a male sex worker.

"I lost my way. I got lost in my journey. Lost in the drugs and the excess," Combs wrote. "My downfall was rooted in my selfishness."

Combs asks judge for mercy

In jail, Combs said, he has been reading, writing, going to therapy, working out and teaching a six-week course to other inmates, "Free Game with Diddy," imparting his business wisdom, as well as lessons learned from his mistakes and failures.

He vowed to never commit a crime again, telling the judge he's gone through a "spiritual reset."

Rather than make an example out of him with a lengthy sentence, Combs implored Subramanian to

"make me an example of what a person can do if afforded a second chance."

"If you allow me to go home to my family, I promise I will not let you down and I will make you proud," he wrote.

Trump says US is in 'armed conflict' with drug cartels after ordering strikes in the Caribbean

By AAMER MADHANI and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has declared drug cartels to be unlawful combatants and says the United States is now in an "armed conflict" with them, according to a Trump administration memo obtained by The Associated Press on Thursday, following recent U.S. strikes on boats in the Caribbean.

The memo appears to represent an extraordinary assertion of presidential war powers, with Trump effectively declaring that trafficking of drugs into the United States amounts to armed conflict requiring the use of military force — a new rationale for past and future actions.

"The President determined that the United States is in a non-international armed conflict with these designated terrorist organizations," the memo says. Trump directed the Pentagon to "conduct operations against them pursuant to the law of armed conflict."

"The United States has now reached a critical point where we must use force in self-defense and defense of others against the ongoing attacks by these designated terrorist organizations," the memo says.

Besides signaling a potential new moment in Trump's stated "America First" agenda that favors non-intervention overseas, the declaration raises stark questions about how far the White House intends to use its war powers and if Congress will exert its authority to approve — or ban — such military actions.

"The United States is taking a much more dramatic step — one that I think is a very, very far stretch of international law and a dangerous one," said Matthew Waxman, who was a national security official in the George W. Bush administration. It "means the United States can target members of those cartels with lethal force. It means the United States can capture and detain them without trial."

Declaration follows boat strikes in the Caribbean

The U.S. military last month carried out three deadly strikes against boats in the Caribbean that the administration accused of ferrying drugs. At least two of those operations were carried out on vessels that originated from Venezuela.

Those strikes followed up a buildup of U.S. maritime forces in the Caribbean unlike any seen in recent times. The Navy's presence in the region — eight warships with over 5,000 sailors and Marines — has been pretty stable for weeks, according to two defense officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing operations.

The memo did not include a timestamp, but it references a Sept. 15 U.S. strike that "resulted in the destruction of the vessel, the illicit narcotics, and the death of approximately 3 unlawful combatants."

"As we have said many times, the President acted in line with the law of armed conflict to protect our country from those trying to bring deadly poison to our shores, and he is delivering on his promise to take on the cartels and eliminate these national security threats from murdering more Americans," the White House said.

Pentagon officials briefed senators on the strikes Wednesday, according to a person familiar with the matter, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. The Pentagon referred questions to the White House.

What the Trump administration laid out at the classified briefing at the Capitol was perceived by several senators as pursuing a new legal framework that raised questions particularly regarding the role of Congress in authorizing any such action, that person said.

Pentagon officials also briefed House staffers last week on the strikes, according to another person who was briefed on the meeting and similarly spoke on condition of anonymity.

The memo, which was reported earlier by The New York Times, lays out a rationale seen both as the administration's justification for the military strikes it has already taken on the boats in the Caribbean —

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which have raised concerns from lawmakers as potentially unlawful — as well as any action to come.

A White House official who wasn't authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity said the memo was sent to Congress on Sept. 18 and does not convey any new information. The person familiar with the Senate briefing said it was transmitted this week.

Details weren't given on the cartels targeted

Trump has designated several Latin American drug cartels as foreign terrorist organizations, and the administration had previously justified the military action as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States.

Pentagon officials could not provide a list of the designated terrorist organizations at the center of the conflict, a matter that was a major source of frustration for some of the lawmakers who were briefed this week, according to one of the people familiar with the briefings.

While "friendly foreign nations have made significant efforts to combat these organizations," the memo said, the groups "are now transnational and conduct ongoing attacks throughout the Western Hemisphere as organized cartels." The memo refers to cartel members as "unlawful combatants."

The Trump administration is trying to justify the use of military force against drug cartels in the same way the Bush administration justified the war against al-Qaida following the Sept. 11 attacks, said Waxman, who served in the State and Defense Departments and on the National Security Council under Bush.

Bush, however, had authorization from Congress, unlike Trump. The Trump administration is arguing that it no longer has to consider the individual circumstances of using force, said Waxman, who now chairs Columbia Law School's National Security Law Program.

"It's basically saying, 'We don't have to engage in that kind of case-by-case decision-making,'" Waxman said. "All of these vessels that are carrying enemy personnel can be targeted, whether they're headed towards the United States or not."

Waxman said he expects more strikes and "we'll see if the United States takes the next big step and engages in lethal force or armed force on the territory of another state."

Lawmakers of both major political parties have pressed Trump to seek war powers authority from Congress for operations against alleged drug traffickers. Several senators and human rights groups have questioned the legality of the strikes, calling them potential overreach of executive authority in part because the military was used for law enforcement purposes.

Sen. Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said drug cartels are "despicable" but the Trump administration has offered "no credible legal justification, evidence or intelligence for these strikes."

Reed, a former Army officer, said "every American should be alarmed that their President has decided he can wage secret wars against anyone he calls an enemy."

Trump uses government shutdown to dole out firings and political punishment

By LISA MASCARO, JOSH BOAK and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has seized on the government shutdown as an opportunity to reshape the federal workforce and punish detractors, saying he planned to meet with budget director Russ Vought to talk through "temporary or permanent" spending cuts that could set up a lose-lose dynamic for Democratic lawmakers.

Trump announced the meeting on social media Thursday morning, saying he and Vought would determine "which of the many Democrat Agencies" would be cut — continuing their efforts to slash federal spending by threatening mass firings of workers and suggesting "irreversible" cuts to Democratic priorities. The White House declined to comment on the timing or details of the meeting, despite the importance placed on it by the president.

"I can't believe the Radical Left Democrats gave me this unprecedented opportunity," Trump wrote on his social media account. "They are not stupid people, so maybe this is their way of wanting to, quietly

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and quickly, MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

Trump has been very direct about his intentions in saying that he believes the Democrats would get the blame if he chooses to fire people or cut spending as part of the shutdown.

"There could be firings and that's their fault," the president said in an interview with One America News that was released Thursday. "I mean, we could cut projects that they wanted, favorite projects, and they'd be permanently cut."

The Truth Social post was notable in its explicit embrace of Project 2025, a controversial policy blueprint drafted by the Heritage Foundation that Trump distanced himself from during his reelection campaign. The effort aimed to reshape the federal government around right-wing policies, and Democrats repeatedly pointed to its goals to warn of the consequences of a second Trump administration.

Vought on Wednesday offered an opening salvo of the pressure he hoped to put on Democrats. He announced he was withholding \$18 billion for the Hudson River rail tunnel and Second Avenue subway line in New York City that have been championed by both Democratic leaders, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries, in their home state. Vought is also canceling \$8 billion in green energy projects in states with Democratic senators.

"Trump's so-called 'maximum pain' plan isn't hurting Democrats — it's hurting American families," Schumer said in a statement Thursday. "He's snatching paychecks, threatening jobs, and deliberately inflicting suffering on working people just to score petty political points."

Meanwhile, the White House is preparing for mass firings of federal workers, rather than simply furloughing them, as is the usual practice during a shutdown. White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said earlier this week that layoffs were "imminent."

"If they don't want further harm on their constituents back home, then they need to reopen the government," Leavitt said Thursday of Democrats.

A starring role for Russ Vought

The bespectacled and bearded Vought has emerged as a central figure in the shutdown — promising layoffs of government workers that would be a show of strength by the Trump administration as well as a possible liability given the weakening job market and existing voter unhappiness over the economy.

The strategic goal is to increase the political pressure on Democratic lawmakers as agencies tasked with environmental protection, racial equity and addressing poverty, among other things, could be gutted over the course of the shutdown.

But Democratic lawmakers also see Vought as the architect of a strategy to refuse to spend congressionally approved funds, using a tool known as a "pocket rescission" in which the administration submits plans to return unspent money to Congress just before the end of the fiscal year, causing that money to lapse.

All of this means that Democratic spending priorities might be in jeopardy regardless of whether they want to keep the government open or partially closed.

Ahead of the end of the fiscal year in September, Vought used the pocket rescission to block the spending of \$4.9 billion in foreign aid.

White House officials refused to speculate on the future use of pocket rescissions after rolling them out in late August. But one of Vought's former colleagues, insisting on anonymity to discuss the budget director's plans, said that future pocket rescissions could be 20 times higher.

