

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Thursday, Jan. 8, 2026

- School Breakfast: Maple French toast.
- School Lunch: Chicken patty, sweet potato puffs.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.
- Carnival of Silver Skates costume hand-out at Emmanuel Lutheran
- Groton Lions Club Meeting at 104 N Main, 6 p.m.
- Basketball at Clark: (GJV/BC-4, BJV/GC-5, GV-6:30, BV-7:45)
- 2nd Grade BBB Practice, 5 p.m.
- 4th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

## Friday, Jan. 9, 2026

- School Breakfast: Breakfast Boats.
- School Lunch: Chicken Fajitas, refried beans.
- Carnival of Silver Skates costume hand-out at Emmanuel Lutheran
- Girls Wrestling at Miller/Highmore-Harrold Tourney, 4 p.m.



Robotics Set-up in the GHS Gym, 6 p.m.

## Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026

- Mixed Doubles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle, 1 p.m.
- Groton Robotics Tourney, 8 a.m.
- Boys Wrestling at Jesse James (Garretson) Tournament, 9:30 a.m.
- Girls Wrestling at Mid-Dakota Monster (Lyman High School) Tournament, 10 a.m.
- Basketball at Lennox: (Gym: BC-1, GC-2:15, Main Gym: JVGBB-1, JVBBB-2:15, VGGB-3:30, VBBB-5:00)

**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.**

## Two Tankers Taken

The US military said it had seized two Venezuela-linked oil tankers yesterday, including a Russian-flagged ship it pursued for more than two weeks.

The ship, formerly called the Bella 1, was working to evade the US Coast Guard in the northern Atlantic Ocean weeks after allegedly seeking to dock in Venezuela. On Dec. 24, the ship received approval from the Kremlin to reflag under Russia and has since changed its name to the Marinera. It was accompanied by Russian naval vessels and a submarine but was seized between the British Isles and Iceland with support from the UK military. A second tanker, the Cameroonian-flagged Sophia, was seized after allegedly leaving a Venezuelan port. The US seized two other tankers—the Centuries and the Skipper—last month.

The latest incidents come after President Donald Trump said the US will take possession of 30 million to 50 million barrels of sanctioned oil from Venezuela—up to 15% of the country's annual oil production.

## ICE Shooting Death

Hundreds of protesters gathered in Minneapolis, Minnesota, yesterday, after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer killed a 37-year-old US citizen.

The Department of Homeland Security says agents believed the woman, identified as Renee Nicole Good, was attempting to weaponize her vehicle to kill federal officers; Mayor Jacob Frey (D) disputes the account and accuses the ICE agent of "recklessly using power," resulting in the woman's death. Video footage shows federal agents approaching a vehicle that had been partially blocking a street and attempting to have the driver exit her vehicle. The car pulls forward and begins to turn before an agent fired at least two shots, according to the police. The car then crashed on the side of the roadway.

More than 2,000 federal personnel were deployed to Minneapolis this week as part of a 30-day surge following allegations of fraud in the state's day care facilities and other federally funded programs.

## New Food Pyramid

The Trump administration announced new federal dietary guidelines yesterday, urging Americans to eat more protein and dairy and, for the first time, formally advising against highly processed foods.

The latest advice is depicted by an inverted pyramid, with proteins, dairy, fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats—like avocados—lumped together at the top. Whole grains are deemphasized at the bottom. The graphic replaced the MyPlate visual introduced in 2011, which advises roughly equal portions of grains and vegetables, smaller servings of protein and fruit, and a side of dairy. Notably, the Trump administration's update moves away from limits on all fats, instead emphasizing different fat qualities. It also abandons daily limits on alcohol in favor of more general advice to drink less, and advises up to doubling protein intake.

The updates will be reflected in federal nutrition programs, directly affecting an estimated one in four Americans. See how US nutrition advice has changed since 1943 [here](#).

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Warner Bros. Discovery board advises shareholders to reject Paramount bid, stick with Netflix deal.  
Judge delays Nick Reiner's arraignment to Feb. 23 after his attorney steps down from the high-profile double murder case.  
"One Battle After Another" earns record seven nods for Actor Awards, formerly Screen Actors Guild Awards; Netflix to livestream March 1 ceremony.  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette to shut down after 240 years, citing labor constraints and financial losses.  
College Football Playoff semifinals begin tonight at 7:30 pm ET with No. 6 Ole Miss facing No. 10 Miami in the Fiesta Bowl.

## Science & Technology

OpenAI launches ChatGPT Health, allowing users to connect medical records and wellness apps to the chatbot for better answers to medical questions; the feature is not intended for diagnosis or treatment.  
Astronomers discover fastest-ever spinning asteroid—over half a kilometer wide—using the world's largest digital camera stationed at the Rubin Observatory.  
Engineers develop material that changes color and texture similar to an octopus, with potential applications in camouflage, art, robotics, and bioengineering.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.3%, Dow -1.0%, Nasdaq +0.2%); S&P 500 and the Dow pull back from records.  
Anthropic reportedly planning to raise \$10B at \$350B valuation.  
Media startup Semafor raises \$30M at \$330M valuation.  
Global startup funding rises 30% year-over-year in 2025 to \$425B, marking third-highest venture-financing year on record.  
JPMorgan Chase's asset-management arm cuts ties with proxy advisers, will use AI to make shareholder-voting decisions in move seen as an industry first.  
JPMorgan reportedly taking over Apple credit card from Goldman Sachs.

## Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump announces he will work to bar Wall Street investment firms from purchasing single-family homes amid jump in housing costs.  
Less than 1% of single-family homes are believed to be owned by investors.  
Secretary of State Marco Rubio to meet with Danish representatives next week, will discuss Trump administration's efforts to acquire Greenland.  
US population is projected to start to shrink for the first time in 2056 after reaching a peak of 364 million people; government cites declining birth rate, immigration policies.

## What science says about the health benefits of chocolate

By Mayo Clinic Health Letter Editors



Press

On an island just off the coast of Panama lives an indigenous tribe called the Kuna, who outlive other people in Panama. Despite their relatively high-salt diet, the Kuna tend to have lower blood pressure than do other people in Panama. In addition, they experience fewer heart attacks and they're less likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes or cancer.

After much study, researchers determined that what set the Kuna people apart wasn't what they ate. Instead, it likely stemmed from what they drank — more than five cups of cocoa daily.

Since then, scientists been trying to figure out whether consuming cocoa — and the chocolate made from it — benefits overall health.

### Why cocoa may be good for your health

Researchers think cocoa may have health benefits for two reasons. First, it's rich in flavanols, which are antioxidants believed to protect blood vessels from aging. Second, it contains theobromine, a bitter-tasting stimulant that may reduce inflammation.

People often use the words "cacao," "cocoa" and "chocolate" interchangeably. However, they mean slightly different things. Manufacturers dry, roast and pulverize the beans from the cacao tree to make cocoa. Because pure cocoa is very bitter, manufacturers add sugar, milk, fat and other ingredients to create hot cocoa mixes and chocolate bars.

### What research says about potential health benefits of chocolate

The research on chocolate and its health benefits has been mixed. One study that followed the eating habits of over 55,000 people found that rates of atrial fibrillation, an irregular heart rhythm, were lower in people who consumed chocolate more often. Another large, long-term study hinted that chocolate consumption might reduce the risk of having a heart attack.

However, those observational studies only show a correlation between chocolate consumption and health. They don't prove a cause-and-effect relationship. Randomized controlled trials are best for that.

The Cocoa Supplement and Multivitamin Outcomes Study (COSMOS) is one of the largest and longest-running randomized controlled trials to look at the relationship between chocolate consumption and health.

In this trial:

Some of the over 21,000 participants took a supplement twice a day that contained 500 milligrams of cocoa flavanols.

Other participants took placebo pills.

During the study, participants who took the cocoa supplement had similar rates of heart attacks as did participants who took placebo pills. They also had similar rates of type 2 diabetes and performed similarly on tests of cognitive health.

However, those who took the cocoa supplement were 27% less likely to die of heart-related events.

In a separate review of 35 randomized controlled trials involving more than 1,800 people, the consumption of flavanol-enriched cocoa led to a small, 2-millimeter of mercury (mm Hg) drop in blood pressure over an average of nine weeks.

### Why everyday chocolate may not be as healthy

The potential health benefits of chocolate are likely mild, at best. And you may not get them by consuming store-bought chocolate. That's because the cocoa used in research differs significantly from chocolate sold commercially.

For example, the cocoa supplement in the COSMOS study contained 500 milligrams of flavanols. That's about five times more flavanols than most people consume daily from all flavanol-rich foods and beverages — including tea, berries and grapes — combined.

Other ingredients — especially sugar and saturated fat — that are added to store-bought chocolate

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dramatically dilute the cocoa content. And that reduces the amount of flavanols.

## **Smart ways to savor chocolate**

So there's no reason to add chocolate to your diet if you don't like it. But if you do, here's how to get the biggest health bang for your caloric buck:

Go dark. The darker the chocolate, the less sugar and more cocoa and flavanols it contains. Look for products that list the percentage of cacao on the label. The higher the percentage listed, the more flavanols and less sugar in the product. If you drink hot chocolate, make it from unsweetened 100% cocoa. Oh, and despite its name, white chocolate contains no cocoa at all – so skip it in favor of darker chocolate.

Keep portions in check. Even the darkest bars of chocolate still have a lot of calories and sugar. For example, one large 101-gram, 70% to 85% cacao bar of chocolate comes with 604 calories, 43 grams of fat and 24 grams of sugar. So keep portions small and think of chocolate as an occasional treat.

Consume other flavanol-rich foods. In addition to cocoa, black and green tea, cinnamon, grapes and apples are packed with flavanols. Many different plant foods — including most fruits, vegetables and herbs — contain numerous other health-promoting substances as well. So rather than zeroing in only on chocolate, try to eat a wide variety of plant foods.

This article originally appeared in the Mayo Clinic Health Letter.

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## Mitchell Technical College Fall 2025 President's List

A total of 395 students at Mitchell Technical College have been placed on the Fall Semester 2025 President's List, according to MTC President Theresa Kriese. To be named to the list, students must earn a term GPA of at least 3.5 on a 4.0 scale and be registered for at least 12 credit hours of academic work during the semester. The individuals listed met these requirements for the Fall 2025 semester, organized by program of study. Students marked with an \* earned a 4.0 GPA this semester.

Groton: Korbin Kucker - Power Line Construction & Maintenance

Frederick: Madelyne Sumption\* - Accounting

Warner: Rylan Evenson\* - Wi-Fi & Broadband Technologies

## Groton Chamber of Commerce

January 7, 2026

12pm City Hall

- Members present: Bruce Babcock, Brian Dolan, Paul Kosel, Katelyn Nehlich, Douglas Heinrich, Ashley Bentz, April Abeln, Topper Tastad, Carol Kutter, and Karyn Babcock
- Members enjoyed a Ken's Food Fair catered meal that was Chamber sponsored and received Christmas gifts.
- The minutes from the previous meeting were approved by Doug and seconded by Bruce. All members present voted aye.
- The treasurer's report was given. Dacotah Bank checking account balance is \$12,613.46 in addition to the \$10,000 CD. The bucks account balance is about \$3,000. A total of 53 members have paid dues for 2026. The report was approved by April and seconded by Doug. All members present voted aye.
- Thank you notes were received from Snow Queen, BIO Girls and NSU.
- No shirt orders have been received since November. \$2000 has been received for our seesaw fundraiser.
- Topper and Bruce will talk to a few businesses about renewing their Hwy 12 sign contracts.
- Motion by Bruce and seconded by Paul to start leading Bingo at the Groton Legion every 5th Wednesday. All members present voted aye. Bruce will ask for approval from the Legion. This activity will be part of our seesaw fundraiser. Those that signed up to be included in the volunteer rotation were Carol, Doug, Ashley, Paul, Bruce, Topper, April, Karyn, and Katelyn. 3 volunteers are needed per time.
- Motion by April and seconded by Bruce to have a table at the January 22nd basketball games and giveaway free popcorn. All members present voted aye. Table will have shirt order information as well and will need to be set up at 5pm. Those that signed up to volunteer were Carol, Ashley, April, Bruce and Tom Bentz. Split pot may also be a possibility. It was mentioned that information should be given to Announcer Mike Imrie.
- Motion by Topper and seconded by April to pay \$220/month to Dakota Broadcasting for 2026 radio ads. All members present voted aye. This increase in price will give more incentives to our new members as well as our existing and provide a few more ads for us as well. April will present Brian with verbiage for Facebook to announce those incentives prior to posting.
- No donations were given out at this time.
- Karyn will reach out to Kelly Oswald of Kelly's Confections about a new business welcome. Other future welcomes include Cloverly Home Décor and NVC.
- President Ashley will attend a Council meeting and provide a recap and discuss our seesaw fundraiser in the near future.
- Motion by Doug and seconded by Paul to sell beach towels as another seesaw fundraiser. All members present voted aye. Towels will be gifted to Council and potentially sold at the pool. Towels will be able to be ordered online thru BK Custom T's using Kellie Locke's prior shirt design. It was suggested the Chamber purchase some in bulk to sell.
- Next Meeting: February 4th, 12pm at City Hall

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Upcoming events:

- o 01/10/2026 Mixed Doubles Bowling Tournament at The Jungle 1pm & 4pm
- o 01/16/2026 Rocky Mountain Oysters at the Groton Legion
- o 01/17/2026 Groton Robotics Tourney at the Community Center
- o 01/23/2026 Wing Nite at the Groton Legion
- o 01/24/2026 Wing Nite at the Groton Legion
- o 01/25/2026 Groton Robotics Pancake Feed 10am-1pm Community Center
- o 01/25/2026 88th Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6pm
- o 02/04/2026 FB Live Electron



## Coming Up on GDILIVE.COM

Groton  
Area  
Tigers  
Groton, SD

# GDILIVE



A production of the

## Groton Daily Independent



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

### Thurs., Jan. 8, 2026

Rich Bosma and Mike Imrie  
Paul Kosel and Jeslyn Kosel



### Doubleheader at Clark/Willow Lake

### Girls JV at 4 p.m.

### Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m., Boys at 8 p.m.

### Sat., Jan. 10, 2026

Rich Bosma and  
Jeslyn Kosel

### Doubleheader at Lennox

### Girls at 3:30 p.m., Boys at 5 p.m.



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**Annual Membership Rates**

Student is \$29.82 per month or \$255.60 per year  
Single is \$35.15 per month or \$319.50 per year  
2-Person is \$55.45 per month or \$575.10 per year  
Family is \$67.10 per month or \$702.26 per year

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Same rates for several years!**



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Dueling federal and state lawsuits arise in dispute over abortion-rights ads in South Dakota

**New case in U.S. Southern District of New York comes after SD's attorney general filed suit in state court**

**BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN**

A dispute over abortion-rights advertising in South Dakota has spawned dueling state and federal lawsuits. A New York-based nonprofit filed a federal lawsuit Tuesday against South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley. The lawsuit seeks to prevent Jackley from taking legal action against the nonprofit's abortion-rights campaign at gas stations across the state.

Jackley asked a South Dakota judge last month to stop the campaign, which includes gas-pump placards asking "Pregnant? Don't want to be?" and provides a link to Mayday Health's website. The nonprofit educates people about the safety and effectiveness of abortion pills. It began its ad campaign in early December, and Jackley sent the group a cease-and-desist letter days later.

In the new federal suit, filed in the Southern District of New York, Mayday claims Jackley's actions are unconstitutional because the nonprofit's website and advertising materials are protected.

"We're not taking the signs down," said Mayday's Executive Director Liv Raisner in a December Instagram post. "It's First Amendment-protected free speech, and information is not illegal."

Mayday's lawsuit says Jackley "may not punish Mayday for publishing truthful information on a public issue" such as "information about legal abortion services in jurisdictions that have made abortion illegal."

In his cease-and-desist letter, Jackley said abortion pills are illegal in the state, and that Mayday Health publishes incorrect and dangerous information.

"These ads are targeting women — including teenagers — encouraging them to take these pills while misleading them about the potential physical risks," Jackley said in a December news release. "At the same time, they promote secrecy by urging women not to inform their doctors and children not to tell their parents."

South Dakota lawmakers adopted an abortion trigger ban in 2005 that took effect in 2022, after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. Abortions are prohibited in the state, unless the mother's life is threatened by a pregnancy. State lawmakers also passed legislation in 2022 banning "medical abortion by telemedicine."

In 2023, medication abortions accounted for 63% of abortions in the country, according to data from the Guttmacher Institute. The drugs mifepristone and misoprostol, commonly used in medication abortions, are also listed on the World Health Organizations' list of essential medicines. In 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected an attempt by anti-abortion medical organizations to overturn the Food and Drug Administration's prescribing guidelines for mifepristone.

Jackley has not yet filed a response to Mayday's federal lawsuit.

*Meghan O'Brien is the audio reporter for South Dakota Searchlight where she covers the state government and its impact on South Dakotans. She's previously reported in Nebraska with a focus on health care and rural communities across the state.*

## ICE officer fatally shoots driver through car window in Minneapolis

BY: MAX NESTERAK, MADISON MCVAN AND ALYSSA CHEN

An ICE officer fatally shot a woman driving an SUV through her car window in south Minneapolis on Wednesday morning.

The deadly confrontation immediately ratcheted up the intensity of what was already a brutal crackdown on Minnesota and its immigrants by the Trump administration — and in a community with raw memories of the police murder of George Floyd.

Video of the incident shared with the Reformer shows masked ICE officers approach a Honda Pilot stopped in the middle of Portland Avenue near 34th Street. One officer tells the driver to “get out of the f\*cking car” and tries to open the door. The driver then slowly backs up and then pulls forward, appearing to try to leave. An officer at the front of the vehicle fires three shots and the SUV travels a short distance before crashing into a parked car.

The woman was transported to Hennepin County Medical Center, where she was pronounced dead, the Minneapolis chief of police said.

A group of Minneapolis City Council members identified her in a statement as Renee Nicole Good, a Minneapolis resident. They said she was a “member of our community” and demanded justice for her killing. She was 37 years old, according to the Minneapolis mayor.

Tricia McLaughlin, assistant Secretary Dept. of Homeland Security, writing on X, gave a different version of what happened: “One of these violent rioters weaponized her vehicle, attempting to run over our law enforcement officers in an attempt to kill them — an act of domestic terrorism. An ICE officer, fearing for his life, the lives of his fellow law enforcement and the safety of the public, fired defensive shots.”

MAGA supporters showed video from different angles that purported to show the officer acting in self-defense, while former senior Obama administration official Tommy Vietor reshared the Reformer video on X and called the incident, “an execution by this ICE officer.” Americans can expect a debate over the shooting for years to come, regardless of the outcome of any investigations.

The witness who took the video, Caitlin Callenson, said she was on a walk when she saw an ICE vehicle stuck in the snow. As more ICE vehicles arrived, bystanders blew whistles in protest, and the driver of the SUV tried to block the ICE vehicles.

Callenson said she did not see ICE agents attempting to detain anyone leading up to or after the shooting.

After the shots were fired, the driver “then was completely slumped over in the vehicle,” said Emily Heller, another witness.

Federal agents wouldn’t allow a man who said he is a physician to examine the driver, Heller said. Emergency medical technicians arrived 15 minutes later, she said. First responders were unable to get close to the scene because ICE agents did not move their cars to let them through.

“There was chaos and ambulance and fire trucks couldn’t get through,” Callenson said. “They had to walk through all of the ICE vehicles on foot to try to administer first aid.”

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said he had been dreading this moment since the Department of Homeland Security began ramping up immigration enforcement in the Twin Cities in recent weeks, sending thousands of officers to the state in what the Department of Homeland Security is calling its “largest operation ever.”

Frey called ICE’s statement saying the shooting was in self-defense was “bullsh\*t” and blasted the agency’s presence in the city saying they’re only “causing chaos and distrust.”

“To ICE, get the f\*ck out of Minneapolis,” Frey said.

He urged residents to remain peaceful and not “take the bait” from the federal government.

“They want us to respond in a way that creates a military occupation in our city,” Frey said. “Let’s not let them.”

Dozens of federal agents from ICE and the FBI, as well as Minneapolis police officers and Hennepin County sheriff deputies responded to the scene.

As some federal officers attempted to leave, protestors blocked their vehicle. The officers fired a noxious gas at close range, causing distress and vomiting for many demonstrators and journalists.

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Protesters hurled insults at Minneapolis Police officers, who are not supposed to assist with immigration enforcement, but were on the scene Wednesday morning.