Shutdown continues with no endgame in sight

Thursday is Day 2 of the shutdown, and already the dial is turned high. The aggressive approach coming from the Trump administration is what certain lawmakers and budget observers feared if Congress, which has the responsibility to pass legislation to fund government, failed to do its work and relinquished control to the White House.

Vought, in a private conference call with House GOP lawmakers Wednesday afternoon, told them of layoffs starting in the next day or two. It's an extension of the Department of Government Efficiency work under Elon Musk that slashed through the federal government at the start of the year.

"These are all things that the Trump administration has been doing since January 20th," Jeffries said.

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"The cruelty is the point."

House Speaker Mike Johnson underscored Thursday that the shutdown gives Trump and Vought vast power over the federal government. He blamed Democrats and said "they have effectively turned off the legislative branch" and "handed it over to the president."

"When Congress turns off the funding, and the funding runs out, it is up to the commander-in-chief, the president of the United States, to determine how those resources will be spent," the Republican speaker said.

Still, Johnson said that Trump and Vought take "no pleasure in this."

Trump and the congressional leaders are not expected to meet again soon. Congress had no action scheduled Thursday in observance of the Jewish holy day, with senators due back Friday. The House is set to resume session next week.

The Democrats are holding fast to their demands to preserve health care funding and refusing to back a bill that fails to do so, warning of price spikes for millions of Americans nationwide.

This shutdown could harm the economy

With no easy endgame at hand, the standoff risks dragging deeper into October, when federal workers who remain on the job will begin missing paychecks. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated roughly 750,000 federal workers could be furloughed on any given day during the shutdown, a loss of \$400 million daily in wages.

The economic effects could spill over into the broader economy. Past shutdowns saw reduced demand for goods and services that pushed down the GDP, the CBO said, but that reversed once people returned to work.

Previous shutdowns have done minimal economic damage, in part because their consequences were either contained or reversed once the government fully reopened. But the impact would be different if there were permanent layoffs at a time when the labor market was already starting to struggle.

How Trump and Vought can reshape the federal government

With Congress as a standstill, the Trump administration has taken advantage of new levers to determine how to shape the federal government.

The Trump administration can tap into funds to pay workers at the Defense Department and Homeland Security from what's commonly called the "One Big Beautiful Bill" that was signed into law this summer, according to the CBO.

That would ensure Trump's immigration enforcement and mass deportation agenda is uninterrupted. But employees who remain on the job at many other agencies will have to wait for the government to reopen before they get a paycheck.

What to know about the life and legacy of chimpanzee researcher and wildlife advocate Jane Goodall

By HALLIE GOLDEN and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

Famed primatologist Jane Goodall was renowned for her groundbreaking work with chimpanzees but dedicated her life to helping all wild animals — a passion that lasted until her death this week while on a U.S. speaking tour.

She spent decades promoting humanitarian causes and the need to protect the natural world, and tried to balance the grim realities of the climate crisis with hope for the future, admirers said.

Those messages of hope "mobilized a global movement to protect the planet," said former President Joe Biden, who awarded Goodall the Presidential Medal of Freedom just before he left office.

Here are some things to know about Goodall's life and legacy:

Goodall didn't have a college degree when she started:

Despite Goodall's enduring passion to observe wild animals in Africa, she didn't have a college degree when she arrived there in 1957, starting as an assistant secretary at a natural history museum in Nairobi.

Famed anthropologist and paleontologist Louis Leakey gave her the job and later invited her to search

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for fossils with him and his wife at the Olduvai Gorge. After seeing her grit and determination, Leakey asked if she would be interested in studying chimpanzees in what is now Tanzania.

She told The Associated Press in 1997 that he chose her "because he wanted an open mind."

It wasn't until 1966 that she earned a Ph.D. in ethology — becoming one of the few people admitted to University of Cambridge as a Ph.D. candidate without a college degree.

Goodall took an unconventional approach in Africa:

While first studying chimpanzees in Tanzania in the early 1960s, Goodall didn't spend her days simply observing the animals from afar and giving them numbers like other scientists.

She immersed herself in every aspect of their lives, feeding them and giving them names and forming what can only be described as personal relationships with them. The approach was criticized by some scientists who saw it as an alarming lack of scientific detachment.

Goodall documented chimp warfare:

Goodall documented chimpanzees in a wide array of activities widely believed at the time to be exclusive to humans, including showing their ruthlessly violent side during what she described as "warfare."

She described seeing a group systematically hunt down and kill members of a smaller group over the course of four years. The war ended only after every member of the smaller group was dead.

"It was a shock to find that they could show such brutal behavior," she said in 2003. "That made them seem even more like us than I thought before."

In another instance, she recalled a dominant chimpanzee brushing a younger chimp aside to get fruit. When the second chimp screamed, its big brother stepped in to rescue him. And then when those two chimps started screaming, a female two trees away stepped in.

Goodall wasn't planning to become a scientist:

Since Goodall could crawl, she'd had a fascination with animals. When she bought her first book at the age of 10 — Edgar Rice Burroughs' "Tarzan of the Apes" — her vision for the future started to solidify. She planned to travel to Africa and live with the wild animals.

But her dreams did not involve becoming a scientist. She told The Associated Press in 2020 that she planned to be a naturalist and write books about animals. But that vision shifted as she learned more.

"I always wanted to help animals all my life. And then naturally that led to 'If you want to save wild animals, you have to work with local people, find ways for them to live without harming the environment and then getting worried about children and what future they could have if we go on as business as usual,'" she said.

Goodall's advocacy lasted until her death:

Goodall has said watching a disturbing film in 1986 about experiments on laboratory animals pushed her into advocacy — a calling that lasted until her death.

"I knew I had to do something," she said later. "It was payback time."

She was still traveling almost 300 days a year giving lectures to packed audiences and was in the midst of a U.S. speaking tour when she died of natural causes in California, the Jane Goodall Institute said. She had been scheduled to meet with students and teachers on Wednesday to kick off a tree-planting effort in wildfire burn zones in the Los Angeles area.

When she couldn't travel during the COVID-19 pandemic, she began podcasting from her childhood home in England. She spoke with guests including U.S. Sen. Cory Booker, author Margaret Atwood and marine biologist Ayana Elizabeth Johnson on dozens of episodes of the "Jane Goodall Hopecast."

She inspired others, especially girls and women:

Admirers said Goodall inspired generations of young people, particularly women and girls.

Jeffrey Flocken, chief international officer of Humane World for Animals, recalled how Goodall once spent two hours telling his young daughter stories about "her adventures with animals and the challenges of being a young woman pioneering biological research in the field when conservation was still an emerging profession."

"Chimps, pangolins, elephants and more. Jane cared about all animals passionately. And she was able

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to use that passion to inspire others — children in particular,” Flocken said.

University of St. Andrews primatologist Catherine Hobaiter, who studies chimpanzee communication, said that her view of science was transformed when she was a young researcher and first heard Goodall speak.

“It was the first time ... that I got to hear that it was okay to to feel something,” Hobaiter said.

Wall Street ticks to more records, led by technology stocks

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks edged up to more records on Thursday as technology stocks kept rising and as Wall Street kept ignoring the shutdown of the U.S. government.

The S&P 500 added 0.1% to its all-time high set the day before. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 79 points, or 0.2%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.4%. Both also hit records.

Thursdays on Wall Street typically have investors reacting to the latest weekly tally of U.S. workers applying for unemployment benefits. But D.C.’s shutdown meant this week’s report on jobless claims has been delayed. An even more consequential report, Friday’s monthly tally of jobs created and destroyed across the economy, will likely also not arrive on schedule.

That increases uncertainty when much on Wall Street is riding on investors’ expectation that the job market is slowing by enough to convince the Federal Reserve to keep cutting interest rates, but not by so much that it leads to a recession.

“The Fed has been on record that they are very data dependent, and the lack of data from public sources is likely to be problematic,” said Brian Rehling, head of global fixed-income strategy at Wells Fargo Investment Institute.

So far, the U.S. stock market has looked past the delays of such data. Shutdowns of the U.S. government have tended not to hurt the economy or stock market much, and the thinking is that this one could be similar, even if President Donald Trump has threatened large-scale firings of federal workers this time around.

That left corporate announcements as the main drivers of trading Thursday.

Stocks in the chip and artificial-intelligence industries climbed after OpenAI announced partnerships with South Korean companies for Stargate, a \$500 billion project aimed at building AI infrastructure.

Samsung Electronics rose 3.5% in Seoul, and SK Hynix jumped 9.9%.

The announcement also sent ripples around the world. On Wall Street, Advanced Micro Devices climbed 3.5%, and Broadcom gained 1.4%. Nvidia’s 0.9% rise was the strongest single force pushing the S&P 500 upward.

Excitement around AI and the massive spending underway because of it has been a major reason the U.S. stock market has hit record after record, along with hopes for easier interest rates. But AI stocks have become so dominant, and so much money has poured into the industry that worries are rising about a potential bubble that could eventually lead to disappointment for investors.

Occidental Petroleum fell 7.3% after it agreed to sell its chemical business, OxyChem, to Berkshire Hathaway for \$9.7 billion in cash. It could be the final big purchase for Berkshire Hathaway with famed investor Warren Buffett as its CEO.

Fair Isaac jumped 18% to its best day in nearly three years after announcing a program that will streamline access to its FICO credit scores, potentially cutting out such big credit bureaus as TransUnion, Equifax and Experian.

TransUnion’s stock tumbled 10.6%, while Equifax slid 8.5%.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 4.15 points to 6,715.35. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 78.62 to 46,519.72, and the Nasdaq composite gained 88.89 to 22,844.05.

The stock of a third credit bureau, the United Kingdom’s Experian, fell 4.2% in London. It helped drag London’s FTSE 100 down by 0.2%, but indexes were much stronger across Europe and Asia.

South Korea’s Kospi leaped 2.7% for one of the world’s largest gains following the big jumps for Samsung Electronics and SK Hynix.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury eased to 4.08% from 4.12% late Wednesday.

Trump asks 9 colleges to commit to his political agenda and get favorable access to federal money

By COLLIN BINKLEY and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House is asking nine major universities to commit to President Donald Trump's political priorities in exchange for more favorable access to federal money.

A document sent to the universities encourages them to adopt the White House's vision for America's campuses, with commitments to accept the government's priorities on admissions, women's sports, free speech, student discipline and college affordability, among other topics.

Signing on would give universities "multiple positive benefits," including "substantial and meaningful federal grants" and "increased overhead payments where feasible," according to a letter sent to universities alongside the compact. The letter calls it a proactive effort as the administration continues to investigate alleged civil rights violations at U.S. campuses.

Called the "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education," it asks universities to accept the government's definition of gender and apply it to campus bathrooms, locker rooms and women's sports teams. It asks colleges to stop considering race, gender and a wide range of student demographics in the admissions process and to require undergraduate applicants to take the SAT or ACT.

The 10-page proposed agreement was sent Wednesday to some of the most selective public and private universities: Vanderbilt, the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth College, the University of Southern California, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Texas, the University of Arizona, Brown University and the University of Virginia. It was not clear how these schools were selected or why.

The nine universities could become "initial signatories" and are being invited to provide feedback before the language is finalized, according to the letter. It asks for a decision by Nov. 21.

White House takes a new, incentive-based approach

The memo represents a shift in strategy as the administration offers a reward — not just punishment — as an incentive for adopting Trump's political wish list. Many of the demands mirror those made by his administration as it slashed billions of dollars in federal money for Harvard, Columbia and others accused of liberal bias. A federal judge overturned cuts at Harvard in September, saying the government had overstepped its authority.

Several universities said they were reviewing the compact and had no comment. A statement from the University of Virginia said there was nothing to suggest why it was chosen. The university's interim president assembled a group of administrators on Thursday to review the letter.

Leaders of the Texas system were "honored" that the Austin campus was chosen to be a part of the compact and its "potential funding advantages," according to a statement from Kevin Eltife, chair of the Board of Regents. "Today we welcome the new opportunity presented to us and we look forward to working with the Trump Administration on it," Eltife said.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said if any universities in his state sign the compact, they will lose access to state funding, including Cal Grants, a \$2.8 billion student financial aid program. In an all-capital statement, Newsom, a Democrat, said California "will not bankroll schools that sell out their students, professors, researchers, and surrender academic freedom."

Colleges would have restrictions on international enrollment and tuition hikes

Under the compact, international enrollment would have to be capped at 15% of a college's undergraduate student body, and no more than 5% could come from a single country. All the universities invited to the compact appear to be within the 15% threshold, though Dartmouth and USC are close, at 14%, according to federal data. Many universities do not report breakdowns by individual countries.

Most other U.S. universities also fall within the 15% cap, but about 120 exceed it, including Columbia University, Emory University and Boston University, federal data show.

Some of the most sweeping commitments are aimed at promoting conservative viewpoints. Universi-

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ties would have to ensure their campuses are a “vibrant marketplace of ideas” where no single ideology is dominant, the compact said. They would have to evaluate views among students and faculty to ensure every department reflects a diverse mix of views.

To accomplish that, it says universities must take steps, including “transforming or abolishing institutional units that purposefully punish, belittle, and even spark violence against conservative ideas.”

It requires policies meant to counter the kind of protests that roiled U.S. campuses last year amid the Israel-Hamas war. It asks for a commitment to prevent any disruption to classes or campus libraries and to ensure demonstrators don’t heckle other students.

Campuses that sign the compact would have to freeze tuition for U.S. students for five years, and those with endowments exceeding \$2 million per undergraduate could not charge tuition at all for students pursuing “hard science” programs.

Opponents see a threat to free speech

Ted Mitchell, president of the American Council on Education, urged universities to reject the deal, saying it violates campus independence and undermines free speech.

“It’s not worth the compromises that they would have to make,” he said. “This is a Faustian bargain.”

The compact also drew criticism from free speech groups, faculty associations and from Larry Summers, a former Treasury secretary and Harvard president. Summers said he believes elite universities have lost their way, but he said the compact is like trying to “fix a watch with a hammer — ill conceived and counterproductive.”

“The backlash against its crudity will likely set back necessary reform efforts,” Summers said.

The terms of the deal would be enforced by the Justice Department, with violators losing access to the compact’s benefits for no less than a year. Following violations bump the penalty to two years.

“Institutions of higher education are free to develop models and values other than those below,” the compact said, “if the institution elects to forego federal benefits.”

Berkshire Hathaway to pay \$9.7 billion for OxyChem, potentially Warren Buffett’s last big deal

By JOSH FUNK AP Business Writer

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Berkshire Hathaway is buying Occidental Petroleum’s chemical division for \$9.7 billion in what may be the last big acquisition involving the consummate dealmaker, Warren Buffett.

Buffett wasn’t mentioned anywhere in materials released by Berkshire Hathaway discussing the deal Thursday, potentially signaling a passing of the torch to Vice Chair Greg Abel, to whom Buffett will hand the CEO title in January. But given the relationship that Buffett has with Occidental CEO Vicki Hollub, who he has praised ever since helping her with an acquisition back in 2019, and the fact that he likes to be involved anytime Berkshire spends more than \$1 billion dollars, he certainly had a role.

Even after the transition, Buffett will remain chairman at Berkshire and will still be involved in deciding how to spend the conglomerate’s colossal pile of more than \$344 billion cash.

Berkshire’s cash reserves have been growing for years because Buffett has been unable to find any major acquisitions at attractive prices since completing the \$11.6 billion acquisition of Alleghany Insurance in 2022. Prices for big acquisitions have been driven higher in recent years by the entry of more hedge funds in the market.

What Berkshire is buying

The OxyChem deal is sizeable, but it still uses less than 3% of Berkshire’s cash and likely isn’t big enough to make a significant difference in the conglomerate’s bottom line. Investors seemed underwhelmed with the deal with Berkshire’s shares trading down slightly and Occidental’s shares dropping more than 7% Thursday after it was announced.

OxyChem makes chlorine for water treatment, vinyl chloride for plastics and calcium chloride that’s used to treat icy roads along with an assortment of other chemicals. It will fit nicely alongside Lubrizol,

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which Buffett bought in 2011 for \$9 billion, but Berkshire typically doesn't consolidate the operations of the companies it buys.

"Berkshire is acquiring a robust portfolio of operating assets, supported by an accomplished team," Abel said in a prepared statement. "We look forward to welcoming OxyChem as an operating subsidiary within Berkshire."

Preparing for the CEO transition

Edward Jones analyst Jim Shanahan said it makes sense to let Abel take the lead on this as Berkshire prepares for the transition. But investors are really watching for what Abel might do differently after he takes over and what kind of deals he can land on his own.

"It'll be interesting to see what kind of deals he does, how they're similar, how they're different and how he talks about the opportunities," Shanahan said.

It's possible Abel, who is a much more hands-on manager than Buffett, might do more to get Berkshire companies working together and maybe even consolidating some things, Shanahan said. But that might be a break with tradition because Buffett always promised business owners that he just wanted to buy good businesses and then largely leave them alone other than requiring them to send their cash to Omaha so he could reinvest it.

How Occidental will use the cash

OxyChem generated \$213 million in pretax earnings for Occidental in the second quarter, though that is down from last year when it generated nearly \$300 million for the company. This year, Occidental has been selling off some of its assets in the Permian Basin to generate \$950 million to pay down debt. Since it completed the CrownRock acquisition in December 2023, Occidental has sold off roughly \$4 billion worth of assets to help it pay down \$7.5 billion in debt. This OxyChem deal will accelerate that.