After law enforcement cleared the scene, demonstrators placed white roses where blood stained the snow. City Council members including Robin Wonsley and Jamal Osman addressed the crowd, saying the area was an active crime scene, and that MPD was present to investigate.

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O'Hara said at a Wednesday press conference that they have yet to see information indicating that the shooting was justified and there was nothing to indicate the woman was a target of immigration enforcement activity, O'Hara said.

Minneapolis police officers secured the crime scene to preserve evidence, O'Hara said. The Federal Bureau of Investigation is now jointly conducting an investigation into the use of deadly force with the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

Hennepin County Sheriff Dawanna Witt emphasized the need for local involvement in the investigation for transparency: "With all due respect to the federal level, we do need to make sure that our local agencies are involved."

Hennepin County Attorney Mary Moriarty issued a statement soon after the shooting saying "pushing hard for a local investigation which is the only way to ensure full transparency and review by our office."

U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, a St. Paul Democrat, called on Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem, who filmed herself observing ICE actions in Minneapolis on Tuesday, to immediately stop the ICE operation "to restore order and prevent further injuries."

*This story was originally produced by Minnesota Reformer, 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.*

*Max Nesterak is the deputy editor of the Reformer and reports on labor and housing. Previously, he was an associate producer for Minnesota Public Radio after a stint at NPR. He also co-founded the Behavioral Scientist and was a Fulbright Scholar to Berlin, Germany.*

*Madison McVan is a Report for America corps member who covers economic mobility for Minnesota Reformer. She previously covered agriculture for Investigate Midwest after graduating from the University of Missouri in 2020 with degrees in Journalism and Latin American studies.*

## Governor seeks federal help for damages from December wind storm

BY: JOHN HULT

Gov. Larry Rhoden has asked the federal government to help pay for more than \$1.7 million in damage to public property in South Dakota caused by a storm last month.

Wind gusts of 100 miles an hour or more tore through large swaths of western South Dakota and eastern Wyoming Dec. 17-18, causing what a press release from Rhoden's office called "severe infrastructure damage."

Pennington, Custer and Fall River counties were among the most affected, the release says. The National Weather Service logged the highest wind gusts in recorded history at the agency's monitoring sites in eastern Rapid City and the Rapid City airport during the storm, at 91 and 94 miles per hour, respectively. The top wind gust recorded by the agency during the storm was 101 miles per hour at a location 4 miles south of downtown Rapid City.

Some residents in the Black Hills experienced power outages that lasted a week, according to the weather service.

Rhoden's disaster declaration, signed on Wednesday, opens the door to possible assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

If FEMA approves the declaration, it could pick up as much as 75% of the price of repairs to public property. Counties would pay 15% of repair costs; the state would pay 10%.

To qualify for federal aid, an incident must cause at least \$1.7 million in damage to public property. The December storm's damage tally thus far "exceeds that amount," Rhoden's press release says.

## Dems demand investigation of fatal Minneapolis ICE shooting as Trump claims self-defense

**Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem calls victim a 'domestic terrorist'**

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA**

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump defended a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer who fatally shot a woman in Minneapolis Wednesday, while congressional Democrats universally condemned the action.

Video obtained by the Minnesota Reformer shows an ICE officer demanding the driver of a maroon SUV get out of the vehicle. As the vehicle begins to pull away, an officer fires three shots through the windshield and driver-side window. The video shows no apparent harm to the officer, who walked away from the vehicle shortly after the shooting.

But Trump wrote on social media that "it is hard to believe he is alive."

"The woman driving the car was very disorderly, obstructing and resisting, who then violently, willfully, and viciously ran over the ICE Officer, who seems to have shot her in self defense," Trump wrote.

Minnesota's Democratic congressional delegation, and other Democrats in Washington, D.C., strongly condemned the incident and questioned the subsequent comments from the administration.

"We need full transparency and an investigation of what happened, and I am deeply concerned that statements made by DHS do not appear to reflect video evidence and on-the-ground accounts," Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the state's senior senator, said in a statement.

A statement from several Minneapolis City Council members identified the victim as Renee Nicole Good, 37. A photo of the SUV shows several stuffed animals hanging out of the glove compartment.

### **Trump, GOP back officer**

Congressional Republicans largely backed Trump's version of events, calling the shooting self-defense and blaming Democrats for rhetoric they said inspired violence.

Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said that the woman tried to run over the agent.

"One of these violent rioters weaponized her vehicle, attempting to run over our law enforcement officers in an attempt to kill them—an act of domestic terrorism," McLaughlin said. "An ICE officer, fearing for his life, the lives of his fellow law enforcement and the safety of the public, fired defensive shots."

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem called the victim a "domestic terrorist."

House Republican Whip Tom Emmer gave his support to the ICE officer.

"Our brave ICE agents put their lives on the line every day to protect our communities from dangerous criminals," he said in a statement. "May God bless and protect them in their efforts. Shame on the elected officials who endanger these agents by spewing lies and hateful rhetoric."

### **Dems call for investigation**

Democrats on Capitol Hill denounced the attack and the administration's response.

House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries called for the ICE officer who shot the woman to be criminally investigated.

"There is no evidence that has been presented to justify this killing," Jeffries, a New York Democrat, said in a statement. "Secretary Kristi Noem is a stone-cold liar and has zero credibility. The masked ICE agent who pulled the trigger should be criminally investigated to the full extent of the law for acting with depraved indifference to human life."

Minnesota Democrats said the ongoing immigration enforcement campaign in the Twin Cities had heightened tensions.

"For weeks, Donald Trump has directed ICE and DHS agents to racially profile and arrest Minnesotans in their homes, their workplaces, and on our streets," Minnesota Democratic Rep. Betty McCollum said in

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a statement, adding that more than 2,000 federal immigration agents are in the state.

"Trump's reckless and dangerous immigration policies do nothing to make us safer," she continued. "Today in Minneapolis, these actions resulted in a masked federal agent fatally shooting a woman in the head."

Democratic Sen. Tina Smith said the woman fatally shot by an ICE officer was a U.S. citizen. She called for ICE to leave Minnesota.

Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, the first Somali-American woman elected to Congress and whose district includes the site of the shooting, said the woman was a legal observer, which is a neutral third party who attends protests or other public demonstrations to observe and record law enforcement actions towards protesters.

"ICE's actions today were unconscionable and reprehensible," Omar said.

## DHS practices, budget questioned

DHS received billions for immigration enforcement in last year's tax and spending cuts package passed by congressional Republicans. The funding can be used for hiring new ICE officers and detention and removal of immigrants.

On Jan. 3, ICE announced it hired 12,000 new officers, doubling from 10,000 agents to 22,000.

A top Senate Democratic appropriator, Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut, wrote on social media that "Democrats cannot vote for a DHS budget that doesn't restrain the growing lawlessness of this agency."

New Jersey Democratic Sen. Cory Booker said in a statement that he was concerned the aggressive DHS practices will lead to more tragedies.

"All evidence indicates that hiring standards have been lowered, training is inadequate, and internal controls are insufficient," he said. "These conditions have allowed agents to operate without proper oversight, and, in some cases, unlawfully."

Arizona Sen. Ruben Gallego also criticized the hiring practices of ICE, specifically calling out White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller, a lead architect of the Trump administration's immigration policy.

"What happened is a disgrace and we need an investigation immediately," Gallego said on social media. "It's clear that that agent didn't have the proper training, and that's because Stephen Miller is going full speed ahead to hire as many agents as possible."

## Day care investigation

The federal immigration operation in Minneapolis began last month but intensified this week after a right-wing influencer reported day care centers run by members of the Somali community as fraudulent.

In response, the Trump administration directed states to provide "justification" that federal child care funds they receive are spent on "legitimate" providers and Noem has zeroed in on the city, which has a large Somali community, for immigration enforcement.

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a Wednesday hearing on the issue of fraud in Minnesota.

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.*

## Rubio to meet with Danish officials amid Greenland push by Trump administration

**SD's Sen. Rounds says he doesn't 'think military intervention is on the table' for Greenland**

**BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA, SHAUNEEN MIRANDA AND JENNIFER SHUTT**

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Wednesday he will meet with Danish officials next week, following a recent push from the Trump administration to annex or even use the military against Greenland — a course of action questioned by several Republican senators.

Senators sat through a closed, classified briefing Wednesday with Rubio about ongoing U.S. intervention in Venezuela launched over the weekend, and Democrats said afterward that he did not address their concerns about the operation.

In addition, President Donald Trump is considering options to acquire Greenland, including possible military operations, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Tuesday.

Danish officials have repeatedly stressed any move to take the sovereign nation by force would violate NATO bylaws, which bar members from acts of aggression against each other. Greenland, with a population of about 56,000, has its own local government but is also part of the Realm of Denmark.

Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski told reporters she does not support Trump's goals for Greenland. "I hate the rhetoric around either acquiring Greenland by purchase or by force. And you know I don't use the word hate very often. But I think that it is very, very unsettling," Murkowski said. "And certainly concerning as one who has actually been to Greenland."

Rubio told reporters following the Venezuela briefing — open to all senators — that Energy Secretary Chris Wright will outline the Trump administration's plans for that nation's oil reserves later Wednesday. Trump said Saturday that the United States will "run the country" of Venezuela until "a proper transition can take place."

"We feel very positive that not only will that generate revenue that will be used for the benefit of the Venezuelan people ... but it also gives us an amount of leverage and influence and control over how this process plays out," Rubio said.

The Senate meeting with Rubio, which also included Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, followed days of escalation by the Trump administration abroad that included capturing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and bringing him to the United States to face criminal charges, threatening to take Greenland by force from NATO member Denmark and seizing a Russian-flagged oil tanker in the North Atlantic sea as well as a second tanker tied to Venezuela.

Hegseth after the briefing defended the U.S. capture of the vessels, arguing the Trump administration was enforcing sanctions placed on Venezuelan oil.

The episode with the oil tankers was disclosed early Wednesday when the U.S. military issued a social media statement that the Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security apprehended a "stateless" ship in the Caribbean Sea and another in the North Atlantic.

Leavitt said during an afternoon press briefing that Trump officials will meet with oil executives on Friday to discuss an "immersive opportunity."

Hours after the Jan. 3 military operation to capture Maduro, Trump stressed that Venezuela's oil reserves were a major factor in U.S. plans. Trump told reporters that major oil companies were notified before and after the operation in Venezuela.

### Senate GOP skeptical

Besides Murkowski, a handful of other Senate Republicans also expressed concern about the White House statement leaving open the possibility of military action on Greenland.

Oklahoma Republican Sen. James Lankford said "we need to not threaten a peaceful nation that's an ally where we have a military base already."

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Maine GOP Sen. Susan Collins said she also disagreed with the Trump administration's push to acquire Greenland and said she's not sure if the Trump administration is serious about using military force.

"It surprises me every time it comes up," she said.

GOP Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota said he doesn't "think military intervention is on the table" for Greenland.

Louisiana's Republican Sen. John Kennedy said "to invade Greenland would be weapons grade stupid, and I don't think President Trump is weapons grade stupid, nor is Marco Rubio." He instead suggested possibly purchasing the territory, an offer that Denmark has already rejected.

Kentucky Republican Sen. Mitch McConnell, chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, wrote in a critical statement that "cooperation with Arctic allies from Canada to the Nordics already grants the United States sweeping access to positions of strategic importance."

"Threats and intimidation by U.S. officials over American ownership of Greenland are as unseemly as they are counterproductive," McConnell wrote. "And the use of force to seize the sovereign democratic territory of one of America's most loyal and capable allies would be an especially catastrophic act of strategic self-harm to America and its global influence."

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., told reporters following his weekly press conference he couldn't comment on hypotheticals about a military takeover of Greenland, including whether Congress must approve such an action.

"No, I can't because it depends on what that is. The Congress has a responsibility to declare war and I think there is no scenario where we'd be at war with Greenland," Johnson said. "Under Article II, as we talked about in the room, the president has broad authority as commander-in-chief, as all previous presidents have. No one can forecast what is going to happen in Greenland. You're asking a hypothetical that I cannot answer."

Johnson said during the press conference that he doesn't believe anyone in the Trump administration is "seriously considering" military action in Greenland. "And in the Congress, we're certainly not."

## Democrats move toward vote on war powers

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut called the administration's plan regarding Venezuelan oil "insane."

"They are talking about stealing the Venezuelan oil at gunpoint for a period of time undefined as leverage to micromanage the country," he said. "The scope and insanity of that plan is absolutely stunning."

Though Murphy said he was glad administration officials held a briefing, he also said he envisioned a "very, very rough ride" ahead.

Senate Democrats are gearing up to take another vote on a war powers resolution intended to curb Trump's military actions abroad. An earlier attempt to pass a resolution was prompted by the administration's multiple boat strikes in the Caribbean, which officials claimed were carrying drugs to the U.S., but backers failed to reach the 60-vote threshold in the Senate.

The next vote, led by Virginia Democratic Sen. Tim Kaine, is expected to take place this week.

Walking out of the briefing, Kaine said "it's time to get this out of the (Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility) and get it in public hearings where senators can ask questions and the American public can learn what the hell is going on." Such facilities are secure settings where classified information can be shared.

Kaine said he could not get a clear answer from the briefing if the Trump administration's actions in Venezuela will be replicated for other countries like Greenland or Cuba.

Sen. Jacky Rosen questioned what the administration's actions mean for the U.S., despite consensus Maduro is a "very brutal dictator" and satisfaction among many that he's no longer governing Venezuela. While Maduro is no longer in charge, his vice president was sworn in, Delcy Rodríguez, effectively continuing the regime.

"We have problems right here at home," the Nevada Democrat said, pointing to the recent expiration

of enhanced tax credits for people who purchase their health insurance on the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

"Last time anybody checked, December 31st was just about a week ago, and how many people lost their health insurance because they couldn't afford it because Donald Trump's so busy, and Pete Hegseth's so busy with the visuals of all these bombs going off all around the world that they're not paying attention to people who are going to lose their health care?" asked Rosen.

Murphy, Kaine and Rosen all sit on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

*Jacob Fischler contributed to this report.*

*Ariana covers the nation's capital for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include immigration, congressional policy and legal challenges with a focus on how those policies impact the lives of immigrants and migrants coming to the U.S.*

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

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

## Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem visits Minnesota as hundreds more ICE agents arrive

BY: MADISON MCVAN

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was in the Twin Cities Tuesday as the Trump administration launches what it's calling "the largest DHS operation ever."

CBS News reported over the weekend that around 2,000 Immigrations and Customs Enforcement agents are being deployed in Minnesota, in addition to the 700 already present in the state as part of "Operation Metro Surge," which began in December.

In a video posted to the Department of Homeland Security's official X account, Noem and several heavily armed and masked agents arrested a man in St. Paul. In another video, Noem appeared to greet and thank local ICE staff.

One photo showed Noem meeting with Assistant U.S. Attorney Joe Thompson, who is leading the prosecutions of people accused of defrauding Minnesota's social services programs.

The Trump administration's focus on Minnesota was sparked by unsubstantiated allegations shared by right-wing media figures that Somali Americans who committed fraud were using the proceeds to fund terrorist organizations abroad.

"@POTUS Trump and @Sec\_Noem have rallied DHS law enforcement personnel to keep Americans safe and ERADICATE fraud," DHS posted on X.

ICE did not respond to the Reformer's requests for comment.

Immigrant rights organizations have been fielding many reports of ICE arrests around the metro, but an exact number of arrests is difficult to confirm. Unlike a few high-profile raids in Minneapolis and St. Paul in 2025, which involved dozens of agents and attracted large crowds, ICE appears to be focused on conducting smaller and faster operations.

Walz blasted the deployment as a waste of government resources on social media, sharing a video from a little over a week ago showing dozens of agents leading a single person out of a Hennepin County government building. He said the Trump administration did not give his office advance notice or any additional information on the operation.

"We have a ridiculous surge of apparently 2,000 people not coordinating with us that are for a show of the cameras," Walz said at a news conference on Tuesday. "We don't even know they are, they'll be wearing masks."

Noem fired back at the governor for accusing them of misusing taxpayer dollars given the widening

scandal of fraud in state-run social service programs that led him to end his campaign for a third term on Monday.

Around the country and in Minnesota, immigration agents have been accused of violating constitutional rights: detaining U.S. citizens for days, targeting individuals based on their speech; and arresting and holding people without probable cause.

In late December, ICE agents entered a private area of the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis without a judicial warrant, according to immigrant rights activists and Democratic elected officials, who urged Hennepin Healthcare to adopt a clear policy and train employees on how to interact with immigration agents.

Janna Gewirtz O'Brien, a pediatrician and president-elect of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said fear of ICE is keeping immigrant families from seeking health care.

"There is a sense of fear that has been perpetuated by our administration, and we need hospitals to step up," Gewirtz O'Brien said.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota and three Minnesota-based law firms recently sued federal immigration authorities, alleging that ICE agents and their leaders are also routinely violating the constitutional rights of the people protesting their actions.

*This story was originally produced by Minnesota Reformer, 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.*

*Madison McVan is a Report for America corps member who covers economic mobility for Minnesota Reformer. She previously covered agriculture for Investigate Midwest after graduating from the University of Missouri in 2020 with degrees in Journalism and Latin American studies.*

## On the hook for uninsured residents, counties now wonder how they'll pay

**BY: CHRISTINE MAI DUC AND CLAUDIA BOYD-BARRETT**

In 2013, before the Affordable Care Act helped millions get health insurance, California's Placer County provided limited health care to some 3,400 uninsured residents who couldn't afford to see a doctor.

For several years, that number has been zero in the predominantly white, largely rural county stretching from Sacramento's eastern suburbs to the shores of Lake Tahoe.

The trend could be short-lived.

County health officials there and across the country are bracing for an estimated 10 million newly uninsured patients over the next decade in the wake of Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act. The act, which President Donald Trump signed into law this past summer, is also expected to reduce Medicaid spending by more than \$900 billion over that period.

"This is the moment where a lot of hard decisions have to be made about who gets care and who doesn't," said Nadereh Pourat, director of the Health Economics and Evaluation Research Program at UCLA. "The number of people who are going to lose coverage is large, and a lot of the systems that were in place to provide care to those individuals have either gone away or diminished."

It's an especially thorny challenge for states like California and New Mexico where counties are legally required to help their poorest residents through what are known as indigent care programs. Under Obamacare, both states were able to expand Medicaid to include more low-income residents, alleviating counties of patient loads and redirecting much of their funding for the patchwork of local programs that provided bare-bones services.

Placer County, which estimates that 16,000 residents could lose health care coverage by 2028, quit operating its own clinics nearly a decade ago.

"Most of the infrastructure that we had to meet those needs is gone," said Rob Oldham, Placer County's

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director of health and human services. "This is a much bigger problem than it was a decade ago and much more costly."

In December, county officials asked to join a statewide association that provides care to mostly small, rural counties, citing an expected rise in the number of uninsured residents.

New Mexico's second-most-populous county, Doña Ana, added dental care for seniors and behavioral health benefits after many of its poorest residents qualified for Medicaid. Now, federal cuts could force the county to reconsider, said Jamie Michael, Doña Ana's health and human services director.

"At some point we're going to have to look at either allocating more money or reducing the benefits," Michael said.

## Straining State Budgets

Some states, such as Idaho and Colorado, abandoned laws that required counties to be providers of last resort for their residents. In other states, uninsured patients often delay care or receive it at hospital emergency rooms or community clinics. Those clinics are often supported by a mix of federal, state, and local funds, according to the National Association of Community Health Centers.

Even in states like Texas, which opted not to expand its Medicaid program and continued to rely on counties to care for many of its uninsured, rising health care costs are straining local budgets.

"As we have more growth, more people coming in, it's harder and harder to fund things that are required by the state legislature, and this isn't one we can decrease," said Windy Johnson, program manager with the Texas Indigent Health Care Association. "It is a fiscal issue."

California lawmakers face a nearly \$18 billion budget deficit in the 2026-27 fiscal year, according to the latest estimates by the state's nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. Gov. Gavin Newsom, who has acknowledged he is mulling a White House run, has rebuffed several efforts to significantly raise taxes on the ultra-wealthy. Despite blasting the bill passed by Republicans in Congress as a "complete moral failure" that guts health care programs, in 2025 the Democrat rolled back state Medi-Cal benefits for seniors and for immigrants without legal status after rising costs forced the program to borrow \$4.4 billion from the state's general fund.

H.D. Palmer, a spokesperson for the state's Department of Finance, said that the Newsom administration is still refining its fiscal projections and that it would be "premature" to discuss potential budget solutions.

Newsom will unveil his initial budget proposal in January. State officials have said California could lose \$30 billion a year in federal funding for Medi-Cal under the new law, as much as 15% of the state program's entire budget.