Occidental expects to use \$6.5 billion of proceeds from the Berkshire deal to lower debt and achieve the target of principal debt below \$15 billion set following the announcement of its CrownRock acquisition. Occidental will retain all the legacy environmental liabilities for OxyChem.

Berkshire's massive Occidental stake

Berkshire holds more than 28% of Occidental's stock and has warrants to buy another 83,911,942.38 shares in the major oil and gas producer for \$59.586 per share. And Berkshire also has about \$8.5 billion worth of preferred Occidental shares that it picked up in 2019 when it helped finance the oil producer's purchase of Anadarko that Occidental has been paying 8% dividends on every year.

Buffett had previously told Berkshire investors that he wouldn't sell off the Occidental stake and he has been periodically buying more shares, but he also told shareholders in 2023 that he had no plans to buy all of Occidental.

Berkshire owns an eclectic assortment of dozens of companies, including Geico and several other insurers, BNSF railroad, a portfolio of major utilities and some well-known brands like Dairy Queen and See's Candy. Buffett has built up the conglomerate over the past 60 years. In addition to owning companies outright, Berkshire holds stocks worth more than \$250 billion, including large stakes in Apple, Coca-Cola, Bank of America and American Express.

The OxyChem deal is expected to close in the fourth quarter of this year.

Israel intercepted a Gaza-bound flotilla carrying aid in international waters. Can it do that?

By IBRAHIM HAZBOUN and RENATA BRITO Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Israeli interception of a Gaza-bound flotilla carrying humanitarian aid and hundreds of activists raises questions about what any nation can legally do to enforce a blockade in international waters.

As dozens of boats sailed closer to Gaza on Wednesday afternoon, the Israeli navy warned them to turn back.

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"You are entering an active war zone. If you continue and attempt to break the naval blockade, we will stop your vessel," a member of the Israeli navy told the activists via radio. Then Israeli military personnel stormed the vessels and seized activists, including Greta Thunberg, Nelson Mandela's grandson and several European lawmakers.

The Israeli action sparked condemnation from world leaders and human rights groups who say Israel violated international law.

A humanitarian mission

The activists say their nonviolent, civilian mission is lawful. Though they carried only a symbolic amount of aid, including baby formula, food and medical supplies, their goal, they say, is to establish a humanitarian corridor to facilitate the flow of aid into famine-stricken Gaza.

Israeli and European government officials had offered alternatives for the flotilla to transfer its aid to the Palestinian territory, which the activists rejected citing Israel's tight control on all that enters Gaza.

Defending their mission, flotilla activist and spokesperson Thiago Avila cited a provisional International Court of Justice ruling that ordered Israel to "take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip."

"You are not allowed by international law to stop us. Therefore we do not comply with your request," he told the navy via radio shortly before the interceptions began some 70 nautical miles (130 kilometers) from the shores of Israel and Gaza.

Only one boat appears to have crossed the 12-nautical-mile line (22-kilometer line) marking territorial waters off Gaza.

Interception in international waters

The U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea stipulates that a nation's territory does not extend beyond 12 nautical miles (19 kilometers) from its shores. It says authorities may exercise control up to 24 nautical miles (45 kilometers) from land to prevent violation of customs, immigration, fiscal or sanitary laws.

Robbie Sabel, an international law expert and former legal adviser to the Israeli Foreign Ministry, said states generally don't have the right to seize ships in international waters, though there are exceptions, including during armed conflict.

Even before the latest war, Israel was in an armed conflict with Hamas, Sabel said, allowing it to intercept ships it suspected violated its longstanding blockade of Gaza. Rights groups have long criticized the blockade as the unlawful punishment of Palestinians.

A contentious maritime blockade

Yuval Shany, an expert on international law at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, said as long as Israel's blockade of Gaza is "militarily justified" to keep out weapons and the ship intended to break it, Israel can intercept the vessel after prior warning.

The debate over the legality of Israel's blockade remains a point of contention.

Adalah, a legal rights group in Israel representing the activists, said in a statement that "the abduction of peaceful civilians in international waters, constitutes a brazen violation of international law."

Omer Shatz, an Israeli international law expert who teaches at Sciences Po University in Paris and co-litigated a previous flotilla case before the Supreme Court of Israel, told The Associated Press that even if the disputed siege of Gaza was considered lawful, "international law paves a humanitarian road from the high seas to Gaza," he said.

"If the basic needs of the population are not provided by the occupying power, there is a right to provide humanitarian aid, albeit under certain conditions," Shatz said. Israel has the right to board and search the vessels to verify the cargo, as it does with aid trucks crossing into Gaza by land.

Enforcing international maritime law

It's not the first time Israel has halted and confiscated humanitarian ships bound for Gaza. Dozens of boats have attempted to reach the Palestinian territory in the past two decades, but none has reached it since 2008.

In 2010, an Israeli commando raid on the Mavi Marmara flotilla descended into violence. Eight Turkish

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activists and one Turkish-American were killed.

A subsequent U.N. report acknowledged "attempts to breach a lawfully imposed naval blockade place the vessel and those on board at risk," while also urging member states to be cautious in using force against civilian vessels. It called on humanitarian missions to deliver aid through regular channels and said a country's naval blockade "must abide by their obligations with respect to the provision of humanitarian assistance."

Enforcing international maritime law is a challenge across the globe. Generally, only states can take other states to court for violations of the U.N. Convention for the Laws of the Sea. But there are other legal frameworks and mechanisms individuals can use to seek justice, including those their state flags are party to. For example, Israel forcibly removing people from foreign-flagged vessels in international waters and taking them to Israel could be considered a crime, Shatz said.

The state prosecutors' office of Spain told The Associated Press on Thursday that it will gather information on the flotilla interception as part of its ongoing effort to collect evidence of possible human rights violations by Israel to be presented in international courts.

Activists meanwhile say they will continue to attempt to break the Israeli blockade by sea.

A second flotilla of ships formed by The Freedom Flotilla Coalition and Thousand Madleens to Gaza is already on its way after departing Italy last week.

Federal shutdowns usually don't do much economic damage. There are reasons to worry about this one

By PAUL WISEMAN and CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Shutdowns of the federal government usually don't leave much economic damage. But the one that started Wednesday looks riskier, not least because President Donald Trump is threatening to use the standoff to permanently eliminate thousands of government jobs and the state of the economy is already precarious.

For now, financial markets are shrugging off the impasse as just the latest failure of Republicans and Democrats to agree on a budget and keep the government running.

"Everyone seems quite complacent about the shutdown, assuming the Democrats and Republicans will come to terms and life will go on, as has been the case in past shutdowns," the independent economist Ed Yardeni wrote in a commentary Thursday. "History could certainly repeat, especially with a man known for dealmaking sitting in the Oval Office."

But given the chasm separating the two political parties, Yardeni added, "the lack of caution is somewhat surprising."

The U.S. government has now shut down 21 times in the past half century. The last of those shutdowns was the longest — stretching five weeks in December 2018 into January 2019 during Trump's first term.

Even that one barely left a mark on the world's biggest economy: The Congressional Budget Office estimates that it shaved just 0.02% off 2019 U.S. gross domestic product — the nation's output of goods and services.

The economic impact of shutdowns is usually fleeting. Federal workers get furloughed and the federal government delays some spending while they last. When they're over, federal workers go back to their jobs and collect back pay, and the government belatedly spends the money it had withheld. It's pretty much a wash.

"Government shutdowns are inconvenient and messy," said Scott Helfstein, head of investment strategy at the investment firm Global X. "But there is little evidence that they have a significant impact on the economy. Typically, the lost economic activity, if meaningful in the first place, is recovered in the following quarter."

Government benefit payments that provide crucial income support for millions of Americans, such as Social Security, and health care programs such as Medicare, won't be disrupted by the shutdown.

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Data from previous shutdowns have shown little impact on U.S. GDP unless they are extended, according to CBO Director Phillip Swagel. "The impact is not immediate, but over time, there is a negative impact of a shutdown on the economy," he recently told The Associated Press.

The damage could be worse this go-around.

First, some government agencies dodged the 2018-2019 shutdown because they'd received funding in advance and could just continue operating. That hasn't happened this time: The CBO estimates that about 750,000 federal employees could be temporarily laid off.

Trump is also considering something more destructive: His budget office has threatened the mass firing of federal workers this time, not just putting them on temporary furlough.

A "reduction in force" would not only lay off employees but eliminate their positions, threatening more upheaval for a workforce that's already been purged by Trump. "We'd be laying off a lot of people that are going to be very affected, and they're Democrats. They're going to be Democrats," the president said Tuesday.

Thomas Ryan of Capital Economics wrote in a commentary that "it is reasonable to assume that (Trump's mass layoff threat) is political bluster, aimed at pressuring Democrats to approve a funding extension without concessions." But, he added, "if followed through, it could have longer-term consequences, prolonging government downsizing and keeping the sector as a drag on payrolls into next year."

Ryan Sweet, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics, estimates that the shutdown and temporary loss of income for federal workers could shave 0.1 to 0.2 percentage points from the nation's annual growth rate in the fourth quarter for each week the government is closed. Some of that will be recovered once it reopens.

"The economic costs of government shutdowns are normally minimal unless they last for several weeks," Sweet wrote.

The shutdown also comes at a time when the job market is already under strain, damaged by the lingering effects of high interest rates and uncertainty around Trump's erratic campaign to slap taxes on imports from almost every country on earth and on specific products — from copper to foreign films.

Labor Department revisions earlier this month showed that the economy created 911,000 fewer jobs than originally reported in the year that ended in March. That meant that employers added an average of fewer than 71,000 new jobs a month over that period, not the 147,000 first reported. Since March, job creation has slowed even more — to an average 53,000 a month. During the 2021-2023 hiring boom that followed COVID-19 lockdowns, by contrast, the economy was creating 400,000 jobs a month.

The September jobs report was supposed to come out Friday — forecasters had expected to see 50,000 new jobs last month — but has been delayed indefinitely by the shutdown.

The economy is sending mixed signals, however. GDP growth came in at a strong 3.8% annual pace from April through June, reversing a 0.6% drop in the first three months of the year. But it's not yet clear if that solid growth can continue, or if it will spur a rebound in hiring.

"The economy is very much on a 'knife's edge,'" said Michael Linden, senior policy fellow at the left-leaning Washington Center for Equitable Growth. "The economic data is pointing in different directions right now. Second-quarter GDP growth was strong, but how much of that was merely a bounce back from incredibly weak first quarter GDP is hard to know. What we know for sure is that the economy is creating fewer jobs, wage growth is slowing, and middle-class consumers are feeling pinched."

Pope intervenes in US abortion debate by raising what it really means to be 'pro-life'

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Leo XIV has intervened for the first time in an abortion dispute roiling the U.S. Catholic Church by raising the seeming contradiction over what it really means to be "pro-life."

Leo, a Chicago native, was asked late Tuesday about plans by Chicago Cardinal Blase Cupich to give a lifetime achievement award to Illinois Senator Dick Durbin for his work helping immigrants. The plans

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drew objection from some conservative U.S. bishops given the powerful Democratic senator's support for abortion rights.

Leo called first of all for respect for both sides, but he also pointed out the seeming contradiction in such debates.

"Someone who says 'I'm against abortion but says I am in favor of the death penalty' is not really pro-life," Leo said. "Someone who says that 'I'm against abortion, but I'm in agreement with the inhuman treatment of immigrants in the United States,' I don't know if that's pro-life."

The White House weighs in

Leo, whose words echoed a common Catholic argument often made in discussions about abortion, spoke hours before Cupich announced that Durbin had declined the award.

Church teaching forbids abortion but it also opposes capital punishment as "inadmissible" under all circumstances. U.S. bishops and the Vatican have strongly called for humane treatment of migrants, citing the Biblical command to "welcome the stranger."

In his comments about the Illinois dispute, Leo made no mention of U.S. President Donald Trump, whose administration has carried out a surge of immigration enforcement in the Chicago area.

Still, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt weighed in and disputed concerns raised by Pope Leo about the treatment of immigrants, saying that she "would reject there is inhumane treatment of illegal immigrants in the United States under this administration."

The administration, Leavitt said, "is trying to enforce our nation's laws in the most humane way possible."

Pope Leo says mutual respect is needed

Leo said he wasn't familiar with the details of the dispute over the Durbin award, but said it was nevertheless important to look at the senator's overall record and noted Durbin's four-decade tenure. Responding to a question in English from the U.S. Catholic broadcaster EWTN News, he said there were many ethical issues that constitute the teaching of the Catholic Church.

"I don't know if anyone has all the truth on them but I would ask first and foremost that there be greater respect for one another and that we search together both as human beings, in that case as American citizens or citizens of the state of Illinois, as well as Catholics to say we need to you know really look closely at all of these ethical issues and to find the way forward in this church. Church teaching on each one of those issues is very clear," he said.

Cupich was a close adviser to Pope Francis, who strongly upheld church teaching opposing abortion but also criticized the politicizing of the abortion debate by U.S. bishops. Some bishops had called for denying Communion to Catholic politicians who supported abortion rights, including former President Joe Biden.

Biden met on several occasions with Francis and told reporters in 2021 that Francis had told him to continue receiving Communion. During a visit to Rome that year he received the sacrament during Mass at a church in Francis' diocese.

Durbin was barred from receiving Communion in his home diocese of Springfield in 2004. Springfield Bishop Thomas Paprocki has continued the prohibition and was one of the U.S. bishops who strongly objected to Cupich's decision to honor the senator. Cupich claims Durbin as a member of the Chicago Archdiocese, where Durbin also has a home.

Senator Durbin declines his award

In his statement announcing that Durbin would decline the award, Cupich lamented that the polarization in the U.S. has created a situation where U.S. Catholics "find themselves politically homeless" since neither the Republican nor the Democratic party fully encapsulates the breadth of Catholic teaching.

He defended honoring Durbin for his pro-immigration stance, and said the planned Nov. 3 award ceremony could have been an occasion to engage him and other political leaders with the hope of pressing the church's view on other issues, including abortion.

"It could be an invitation to Catholics who tirelessly promote the dignity of the unborn, the elderly, and the sick to extend the circle of protection to immigrants facing in this present moment an existential threat to their lives and the lives of their families," Cupich wrote.

Paprocki, for his part, thanked Durbin for declining the award. "I ask that all Catholics continue to pray

for our church, our country, and for the human dignity of all people to be respected in all stages of life including the unborn and immigrants,” Paprocki said in a Facebook post.

A well-defined leadership hierarchy makes for no surprises in next president of Mormon church

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM and BRADY McCOMBS Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A former Utah Supreme Court justice is expected to be named the next president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints after the recent death of President Russell M. Nelson.

Announcing his successor — Dallin H. Oaks — is largely a formality because the church has a well-defined leadership hierarchy that has governed it for decades. Nothing will change in the leadership body until some time after Nelson’s funeral, which is scheduled for Oct. 7.

Here’s a closer look at how the leadership structure is arranged and how new members are chosen:

Who leads the church?

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, known widely as the Mormon church, is led by a president and his two top counselors, forming what is known as the First Presidency. They usually come from a governing body called the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, which sits just below the First Presidency and helps set church policy while overseeing the faith’s business interests.

Together, these 15 top officials are all men in accordance with the church’s all-male priesthood.

How are the presidents chosen?

The longest-tenured member of the Quorum of the Twelve becomes the new president in a tradition established more than a century ago to ensure a smooth handover and prevent any lobbying internally or publicly.

The succession plan was created in 1889 following nearly two years of debate and some politicking among the apostles after the faith’s third president, John Taylor, died. Since then, the plan has been carried out without exception.

Nelson, the faith’s oldest-ever president, died Saturday at the age of 101. Per protocol, his successor won’t be formally announced until some time after his funeral next week. With his death, the First Presidency automatically dissolved and his two counselors rejoined the Quorum, bringing its number to 14.

Until a new president is announced, the Quorum, now led by Oaks, is in charge as the Utah-based faith prepares for its twice-annual general conference in Salt Lake City this weekend.

What does the president do?

He is considered a prophet, seer and revelator who leads the church through divine revelation from God along with two top counselors and members of the Quorum of the Twelve. He sets policy, interprets doctrine and manages church programs.

The president also oversees the church’s businesses, which include real estate, farms, publishing, life insurance, nonprofits, universities, a Polynesian cultural center in Hawaii and an upscale open-air shopping mall in Salt Lake City.

The church doesn’t disclose or discuss its finances, but the latest filings from its investment arm, Ensign Peak Advisors, Inc., value its portfolio at \$58 billion.

How long do the presidents serve?

Presidents serve until they die, which is why the length of their tenures vary widely.

The longest was Brigham Young, who served nearly 30 years in the mid- to late 1800s. Other lengthy tenures include Heber J. Grant, with nearly 27 years from 1918 to 1945, and David O. McKay, with nearly 19 years from 1951 to 1970.

The shortest tenure was Howard H. Hunter, who served only nine months from 1994 to 1995. He and three other church presidents served less than five years, including an 18-month stint by Harold B. Lee from 1972 to 1973.

Nelson held the position for more than seven years. The two presidents before him, Thomas S. Monson and Gordon B. Hinckley, each had relatively long terms. Monson served nearly 10 years, and Hinckley

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was in the post for nearly 13.