"Local governments don't really have much capacity to raise revenue," said Scott Graves, a director at the independent California Budget & Policy Center with a focus on state budgets. "State leaders, if they choose to prioritize it, need to decide where they're going to find the funding that would be needed to help those who are going to lose health care as a result of these federal funding and policy cuts."

Reviving county-based programs in the near term would require "considerable fiscal restructuring" through the state budget, the Legislative Analyst's Office said in an October report.

## No Easy Fixes

It's not clear how many people are currently enrolled in California's county indigent programs, because the state doesn't track enrollment and utilization. But enrollment in county health safety net programs dropped dramatically in the first full year of ACA implementation, going from about 858,000 people statewide in 2013 to roughly 176,000 by the end of 2014, according to a survey at the time by Health Access California.

"We're going to need state investment," said Michelle Gibbons, executive director of the County Health Executives Association of California. "After the Affordable Care Act and as folks got coverage, we didn't imagine a moment like this where potentially that progress would be unwound and folks would be falling back into indigent care."

In November, voters in affluent Santa Clara County approved a sales tax increase, in part to backfill

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the loss of federal funds. But even in the home of Silicon Valley, where the median household income is about 1.7 times the statewide average, that is expected to cover only a third of the \$1 billion a year the county stands to lose.

Health advocates fear that, absent major state investments, Californians could see a return to the previous patchwork of county-run programs, with local governments choosing whom and what they cover and for how long.

In many cases, indigent programs didn't include specialty care, behavioral health, or regular access to primary care. Counties can also exclude people based on immigration status or income. Before the ACA, many uninsured people who needed care didn't get it, which could lead to them winding up in ERs with untreated health conditions or even dying, said Kiran Savage-Sangwan, executive director of the California Pan-Ethnic Health Network.

Rachel Linn Gish, interim deputy director of Health Access California, a consumer advocacy group, said that "it created a very unequal, maldistributed program throughout the state."

"Many of us," she said. "including counties, are reeling trying to figure out: What are those downstream impacts?"

*This article first appeared on KFF Health News and is republished here under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.*

*As a California-based reporter for KFF Health News, Christine Mai-Duc covers health care policy and politics in the Golden State. She previously reported for The Wall Street Journal, where she covered housing and state politics, including the state Legislature and Gov. Gavin Newsom. Her reporting has explored California's homelessness crisis, attempts to enact single payer health care and funding for mental health treatment.*

*Claudia Boyd-Barrett is the Southern California correspondent for KFF Health News. She writes about health care access and affordability issues facing the region's diverse populations, and local impacts of national health policy changes. Previously, she was senior reporter and assistant editor at the California Health Report, a nonprofit news site dedicated to health and solutions journalism, as well as an independent health journalist for more than a decade.*

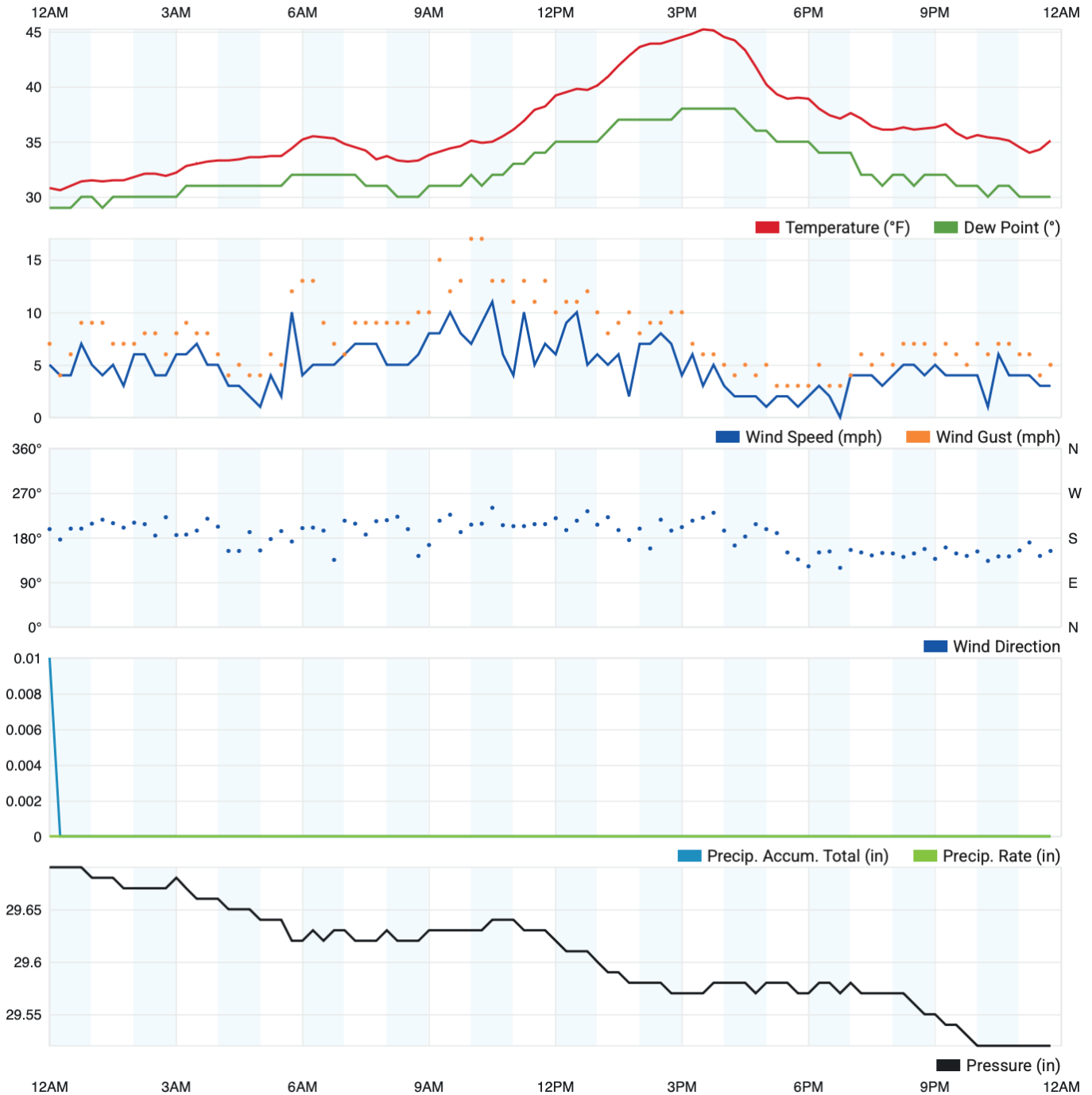
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 7, 2026



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Today



High: 33 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tonight



Low: 15 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Friday



High: 34 °F

Slight Chance  
Snow then  
Mostly Cloudy

Friday Night



Low: 12 °F

Partly Cloudy  
then Slight  
Chance Snow

Saturday



High: 18 °F

Mostly Sunny



## Max Temperatures

Thursday Evening, Jan 8 - Tuesday Evening, Jan 13

	Thu 1/8	Fri 1/9	Sat 1/10	Sun 1/11	Mon 1/12	Tue 1/13
Aberdeen	35	34	20	32	42	40
Mobridge	35	34	23	41	45	43
Pierre	39	37	27	44	49	47
Sisseton	35	34	19	32	41	39
Watertown	36	34	20	31	42	41

Max Temperature (°F)

## Additional Details



### Upcoming Temperatures

- Temperatures through the beginning of next week will be 10-20 degrees above normal
- The exception will be Saturday, which is expected to have around normal temperatures

Valid: Thu 06 pm CST - Tue 06 pm CST

Issued: Wed, Jan 7, 2026, 1 pm CST



The next several days will feature high temperatures 10-20 degrees above normal. The exception will be Saturday, which is expected to have highs around normal. Saturday will also see a chance of snow for northeast SD and west central MN, but accumulations look to be only a few tenths of an inch.

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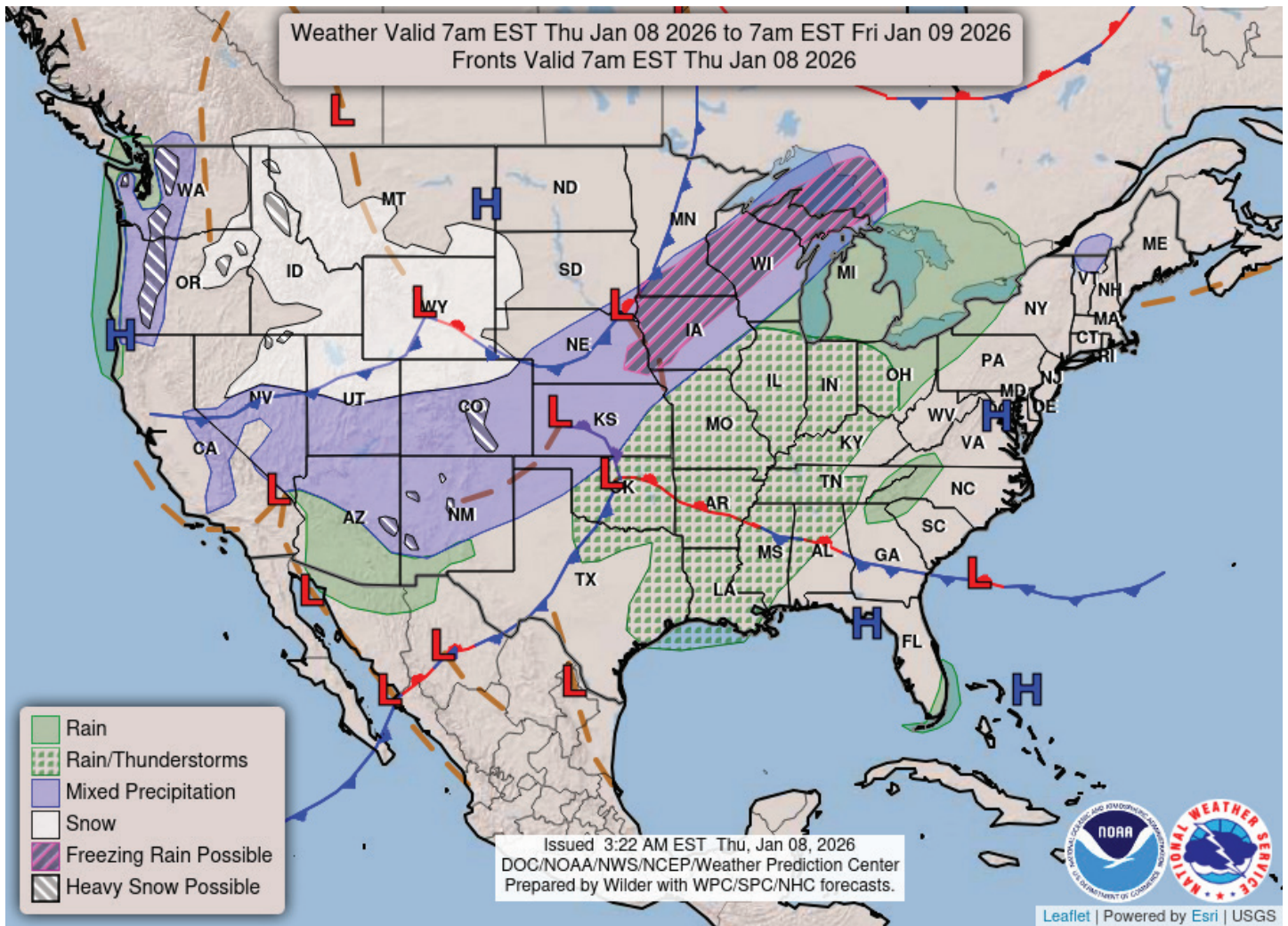
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 45 °F at 3:29 PM**  
**Low Temp: 31 °F at 12:11 AM**  
**Wind: 18 mph at 10:01 AM**  
**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 55 in 1963  
Record Low: -33 in 1912  
Average High: 23  
Average Low: 2  
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.17  
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00  
Average Precip to date: 0.17  
Precip Year to Date: 0.00  
Sunset Tonight: 5:06 pm  
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 am



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## Today in Weather History

January 8, 2010: Arctic high pressure combined with strong northwest winds resulted in extreme wind chills from -35 to nearly 50 degrees below zero across central and northeast South Dakota. Some of the lowest wind chills included -40 in Aberdeen; -41 in Watertown; -42 in Highmore; -43 in Leola and Faulkton; -44 in Eagle Butte, Herreid, and Gettysburg; and -47 in Bowdle. Several record lows were also tied or broken during the morning hours of the 8th, including -22 degrees NW of Gann Valley and Victor; -23 degrees at Pierre and Sisseton; -24 degrees at Roscoe; and -34 degrees at Pollock.

1953 — A severe icestorm in the northeastern U.S. produced up to four inches of ice in Pennsylvania, and two to three inches in southeastern New York State. In southern New England the ice coated a layer of snow up to 20 inches deep. The storm resulted in 31 deaths and 2.5 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1973 — A severe icestorm struck Atlanta GA. The storm paralyzed the city closing schools and businesses, and damage from the storm was estimated at 25 million dollars. One to four inches of ice coated northern Georgia leaving 300,000 persons without electricity for up to a week. Between 7 PM and 9 PM on the 7th, 2.27 inches (liquid content) of freezing rain, sleet and snow coated Atlanta, as the temperature hovered at 32 degrees. (7th-8th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A winter storm moving out of the Southern Rockies into the Central Plains Region produced 14 inches of snow at Red River NM, and 17 inches in the Wolf Creek ski area of Colorado. Wichita KS was blanketed with seven inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — A winter storm spread heavy snow across the northeastern U.S., with up to ten inches reported in southern New Jersey. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Strong northwesterly winds and bitterly cold temperatures prevailed in the north central U.S. Winds in the Great Lakes Region gusted to 58 mph at Chicago IL, and reached 63 mph at Niagara Falls NY. Squalls in western New York State produced 20 inches of snow at Barnes Corners and Lowville. Snow squalls in Upper Michigan produced 26 inches around Keweenaw. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — High winds plagued the northwestern U.S., with the state of Oregon hardest hit. Two persons were killed in Oregon, and nine others were injured, and the high winds downed fifty-five million board feet of timber, valued at more than twenty million dollars. Winds gusted to 90 mph near Pinehurst ID, and wind gusts reached 96 mph at Stevenson WA. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2019: An unusual January tornado impacted Cortland, Ohio, during the mid-morning hours. The EF-1 tornado developed northeast of Champion Township in Trumbull County and moved east. The tornado brought down numerous trees and wires along the 4.5-mile path.

## What Fasting Adds to Prayer

**Fasting combined with prayer can be helpful when seeking God's guidance and protection.**

Matthew 6:16-21: 16 ``Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

17 ``But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

19 ``Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 ``But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Jesus' words about fasting are an invitation to a deeper experience with God. Fasting benefits us in many ways:

Cleansing from sin. When we let our spiritual guard down, we start thinking incorrectly. Through such lapses, ungodly attitudes and habits can quietly take up residence in us, and we hardly notice. They impede our fellowship with God, limit the effectiveness of our service, and erode our joy. Fasting helps us give God our undivided attention as He addresses whatever is hindering our spiritual growth. (See Romans 12:2.)

Guidance. God wants His children to understand and follow His directions. A combination of prayer and fasting helps us develop both the mind needed to hear what He's saying and the spirit ready to accept His instructions.

Protection. Through fasting, we gain insight into God's ways and receive help in identifying unhealthy or dangerous situations. As we submit to His authority and confess our need for protection, the Holy Spirit will give us discernment to make wiser decisions and avoid unnecessary risks.

Fasting coupled with prayer will bring greater spiritual awareness and more intimate communion with the Lord. It can certainly be challenging, but the benefits are worth it.

*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:

01.06.26

9 39 47 58 68 24

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$199,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 44 Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

3 18 25 45 50 4

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$12,370,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 59 Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

5 14 15 21 39 10

TOP PRIZE:

**\$7,000/week**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 14 Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

3 16 20 32 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$180,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 14 Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

28 41 50 61 68 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 43 Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.07.26

15 28 57 58 63 23

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$124,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 43 Mins 25 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Johnson-Arigu scores 25 as St. Thomas beats South Dakota 99-86**

By The Associated Press undefined

Isaiah Johnson-Arigu scored 25 points, Nolan Minessale added 22 points, 12 assists and six steals, and St. Thomas defeat South Dakota 99-86 on Wednesday night to extend its win streak to seven consecutive games.

Johnson-Arigu shot 10 for 13, including 4 for 6 from beyond the arc and Minessale made 9 of 15 from the field and 4 of 5 from the free-throw line. Carter Bjerke shot 4 of 6 from the field, including 2 for 3 from 3-point range, and went 2 for 3 from the line to finish with 12 points.

The Coyotes (8-9, 0-2) were led by Isaac Bruns, who recorded 24 points and six rebounds. Trent Hudgens Jr. added 17 points and four assists for South Dakota. Ethan Kizer also recorded 13 points.

### **Minneapolis on edge after fatal shooting of woman by ICE officer**

By TIM SULLIVAN and GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minneapolis was on edge Thursday following the fatal shooting of a woman by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer taking part in the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown, with the governor calling for people to remain calm and schools canceling classes and activities as a safety precaution.

State and local officials demanded ICE leave the state after 37-year-old Renee Nicole Macklin Good was shot in the head. But Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said agents are not going anywhere.

The Department of Homeland Security has deployed more than 2,000 officers to the area in what it says is its largest immigration enforcement operation ever. Noem said more than 1,500 people have been arrested.

Macklin Good's killing Wednesday morning in a residential neighborhood south of downtown was recorded on video by witnesses, and by the evening hundreds of people came out for a vigil to mourn her and urge the public to resist immigration enforcement. Some then chanted as they marched through the city, but there was no violence.

"I would love for ICE to leave our city and for more community members to come to see it happens," said Sander Kolodziej, a painter who came to the vigil to support the community.

The videos of the shooting show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The Honda Pilot begins to pull forward, and a different ICE officer standing in front of it pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him.

It is not clear from the videos if the vehicle makes contact with the officer, and there is no indication of whether the woman had interactions with ICE agents earlier. After the shooting the SUV speeds into two cars parked on a curb before crashing to a stop.

In another recording made afterward, a woman who identifies Macklin Good as her spouse is seen crying near the vehicle. The woman, who is not identified, says the couple recently arrived in Minnesota and they had a child.

Noem called the incident an "act of domestic terrorism" against ICE officers, saying the driver "attempted to run them over and rammed them with her vehicle. An officer of ours acted quickly and defensively, shot, to protect himself and the people around him."

President Donald Trump made similar accusations on social media and defended ICE's work.

Noem alleged that the woman was part of a "mob of agitators" and said the officer followed his training. She said the FBI would investigate.

But Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey called Noem's version of events "garbage."

"They are already trying to spin this as an action of self-defense," Frey said. "Having seen the video

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myself, I wanna tell everybody directly, that is bullshit.”

He also criticized the federal deployment and said the agents should leave.

The shooting marked a dramatic escalation of the latest in a series of immigration enforcement operations in major cities under the Trump administration. Wednesday’s is at least the fifth death linked to the crackdowns.

The Twin Cities have been on edge since DHS announced the operation’s launch Tuesday, at least partly tied to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents.

A crowd of protesters gathered at the scene after the shooting to vent their anger at local and federal officers.

In a scene that hearkened back to crackdowns in Los Angeles and Chicago, people chanted “ICE out of Minnesota” and blew whistles that have become ubiquitous during the operations.

Gov. Tim Walz said he was prepared to deploy the National Guard if necessary. He expressed outrage over the shooting but called on people to keep protests peaceful.

“They want a show,” Walz said. “We can’t give it to them.”

There were calls on social media to prosecute the officer who shot Macklin Good.

Commissioner Bob Jacobson of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety said state authorities would investigate the shooting with federal authorities.

## China and Japan, uneasy neighbors in East Asia, are at odds again

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

BEIJING (AP) — They’re at it again.

China and Japan — frenemies, trading partners and uneasy neighbors with a tortured, bloody history they still struggle to navigate — are freshly at each other’s rhetorical throats as 2026 begins. And it’s over the same sticking points that have kept them resentful and suspicious for many decades: Japan’s occupation of parts of China in the 20th century, the use of military power in East Asia, economics and politics — and, of course, pride.

From insinuations that Chinese citizens face dangers in Japan to outright accusations of resurgent Japanese imperialism, this first week of the year in China has been marked by the communist government scorning Tokyo on multiple fronts and noticeably embracing the visiting leader of another crucial strategic neighbor: South Korea.