How are the president's two counselors chosen?

A new president usually chooses counselors from the Quorum of the Twelve. Sometimes, they are the same men who served the previous president. If they're different, the previous counselors return to being members of the Quorum.

Nelson kept Henry B. Eyring as a counselor and elevated Oaks as the other.

Being counselors does not put them ahead in line to become the next president. It is still the longest-tenured Quorum member who takes that role.

Oaks happens to be next in line. The 93-year-old joined the Quorum in May 1984, around the same time as Nelson.

Jeffrey R. Holland, 84, has the next highest seniority after Oaks.

How are new Quorum members chosen?

They can come from anywhere. In modern history, most were already serving in lower-tier leadership councils.

The apostles tend to be older men who have achieved success in occupations outside the church. The last three chosen for the Quorum were a U.S. State Department official, an accountant for multinational corporations, and a board member of charities, schools and an enterprise agency.

Under Nelson, the church injected some diversity into the previously all-white leadership panel by selecting the first Latin American apostle and the first apostle of Asian ancestry. The appointments brought excitement to a contingent of members who for years had been hoping to see the top leadership become more representative of a religion with over half its more than 17 million members living outside the U.S.

Once Oaks becomes president and selects his two counselors, the Quorum will likely be left with one vacancy for him to fill — one way church presidents can leave their imprint.

What about women?

Nine highest-ranking women in the church oversee three organizations that run programs for women and girls. These councils sit below several layers of leadership groups reserved for only men.

The president and two counselors who oversee the Relief Society, which runs activities for women, are considered the top female leaders based on the organization's historical cachet.

Republicans are relishing a role reversal in the shutdown fight. Can Trump keep them united?

By JOEY CAPPELLETTI and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gathered in the unusually quiet halls of the U.S. Capitol, Republican leaders faced the cameras for a second day and implored Democrats to reopen the government.

"We want to protect hardworking federal workers," House Speaker Mike Johnson said Thursday morning, before criticizing his counterparts. "Democrats are the ones who have decided to inflict the pain."

It's a striking role reversal. Budget standoffs for years have been the bane of Republican congressional leaders who had to wrestle with conservatives on their side ready to shut down the government to get their policy demands. Democrats often stood as willing partners to keeping the government open, lending crucial votes to protect programs they had championed.

"Both parties have completely flip-flopped to the opposite side of the same issue that hasn't changed," said GOP Sen. Rand Paul. "Congress has truly entered the upside down world."

The change is happening in large part because President Donald Trump exercises top-down control over a mostly unified GOP — and faces little internal resistance to his budget priorities. The shift is unfolding as the shutdown threatens government services, forces the furlough of federal workers and gives the Trump administration another opportunity to remake the federal government.

Democrats, meanwhile, have been left scrambling for leverage in the first year of Trump's second term, using the funding fight to exert what influence they can. It's an awkward posture for a party that has long cast itself as the adults in the room during shutdown threats — something not lost on Republicans.

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At a Wednesday morning news conference, Republicans looped an old clip of New York Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez declaring, "It's not normal to shut down the government if we don't get what we want."

A new GOP consensus on short-term spending

Short-term government funding legislation — known as continuing resolutions on Capitol Hill — once roiled hardline conservatives who viewed them as a dereliction of their duty to set the government's funding levels. That fight became so bitter in 2023 that right-wing lawmakers initiated the ouster of Kevin McCarthy as House speaker after he relied on Democrats to pass a "clean" continuing resolution.

But now, Paul of Kentucky has been the lone Republican to join Senate Democrats in opposing a short-term funding measure backed by GOP leaders that would keep government funding generally at current levels through Nov. 21. In explaining his vote, Paul said the measure "continues Biden spending levels" which Trump had previously pledged to roll back.

Many of Paul's previous fiscal hawk allies, however, have changed their tune.

"We need to reopen the government. Let's fix America's problems, let's work together to solve them, but let's reopen the government," Vice President JD Vance said Thursday.

When he was in the Senate, Vance never voted in favor of final passage of a continuing resolution. Instead he argued that the leverage should be used to gain significant policy wins.

"Why shouldn't we be trying to force this government shutdown fight to get something out of it that's good for the American people?" Vance said last September on the Shawn Ryan Show podcast.

This week, Vance said: "You don't have policy disagreements that serve as the basis for a government shutdown."

Trump's budget director, Russ Vought, has also taken a new tack now that he is back in the White House. While Joe Biden was president, Vought directed a conservative organization called The Center for Renewing America and counseled Republicans in Congress to use the prospect of a shutdown to gain policy concessions.

Yet this week, he charged that Democrats were "hostage taking" as they demanded that Congress take up health care policy.

In retaliation, Vought has threatened to initiate mass layoffs of federal workers and Wednesday announced that the White House was withholding funding for already approved projects in some blue states.

Trump's tight grip unifies the GOP on the surface

The shutdown, which began Wednesday, shows no sign of resolution. Republicans appear increasingly comfortable with their position, reflecting Trump's firm control on the party's agenda.

In a striking contrast to the internal division that once plagued GOP spending fights, party leaders displayed unity on the Capitol balcony on the first day of the shutdown.

"The President, House Republicans, Senate Republicans, we're all united on this," Senate Majority Leader John Thune said at the gathering, while holding the pages of the Republicans' continuing resolution that has already passed the House. That bill would reopen the government if it passed the Senate.

Trump's second term has seen far less resistance from Republicans than his first. His major tax and spending proposal, along with his personnel appointments, have largely moved forward unchallenged — a break from his first term when GOP lawmakers frequently pushed back against his proposals and actions.

Still, tensions remain just below the surface. The Republican administration's push for aggressive spending cuts — and its resistance to renewing certain health care subsidies — has sparked quiet concern inside the party.

Signs of Republican unease

One of the biggest flashpoints is the impending expiration of Affordable Care Act tax credits.

Some Republicans are sympathetic to the Democratic demands for an extension of the tax credits. If they allowed to expire, there will be large rate increases for many people who purchase their health care coverage on the marketplace. It would add financial stress to key Republican constituencies like small business owners, contractors, farmers and ranchers.

When Sen. Mike Rounds, a South Dakota Republican, floated a one-year extension to the health care

subsidies during a Senate floor vote Wednesday, it attracted attention from Democrats and Republicans alike.

"Sometimes there's a misunderstanding that we're divided on the ACA credits, we're not. So now we're moving forward to eliminate the fraud and also find a way back to pre-pandemic levels," Rounds said.

There's also a growing unease with how the Trump administration is leading Republicans through the shutdown. GOP lawmakers feel they hold the political advantage in the fight, but some are beginning to express doubts as the president and his budget director prepare to unleash mass layoffs and permanent program cuts.

Trump's penchant for hurling insults at Democratic lawmakers – many who will be crucial to leading Congress out of the spending impasse – has also undercut the messaging of Republican leaders. When Johnson was asked Thursday what he thought about Trump posting doctored videos of House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries in a sombrero, he offered a bit of advice for his Democratic counterpart.

"Man, just ignore it," Johnson said.

Immigration judge denies Kilmar Abrego Garcia's bid for asylum, but he has 30 days to appeal

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A U.S. immigration judge has denied a bid for asylum from Kilmar Abrego Garcia, whose case has become a proxy for the partisan power struggle over immigration policy.

The judge in Baltimore on Wednesday rejected an application to reopen Abrego Garcia's 2019 asylum case, but that is not the final word. Abrego Garcia has 30 days to appeal to the Board of Immigration Appeals.

The Salvadoran national has an American wife and children and has lived in Maryland for years, but he immigrated to the United States illegally as a teenager. In 2019, he was arrested by immigration agents. He requested asylum but was not eligible because he had been in the U.S. for more than a year. But the judge ruled he could not be deported to El Salvador, where he faced danger from a gang that targeted his family.

He was mistakenly deported to El Salvador by President Donald Trump's administration in March and was held in a notorious prison, and his case soon became a rallying point for those who oppose the Republican president's immigration crackdown. Facing a ruling from the Supreme Court, the administration returned him to the U.S. in June, only to immediately charge him with human smuggling.

Abrego Garcia faces criminal charges in Tennessee, based on a 2022 traffic stop. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement is also seeking to deport him to a third country, proposing Uganda first and then Eswatini, a small country in southern Africa where the king still holds absolute power. His attorneys have denounced the criminal charges and the deportation efforts, saying they are an attempt to punish him for standing up to the administration.

Abrego Garcia's request to reopen his asylum case is a calculated risk. If approved, asylum could provide him with a green card and a path to citizenship. But if he loses, an immigration judge could remove his protection from being returned to his native country. That could place him back in the infamous Terrorism Confinement Center, or CECOT. It's where, he alleges in a lawsuit, he suffered severe beatings, sleep deprivation and psychological torture. El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, has denied those allegations.

Trump administration officials have waged a relentless public relations campaign against Abrego Garcia, repeatedly referring to him as a member of the MS-13 gang, among other things, despite the fact he has not been convicted of any crimes.

His lawyers have filed motions requesting a gag order and say he will not be able to receive a fair trial because of the "highly prejudicial, inflammatory, and false statements" made about him.

While the federal judge in Tennessee can order prosecutors there not to make any prejudicial statements about Abrego Garcia, it is unclear whether the judge's authority extends to the Department of Homeland Security, which posted about the immigration court ruling on X on Wednesday.

"His lawyers tried to fight his removal from the U.S. but one thing is certain, this Salvadoran man is not

going to be able to remain in our country," according to the post.

Everybody in Washington hates a shutdown until it becomes a useful tool

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government had shut down, and Donald Trump was calling on Democrats and Republicans to work together to get out of the mess.

"You have to get people in a room, and you have to just make deals for the good of the country," Trump remarked.

The year was 2013, and Trump was then a business mogul who had yet to enter politics. Now that he is president, Trump and his fellow Republicans are taking a strikingly different posture, refusing to negotiate with Democrats in a shutdown that the GOP say the minority party instigated.

Just last year, Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York was criticizing ideologues who "amazingly believe that causing a shutdown is somehow a good thing, if it gets them what they want." Now Schumer and most other Democrats are rejecting bills to open and fund the government because they want health care provisions included.

If you've been in Washington long enough, you've most likely argued both sides of a shutdown. Both parties have used the threat of shutdowns to force a policy outcome and both sides have decried the other for doing the same. Nobody likes a shutdown, but each side insists the American people are on their side — whether their side is supporting a shutdown or not.

"Everybody just makes the mistake of believing in the righteousness of their positions, and it blinds them to the reality of shutdowns," said Brendan Buck, who served as a top aide to House Speakers John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Paul Ryan, R-Wis. "It's a political messaging exercise framed as a negotiating tactic, but there's very little evidence that it really serves a policymaking purpose. It is more just a platform to talk about what's important to you."

Other politicians do it, too

Not many politicians, save the few moderates who always chafe at shutdown maneuvers, are immune.

When Vice President JD Vance was a senator last year and when Congress, yet again, was on the brink of a funding lapse, he made an assertive case for using government funding as leverage to get what Republicans wanted.

"Why shouldn't we be trying to force this government shutdown fight to get something out of it that's good for the American people?" Vance asked in a September 2024 podcast interview. "Why have a government if it's not a functioning government?"

Vance is taking a much different approach now. Standing with GOP leaders at the White House this week, he said it was "not reasonable" for Democrats to use their proposals "as leverage and to shut down the government unless we give you everything you want."

In 2013, when Massachusetts Democrat Elizabeth Warren was in her first Senate term, she argued in a floor speech that the "bare minimum that we can do" would be to pass a short-term funding bill "to keep the doors open and the lights on."

Now, Warren has twice voted against a stopgap measure pushed by GOP lawmakers and the White House.

"Democrats are at the negotiating table. We don't have a long list of demands. We're not saying we need to find more money," Warren wrote on the social media site X. "We just want Republicans to restore the health care coverage they took away from millions of Americans."

What drives the argument?

What changes from each shutdown scenario is what specific policy the instigating party wants out of it.

In the fall of 2013, Republicans headed by Texas Sen. Ted Cruz and House conservatives were adamant that any government funding bill needed to strip money from the Affordable Care Act and they led the nation into a 16-day shutdown. In January 2018, it was Democrats who were insisting that any government spending bill offer legal protections to "Dreamers," young people who were brought to the United

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States illegally as children by family. Trump refused to negotiate, and the shutdown ended after three days.

Later in Trump's first term, he demanded money for a U.S.-Mexico border wall that lawmakers would not approve. Trump said he would "be the one to shut it down" as he sparred with congressional leaders over who would be responsible for the closures. That partial shutdown lasted 35 days.

Does forcing a shutdown even work?

One common theme is that the party forcing the shutdown hardly ever gets what it wants.

The Obama-era health law was not defunded, Democrats only got a vote on protecting "Dreamers" and Trump had to declare a national emergency to get money for his border wall. If past is prologue, that would suggest Democrats this time will not get what they want: an extension of health care subsidies for people who purchase plans through "Obamacare," plus a reversal of Medicaid cuts put in place through the GOP's signature tax law earlier this year.

Michael Thorning, who worked for former Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., said he believes shutdowns are happening more often because both Democrats and Republicans have concluded "that the public is not going to punish them at the polls."

"It's hard to see any pattern of public accountability there," said Thorning, now the director of the structural democracy project at the Bipartisan Policy Center. "I think that has probably reduced the riskiness of what was seen as a pretty hardball tactic."

Two years ago, while Democrat Joe Biden was president, Trump posted on Truth Social that any Republican fears of being blamed for a shutdown were overblown.

"Wrong!!! Whoever is President will be blamed," he wrote, later adding, "UNLESS YOU GET EVERYTHING, SHUT IT DOWN!"

Asked for comment on Trump's previous shutdown-related comments, the White House press office did not respond immediately. Their general press line gave an automatic message that due to "resulting from the Democrat Shutdown, the typical 24/7 monitoring of this press inbox may experience delays."

Later, spokeswoman Abigail Jackson responded that "Chuck Schumer and the Democrats are so desperate to distract from their decision to shut down the government that they're making the AP write stories on their week old Instagram posts." She was referring to a post from Schumer's account that featured Trump's comments from 2013.

"Here's the truth: Democrats shut down the government because they want free health care for illegal aliens and they know it hurts the American people," Jackson said. "Just listen to their own statements."

Gatorade and Cheetos are among the Pepsi products getting a natural dye makeover

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and TED SHAFFREY Associated Press

VALHALLA, New York (AP) — Pepsi has a new challenge: keeping products like Gatorade and Cheetos vivid and colorful without the artificial dyes that U.S. consumers are increasingly rejecting.

PepsiCo, which also makes Doritos, Cap'n Crunch cereal, Funyuns and Mountain Dew, announced in April that it would accelerate a planned shift to using natural colors in its foods and beverages. Around 40% of its U.S. products now contain synthetic dyes, according to the company.

But just as it took decades for artificial colors to seep into PepsiCo's products, removing them is likely to be a multi-year process. The company said it's still finding new ingredients, testing consumers' responses and waiting for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to approve natural alternatives. PepsiCo hasn't committed to meeting the Trump administration's goal of phasing out petroleum-based synthetic dyes by the end of 2026.

"We're not going to launch a product that the consumer's not going to enjoy," said Chris Coleman, PepsiCo's senior director for food research and development in North America. "We need to make sure the product is right."

Coleman said it can take two or three years to shift a product from an artificial color to a natural one. PepsiCo has to identify a natural ingredient that will have a stable shelf life and not change a product's

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flavor. Then it must ensure the availability of a safe and adequate supply. The company tests prototypes with trained experts and panels of consumers, then makes sure the new formula won't snag its manufacturing process. It also has to design new packaging.

Experimenting with spices to color Cheetos

Tostitos and Lay's will be the first PepsiCo brands to make the shift, with naturally dyed tortilla and potato chips expected on store shelves later this year and naturally dyed dips due to be on sale early next year. Most of the chips, dips and salsas in the two lines already are naturally colored, but there were some exceptions.

The reddish-brown tint of Tostitos Salsa Verde, for example, came from four synthetic colors: Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Red 40 and Blue 1. Coleman said the company is switching to carob powder, which gives the chips a similar color, but needed to tweak the recipe to ensure the addition of the cocoa alternative wouldn't affect the taste.

In its Frito-Lay food labs and test kitchens in Plano, Texas, PepsiCo is experimenting with ingredients like paprika and turmeric to mimic the bright reds and oranges in products like Flamin' Hot Cheetos, Coleman said.

The company is looking at purple sweet potatoes and various types of carrots to color drinks like Mountain Dew and Cherry 7Up, according to Damien Browne, the vice president of research and development for PepsiCo's beverage division based in Valhalla, New York.

Getting the hue right is critical, since many consumers know products like Gatorade by their color and not necessarily their name, Browne said.

"We eat with our eyes," he said. "If you look at a plate of food, it's generally the different kinds of colors that will tell you what you would like or not."

Consumer demand goes from a whisper to a roar

When the Pepsi-Cola Company was founded in 1902, the absence of artificial dyes was a point of pride. The company marketed Pepsi as "The Original Pure Food Drink" to differentiate the cola from rivals that used lead, arsenic and other toxins as food colorants before the U.S. banned them in 1906.

But synthetic dyes eventually won over food companies. They were vibrant, consistent and cheaper than natural colors. They are also rigorously tested by the FDA.