The latest chapter in Japan-China enmity surged in November when Japan’s new leader waded into choppy bilateral waters. She said, in effect, that if China moved militarily against Taiwan, she wouldn’t rule out involving Japan’s constitutionally defense-only military. That didn’t go over well in Beijing, which has teed off on Tokyo over the years for far less.

“Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi’s erroneous remarks concerning Taiwan infringe upon China’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, blatantly interfere in China’s internal affairs, and send a military threat against China,” Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said Wednesday, a week after military exercises around the island ended. “We urge Japan to face up to the root causes of the issue, reflect and correct its mistakes.”

That’s hardly uncommon language. China frequently demands Japan ponder the path it has taken and correct its “erroneous” course. It’s rhetoric, sure, but it goes far deeper. And sometimes it’s hard to tell what’s real umbrage and what’s ginned up for domestic political consumption.

Because when it comes to the China-Japan relationship, anger remains a powerful and enduring tool on both sides. And there’s no indication that’s going away anytime soon.

A long history of antagonism

From the time Japan colonized Taiwan in 1895 after a war with Qing Dynasty China, a deep suspicion and at times outright enmity has existed between the two countries.

It worsened in the 1920s and 1930s after Japan’s brutal occupation of parts of China resulted in torture and deaths that Chinese resent to this day. At the same time, Japanese leaders have sometimes thrown incendiary political footballs like visits to the Yasukuni Shrine, a memorial to Japanese who gave their lives

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in the nation's wars — including some war criminals from the Sino-Japanese wars. China, like clockwork, responds with indignation.

Japan lost World War II to the Allied powers and relinquished offensive military powers under a U.S.-drafted constitution, even as the current communist Chinese government was establishing the People's Republic in 1949. Since then, any hint of Japanese military assertiveness has drawn great umbrage here. Disputes over territory, such as an island chain called Diaoyu by China and Senkaku by Japan, spike occasionally.

The enmity, pulled out when something is perceived as aggressive or anger is required for a domestic audience, lurks barely beneath the surface, ready to pop. Even today, cartoons circulate online in China depicting Japanese as demonic, aggressive and anti-China.

This week has been an illuminating case study.

On Tuesday, China slapped restrictions on "dual-use exports" to Japan — anything, it said, that Japan could adapt for military use. Though it didn't specify what the ban includes, anything from drones to rare earths could be considered dual-use. The lack of specificity allows China to adjust its approach as it goes — making it more or less strict depending on where the political winds are blowing.

Japan demanded the move be rescinded. "These measures, which only target Japan, deviate significantly from international practice," its Foreign Ministry said, calling China's actions "absolutely unacceptable and deeply regrettable." This came days after it protested Chinese mobile drilling rigs in the East China Sea.

While the Chinese Commerce Ministry did not mention rare earths curbs, the official newspaper China Daily, seen as a government mouthpiece, quoted anonymous sources saying Beijing was considering tightening exports of certain rare earths to Japan.

On Wednesday, the focus turned to a gas called dichlorosilane, used in computer chip manufacturing. The Commerce Ministry said it had launched an investigation into why the price of dichlorosilane imported from Japan had decreased 31% between 2022 and 2024. "The dumping of imported products from Japan has damaged the production and operation of our domestic industry," it said.

Finally, on Thursday, China's Arms Control and Disarmament Association, a nongovernment agency (inasmuch as any agency in China is nongovernmental) released with some fanfare a report provocatively titled "Nuclear Ambitions of Japan's Right-Wing Forces: A Serious Threat to World Peace." It spent 29 pages outlining worries and accusations that Tokyo harbors dangerous nuclear ambitions.

But it also went broader, invoking once again its stance that the nation's right-wing leaders — and, by extension, the whole country itself — have "failed to reflect on Japan's history of aggression."

"Japan has never been able to fully eliminate the scourge of militarism in the country," the report said. "If Japan's right-wing forces are left free to develop powerful offensive weapons, or even possess nuclear weapons, it will again bring disaster to the world."

Enter Seoul

Also part of the equation this week: China's visible pivot to another regional neighbor, South Korea, whose president spent four days in Beijing. Seoul has a bumpy history of its own with Japanese aggression and also sporadic — though generally less intense — friction with Beijing, a longtime supporter and ally of its rival North Korea.

Chinese media gave splashy coverage to Lee Jae Myung's visit, touting new Beijing-Seoul agreements on trade, environmental protection and transportation — and notably technology, given the dual-export ban. Also visible: Lee at two business events watching major companies pledge increased collaboration. The sides signed 24 export contracts worth a combined \$44 million, according to South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources.

The burst of official affection toward South Korea didn't stop with Lee. While he was here, Chinese media reported that South Korea overtook Japan as the leading destination for outbound flights from the mainland over New Year's. That's on top of Beijing's recent efforts to discourage Chinese from traveling to Japan, citing "significant risks to the personal safety and lives of Chinese citizens" there.

For now, Japan-China tension remains a matter of rhetoric and policy. But no one is predicting a quick

resolution. With Japan's staunch ally, the United States, planning to furnish more arms to Taiwan in a single sale than ever before, there's too much at stake for both East Asian nations at this moment — and too much contentious history — for an easy and quick solution.

"This time ... de-escalation and a return to the status quo may not be as easily achieved," Sebastian Maslow, an East Asia specialist and associate professor of international relations at the University of Tokyo, wrote in *The Conversation* last month. "With diplomatic channels in short supply and domestic political agendas paramount, an off-ramp for the current dispute is not in sight."

## 2 killed in shooting outside Mormon church in Salt Lake City

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Two people were killed and six others injured in a shooting outside a Salt Lake City church Wednesday night while mourners were attending a memorial service inside, police said.

The shooting took place in the back parking lot of a house of worship for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Utah-based faith known widely as the Mormon church.

Authorities said no suspect was in custody Wednesday.

All the victims were adults. At least three of the injured were in critical condition, police said.

Police said they do not believe the shooter had any animus toward a particular faith. They also don't think the shooting was random.

"We don't believe this was a targeted attack against a religion or anything like that," Salt Lake City Police Chief Brian Redd said.

The red brick church in the northwest Salt Lake City neighborhood mostly serves Tongan congregants and holds regular worship services in their native tongue, according to its website.

Upon hearing gunshots, residents from a low-income housing complex next to the church flooded outside to help victims and console dozens of people who had been attending a funeral for a person who was not identified.

Brennan McIntire said he and his wife, Kenna, heard several loud gunshots from their apartment next to the church parking lot while watching TV. He jumped off the couch and ran outside in flip-flop sandals to see what happened.

"As soon as I came over, I see someone on the ground," he said. "People are attending to him and crying and arguing."

Kenna McIntire came outside soon after and was rattled at the sight of first responders lifting an unconscious woman into an ambulance while people huddled around and sobbed.

The couple said they hear gunshots in their neighborhood almost daily, but never right outside their door.

"It was really heartbreaking to hear and see," she said.

About 100 law enforcement vehicles were at the scene in the aftermath, and helicopters flew overhead. Neighbors huddled in blankets next to a taco truck, watching the officers work and waiting for updates.

Police said they were reviewing license plate readers and surveillance videos from nearby businesses in their search for a suspect.

"This should never have happened outside a place of worship. This should never have happened outside a celebration of life," Mayor Erin Mendenhall said.

The church, headquartered in Salt Lake City, was cooperating with law enforcement and said it was grateful for first responders' quick efforts.

"We extend prayers for all who have been impacted by this tragedy and express deep concern that any sacred space intended for worship should be subjected to violence of any kind," church spokesperson Sam Penrod said.

About half of Utah's 3.5 million residents are members of the faith. Houses of worship like the one where the shooting occurred can be found tucked into neighborhoods around the city and state.

The faith has been on heightened alert since four people were killed when a former Marine opened fire in a Michigan church in September and set it ablaze. The FBI found that he was motivated by "anti-religious

beliefs" against Latter-day Saints.

## World shares mostly lower after Wall Street's strong start to the year cools

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — World shares were mostly lower and U.S. futures also declined on Thursday as the new year's rally on Wall Street faded.

In Europe, Britain's FTSE 100 fell 0.3% to 10,015.45 in early trading, while the CAC 40 in Paris lost 0.2% to 8,217.55. Germany's DAX dropped 0.1% to 25,097.16.

The futures for the S&P 500 declined more than 0.2%, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average futures dropped 0.3%.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 dropped 1.6% on Thursday to 51,117.26, with technology stocks among those leading the decline. SoftBank, which focuses on tech investments, dropped 7.6%, while semiconductor equipment maker Tokyo Electron dipped 4%.

Hong Kong's benchmark Hang Seng lost 1.2% to 26,149.31, although shares of OpenAI's Chinese rival Zhipu rose as much as around 15% above their offer price in the company's trading debut.

The Shanghai Composite index fell nearly 0.1% to 4,082.98.

South Korea's Kospi, which reached record high levels this week, mostly flatlined Thursday, adding less than 0.1% to 4,552.37.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 added 0.3% to 8,720.80, while Taiwan's Taiex slid more than 0.2%.

Wall Street's optimism for the start of the year faded Wednesday, in part after some stocks were hit by fresh comments from President Donald Trump that could bar large investors from buying single-family homes.

The S&P 500 fell 0.3% from an all-time high to 6,920.93. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.9% to 48,996.08. The Nasdaq composite added 0.2% to 23,584.27.

Trump said on his social media network Wednesday that he would move to block large institutional investors from buying single-family homes — in an attempt to address the country's housing affordability issue. Homebuilders fell sharply. D.R. Horton shed 3.6% and PulteGroup dropped 3.2%.

Warner Bros. Discovery on Wednesday rejected a revised buyout bid from Paramount, as it told its shareholders to stick with Netflix's offer. Warner Bros. Discovery rose 0.4%, Netflix added 0.1% while Paramount Skydance fell 1%.

Oil prices rose on Thursday after the U.S. seized two oil tankers as Trump's administration sought to assert control over Venezuelan oil. That also followed Trump's earlier remarks that Venezuela would provide 30 million to 50 million barrels of oil to the U.S.

Benchmark U.S. crude rose 0.2% to \$56.22 per barrel. Brent crude rose 0.3% to \$60.22 per barrel.

Oil prices have been volatile this week, as markets assess risks after the U.S. ousted Nicolás Maduro as Venezuela's president. Venezuela has some of the world's largest oil reserves.

In bond markets, U.S. Treasury yields swung following mixed reports on the U.S. economy. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.14% from 4.18%, and the two-year yield held at 3.46%.

One report reflected a more substantial pick up in U.S. services sector activity in December than what economists expected. But separate reports on the U.S. job market offered a mixed view. One suggested that businesses and government agencies posted far fewer job openings in November compared with the month before. Another report said businesses added 41,000 jobs in December.

The U.S. Labor Department is expected to release its monthly job report for December on Friday, which could offer a more comprehensive look.

In other dealings early Thursday, the dollar fell to 156.53 yen, down from 156.77 yen.

The euro rose to \$1.1682 from \$1.1677.

## Dose of uncertainty: Experts wary of AI health gadgets at CES

By JESSICA HILL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Health tech gadgets displayed at the annual CES trade show make a lot of promises. A smart scale promoted a healthier lifestyle by scanning your feet to track your heart health, and an egg-shaped hormone tracker uses AI to help you figure out the best time to conceive.

Tech and health experts, however, question the accuracy of products like these and warn of data privacy issues — especially as the federal government eases up on regulation.

The Food and Drug Administration announced during the show in Las Vegas that it will relax regulations on “low-risk” general wellness products such as heart monitors and wheelchairs. It’s the latest step President Donald Trump’s administration has taken to remove barriers for AI innovation and use. The White House repealed former President Joe Biden’s executive order establishing guardrails around AI, and last month, the Department of Health and Human Services outlined its strategy to expand its use of AI.

Booths at the conference showcased new tech designed to help people living in rural areas with their health care needs amid doctor shortages, boost research into women’s health and make life easier for people with disabilities.

AI technologies have benefits in the over \$4.3 trillion health care industry, according to Marschall Runge, professor of medical science at the University of Michigan. They’re good at analyzing medical imaging and can help streamline doctors’ busy schedules, but they can also promote biases and “hallucinate,” providing incorrect information stated as fact.

“I would urge people not to think that the technology is the same as a well-resourced, thoughtful, research-driven medical professional,” said Cindy Cohn, executive director of the digital rights group Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Privacy protections like the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act do not cover information collected by consumer devices, and the companies could be using the data to train their AI models, or selling it to other businesses, Cohn said.

With a lot of the gadgets at CES, it’s difficult to find out where your information is going, Cohn said.

“You have to dig down through the fine print to try to figure that out, and I just don’t think that’s fair or right for the people who might rely on it,” she said.

But the creators of the products say their innovations fill in health care gaps, and they maintain they protect their customers’ privacy.

Sylvia Kang, founder and CEO of Mira, said she created the egg-shaped hormone tracker because many of her friends were trying to conceive and realized they had no knowledge of their hormonal health. To use the “world’s mini hormone lab,” you dip a wand in urine, insert the wand into the monitor and look at the results on the app.

Kang said her company uses AI to analyze female hormone data and has one of the world’s biggest hormonal health banks. The data is stored on the cloud and is not shared with anyone, Kang said.

“There was no such thing before,” Kang said of her \$250 product.

Many gadgets at CES focused on women’s health, which has been historically under-researched and underfunded. Before 1993, women were excluded from clinical trials, and there still is little research on areas like menopause.

While not every woman will have a baby, all women go through menopause, and “yet we know nothing about it,” said Amy Divaraniya, founder and CEO of the women’s health company Oova, during a session.

One gadget called Peri aims to better understand perimenopause — the transitional phase before menopause. The wearable device monitors hot flashes and night sweats and provides the data via an app.

Improving accessibility to health care

Other products at CES were promoted as a way to increase accessibility to health information. The free medicine-focused AI chatbot called 0xmd helps improve access to medical information in areas with doctor shortages and provides a cost-effective alternative, said its founder and architect Allen Au. People can ask the chatbot questions about medicine, upload photos of a mole or rash, and submit their doctors’ notes

for an easier-to-understand translation, Au said.

"At the end of the day, I don't think we will replace doctors," but it can give people a second opinion, Au said.

OpenAI announced on Wednesday its launch of ChatGPT Health, a similar platform.

Cohn remains skeptical of consumer tech. She said they can help prepare people to ask the right questions of their medical professional, but they're not going to be a substitute for a doctor.

"People need to remember that these are just tools; they're not oracles who are delivering truths," she said.

## Protests in Iran sparked by economic woes now nationwide, activists say

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Protests in Iran sparked by economic woes have now gone nationwide in the Islamic Republic, activists said Thursday, signaling both their staying power and intensity as they challenge the country's theocracy.

Wednesday saw the most-intense day of demonstrations, reaching rural towns and major cities in every province though still localized enough for daily life to continue in Tehran, Iran's capital, and elsewhere. So far, violence around the demonstrations has killed at least 38 people while more than 2,200 others have been detained, said the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency.

The growth of the protests increases the pressure on Iran's civilian government and its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. So far, authorities haven't shut down the internet or fully flooded the streets with security forces like they did to put down the 2022 Mahsa Amini demonstrations. But any intensification may seem them act.

Meanwhile, the protests themselves have remained broadly leaderless, though a call for protests by Iran's exiled crown prince will test whether or not demonstrators are being swayed by messages from abroad.

"The lack of a viable alternative has undermined past protests in Iran," wrote Nate Swanson of the Washington-based Atlantic Council, who studies Iran.

"There may be a thousand Iranian dissident activists who, given a chance, could emerge as respected statesmen, as labor leader Lech Wałęsa did in Poland at the end of the Cold War. But so far, the Iranian security apparatus has arrested, persecuted and exiled all of the country's potential transformational leaders."

Wednesday's protests broadest yet

On Wednesday, at least 37 protests took place across the country, activists said. They included Shiraz, where online videos purported to show an anti-riot truck using a water cannon to target demonstrators. The state-run IRNA news agency, which has largely been silent about the demonstrations, reported on a mass demonstration in Bojnourd, as well as demonstrations in Kerman and Kermanshah.

Iranian officials have offered no acknowledgment of the scale of the protests. However, there has been reporting regarding security officials being hurt or killed. The judiciary's Mizan news agency report a police colonel suffered fatal stab wounds in a town outside of Tehran, while the semiofficial Fars news agency said gunmen killed two security force members and wounded 30 others in a shooting in the city of Lordegan in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province.

Demonstrations continued Thursday, with merchants closing their shops in Iran's Kurdistan province.

It remains unclear why Iranian officials have yet to crack down harder on the demonstrators. U.S. President Donald Trump's warned last week that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," America "will come to their rescue."

Trump's comments drew a new rebuke from Iran's Foreign Ministry.

"Recalling the long history of criminal interventions by successive U.S. administrations in Iran's internal affairs, the Foreign Ministry considers claims of concern for the great Iranian nation to be hypocritical, aimed at deceiving public opinion and covering up the numerous crimes committed against Iranians," it said.

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But those comments haven't stopped the U.S. State Department on the social platform X from highlighting online footage purporting to show demonstrators putting up stickers naming roads after Trump or throwing away government-subsidized rice.

"When prices are set so high that neither consumers can afford to buy nor farmers can afford to sell, everyone loses," the State Department said in one message. "It makes no difference if this rice is thrown away."

Exiled prince calls for protests

The demonstrations so far broadly appear to be leaderless, like other rounds of protests in Iran in recent years. However, Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, the son of the late shah, has urged the public in Iran to shout from their windows and roofs on Thursday and Friday nights at 8 p.m. (1630 GMT).

"Wherever you are, whether in the streets or even from your own homes, I call on you to begin chanting exactly at this time," Pahlavi said in an online video that's also been promoted by Iranian satellite news channels abroad. "Based on your response, I will announce the next calls to action."

Whether people take part will be a sign of possible support for Pahlavi, whose support of and from Israel has drawn criticism in the past — particularly after the 12-day war Israel waged on Iran in June. Demonstrators have shouted in support of the shah in some demonstrations, but it isn't clear whether that's support for Pahlavi or a desire to return to a time before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Meanwhile, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi remains imprisoned by authorities after her arrest in December.

"Since Dec. 28, 2025, the people of Iran have taken to the streets, just as they did in 2009, 2019," her son Ali Rahmani said. "Each time, the same demands came up: an end to the Islamic Republic, an end to this patriarchal, dictatorial and religious regime, the end of the clerics, the end of the mullahs' regime."

Biggest protests since Mahsa Amini's death

Iran has faced rounds of nationwide protests in recent years. As sanctions tightened and Iran struggled after a 12-day war with Israel in June, its rial currency collapsed in December, reaching 1.4 million to \$1. Protests began soon after, with demonstrators chanting against Iran's theocracy.

Prior to Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, the rial was broadly stable, trading at around 70 to \$1. At the time of Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, \$1 traded for 32,000 rials. Shops in markets across the country have shut down as part of the protests.

This round of protests has yet to reach the level of the months of protests surrounding the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody in 2022. Amini was detained over not wearing her hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. Her death became a rallying cry for women who continue to refuse to wear the hijab.

## Saudi Arabia alleges UAE smuggled wanted Yemen separatist leader out of the country

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Arabia alleged Thursday that the United Arab Emirates smuggled a separatist leader in Yemen wanted for treason out of the country and flew him to Abu Dhabi.

The UAE had no immediate reaction to the claim, which further escalates tensions between the neighboring nations on the Arabian Peninsula as their partnership in the yearslong war in Yemen breaks down.

A Saudi military statement claimed Aidarous al-Zubaidi, the leader of the Southern Transitional Council, fled Yemen by boat to Somalia. Then, UAE officials flew al-Zubaidi to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Emirates, the statement said. The UAE has been the major supporter of the council, known as the STC, which sparked a confrontation between Saudi Arabia and the Emirates in recent days after STC fighters advanced in two governorates and appeared to be preparing to secede from Yemen.

The Saudi statement from Maj. Gen. Turki al-Malki included him naming a major general in the UAE as being involved in al-Zubaidi's alleged escape, along with identifying his nom de guerre — something highly unusual in the typical clubby world of Gulf Arab relations. It also suggested an Ilyushin Il-76 aircraft used

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in the operation had been used in "conflict zones" like Ethiopia, Libya and Somalia — routes the Emirati military has been accused of funneling weapons through in the past.

The UAE has denied running guns into those areas. The Emirati Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press. The STC did not immediately acknowledge the allegation either, saying Wednesday that al-Zubaidi had remained in Aden, where forces allied against the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels had congregated for years since the rebels seized Yemen's capital, Sanaa.

Saudi ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed al-Jaber, said on X Thursday morning that he met with the STC delegation that landed in Riyadh a day earlier. They discussed al-Zubaidi's recent actions, which he said "harmed the southern cause and didn't serve it."

"We also explored ways to work in the future to address what happened in a manner that serves the Southern cause, the Coalition's efforts to achieve security and stability in Yemen, and we addressed the arrangements for the Southern Cause Conference, which will be held in Riyadh soon," he added.

Meanwhile, Mohamed al-Ghaithi, an STC member and head of the negotiation and reconciliation committee supporting the Presidential Leadership Council, called the meeting with al-Jaber "fruitful" and praised the kingdom's initiative to sponsor the conference aimed at finding a resolution in the south. Al-Ghaithi confirmed that the delegation "rejected everything that harms unity."

"We have heard clear commitments from our brothers in Riyadh towards our people's cause and ensuring a secure and stable future," he added in a post on X. On Wednesday, the STC had said it lost contact with its delegation after they landed in Riyadh, with a Council representative saying that members' cellphones were either switched off or ringing with no one answering.

Southern Yemen had been run under the Presidential Leadership Council, a group including al-Zubaidi and others, since 2022. On Wednesday, the leadership council expelled al-Zubaidi and charged him with treason after he apparently declined to fly to Saudi Arabia for talks. It marked the latest pushback against the STC by Saudi Arabia, which also recently launched airstrikes against the group and an arms shipment the kingdom said came from the UAE.

The war in Yemen, on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, has killed more than 150,000 people, including fighters and civilians. It has created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The Houthis have also launched attacks against shipping over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, disrupting a vital route for global commerce.

The U.S., which earlier praised Saudi-Emirati efforts to end the crisis over the separatists, has launched airstrikes against the Houthi rebels under both Presidents Joe Biden and Donald Trump. Saudi Arabia's foreign minister met with U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio in Washington on Wednesday.

This latest accusation will further strain ties between Saudi Arabia and the UAE, OPEC members and neighbors that increasingly have competed over economic issues and regional politics, particularly in the Red Sea area. The Yemen dispute has become their most serious confrontation in decades.

The Saudi statement came as part of what appeared to be an organized media push over the incident by Saudi broadcasters and newspapers that offered details that could prove embarrassing for the Emiratis. The Saudi-owned satellite news channel Al Arabiya aired what it described as intercepted telephone calls highlighting al-Zubaidi's alleged escape.

Saudi Arabia's English-language newspaper Arab News offered a front-page image of al-Zubaidi under the headline "WANTED" in the style of a poster from the American Old West. A scathing front-page editorial by the state-backed newspaper said the separatist leader's refusal to come to the kingdom was "cementing his image as a traitor to his country."

"Al-Zubaidi chose narrow self-interest, aligning with foreign powers at the expense of his homeland and attempting to impose southern secession by force," the editorial said. "His sole aim: to seize power for himself."

## Rubio plans to meet with Danish officials next week to talk about US interest in Greenland

By STEFANIE DAZIO and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said he plans to meet with Danish officials next week after the Trump administration doubled down on its intention to take over Greenland, the strategic Arctic island that is a self-governing territory of Denmark.

Since the capture of former Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, President Donald Trump has revived his argument that the United States needs to control the world's largest island to ensure its own security in the face of rising threats from China and Russia in the Arctic.

Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen and his Greenland counterpart, Vivian Motzfeldt, had requested a meeting with Rubio, according to a statement posted Tuesday to Greenland's government website. Previous requests for a meeting were not successful, the statement said.

Rubio told a select group of U.S. lawmakers that it was the Republican administration's intention to eventually purchase Greenland, as opposed to using military force.

The remarks, first reported by The Wall Street Journal, were made in a classified briefing Monday evening on Capitol Hill, according to a person with knowledge of his comments who was granted anonymity because it was a private discussion.

On Wednesday, Rubio told reporters in Washington that Trump has been talking about acquiring Greenland since his first term. "That's always been the president's intent from the very beginning," Rubio said. "He's not the first U.S. president that has examined or looked at how we could acquire Greenland."

European leaders express concern

The leaders of France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom joined Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in issuing a statement this week reaffirming that the mineral-rich island, which guards the Arctic and North Atlantic approaches to North America, "belongs to its people." Frederiksen warned that a U.S. takeover would amount to the end of NATO.

"The Nordics do not lightly make statements like this," Maria Martisiute, a defense analyst at the European Policy Centre think tank, told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "But it is Trump whose very bombastic language bordering on direct threats and intimidation is threatening the fact to another ally by saying, 'I will control or annex the territory.'"

Rubio, who was on Capitol Hill for a classified briefing Wednesday with the entire U.S. Senate and House, did not directly answer reporters' questions about whether the administration was willing to risk the NATO alliance by potentially moving ahead with a military option regarding Greenland.

"I'm not here to talk about Denmark or military intervention, I'll be meeting with them next week, we'll have those conversations with them then, but I don't have anything further to add to that," Rubio said. He added that every president retains the option to address national security threats to the United States through military means.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Tuesday that using the military to acquire Greenland was an option, though she told reporters Wednesday that "the president's first option always has been diplomacy."

Some Republican senators said they saw strategic value in Greenland, but they stopped short of supporting military action to acquire it.

Kansas Sen. Roger Marshall said he hoped "we can work out a deal," while North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven said some of the discussion about taking Greenland by force has been "misconstrued."

"One of the things about President Trump, you may have noticed, is he keeps our adversaries off balance by making sure they don't know what we're going to do," Hoeven said.

But Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said she hated "the rhetoric around either acquiring Greenland by purchase or by force," adding, "I think that it is very, very unsettling."

Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire and Republican Sen. Thom Tillis of North Carolina, co-chairs of the bipartisan Senate NATO Observer Group, said the U.S. needs to honor its treaty obliga-

tions to Denmark.

"Any suggestion that our nation would subject a fellow NATO ally to coercion or external pressure undermines the very principles of self-determination that our Alliance exists to defend," the senators said in a joint statement.

'This is America now'

Thomas Crosbie, an associate professor of military operations at the Royal Danish Defense College, said an American takeover would not help Washington's national security.

"The United States will gain no advantage if its flag is flying in Nuuk versus the Greenlandic flag," he told the AP. "There's no benefits to them because they already enjoy all of the advantages they want. If there's any specific security access that they want to improve American security, they'll be given it as a matter of course, as a trusted ally. So this has nothing to do with improving national security for the United States."

Denmark's parliament approved a bill in June to allow U.S. military bases on Danish soil. It widened a previous military agreement, made in 2023 with the Biden administration, in which U.S. troops had broad access to Danish air bases in the Scandinavian country. Denmark's foreign minister has said that Denmark would be able to terminate the agreement if the U.S. tries to annex all or part of Greenland.

In the event of military action, the U.S. Department of Defense operates the remote Pituffik Space Base, in northwestern Greenland, and the troops there could be mobilized.

Crosbie said he believes the U.S. would not seek to hurt the local population or engage with Danish troops.

"They don't need to bring any firepower. They don't need to bring anybody," Crosbie said Wednesday. "They could just direct the military personnel currently there to drive to the center of Nuuk and just say, 'This is America now,' right? And that would lead to the same response as if they flew in 500 or 1,000 people."

The danger in an American annexation, he said, lies in the "erosion of the rule of law globally and to the perception that there are any norms protecting anybody on the planet."

He added: "The impact is changing the map. The impact I don't think would be storming the parliament."

## **US seeks to assert its control over Venezuelan oil with tanker seizures and sales worldwide**

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, JOSH BOAK, JILL LAWLESS and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's administration on Wednesday sought to assert its control over Venezuelan oil, seizing a pair of sanctioned tankers transporting petroleum and announcing plans to relax some sanctions so the U.S. can oversee the sale of Venezuela's petroleum worldwide.

Trump's administration intends to control the distribution of Venezuela's oil products globally following its ouster of President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid. Besides the United States enforcing an existing oil embargo, the Energy Department says the "only oil transported in and out of Venezuela" will be through approved channels consistent with U.S. law and national security interests.

That level of control over the world's largest proven reserves of crude oil could give the Trump administration a broader hold on oil supplies globally in ways that could enable it to influence prices. Both moves reflect the Republican administration's determination to make good on its effort to control the next steps in Venezuela through its vast oil resources after Trump pledged the U.S. will "run" the country.

Vice President JD Vance said in an interview the U.S. can "control" Venezuela's "purse strings" by dictating where its oil can be sold.

"We control the energy resources, and we tell the regime, you're allowed to sell the oil so long as you serve America's national interest," Vance said in an interview to air on Fox News Channel's "Jesse Watters Primetime."

The vice president added, "And that's how we exert incredible pressure on that country without wasting a single American life."

Secretary of State Marco Rubio suggested that the oil taken from the sanctioned vessels seized in the

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North Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea would be sold as part of the deal announced by Trump on Tuesday under which Venezuela would provide up to 50 million barrels of oil to the U.S.

Venezuela's interim authorities "want that oil that was seized to be part of this deal," Rubio told reporters after briefing lawmakers Wednesday about the Maduro operation. "They understand that the only way they can move oil and generate revenue and not have economic collapse is if they cooperate and work with the United States."

Seizing 2 more vessels

U.S. European Command said on social media that the merchant vessel Bella 1 was seized in the North Atlantic for "violations of U.S. sanctions." The U.S. had been pursuing the tanker since last month after it tried to evade a blockade on sanctioned oil vessels around Venezuela.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem revealed U.S. forces also took control of the M Sophia in the Caribbean Sea. Noem said on social media that both ships were "either last docked in Venezuela or en route to it."

The two ships join at least two others that were taken by U.S. forces last month — the Skipper and the Centuries.

The Bella 1 had been cruising across the Atlantic nearing the Caribbean on Dec. 15 when it abruptly turned and headed north, toward Europe. The change in direction came days after the first U.S. tanker seizure of a ship on Dec. 10 after it had left Venezuela carrying oil.

When the U.S. Coast Guard tried to board the Bella 1, it fled. U.S. European Command said a Coast Guard vessel had tracked the ship "pursuant to a warrant issued by a U.S. federal court."

As the U.S. pursued it, the Bella 1 was renamed Marinera and flagged to Russia, shipping databases show. A U.S. official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military operations, said the ship's crew had painted a Russian flag on the side of the hull.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said it had information about Russian nationals among the Marinera's crew and, in a statement carried by Russia's state news agencies Tass and RIA Novosti, demanded that "the American side ensure humane and dignified treatment of them, strictly respect their rights and interests, and not hinder their speedy return to their homeland."

Separately, a senior Russian lawmaker, Andrei Klishas, decried the U.S. action as "blatant piracy."

The Justice Department is investigating crew members of the Bella 1 vessel for failing to obey Coast Guard orders and "criminal charges will be pursued against all culpable actors," Attorney General Pam Bondi said.

"The Department of Justice is monitoring several other vessels for similar enforcement action — anyone on any vessel who fails to obey instructions of the Coast Guard or other federal officials will be investigated and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law," Bondi said on X.

The ship had been sanctioned by the U.S. in 2024 on allegations of smuggling cargo for a company linked to Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which is backed by Iran.

Easing some sanctions to sell Venezuela's oil

The Trump administration, meanwhile, is "selectively" removing sanctions to enable the shipping and sale of Venezuelan oil to markets worldwide, according to an outline of the policies published Wednesday by the Energy Department.

The sales are slated to begin immediately with 30 million to 50 million barrels of oil. The U.S. government said the sales "will continue indefinitely," with the proceeds settling in U.S.-controlled accounts at "globally recognized banks." The money would be disbursed to the U.S. and Venezuelan populations at the "discretion" of Trump's government.

Venezuelan state-owned oil company PDVSA said it is in negotiations with the U.S. government for the sale of crude oil.

"This process is developed under schemes similar to those in force with international companies, such as Chevron, and is based on a strictly commercial transaction, with criteria of legality, transparency and benefit for both parties," the company said in the statement.

Acting President Delcy Rodríguez on Wednesday night tried to normalize the latest chapter in U.S.-Venezuela economic relations, calling them "neither extraordinary nor irregular."

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"Venezuela must diversify its relations and have relations with all the countries of this hemisphere, just as it should with Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe," she said during a televised meeting with lawmakers and senior government officials.

The U.S. plans to authorize the importation of oil field equipment, parts and services to increase Venezuela's oil production, which has been roughly 1 million barrels a day.

The Trump administration has indicated it also will invest in the electricity grid to increase production and the quality of life for people in Venezuela, whose economy has been unraveling amid changes to foreign aid and cuts to state subsidies, making necessities, including food, unaffordable to millions.

Meanwhile, Trump abruptly changed his tone about Colombian President Gustavo Petro. Trump said Wednesday that they had exchanged a friendly phone call and he had invited the leader of the South American country to the White House. Trump had said earlier this week that "Colombia is very sick too" and accused Petro of "making cocaine and selling it to the United States."

Ships said to be part of a shadow fleet

Noem said both seized ships were part of a shadow fleet of rusting oil tankers that smuggle oil for countries facing sanctions, such as Venezuela, Russia and Iran.

After the seizure of the now-named *Marinera*, which open-source maritime tracking sites showed was between Scotland and Iceland earlier Wednesday, the U.K. defense ministry said Britain's military provided support, including surveillance aircraft.

"This ship, with a nefarious history, is part of a Russian-Iranian axis of sanctions evasion which is fueling terrorism, conflict, and misery from the Middle East to Ukraine," U.K. Defense Secretary John Healey said.

The capture of the *M Sophia*, on the U.S. sanctions list for moving illicit cargos of oil from Russia, in the Caribbean was much less prolonged.

The ship had been "running dark," not having transmitted location data since July. Tankers involved in smuggling often turn off their transponders or broadcast inaccurate data to hide their locations.

Samir Madani, co-founder of TankerTrackers.com, said his organization used satellite imagery and surface-level photos to document that at least 16 tankers had left the Venezuelan coast since Saturday, after the U.S. captured Maduro.

The *M Sophia* was among them, Madani said, citing a recent photo showing it in the waters near Jose Terminal, Venezuela's main oil export hub.

Windward, a maritime intelligence firm that tracks such vessels, said in a briefing to reporters the *M Sophia* loaded at the terminal on Dec. 26 and was carrying about 1.8 million barrels of crude oil — a cargo that would be worth about \$108 million at current price of about \$60 a barrel.

## **Australia's leader announces a royal commission into antisemitism after Bondi mass shooting**

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced a wide-ranging royal commission into antisemitism, weeks after two gunmen opened fire on a Jewish holiday event at Bondi Beach, killing 15 people.

The commission will investigate the nature, prevalence and drivers of antisemitism generally as well as the circumstances of the Bondi mass shooting, Albanese told reporters in Canberra on Thursday. It will also make recommendations for law enforcement, strengthening social cohesion and countering the spread of extremism.

A royal commission, which is the most powerful form of government-commissioned inquiry that can be held in Australia, has the power to summon witnesses and request documents as evidence. It will be led by former High Court judge Virginia Bell, Albanese said.

A report is due by Dec. 14, which will be a year to the day since the shooting during a Hanukkah celebration at the Sydney landmark.

"This was an antisemitic terrorist attack, aimed at Jewish Australians, inspired by ISIS, the deadliest that has ever occurred on Australian soil," said Albanese, referring to the Islamic State group. The surviving suspect, Naveed Akram, 24, faces dozens of criminal charges including murder and terrorism.

He has yet to enter a plea. His father, Sajid Akram, was shot dead by police during the episode.

The announcement followed weeks of urging, that has grown in volume, from lawmakers across the political spectrum, some Jewish leaders and other public figures such as prominent sportspeople for a national royal commission to be convened, instead of a statewide inquiry in New South Wales, where the shooting happened. Albanese at first suggested such a wide-ranging inquiry might take too long, but rejected the suggestion on Thursday that he had been pressured to change his mind.

"I have listened," he said. "In a democracy that's a good thing."

Albanese had already launched an investigation into Australia's security and law enforcement agencies following the shooting, which he said would become part of the royal commission. He also plans to enact a legislative agenda in response to the attack that includes tightening Australia's already stringent gun laws and criminalizing the words of so-called hate preachers, which his government has said frequently fall below the bar for prosecution.

## Trump's 'beautiful' new law means states have big decisions this year on Medicaid, SNAP and taxes

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

States have major decisions to make in 2026 about the social safety net and taxes in the aftermath of a sweeping law President Donald Trump signed last year.

The federal government is shifting more responsibilities to states over the next few years, and states must prepare for greater costs in the Medicaid health care and SNAP food aid programs. They also must decide whether to offset upcoming federal funding cuts with state tax dollars. And they must weigh whether to cut state taxes on tips, overtime wages and other items to remain in line with Trump's big bill.

Though most states still have ample rainy day funds, the extra burdens are coming as many states face their tightest budgets since the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

"There's a big storm coming for state budgets — the radar is clear — and it's going to hit almost every state," said Tim Storey, CEO of the National Conference of State Legislatures. "It's going to mean some hard choices."

In most states, those determinations will begin in January, when legislatures convene and governors lay out their agendas.

Food aid will become a bigger expense for states

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which is used by 42 million Americans to help buy groceries, is going to become more expensive for states to run and harder for some people to qualify for assistance.

Currently, the federal government picks up the full cost of benefits — around \$94 billion in the fiscal year that ended in September 2024 — and splits the administrative costs with the states, which run the program. The federal share of administrative costs for 2024 was about \$6 billion.

Starting Oct. 1, states will have to pay three-fourths of the cost to run the program. And starting in late 2027, some states that make errors in more than 6% of payments — often for paying a household more than it's supposed to get after its income rises — will have to start paying some of the costs of benefits.

California already has allocated \$84 million to try to reduce SNAP errors, plus additional money to help counties implement other new requirements.

The shift in administrative costs could come to around \$50 million a year in Florida, said Sky Beard, the Florida director for No Kid Hungry. Paying for some SNAP benefits, if the state is forced to, could be in the neighborhood of \$1 billion a year. She said that's a reason lawmakers have a lot of questions about the details of error rates.

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Other states are weighing whether to put more money into SNAP.

New Jersey Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, a Democrat, said the state has an obligation to help people access health care and food. But he said the magnitude of federal cuts — as much as a \$36 billion reduction for New Jersey over the next decade for Medicaid alone, according to KFF, an organization that researches health policy — could make it hard to keep all the state's social programs unchanged.

"What there will be is a commitment to doing our level best to make sure that all of the people's needs get covered," Coughlin said.

States could consider scaling back Medicaid

The federal law signed by Trump imposes work requirements for some adults on Medicaid, the joint federal-state health insurance program for low-income people. Most states must start those work mandates by January 2027, which means they must be accounted for in their next state budgets.

But states can start sooner if they desire.

Nebraska Gov. Jim Pillen announced that his state will launch Medicaid work requirements in May. The Republican said the state could handle the change without hiring more government employees and that the work mandate "can have a gigantic impact in helping lift people up."

But many states face tens of millions of dollars of costs merely to prepare for the new Medicaid requirements.

The Missouri Department of Social Services has requested about \$33 million in the next budget for technology improvements needed to comply with Medicaid work checks and more frequent eligibility reviews. It's seeking more than \$12 million to hire the equivalent of about 120 people to carry out the tasks.

The work requirement applies to people with slightly higher incomes who are eligible for Medicaid under a voluntary expansion included in President Barack Obama's 2010 health insurance overhaul. Forty states and the District of Columbia took up the offer. The states that didn't agree to the expansion all have legislatures controlled by Republicans.

The work requirement is the biggest piece in a series of Medicaid changes that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office forecasts will reduce Medicaid spending by \$911 billion through 2034 and leave 10 million more Americans uninsured over that time frame.

States could respond by narrowing who is eligible for Medicaid, as the District of Columbia did in a policy that kicked in Jan 1. Or they could follow Colorado and Idaho and cut Medicaid reimbursements to medical providers.

Liz Williams, who analyzes Medicaid at KFF, said home care, dental benefits and coverage of GLP-1 drugs often used for weight loss, also could face restrictions in some states.

Some changes are expected to hit rural hospitals especially hard. The federal law seeks to partly offset that by spending \$50 billion over the next five years. States will have to decide how to use their share of that money.

States also face decisions on tax cuts

The federal law temporarily halts federal income taxes on tips and overtime pay, provides new tax deductions for seniors and some people with auto loans, and enacts numerous new corporate tax breaks.

States can decide whether to incorporate those tax cuts into their own income tax codes.

Some states have income tax laws that automatically conform with changes to federal tax laws. But officials in other states have to decide whether to link up — and whether to do so partially or fully.