Still, PepsiCo said it started seeing a small segment of shoppers asking for products without artificial colors or flavors more than two decades ago. In 2002, it launched its Simply line of chips, which offer natural versions of products like Doritos. A dye-free organic Gatorade came out in 2016.

"We're looking for those little signals that will become humongous in the future," Amanda Grzeda, PepsiCo's senior director of global sensory and consumer experience, said of the company's close attention to consumer preferences.

Grzeda said the whisper PepsiCo detected in the early 2000s has become a roar, fueled by social media and growing consumer interest in ingredients. More than half of the consumers PepsiCo spoke to for a recent internal study said they were trying to reduce their consumption of artificial dyes, Grzeda said.

Synthetic and natural colors are in FDA's hands

Some states, including West Virginia and Arizona, have banned artificial dyes in school lunches. But Browne said he thinks consumers are driving the push to overhaul processed foods.

"Consumers are definitely leading, and I think what we need to do is have the regulators catching up, allowing us to approve new natural ingredients to be able to meet their demand," he said.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has said it's expediting approval of natural additives after calling on companies to halt their use of synthetic dyes. In May, the FDA approved three new natural color additives, including a blue color derived from algae. In July, the agency approved gardenia blue, which is derived from a flowering evergreen.

The FDA banned one petroleum-based dye, Red 3, in January because it was shown to cause cancer in lab rats. And in September, the agency proposed a ban on Orange B, a synthetic color that hasn't been used in decades.

Six synthetic dyes remain FDA-approved and widely used, despite mixed studies that show they may

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cause neurobehavioral problems in some children. Red 40, for example, is used in 25,965 food and beverage items on U.S. store shelves, according to the market research firm NIQ.

But even if decades of research has shown that synthetic colors are safe, PepsiCo has to weigh public perceptions, Grzeda said.

"We could just blindly follow the science, but it probably would put us at odds with what our consumers believe and perceive in the world," she said.

Passing taste and texture tests

PepsiCo also has to balance the needs of consumers who don't want their favorite snacks and drinks to change or get more expensive because of the costs of natural dyes. NIQ data shows that unit sales of products advertised as free of artificial colors fell sharply in 2023 as prices rose.

Susan Mazur-Stommen, a small business owner in Hinton, West Virginia, picked up some Simply brand Cheetos Puffs recently at a convenience store because they were the only variety available. She found the texture to be much different from regular Cheetos Puffs, she said, and their pallid color made them less appetizing.

Mazur-Stommen said she agrees with the move away from petroleum-based dyes, but it's not a critical issue for her.

"What I am looking for is the original formulation," she said.

Ultimately, PepsiCo does not want customers to have to choose between natural colors and familiar flavors and textures, Grzeda said.

"That's where it requires the deep science and ingredients and magic," she said.

Rescuers turn to heavy machinery as hope fades of finding survivors of Indonesia school collapse

By NINIEK KARMINI and DITA ALANGKARA Associated Press

SIDOARJO, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian rescue authorities made the tough decision on Thursday to start using heavy machinery to move large sections of a collapsed school, with no more signs of life from beneath the rubble and nearly 60 teenage students still unaccounted for three days after the building caved in.

The decision had been made in consultation with the families of those still missing, Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Cultural Affairs Pratikno told reporters at the scene in Sidoarjo.

For Mohammad Solehoddin, whose son Ahmad Suafi still hasn't been found, ramping up the effort with heavy excavators seemed the best chance of still possibly finding the 17-year-old alive.

"By removing the large parts of concrete, we hope our sons will be found," said the 47-year-old, who waited with his wife and other anxious parents in an area of the school that was undamaged, with the sounds of the machinery at work audible in the background.

Five students were rescued Wednesday by workers who tunneled into the rubble using only hand tools. Pratikno said on Thursday that work would proceed with extreme caution even though no more signs of life could be detected.

"In any case, we will be very, very careful when using the heavy machines," said Pratikno, who only goes by one name as is common in Indonesia.

The structure fell on top of hundreds of people on Monday in the prayer hall at the century-old al Khoziny Islamic boarding school in Sidoarjo, on the eastern side of Indonesia's Java island.

Authorities have said the building was two stories, but two more levels were being added without a permit. Police said that the old building's foundation was apparently unable to support two floors of concrete and collapsed during the pouring process.

Five people have been confirmed killed so far, and of about 105 who were injured, more than two dozen are still hospitalized, with many said to have suffered head injuries and broken bones.

The students were mostly boys in grades seven to 12, between the ages of 12 and 19. Female students

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were praying in another part of the building and managed to escape, survivors said.

Most rescues typically happen within 24 hours after such disasters, with chances of survival decreasing steadily as time progresses.

Solehoddin said that he had had been at the scene since late Monday, having rushed there from his village on a nearby island after hearing the news. On Tuesday, when he was close to the collapsed section as the parent representative chosen to observe, he said he had been able to hear voices from those trapped.

He last saw his son two weeks ago when the teenager made a surprise visit home, because he said he missed his mother's cooking. Now, he said, he's left with prayers that he will see him again.

"I leave it to God," he said. "What else can we do?"

Nearly 220 workers were on the scene Thursday with ambulances on hand ready to take any survivors found quickly to the hospital. But authorities also brought in large quantities of body bags, a tacit acknowledgement that the odds of finding anyone left alive were rapidly diminishing.

"We are no longer considering the possibility of survivors remaining, but we will still proceed with caution, said Suharyanto, the head of Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency, who also goes by one name.

The numbers of missing have fluctuated widely over the course of the three-day recovery effort, and Suharyanto conceded that authorities still aren't certain how many students may be buried, having made their estimate based on school attendance figures and information from families.

"We really hope that these 59 people are not there under the rubble," he said. "It happened previously that parents reported their children missing but turned out that their children were somewhere else — I do hope and pray that they are not there."

Today in History: October 3, Germany reunifies after 45 years

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Oct. 3, the 276th day of 2025. There are 89 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Oct. 3, 1990, West Germany and East Germany ended 45 years of postwar division, declaring the creation of a reunified country.

Also on this date:

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. Army troops cracked the Siegfried Line north of Aachen, Germany.

In 1951, the New York Giants captured the National League pennant by a score of 5-4 as Bobby Thomson hit a three-run homer off Ralph Branca of the Brooklyn Dodgers, which became known as the "Shot Heard 'Round the World."

In 1974, Frank Robinson was named the American League's first Black manager after he was hired by the Cleveland Indians.

In 1993, 18 U.S. service members and hundreds of Somalis were killed in the Battle of Mogadishu — the deadliest battle for U.S. troops since the Vietnam War. The battle inspired the film "Black Hawk Down."

In 1995, the jury in the O.J. Simpson murder trial in Los Angeles found the former football star not guilty of the 1994 killings of his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend Ronald Goldman.

In 2008, O.J. Simpson was found guilty of robbing two sports-memorabilia dealers at gunpoint in a Las Vegas hotel room. (Simpson was sentenced late that year to nine to 33 years in prison; he was granted parole in July 2017 and released from prison in October of that year. He died at age 76 on April 10, 2024, after battling prostate cancer.)

In 2011, an Italian appeals court freed Amanda Knox of Seattle after four years in prison, tossing murder convictions against Knox and an ex-boyfriend in the stabbing of their British roommate, Meredith Kercher. An Italian high court definitively vindicated Knox in 2015, throwing out their convictions once and for all.

In 2013, a smugglers' ship packed with African migrants sank off the coast of a southern Italian island, killing more than 365 people.

In 2023, the U.S. House of Representatives voted to remove House Speaker Kevin McCarthy — the first time in U.S. history a speaker had been ousted from the position. Though McCarthy had the support of

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many fellow Republicans, several hard-right detractors from his party essentially forced him out.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Steve Reich is 89. Rock and roll star Chubby Checker is 84. Musician Lindsey Buckingham (Fleetwood Mac) is 76. Blues musician Keb' Mo' is 74. Baseball Hall of Famer Dave Winfield is 74. Baseball Hall of Famer Dennis Eckersley is 71. Golf Hall of Famer Fred Couples is 66. Rock drummer Tommy Lee is 63. Actor Clive Owen is 61. Film director Denis Villeneuve is 58. Singer-TV personality Gwen Stefani is 56. Pop singer Kevin Richardson (Backstreet Boys) is 54. Actor Neve Campbell is 52. Actor Lena Headey is 52. Singer India.Arie is 50. Rapper Talib Kweli is 50. Actor Seann William Scott is 49. Actor Tessa Thompson is 42. Actor-singer Ashlee Simpson is 41. Actor Alicia Vikander is 37. Rapper A\$AP Rocky is 37. Actor Ayo Edebiri is 30. Actor Noah Schnapp (TV: "Stranger Things") is 21.