Michigan is the only state so far to vote to opt in to the tax breaks on tips and overtime. Those provisions automatically carry over to state income taxes in about a half-dozen other states.

Officials in Arizona are among those planning to conform to the federal tax cuts when their legislative session begins in January. Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs said embracing the tax breaks can help "ease the cost of living crisis" and provide certainty to taxpayers. Republican legislative leaders say they stand ready to give their approval.

## Woman killed by ICE agent in Minneapolis was a mother of 3, poet and new to the city

By MICHAEL BIESECKER and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The woman shot and killed by a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer in Minneapolis on Wednesday was Renee Nicole Macklin Good, a 37-year-old mother of three who had recently moved to Minnesota.

She was a U.S. citizen born in Colorado and appears to never have been charged with anything involving law enforcement beyond a traffic ticket.

In social media accounts, Macklin Good described herself as a “poet and writer and wife and mom.” She said she was currently “experiencing Minneapolis,” displaying a pride flag emoji on her Instagram account. A profile picture posted to Pinterest shows her smiling and holding a young child against her cheek, along with posts about tattoos, hairstyles and home decorating.

Her ex-husband, who asked not to be named out of concern for the safety of their children, said Macklin Good had just dropped off her 6-year-old son at school Wednesday and was driving home with her current partner when they encountered a group of ICE agents on a snowy street in Minneapolis, where they had moved last year from Kansas City, Missouri.

Video taken by bystanders posted to social media shows an officer approaching her car, demanding she open the door and grabbing the handle. When she begins to pull forward, a different ICE officer standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots into the vehicle at close range.

In another video taken after the shooting, a distraught woman is seen sitting near the vehicle, wailing, “That’s my wife, I don’t know what to do!”

Calls and messages to Macklin Good’s current partner received no response.

Trump administration officials painted Macklin Good as a domestic terrorist who had attempted to ram federal agents with her car. Her ex-husband said she was no activist and that he had never known her to participate in a protest of any kind.

He described her as a devoted Christian who took part in youth mission trips to Northern Ireland when she was younger. She loved to sing, participating in a chorus in high school and studying vocal performance in college.

She studied creative writing at Old Dominion University in Virginia and won a prize in 2020 for one of her works, according to a post on the school’s English department Facebook page. She also hosted a podcast with her second husband, who died in 2023.

Macklin Good had a daughter and her son from her first marriage, who are now ages 15 and 12. Her 6-year-old son was from her second marriage.

Her ex-husband said she had primarily been a stay-at-home mom in recent years but had previously worked as a dental assistant and at a credit union.

Donna Ganger, her mother, told the Minnesota Star Tribune the family was notified of the death late Wednesday morning.

“Renee was one of the kindest people I’ve ever known,” Ganger told the newspaper. “She was extremely compassionate. She’s taken care of people all her life. She was loving, forgiving and affectionate. She was an amazing human being.”

Ganger did not respond to calls or messages from the AP.

## President Petro’s clash with Trump over Venezuela backs Colombia into a corner

By ISABEL DEBRE and MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press

BOGOTÁ, Colombia (AP) — An “abhorrent” violation of Latin American sovereignty. An attack committed by “enslavers.” A “spectacle of death” comparable to Nazi Germany’s 1937 carpet bombing of Guernica,

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Spain.

There is perhaps no world leader criticizing the Trump administration's attack on Venezuela as strongly as left-wing President Gustavo Petro of Colombia, historically Washington's most important ally in the region.

For the past 30 years, the U.S. has worked closely with Colombia, the world's largest producer of cocaine, to arrest drug traffickers, fend off rebel groups and boost economic development in rural areas.

But while other officials tread carefully, Colombia's outspoken president has seized on the U.S. capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro to escalate his spiraling war of words with President Donald Trump, who said a U.S. military operation in Colombia "sounds good to me."

Answering a protest call issued by Petro, thousands of Colombians gathered in public squares across the country Wednesday "to defend national sovereignty" against Trump's military threats, chanting "Long live free and sovereign Colombia!" and waiting anxiously to hear what they expected would be Petro's latest scathing salvo in his clash with Trump.

Instead, to everyone's surprise, the Colombian president offered an olive branch to the man who has repeatedly called him a drug kingpin, despite a lack of evidence.

"I had one speech prepared for today, but I have to give another one," Petro told the crowd in Colombia's capital of Bogotá. "The first speech was quite harsh. I had to change it."

Just minutes earlier, Petro said, he had held a friendly call with Trump, and explained that his only connection to drug trafficking was his fierce commitment to fighting against it.

"I asked (Trump) to re-establish direct communication between our governments," Petro said. "If there is no dialogue, there will be war."

Trump released a statement on social media, calling it a "Great Honor" to speak with Petro. He even invited his fiercest critic to the White House, revealing what he's shown in the past to be a dramatic capacity to swiftly change tack.

"I appreciated his call and tone, and look forward to meeting him in the near future," Trump wrote of Petro.

The sudden détente between the irascible foes revealed that, for all their differences, Petro and Trump share a willingness to side with an ideological rival if deemed to be in their best interest.

For Colombia, the U.S. remains key to the military's fight against leftist guerrillas and drug traffickers. Washington has provided Bogotá with roughly \$14 billion in the last two decades.

For the U.S., Colombia remains the cornerstone of its counternarcotics strategy abroad, providing crucial intelligence used to interdict drugs in the Caribbean.

"The Colombians are extremely effective in taking advantage of their contacts in Washington, on the Hill and elsewhere, and the private sector is mobilized," said Michael Shifter, a Latin America expert at the Inter-American Dialogue think tank in Washington.

"People were trying to tell Trump: 'Look, you can punish Petro to the extent possible, but you don't want to punish the country. That undermines the fight against drugs and is going to be harmful for the United States.'"

Trump and Petro hate each other

Petro has drawn Trump's ire for months.

He turned back U.S. military deportation flights, urged American soldiers to disobey Trump during a pro-Palestinian rally in New York, lambasted U.S. attacks on alleged drug vessels as "murder," and sparred with Trump over Israel's war in Gaza and his crackdown on immigration.

Infuriated, Trump deployed language that he often used to describe Maduro, calling Petro a "lunatic" and an "international drug leader." He revoked Petro's U.S. visa and the visas of his top officials and diplomats; slapped sweeping sanctions on him, his relatives and his interior minister on drug-related grounds; vowed to end all U.S. aid to Colombia; and threatened punitive tariffs on Colombian exports.

Thrilled by Maduro's ouster, Trump pushed the fight further in recent days. He called Petro a "sick man who likes making cocaine and selling it to the United States" and warned of a possible U.S. military operation on Colombian soil.

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Casting himself as a patriot defending national sovereignty from U.S. meddling, Petro convened emergency meetings before the United Nations and the Organization of American States. He galvanized nationwide protests Wednesday where banners read "The U.S. is the biggest threat to world peace." The former leftist guerrilla even threatened to take up arms against the U.S. to defend Colombia.

Petro's high-stakes gambit put Colombia, long America's staunchest regional ally, in Trump's crosshairs and his government in a bind: how to reap the political rewards of standing up to Washington just months before a presidential election without jeopardizing crucial security assistance or goading Trump into making good on his threat to invade.

Petro plays the fight to his advantage

Frustrated with congressional resistance to his contentious reforms, failing to fulfill his promise of "total peace" with armed groups and facing a series of electoral tests, Petro found in Trump the perfect foil as he fought for his legacy.

"He wants this stage where he is the clearest adversary, rhetorically or politically, to the U.S.," said Sergio Guzman, a political risk analyst based in Bogotá.

The constitution bars Petro from seeking another term in May's presidential vote. Still, as Colombia's first leftist president, Petro wants his coalition to retain power over the resurgent right that blames his unpopular government for rising crime. Colombia will also hold legislative elections in March.

On Wednesday, Petro's strategy of playing David to Trump's Goliath seemed to have paid off.

While Trump's threats struck Colombians as excessive enough to provoke widespread sympathy for Petro, the Colombian leader managed to de-escalate tensions before the verbal conflict could spill into a military one and inflict irreparable damage to the country's most vital security partnership.

"The priority is peace, and peace is achieved through dialogue," Petro told protesters after his conversation with Trump. "Colombia can sleep soundly."

Alarm was growing in Colombia over Trump's threats

Experts doubted the likelihood of a U.S. military operation against Petro who, unlike Maduro, was democratically elected.

But complicating the calculation for fretful Colombian officials were Trump's increasingly militaristic comments about Latin America that lumped Colombia in with Venezuela as a source of narcotics and immigrants in the U.S.

"Whereas the Colombian institutions still maintain cooperation and have a lot to lose, Petro personally felt like that bridge has already burned," said Elizabeth Dickinson, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group.

As Petro used his social media bully pulpit to hammer at Trump this week, his interior and justice ministers scrambled to reassure U.S. intelligence agencies that Colombia would "continue to coordinate and cooperate in the fight against drug trafficking," the government said.

Defense Minister Pedro Sánchez also rushed to put out the fire, declaring this week a "golden moment" for the U.S. and Colombia to move away from confrontation.

In perhaps the most serious warning yet, Foreign Minister Rosa Villavicencio told reporters Tuesday that even as Colombia sought to resolve tensions diplomatically, authorities were preparing for "the possibility of aggression against our country by the United States."

"For this, we have a highly trained, very well prepared army," she said. After all, it has long received training from the U.S.

Rather than readying for war, Villavicencio late Wednesday found herself preparing for a trip to Washington to set up Petro's White House visit.

But first, authorities pointed out, she needed a U.S. visa.

## ICE officer kills a Minneapolis driver in a deadly start to Trump's latest immigration operation

By TIM SULLIVAN and GIOVANNA DELL'ORTO Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — An Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and killed a Minneapolis driver on Wednesday during the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown on a major American city — a shooting that federal officials said was an act of self-defense but that the mayor described as reckless and unnecessary.

The 37-year-old woman was shot in the head in front of a family member in a snowy residential neighborhood south of downtown Minneapolis, just a few blocks from some of the oldest immigrant markets and about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from where George Floyd was killed by police in 2020.

Her killing after 9:30 a.m. was recorded on video by witnesses, and the shooting quickly drew a large crowd of angry protesters. By evening, hundreds were there for a vigil to mourn her death and urge the public to resist immigration enforcers.

The woman, Renee Nicole Macklin Good, had a 6-year old child, her mother told the Minnesota Star Tribune. Macklin Good described herself on social media as a "poet and writer and wife and mom" who was from Colorado.

Videos taken by bystanders with different vantage points and posted to social media show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The Honda Pilot begins to pull forward and a different ICE officer standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots into the vehicle at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him.

It is not clear in the videos if the vehicle makes contact with the officer and there is no indication of whether or not the woman had interactions with ICE officers before the videos started. After the shooting, the SUV speeds into two cars parked on a curb nearby before crashing to a stop.

In another video taken at the scene, a woman, who described Macklin Good as her spouse, is seen crying near the vehicle. The woman, who was not identified, said the couple had only recently arrived in Minnesota and that they had a child.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem described the incident as an "act of domestic terrorism" carried out against ICE officers by a woman who "attempted to run them over and rammed them with her vehicle. An officer of ours acted quickly and defensively, shot, to protect himself and the people around him."

In a social media post, President Donald Trump made similar accusations against the woman and defended ICE's work.

Local officials dispute the narrative

Noem claimed the woman was part of a "mob of agitators" and said the officer followed his training. She said the veteran officer who fired his gun had been rammed and dragged by an anti-ICE motorist in June.

"Any loss of life is a tragedy, and I think all of us can agree that in this situation, it was preventable," Noem said, adding that the FBI would investigate.

But Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey blasted Noem's version of what happened as "garbage" and criticized the federal deployment of more than 2,000 officers to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul as part of the immigration crackdown.

"What they are doing is not to provide safety in America. What they are doing is causing chaos and distrust," Frey said, calling on the immigration agents to leave. "They're ripping families apart. They're sowing chaos on our streets, and in this case, quite literally killing people."

"They are already trying to spin this as an action of self-defense. Having seen the video myself, I wanna tell everybody directly, that is bullshit," the mayor said.

Shooting is fifth linked to crackdowns

The shooting marked a dramatic escalation of the latest in a series of immigration enforcement operations in major cities under the Trump administration. The death of the woman in Minneapolis was at least the fifth linked to immigration crackdowns.

The Twin Cities have been on edge since DHS announced Tuesday that it had launched the operation, which is at least partly tied to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. Noem said they had already made “hundreds and hundreds” of arrests.

A large throng of protesters gathered at the scene after the shooting, where they vented their anger at the local and federal officers who were there, including Gregory Bovino, a senior U.S. Customs and Border Patrol official who has been the face of crackdowns in Los Angeles, Chicago and elsewhere.

“She was driving away and they killed her,” said Lynette Reini-Grandell, a local resident who was among those who filmed the shooting.

In a scene that hearkened back to the Los Angeles and Chicago crackdowns, bystanders heckled the officers, chanting “ICE out of Minnesota” and blew whistles that have become ubiquitous during the operations.

Governor calls for calm

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz said he’s prepared to deploy the National Guard if necessary. He described the killing as “predictable” and “avoidable.” He also said like many, he was outraged by the shooting, but he called on people to keep protests peaceful.

“They want a show. We can’t give it to them. We cannot,” the governor said.

Minneapolis Public Schools canceled school, sports and activities for Thursday and Friday, saying in a statement that the decision was “due to safety concerns related to today’s incidents around the city.”

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O’Hara briefly described the shooting to reporters but, unlike federal officials, gave no indication that the driver was trying to harm anyone.

There were calls on social media to prosecute the officer who shot the driver. Commissioner Bob Jacobson of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety said state authorities would investigate the shooting with federal authorities.

“Keep in mind that this is an investigation that is also in its infancy. So any speculation about what has happened would be just that,” Jacobson told reporters.

The shooting happened in the district of Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, who called it “state violence,” not law enforcement.

For nearly a year, migrant rights advocates and neighborhood activists across the Twin Cities have been preparing to mobilize in the event of an immigration enforcement surge. From houses of worship to mobile home parks, they have set up very active online networks, scanned license plates for possible federal vehicles and bought whistles and other noisemaking devices to alert neighborhoods of any enforcement presence.

## What to know about the fatal shooting of a woman by an ICE officer in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Federal officials and local leaders clashed Wednesday over their differing characterizations of a fatal shooting by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer in Minneapolis.

While President Donald Trump’s administration described the killing of a 37-year-old mother as an act of self-defense amid his latest immigration crackdown, Minneapolis officials have disputed that narrative.

Here’s what is known about the shooting:

How it unfolded

The woman was shot in her car in a residential neighborhood south of downtown Minneapolis, about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from where police killed George Floyd in 2020. Videos taken by bystanders and posted to social media show an officer approaching an SUV stopped in the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle.

The Honda Pilot begins to pull forward and a different ICE officer standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots into the vehicle at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him.

It is not clear from the videos if the vehicle makes contact with the officer. The SUV then speeds into two cars parked on a curb nearby before crashing to a stop. Witnesses can be heard shouting out in shock.

Victim was a 'wife and mom'

Renee Nicole Macklin Good died of gunshot wounds to the head.

She described herself on social media as a "poet and writer and wife and mom" who was from Colorado. Calls and messages to her family were not immediately returned.

Public records show Macklin Good had recently lived in Kansas City, Missouri, where she and another woman with the same home address had started a business last year called B. Good Handywork.

In a video posted from the scene on social media, a woman, who describes Macklin Good as her wife, is seen sitting near the vehicle sobbing. She says the couple had only recently arrived in Minnesota and that they had a 6-year-old child.

Her killing quickly drew hundreds of angry protesters. It is at least the fifth death to result from the aggressive U.S. immigration crackdown the Trump administration launched last year.

Noem says officer followed training

The ICE officer has not been publicly identified. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem described him only as an experienced officer and said he had been injured in June after being dragged by the vehicle of an anti-ICE protester.

She said the officer was hit by the vehicle during Wednesday's shooting and taken to the hospital. He has since been discharged.

"Our officer followed his training, did exactly what he's been taught to do in that situation, and took actions to defend himself and defend his fellow law enforcement officers," Noem said.

Noem said that officers were trying to push a vehicle out of the snow when a group of protestors descended on them. The officers had just completed an operation and were trying to return to headquarters, she said.

The woman was blocking the officers with her vehicle, and refused to heed commands from law enforcement, Noem said.

"She then weaponized her vehicle, and she attempted to run a law enforcement officer over with it," Noem said. "This appears as an attempt to kill or to cause bodily harm to agents, an act of domestic terrorism."

Local leaders dispute narrative

Police Chief Brian O'Hara gave no indication that the driver was trying to harm anyone when he described the shooting to reporters.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey called Noem's description of the events "garbage," saying he had watched videos of the shooting that show it wasn't self-defense and was avoidable. Frey criticized the federal deployment of more than 2,000 officers to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

"They're ripping families apart. They're sowing chaos on our streets, and in this case, quite literally killing people," Frey said.

## California loses \$160M for delaying revocation of 17,000 commercial driver's licenses for immigrants

By JOSH FUNK AP Transportation Writer

California will lose \$160 million for delaying the revocations of 17,000 commercial driver's licenses for immigrants, federal transportation officials announced Wednesday.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy already withheld \$40 million in federal funding because he said California isn't enforcing English proficiency requirements for truckers.

The state notified these drivers in the fall that they would lose their licenses after a federal audit found problems that included licenses for truckers and bus drivers that remained valid long after an immigrant's visa expired. Some licenses were also given to citizens of Mexico and Canada who don't qualify. More than one-quarter of the small sample of California licenses that investigators reviewed were unlawful.

But then last week California said it would delay those revocations until March after immigrant groups

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sued the state because of concerns that some groups were being unfairly targeted. Duffy said the state was supposed to revoke those licenses by Monday.

Duffy is pressuring California and other states to make sure immigrants who are in the country illegally aren't granted the licenses.

"Our demands were simple: follow the rules, revoke the unlawfully-issued licenses to dangerous foreign drivers, and fix the system so this never happens again," Duffy said in a statement. "(Gov.) Gavin Newsom has failed to do so — putting the needs of illegal immigrants over the safety of the American people."

California DMV spokesperson Eva Spiegel said the state complies with all regulations and had positive conversations with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration officials about delaying the revocations to allow time for the federal agency to complete its review of the state's commercial driver's license program.

"We strongly disagree with the federal government's decision to withhold vital transportation funding from California — their action jeopardizes public safety because these funds are critical for maintaining and improving the roadways we all rely on every day," Spiegel said.

But in the official letter the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration sent Wednesday, federal officials said they never agreed to the delay after the state suggested it and still expected the 17,000 licenses to be revoked by this week.

#### Enforcement ramped up after fatal crashes

The federal government began cracking down during the summer. The issue became prominent after a truck driver who was not authorized to be in the U.S. made an illegal U-turn and caused a crash in Florida that killed three people in August.

Duffy previously threatened to withhold millions of dollars in federal funding from California, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, New York, Texas, South Dakota, Colorado, and Washington after audits found significant problems under the existing rules, including commercial licenses being valid long after an immigrant truck driver's work permit expired. He had dropped the threat to withhold nearly \$160 million from California after the state said it would revoke the licenses.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration Administrator Derek Barrs said California failed to live up to the promise it made in November to revoke all the flawed licenses by Jan. 5. The agency said the state also unilaterally decided to delay until March the cancellations of roughly 4,700 additional unlawful licenses that were discovered after the initial ones were found.

"We will not accept a corrective plan that knowingly leaves thousands of drivers holding noncompliant licenses behind the wheel of 80,000-pound trucks in open defiance of federal safety regulations," Barrs said.

#### Industry praises the enforcement

Trucking trade groups have praised the effort to get unqualified drivers who shouldn't have licenses or can't speak English off the road. They also applauded the Transportation Department's moves to go after questionable commercial driver's license schools.

"For too long, loopholes in this program have allowed unqualified drivers onto our highways, putting professional truckers and the motoring public at risk," said Todd Spencer, president of the Owner Operator Independent Drivers Association.

The spotlight has been on Sikh truckers because the driver in the Florida crash and the driver in another fatal crash in California in October are both Sikhs. So the Sikh Coalition, a national group defending the civil rights of Sikhs, and the San Francisco-based Asian Law Caucus filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of the California drivers. They said immigrant truck drivers were being unfairly targeted.

Immigrants account for about 20% of all truck drivers, but these non-domiciled licenses immigrants can receive only represent about 5% of all commercial driver's licenses or about 200,000 drivers. The Transportation Department also proposed new restrictions that would severely limit which noncitizens could get a license, but a court put the new rules on hold.

## Minneapolis shooting by ICE agent brings debate over police force and moving vehicles back in focus

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

The fatal shooting of a woman by a federal immigration officer in Minneapolis on Wednesday has thrust a long-running and deeply contested question back into the national spotlight: When is a law enforcement officer justified in using lethal force against someone in a moving vehicle?

The killing, captured on cellphone video, has exposed sharp divisions between federal authorities who quickly defended the agent's actions and local leaders who called the shooting unjustified. It has also renewed scrutiny of use-of-force rules that many police departments adopted decades ago to reduce the risk to bystanders or drivers losing control after being shot.

At the center of the debate are policies that for years have limited when officers may fire at vehicles, generally barring gunfire at fleeing cars unless the driver poses an imminent threat of deadly force beyond the vehicle itself. Those restrictions, embraced by many police departments and reflected in federal guidance, were intended to curb what experts long warned was among the most dangerous and unpredictable uses of lethal force.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem described Wednesday's episode as an "act of domestic terrorism" and said the agent acted in self defense and to protect fellow officers.

Here's a look at why police agencies moved to restrict shootings at moving vehicles, what those policies typically require, how they are enforced, and how recent incidents, including the Minneapolis case, have tested rules meant to balance officer safety with public risk.

### Why many police agencies limit shooting at moving vehicles

For decades, police departments across the U.S. have limited when officers are allowed to fire at moving vehicles, citing the danger to bystanders and the risk that a driver who is shot will lose control.

The New York City Police Department was among the first to adopt those limits. The department barred officers from firing at or from moving vehicles after a 1972 shooting killed a 10-year-old passenger in a stolen car and sparked protests.

Researchers in the late 1970s and early 1980s later found that the policy, along with other use-of-force restrictions, helped reduce bystanders being struck by police gunfire and led to fewer deaths in police shootings.

Over the years, many law enforcement agencies followed New York's lead. Policing organizations such as the Police Executive Research Forum and the International Association of Chiefs of Police have recommended similar limits, warning that shooting at vehicles creates serious risks from stray gunfire or from a vehicle crashing if the driver is hit.

In Wednesday's shooting, the vehicle can be seen in videos crashing into two parked cars before coming to a stop. It was unclear from the video if the vehicle made contact with the officer before he steps to the side.

### What federal policy says

Federal law enforcement officers operate under similar guidance.

The Department of Justice says in its Justice Manual that firearms should not be used simply to disable a moving vehicle. The policy allows deadly force only in limited circumstances, such as when someone in the vehicle is threatening another person with deadly force, or when the vehicle itself is being used in a way that poses an imminent risk and no reasonable alternative exists, including moving out of the vehicle's path.

At a news conference Wednesday, Noem said any death is a tragedy, but that the shooting was justified.

"Our officer followed his training, did exactly what he's been taught to do in that situation, and took actions to defend himself and defend his fellow law enforcement officers," Noem said.

She alleged the woman who was killed was using her vehicle to block officers, had been harassing them through the day and "attempted to run a law enforcement officer over" before she was shot. The FBI is leading the investigation into the shooting, she said.

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Geoffrey Alpert, a criminology professor at the University of South Carolina, said officials should take a step back before making any pronouncements.

"There needs to be two thorough parallel investigations," he said. "First ICE officials should investigate administratively whether this agent violated policy or training. And then state officials should be conducting a thorough criminal investigation as well."

He said determining whether the use-of-force was justified or criminal is going to depend on many details that have not been disclosed publicly.

## Rise in fatal encounters with federal agents

The shooting of the woman, identified by family members as Renee Nicole Good, 37, occurred as Homeland Security escalates immigration enforcement operations in Minnesota by deploying 2,000 agents and officers. It's the latest in a growing number of violent encounters between ICE agents and community members, and at least the fifth fatality.

In October, a Chicago woman was shot five times by a Border Patrol agent in a similar incident involving a vehicle. Marimar Martinez, 30, survived, and was almost immediately labeled a "domestic terrorist" by Homeland Security officials, who said she had "ambushed" and "rammed" agents with her vehicle.

She was charged with assaulting a federal officer, but federal prosecutors later dismissed the case after security camera video and body camera footage emerged showing a Border Patrol agent steering his vehicle into Martinez's truck.

## What training experts say about moving vehicle policies

The debate over shooting at moving vehicles has been sharpened by high-profile cases, including a 2023 shooting in Ohio in which an officer fired through the windshield of a car in a grocery store parking lot while investigating a shoplifting allegation. The pregnant driver was killed; the officer was later charged and acquitted.

John P. Gross, a professor at the University of Wisconsin School of Law who has written extensively about officers shooting at moving vehicles, said while more departments have added explicit policies regarding use-of-force and moving vehicles, officer training also needs to improve.

"If this woman was blocking the street and a law enforcement operation, they are entitled to arrest her. What they are not entitled to do is to use deadly force to arrest her," Gross said. "From just watching the video, this seems like an egregious example."

He said officers need to consider the totality of a situation, the crime or allegation being made against someone, whether they can be found at a later date or whether they are an actual danger.

Gross noted that Minnesota passed a revision to its use-of-force statutes that require clearly identified and immediate threats and also make it easier for prosecutors to file state charges for excessive force.

## Can the ICE officer be charged with a crime?

It is far too early to know whether the ICE officer who fired the fatal shot could face criminal charges. Multiple investigations are ongoing, including by the FBI, and prosecutors have said no decisions will be made until those inquiries are complete.

Federal law enforcement officers have broad legal protections when acting in the course of their official duties, and the Justice Department has taken a hard line against state efforts to arrest or prosecute federal agents. Late last year, Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche said arrests of federal officers performing their duties would be "illegal and futile," citing the Constitution's Supremacy Clause and federal law.

Legal experts say those protections are significant but not absolute. The Supremacy Clause does not provide blanket immunity, and federal agents can still face criminal liability if prosecutors determine they acted unlawfully or outside their authority.

Local prosecutors said they have jurisdiction but stressed the process is ongoing. Daniel Borgertpoepping, a spokesperson for the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, said investigators are still gathering facts and that charging decisions would come later, if at all. "The bottom line is yes, we have jurisdiction," he said.

## Trump invites Colombian president to White House after threatening his country with military strike

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump abruptly changed his tone Wednesday about his Colombian counterpart, Gustavo Petro, saying they had exchanged a friendly phone call and he'd even invited the leader of the South American country to the White House.

"It was a Great Honor to speak with the President of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, who called to explain the situation of drugs and other disagreements that we have had," Trump posted on his social media site. "I appreciated his call and tone, and look forward to meeting him in the near future."

He wrote that the upcoming meeting would take place at the White House.

That came mere days after Trump said in the wake of the U.S. operation to oust Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro over the weekend that "Colombia is very sick too" and accused Petro of "making cocaine and selling it to the United States."

In comments to reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday, Trump added of Petro, "He's not going to be doing it very long, let me tell you." Asked whether U.S. intervention was possible, Trump responded, "Sounds good to me."

Later Wednesday, addressing thousands of protesters that he had mobilized to rally against U.S. military threats, Petro said he had spoken with Trump for roughly one hour.

"I talked about two things: Venezuela and the issue of drug trafficking," he told the crowd in downtown Bogotá, where demonstrators had just minutes earlier chanted slogans against the United States at Petro's behest.

Petro explained to the audience that Colombian politicians allegedly linked to narco-trafficking misled the U.S. president about Petro's record to turn Trump against him.

"Those (people) are responsible for this crisis — let's call it diplomatic for now, verbal for now — that has erupted between the U.S. and Colombia," he said.

Trump now suddenly warming to Petro is especially surprising since Colombia's president called the U.S. operation in Venezuela an "abhorrent" violation of Latin American sovereignty. He also suggested it was committed by "enslavers" and constituted a "spectacle of death" comparable to Nazi Germany's 1937 carpet bombing of Guernica, Spain.

Colombia has long been among America's staunchest Latin American allies, a pillar of Washington's counternarcotics strategy abroad. For three decades, the U.S. has worked closely with Colombia, the world's largest producer of cocaine, to arrest drug traffickers, fend off rebel groups and boost economic development in rural areas.

Still, before Trump's conciliatory post, tensions had been rising between the U.S. and Colombia for months.

The Trump administration imposed sanctions in October on Petro, his family and a member of his government over accusations of involvement in the global drug trade. Colombia is considered the epicenter of the world's cocaine trade.

Trump began his monthslong pressure campaign on Maduro by ordering dozens of lethal strikes on alleged drug smuggling boats launched from Venezuela in the Caribbean. He eventually expanded the operations to also target suspected vessels in the eastern Pacific that came from Colombia.

The U.S. in September added Colombia, the top recipient of American assistance in the region, to a list of nations failing to cooperate in the drug war for the first time in almost 30 years. The designation led to a slashing of U.S. assistance to the country.

"He has cocaine mills and cocaine factories," Trump said of Petro on Sunday. "He's not going to be doing it."

## The Latest: ICE officer shoots and kills a woman during Minneapolis immigration crackdown

By The Associated Press undefined

An Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer shot and killed a Minneapolis motorist on Wednesday during the Trump administration's latest immigration crackdown in a major U.S. city — a shooting that federal officials claimed was an act of self-defense but that the city's mayor described as "reckless" and unnecessary.

Videos taken by bystanders with different vantage points and posted to social media show an officer approaching an SUV stopped across the middle of the road, demanding the driver open the door and grabbing the handle. The SUV begins to pull forward and a different ICE officer standing in front of the vehicle pulls his weapon and immediately fires at least two shots into the SUV at close range, jumping back as the vehicle moves toward him. It was not clear from the videos if the vehicle made contact with the officer. The SUV then sped into two cars parked on a curb nearby before crashing to a stop.

The shooting marks a dramatic escalation of a series of immigration enforcement operations in major U.S. cities under the Trump administration. The killing was at least the fifth linked to immigration crackdowns in a handful of states since 2024.

The Latest:

The child of the woman killed has lost both biological parents

Court records show that Renee Nicole Macklin Good had previously been married to a man named Timmy Ray Macklin, who died in 2023 at age 36.

The man's father, Timmy Ray Macklin Sr., told the Minnesota Star Tribune that his son and Macklin Good had a child together who is now 6 years old.

"There's nobody else in his life," Macklin Sr. told the paper.

Donna Ganger, the deceased woman's mother, told the newspaper that the family was notified of the death late Wednesday morning.

"That's so stupid" that she was killed, Ganger told the newspaper. "She was probably terrified."

Asked about protesters challenging ICE officers, Ganger said her daughter was "not part of anything like that at all."

Woman killed by ICE described herself as a poet and mother

A hospital record obtained by The Associated Press identified the woman as 37-year-old Renae Macklin-Good, though business records spelled her name as Renee Nicole Macklin Good.

In social media accounts, Macklin Good said she was a "Poet and writer and wife and mom" originally from Colorado but "experiencing Minnesota." A profile picture shows her smiling and holding a young child against her cheek.

In a video from the scene of the shooting posted to social media, a distraught woman is seen sitting near the vehicle crying, describing Macklin Good as her spouse and saying that they had a 6-year-old child.

"That's my wife, I don't know what to do!" wailed the woman, who wasn't identified.

Noem didn't name the ICE officer who shot the woman, but said he was 'experienced'

"He's been in situations like this before, and he certainly has been out there and followed his training today," said Noem at the evening news conference in Minneapolis.

Noem appeared to reference the same officer when she said that, back in June, he'd been rammed and dragged by an "anti-ICE" motorist.

Noem says the immigration enforcement operation in Minneapolis will continue

"We are still out on the street doing our work to get dangerous criminals off of the streets of Minneapolis," the Homeland Security secretary said at the news conference.

Noem also said she spoke with Walz earlier Wednesday and that they didn't see eye to eye on the shooting.

Noem says any death is a 'tragedy' but that the ICE shooting was justified

"Our officer followed his training, did exactly what he's been taught to do in that situation," Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said at a news conference in Minneapolis Wednesday evening.

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Noem alleged that the woman who was killed was trying to block officers with her vehicle, had been harassing them through the day and "attempted to run a law enforcement officer over" before she was shot. "We'll let the FBI continue the investigation to get it resolved," she said, adding that the officer was hit by the vehicle, taken to a hospital and released.

Noem added that immigration enforcement has made over 1,500 arrests in Minnesota in recent weeks. Pastors attend community gathering after ICE shooting to show solidarity and advocate for nonviolence. The Rev. Ingrid Rasmussen, a pastor of nearby Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, said she and other clergy, wearing their stoles and collars, are there "to be in community with a neighborhood that's hurting and a city that feels under siege."

Rasmussen, who had opened her church to the community during the protests and rioting after the killing of George Floyd, said she hoped violence wouldn't happen again, but blamed federal law enforcement activities like Wednesday's shooting for inciting it.

"We are all gathered around our own grief," she said.

Hundreds gather at the site of the shooting

As the sun set over Minneapolis, the crowd stood at the intersection where the motorist was killed just before a vigil was set to start.

Most were quiet. Some held profanity-laced signs against ICE, waving Mexican flags or sporting keffiyeh scarves.

A few blocks north, cars and improvised barricades blocked the main avenue.

Witness describes scene of the shooting

Lynette Reini-Grandell, 65, had already heard that ICE agents were in her neighborhood when she saw the chaotic scene, one car askew in a lane and ICE vehicles backed up behind it.

She said she tried to figure out what was going on when several gunshots rang out and the car that was askew crashed to a stop.

"She was driving away and they killed her," said Reini-Grandell of the motorist.

Reini-Grandell said she started recording ICE officers approach the woman's vehicle and kept a close watch as law enforcement told bystanders to stand back.

"I didn't want to get shot or chemical sprayed," she said. "I was much calmer when it was happening than I am now."

City says 37-year-old shooting victim died at hospital

In a statement, the city of Minneapolis says police officers "responded to the reports of shots fired and found a woman with life-threatening gunshot wounds to the head.

"Minneapolis firefighters then removed the 37-year-old victim from the vehicle and immediately began lifesaving measures until paramedics could respond. She was transported to Hennepin County Medical Center, where she later died."

Minnesota official says state will investigate the shooting with federal authorities

That's according to Commissioner Bob Jacobson of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

"Keep in mind that this is an investigation that is also in its infancy. So any speculation about what has happened would be just that," Jacobson told reporters.

The shooting happened in the district of Democratic U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar, who called it "state violence," not law enforcement.

What federal policy says about shooting at vehicles

The Department of Justice says in its Justice Manual that firearms should not be used simply to disable a moving vehicle.

The policy allows deadly force only in limited circumstances, such as when someone in the vehicle is threatening another person with deadly force, or when the vehicle itself is being used in a way that poses an imminent risk and no reasonable alternative exists, including moving out of the vehicle's path.

Police training experts have told The Associated Press that officers are generally taught not to step in front of moving vehicles to try to block them.

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Training also emphasizes weighing the totality of the situation, including whether the person involved poses an immediate danger and whether the underlying allegation involves violence.

Many department policies specifically bar firing at vehicles just to stop a fleeing suspect.

Some policing experts say the rules need flexibility, pointing to cases in which people have used vehicles as weapons, including attacks in recent years where cars were driven into crowds.

The debate has been sharpened by high-profile cases, including a 2023 shooting in Ohio in which an officer fired through a windshield in a grocery store parking lot while investigating a shoplifting allegation, killing the pregnant motorist. The officer was later charged and acquitted.

Why many police agencies limit shooting at moving vehicles

For decades, police departments across the U.S. have limited when officers are allowed to fire at moving vehicles, citing the danger to bystanders and the risk that a driver who is shot will lose control.

The New York Police Department was among the first major agencies to adopt those limits. The department barred officers from firing at or from moving vehicles after a 1972 shooting killed a 10-year-old passenger in a stolen car and sparked protests.

Researchers in the late 1970s and early 1980s later found that the policy, along with other use-of-force restrictions, helped reduce bystanders being struck by police gunfire and led to fewer deaths in police shootings.

Over the years, many law enforcement agencies followed New York's lead. Policing organizations such as the Police Executive Research Forum and the International Association of Chiefs of Police have recommended similar limits, warning that shooting at vehicles creates serious risks from stray gunfire or from a vehicle crashing if the driver is hit.

Minneapolis Police chief gives no indication that the driver was trying to harm anyone

Chief Brian O'Hara briefly described the shooting to reporters. Unlike federal officials, O'Hara didn't say the driver was trying to harm anyone. He said she had been shot in the head.

"This woman was in her vehicle and was blocking the roadway on Portland Avenue. ... At some point a federal law enforcement officer approached her on foot and the vehicle began to drive off," the chief said.

"At least two shots were fired. The vehicle then crashed on the side of the roadway."

Walz calls on protesters to remain peaceful

The governor said he's prepared to deploy the National Guard if necessary. He also said that like many, he is outraged about the killing, which he described as "predictable" and "avoidable." But he called for calm.

"They want a show. We can't give it to them. We cannot," the governor said during a news conference.

"If you protest and express your First Amendment rights, please do so peacefully, as you always do. We can't give them what they want."

Trump says the ICE officer who fatally shot the motorist appears to have been acting in self-defense

The president, in a social media post, said he'd viewed video footage of the incident and criticized the woman who was shot as acting "very disorderly, obstructing and resisting" and "then violently, willfully, and viciously" running over the ICE officer.

The president also described another woman seen screaming in the footage of the incident he viewed as "obviously, a professional agitator."

"Based on the attached clip, it is hard to believe he is alive, but is now recovering in the hospital," Trump said of the ICE officer.

"The situation is being studied, in its entirety, but the reason these incidents are happening is because the Radical Left is threatening, assaulting, and targeting our Law Enforcement Officers and ICE Agents on a daily basis. They are just trying to do the job of MAKING AMERICA SAFE."

A vigil is planned for the woman killed

An immigrant rights group says on Facebook that it will hold a vigil for the woman who was shot.

"We witnessed an atrocious attack on our community today," read the post from the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee. "Community members were taken from us and an observer was shot dead. ICE OUT OF MINNESOTA NOW."

Why is the Minneapolis area the target of what immigration enforcement describes as its largest operation?

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Minnesota initially grabbed President Donald Trump's and Republicans' attention over a series of fraud cases where many of the defendants had roots in Somalia. Prosecutors say that billions of dollars were stolen from federally funded health care benefits and a COVID-19 program in recent years.

Minnesota has the largest Somali population in the U.S., a group Trump called "garbage" in December and said he didn't want them in the country.

The president has also criticized Democratic Gov. Walz for failing to catch the alleged crimes.

Late last month, a right-wing influencer posted a video claiming that day care centers in Minneapolis run by Somali residents had taken over \$100 million in fraud. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem and FBI Director Kash Patel then posted on social media about increased operations in the city partly targeting, as Patel put it, "large-scale fraud schemes."

On Tuesday, DHS said it planned to deploy 2,000 federal agents and officers to the Minneapolis area.

Chicago experienced a similar incident during immigration crackdown

In October, a Chicago woman was shot five times by a Border Patrol agent in a similar incident involving a vehicle, though she survived.

Almost immediately, Homeland Security officials issued a statement labeling Marimar Martinez, a 30-year-old teaching assistant at a Montessori school, as a "domestic terrorist" who had "ambushed" and "rammed" agents with her vehicle.

She was charged in federal court with assaulting a federal officer, a felony punishable by up to 20 years in prison. But federal prosecutors were later forced to dismiss the case against Martinez before trial after security camera video and bodycam footage emerged that her defense lawyers said undermined the official narrative.

The videos showed a Border Patrol agent steering his vehicle into Martinez's truck, rather than the other way around, her attorney said.

Gov. Tim Walz calls Homeland Security's claims in the Minnesota shooting 'propaganda'

"I've seen the video. Don't believe this propaganda machine," Walz wrote on X, responding to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's post alleging that a woman had "weaponized her vehicle" before she was shot and killed by an ICE officer.

The state will ensure there is a full, fair, and expeditious investigation to ensure accountability and justice," wrote the governor.

County attorney's office says investigation must play out before any decision made on charges

Daniel Borgertpoopping, a spokesperson for the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, says that "We have jurisdiction to bring charges, as do the feds.

"It's a little bit of a complicated interplay but the bottom line is yes, we have jurisdiction to bring criminal charges."

Homeland Security secretary describes the incident as an 'act of domestic terrorism'

Secretary Kristi Noem, during a visit to Texas, says it was carried out against ICE officers by a woman who "attempted to run them over and rammed them with her vehicle. An officer of ours acted quickly and defensively, shot, to protect himself and the people around him."

But Mayor Frey blasted that characterization as well as the federal deployment in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

"They are not here to cause safety in this city. What they are doing is not to provide safety in America. What they are doing is causing chaos and distrust," Frey said.

Shooting occurred in modest neighborhood not far from where George Floyd was killed

The location is just a few blocks from some of the oldest immigrant markets in the area and a mile from where George Floyd was killed by police in 2020.

During a news conference in Texas on Wednesday, DHS Secretary Kristi Noem confirmed that the agency had deployed more than 2,000 officers to the Twin Cities and already made "hundreds and hundreds" of arrests.

Frey demands ICE leave Minneapolis

The mayor says in a social media post that immigration agents are "causing chaos in our city." "We are demanding ICE leave the city and state immediately. We stand rock solid with our immigrant and refugee communities," Frey said.

A large throng of protesters gather at the scene after the shooting

The crowd vented its anger at the local and federal officers who were there, including Gregory Bovino, a senior U.S. Customs and Border Patrol official who has been the face of crackdowns in Los Angeles, Chicago and elsewhere.

In a scene that harkened back to the Los Angeles and Chicago immigration crackdowns, bystanders heckled the officers and blew whistles that have become ubiquitous during the operations.

"Shame! Shame! Shame!" and "ICE out of Minnesota!" they loudly chanted from behind the police tape.

Department of Homeland Security says an ICE officer shot the woman in a residential neighborhood

That's according to a statement from department spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin.

The shooting marks a dramatic escalation of the latest in a series of immigration enforcement operations in major American cities under the Trump administration. It's at least the fifth person killed in a handful of states since 2024.

The twin cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have been on edge since DHS announced Tuesday that it had launched the operation, with more than 2,000 agents and officers expected to participate in the crackdown tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents.

Minneapolis mayor blasts federal immigration enforcement

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said Wednesday that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer who shot and killed a motorist acted recklessly. Fry rejected federal officials' claims that the officer had acted in self-defense.

During a news conference hours after the ICE officer shot the woman, an angry Frey blasted the federal immigration crackdown on the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

"They are not here to cause safety in this city. What they are doing is not to provide safety in America. What they are doing is causing chaos and distrust," Frey said. "They're ripping families apart. They're sowing chaos on our streets and in this case quite literally killing people."

"They are already trying to spin this as an action of self-defense," the mayor said.

## **Attorney for Rob Reiner's son resigns but says his client is not guilty of murder under state law**

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The high-profile private attorney for Nick Reiner resigned from his case Wednesday for reasons he said he could not reveal, and he later told reporters that under California law his client is definitely not guilty of murder in the killing of his parents, Rob Reiner and Michele Singer Reiner.

"Circumstances beyond our control and more importantly circumstances beyond Nick's control have dictated that, sadly, it's made it impossible to continue our representation," lawyer Alan Jackson said as he stood with his team outside a Los Angeles courthouse.

But, Jackson added, after weeks of investigation, "what we've learned, and you can take this to the bank, is that pursuant to the laws of this state, pursuant to the law of California, Nick Reiner is not guilty of murder. Print that."

Jackson would not specify what he meant and took no questions at the brief news conference, but it was the first direct statement from a Nick Reiner representative about his guilt or innocence in the 3 1/2 weeks since the killings.

He spoke after a hearing where Reiner was supposed to be arraigned and enter a plea to two charges of first-degree murder. Instead, after meeting with the Judge Theresa McGonigle in chambers, Jackson, at his own request, was replaced by a public defender and the plea hearing was postponed to Feb. 23.

Jackson does not say why he has to quit case

Jackson said that for legal and ethical reasons, he could not reveal why he had to resign. He first ap-

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peared in court representing Nick Reiner at a hearing a few days after the beloved actor-director and his wife of 36 years were found dead with stab wounds in their home in the upscale Brentwood section of Los Angeles. Jackson did not say how he was hired — or who hired him. Generally, defendants use public defenders when they can't pay for a private attorney.

Jackson has become one of the most prominent defense attorneys in the nation in recent years after his defense of clients including Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey and Karen Read at her intensely followed trials in Massachusetts.

Deputy Public Defender Kimberly Greene took over as Reiner's attorney during the hearing.

"The Public Defender's Office recognizes what an unimaginable tragedy this is for the Reiner family and the Los Angeles community," LA County Public Defender Ricardo D. Garcia said in a rare public statement on a case from the office. "Our hearts go out to the Reiner family as they navigate this difficult time. We ask for your patience and compassion as the case moves through the legal process."

A Reiner family spokesperson said in a statement after Wednesday's hearing that "They have the utmost trust in the legal process and will not comment further on matters related to the legal proceedings."

Nick Reiner appears in jail clothes, without suicide prevention smock

During Wednesday's hearing, Reiner stood behind glass in a custody area of the courtroom wearing brown jail garb and with his hair shaved. Two deputies stood behind him. Jackson and his team stood in front of him on the other side of the glass. At one point, Reiner stood on his tiptoes to peer over the lawyers' heads to look at the audience. He spoke only to agree to the delayed arraignment.

McGonigle approved the use of cameras inside the courtroom but said photos and video could not be taken of the defendant. Reiner did not wear the suicide prevention smock he had on at his initial court appearance on Dec. 17.

Reiner, 32, the third of Rob Reiner's four children, has been held without bail since his arrest hours after his parents were found dead on Dec. 14.

Jackson says he 'dropped everything' to represent Reiner

Jackson, a former LA County prosecutor, had given no indication of the plans for his defense.

He said that just hours after Nick Reiner's arrest, he and his team were in New York when they got a call about representing him. He did not say who called him.

"We dropped everything," Jackson said. "For the last three weeks, we have devoted literally every waking hour to protecting Nick and his interests. We've investigated this matter top to bottom, back to front."

He said they remain "deeply, deeply committed" to him and said, "We're not just convinced; we know that the legal process will reveal the true facts."

Rob Reiner, 78, and Michele Singer Reiner, 70, were killed early on the morning of Dec. 14, and they were found in the late afternoon, authorities said. The LA County Medical Examiner said in initial findings that they died from "multiple sharp force injuries." A court order has prevented the release of more details. Police have said nothing about possible motives.

Prosecutors have said they have not yet decided whether to seek the death penalty for Nick Reiner.

Rob Reiner was a prolific director whose work included some of the most memorable and endlessly watchable movies of the 1980s and '90s. His credits included "This is Spinal Tap," "Stand By Me," "A Few Good Men," and "When Harry Met Sally ...," during whose production he met Michele Singer, a photographer, and married her soon after.

A decade ago, Nick Reiner publicly discussed his struggles with addiction and mental health after making a movie with his father, "Being Charlie," that was very loosely based on their lives.

## **US will exit 66 international organizations as it further retreats from global cooperation**

By MATTHEW LEE and FARNOUSH AMIRI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration will withdraw from dozens of international organizations, including the U.N.'s population agency and the U.N. treaty that establishes international climate negotia-

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tions, as the U.S. further retreats from global cooperation.

President Donald Trump on Wednesday signed an executive order suspending U.S. support for 66 organizations, agencies, and commissions, following his administration's review of participation in and funding for all international organizations, including those affiliated with the United Nations, according to a White House release.

Many of the targets are U.N.-related agencies, commissions and advisory panels that focus on climate, labor, migration and other issues the Trump administration has categorized as catering to diversity and "woke" initiatives. Other non-U.N. organizations on the list include the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and the Global Counterterrorism Forum.

"The Trump Administration has found these institutions to be redundant in their scope, mismanaged, unnecessary, wasteful, poorly run, captured by the interests of actors advancing their own agendas contrary to our own, or a threat to our nation's sovereignty, freedoms, and general prosperity," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

Trump's decision to withdraw from organizations that foster cooperation among nations to address global challenges comes as his administration has launched military efforts or issued threats that have rattled allies and adversaries alike, including capturing autocratic Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and indicating an intention to take over Greenland.

### US builds on pattern of exiting global agencies

The administration previously suspended support for agencies like the World Health Organization, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees known as UNRWA, the U.N. Human Rights Council and the U.N. cultural agency UNESCO. It has taken a larger, à la carte approach to paying dues to the world body, picking which operations and agencies it believes align with Trump's agenda and those that no longer serve U.S. interests.

"I think what we're seeing is the crystallization of the U.S. approach to multilateralism, which is 'my way or the highway,'" said Daniel Forti, head of U.N. affairs at the International Crisis Group. "It's a very clear vision of wanting international cooperation on Washington's own terms."

It has marked a major shift from how previous administrations — both Republican and Democratic — have dealt with the U.N., and it has forced the world body, already undergoing its own internal reckoning, to respond with a series of staffing and program cuts.

Many independent nongovernmental agencies — some that work with the United Nations — have cited many project closures because of the U.S. administration's decision last year to slash foreign assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID.

Despite the massive shift, Trump administration officials say they see the potential of the U.N. and want to instead focus taxpayer money on expanding American influence in many of the standard-setting U.N. initiatives where there is competition with China, like the International Telecommunications Union, the International Maritime Organization and the International Labor Organization.

### The latest global organizations the US is departing

The withdrawal from the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, or UNFCCC, is the latest effort by Trump and his allies to distance the U.S. from international organizations focused on climate and addressing climate change.

UNFCCC, the 1992 agreement between 198 countries to financially support climate change activities in developing countries, is the underlying treaty for the landmark Paris climate agreement. Trump — who calls climate change a hoax — withdrew from that agreement soon after reclaiming the White House.

Gina McCarthy, former White House National Climate Adviser, said being the only country in the world not part of the treaty is "shortsighted, embarrassing, and a foolish decision."

"This Administration is forfeiting our country's ability to influence trillions of dollars in investments, policies, and decisions that would have advanced our economy and protected us from costly disasters wreaking havoc on our country," McCarthy, who co-chairs America Is All In, a coalition of climate-concerned U.S. states and cities, said in a statement.

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Mainstream scientists say climate change is behind increasing instances of deadly and costly extreme weather, including flooding, droughts, wildfires, intense rainfall events and dangerous heat.

The U.S. withdrawal could hinder global efforts to curb greenhouse gases because it “gives other nations the excuse to delay their own actions and commitments,” said Stanford University climate scientist Rob Jackson, who chairs the Global Carbon Project, a group of scientists that tracks countries’ carbon dioxide emissions.

It will also be difficult to achieve meaningful progress on climate change without cooperation from the U.S., one of the world’s largest emitters and economies, experts said.

The U.N. Population Fund, the agency providing sexual and reproductive health worldwide, has long been a lightning rod for Republican opposition, and Trump cut funding for it during his first term. He and other GOP officials have accused the agency of participating in “coercive abortion practices” in countries like China.

When President Joe Biden took office in January 2021, he restored funding for the agency. A State Department review conducted the following year found no evidence to support GOP claims.

Other organizations and agencies that the U.S. will quit include the Carbon Free Energy Compact, the United Nations University, the International Cotton Advisory Committee, the International Tropical Timber Organization, the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation, the Pan-American Institute for Geography and History, the International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, and the International Lead and Zinc Study Group.

## Trump threats against Greenland pose new, potentially unprecedented challenge to NATO

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump’s latest threats against Greenland pose a new and potentially unprecedented challenge to NATO, perhaps even an existential one, for an alliance focused on external threats that could now face an armed confrontation involving its most powerful member.

The White House says the administration is weighing “options” that could include military action to take control of the strategically located and mineral-rich island, which is a semi-autonomous region that is part of NATO ally Denmark.

Trump’s renewed interest in Greenland could put at risk the entire future of NATO, which was founded in 1949 to counter the threat to European security posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The alliance is normally focused on threats such as those from Russia or international terror groups. It would not function without U.S. leadership and firepower.

NATO, the world’s biggest security organization, was built on a “Three Musketeers”-like vow that an attack on anyone in its ranks will be met with a response from all of them. That security guarantee, enshrined in Article 5 of its founding treaty, has kept Russia away from allied territory for decades.

But in an organization that operates on unanimity, Article 5 does not function if one member targets another.

Uneasy allies and neighbors Greece and Turkey have harassed each other’s military forces and disputed borders for decades. But past internal clashes have never posed the kind of threat to NATO unity that would arise from an American seizure of Greenland.

In a post on social media Wednesday, Trump said that “RUSSIA AND CHINA HAVE ZERO FEAR OF NATO WITHOUT THE UNITED STATES.” But he added: “We will always be there for NATO, even if they won’t be there for us.”

A White House warning

The White House took its threats toward Greenland to a new level Tuesday, issuing an official statement that insisted Greenland is “a national security priority” and refusing to rule out the use of military force.

“The president and his team are discussing a range of options to pursue this important foreign policy goal,

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and of course, utilizing the U.S. military is always an option at the commander in chief's disposal," it said.

Ian Lesser, distinguished fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States think tank and an expert on NATO, described the White House statement as "very striking."

"It's a low-probability, high-consequence event if it were to happen. But the odds have changed, and so it becomes more difficult to simply dismiss this as bluster from the White House," he said.

The statement came after the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain defended the sovereignty of Greenland, along with Denmark, whose right to the island was recognized by the U.S. government at the beginning of the 20th century.

"It is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland," the leaders said Tuesday in a joint statement. Canada, which sits off the western coast of an island that has been crucial to the defense of North America since World War II, expressed its support as well.

NATO itself remains reluctant to say anything that might annoy its leading member.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen has warned that the U.S. threat must be taken seriously, particularly after Trump ordered the capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro in a nighttime raid, and that any U.S. attempt to take control of the island could mean the end of NATO.

Asked whether Frederiksen was right when she said that an American attack on another NATO country means that "everything stops," an official at the alliance said: "NATO does not speculate on hypotheticals."

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because NATO protocol forbids the use of their name, preferred to note Greenland's strategic significance.

"The Arctic is an important region for our collective security, and NATO has a clear interest in preserving security, stability and cooperation in the high north," the official said. "Together we make sure that the whole of the alliance is protected."

Trump's interest in Greenland also threatens to destabilize the alliance at the moment when the U.S.-led efforts to end the war in Ukraine enter a pivotal stage, distracting its members from their efforts to support Kyiv and provide it with security guarantees.

Maria Martisiute, a defense analyst at the European Policy Center think tank, warned that NATO's credibility is on the line.

When a leading alliance member undermines another member, it hurts "NATO's cohesion and credibility, and it serves only our adversaries such as Russia and China," she said.

Tension comes after NATO leaders agreed to Trump's demands

Last summer, NATO leaders rallied behind Trump's demand that they increase defense spending. Apart from Spain, they agreed to invest as much per capita as the United States does, within a decade.

Just before Christmas, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte hailed Trump as a savior.

"I believe fundamentally that thanks to Donald J. Trump, NATO is stronger than it ever was," Rutte told BBC radio. "NATO has never been as strong as this moment since the fall of the Berlin Wall."

Yet in a year-end address in Germany meant to rally to European citizens behind defense spending, Rutte warned that Russia might attack elsewhere in Europe within a few years should it win in Ukraine.

"Conflict is at our door," the former Dutch prime minister said. "Russia has brought war back to Europe, and we must be prepared for the scale of war our grandparents or great-grandparents endured."

Lesser said it's difficult to reconcile Trump's defense spending victory with his designs on Greenland.

"What good is it to have revived NATO capability if it's no longer a functional political alliance" afterwards? he asked. If that breakdown occurs, "it's a gift to Moscow, and it's a gift to Beijing."

## Gov. Ron DeSantis calls for special session in April to redraw Florida's congressional districts

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis said Wednesday he plans to call a special session in April for the Republican-dominated legislature to draw new congressional districts, joining a redistricting arms race among states that have redrawn districts mid-decade.

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Even though Florida's 2026 legislative session starts next week, DeSantis said he wanted to wait for a possible ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court on a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. The ruling in *Louisiana v. Callais* could determine whether Section 2, a part of the Voting Rights Act that bars discrimination in voting systems, is constitutional. The governor said "at least one or two" districts in Florida could be affected by the high court's ruling.

"I don't think it's a question of if they're going to rule. It's a question of what the scope is going to be," DeSantis said at a news conference in Steinhatchee, Florida. "So, we're getting out ahead of that."

Currently, 20 of Florida's 28 congressional seats are held by Republicans.

Congressional districts in Florida that are redrawn to favor Republicans could carry big consequences for President Donald Trump's plan to reshape congressional districts in GOP-led states, which could give Republicans a shot at winning additional seats in the midterm elections and retaining control of the closely divided U.S. House.

Nationwide, the unusual mid-decade redistricting battle has so far resulted in a total of nine more seats Republicans believe they can win in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio — and a total of six more seats Democrats expect to win in California and Utah, putting Republicans up by three. But the redrawn districts are being litigated in some states, and if the maps hold for 2026, there is no guarantee the parties will win the seats.

In 2010, more than 60% of Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment prohibiting the drawing of district boundaries to unfairly favor one political party in a process known as gerrymandering. The Florida Supreme Court, however, last July upheld a congressional map pushed by DeSantis that critics said violated the "Fair Districts" amendment.

After that decision, Florida House Speaker Daniel Perez last August announced the creation of a select committee to examine the state's congressional map.

Florida Senate Democratic Leader Lori Berman said in a statement that what DeSantis wants the Legislature to do is clearly illegal.

"Florida's Fair Districts Amendment strictly prohibits any maps from being drawn for partisan reasons, and regardless of any bluster from the governor's office, the only reason we're having this unprecedented conversation about drawing new maps is because Donald Trump demanded it," Berman said. "An overwhelming majority of Floridians voted in favor of the Fair Districts Amendment and their voices must be respected. The redistricting process is meant to serve the people, not the politicians."

In a statement, the Florida Democratic Party called the move by DeSantis "reckless, partisan and opportunistic."

"This is nothing more than a desperate attempt to rig the system and silence voters before the 2026 election," the statement said. "Now, after gutting representation for Black Floridians just three years ago, Ron is hoping the decimation of the Voting Rights Act by Trump's Supreme Court will allow him to further gerrymander and suppress the vote of millions of Floridians."

Michael McDonald, a political science professor at the University of Florida, said the state already has a fairly strong Republican gerrymander, so it would be difficult for Republicans to pick up additional seats, unless they're planning to draw "noncompact districts that squiggle all over the place" and then hold the election before a judge can throw out the map. McDonald said DeSantis also could be trying to shore up Republican strongholds to mitigate the losses generally experienced by the party in power during midterm elections.

"Trump's approval ratings are pretty low," McDonald said. "And so looking at what we would expect to happen in November, unless something fundamentally changes in the country between now and then, we expect the Democrats to have a very good year."

## Winter storms bring snow, ice and school and road closures to New England. More bad weather's coming

By PATRICK WHITTLE Associated Press

SCARBOROUGH, Maine (AP) — Messy winter weather brought snow, ice, freezing rain and dangerous driving to the New England states on Wednesday as the region prepared for more unpleasant conditions later in the week.

The combination of rain, snow and slush blanketed the region, causing dozens of school districts to close for the day or begin on a delay. Snow accumulations were not expected to be high, but the road conditions made it unsafe to roll buses on Wednesday morning, districts said.

About a tenth of an inch of ice coated some areas — a little less than the amount that can cause power outages from falling tree limbs, but more than enough to create unsafe roads. Nonetheless, there were a few thousand power outages, mostly in Maine, with several hundred in Massachusetts.

"With icy conditions forecast during both the morning and afternoon bus routes, ensuring the safety of our students and staff is our highest priority," said the administration of Maine Regional School Unit 21, based in Kennebunk, in a statement.

All six New England states were under National Weather Service winter weather advisories, and the service issued several hazardous weather outlook statements for northern areas that could be hit with winter storms in the coming days. The possibility of heavy rain followed by dropping temperatures could create treacherous driving conditions later in the week, the service said.

Highway authorities in Maine, New Hampshire and Massachusetts reported numerous accidents and vehicle spinouts in those states, though there were no serious injuries reported as of late Wednesday morning. At least five New England airports, including Logan International Airport in Boston, had aircraft being treated with deicing fluid for snow and ice.

In southern Maine, the National Weather Service issued a winter weather advisory despite the potential for only two inches of snow in some areas, said Jerry Combs, meteorologist with the service in Gray, Maine. And more hazardous weather could be on the way, as another system is expected to bring rain Friday night into Saturday, followed by the potential for snow Saturday into Sunday, he said.

The service typically holds off on issuing an advisory unless there is the potential for four inches of snow, but other kinds of messy weather necessitated it on Wednesday, Combs said.

"That was for the freezing rain and sleet and snow mixture," he said. "That makes the road conditions that much worse."

## Wall Street's strong start to the year slows

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Wall Street's strong start to the year slowed on Wednesday.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.3% from its latest all-time high for its first loss in four days. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 466 points, or 0.9%, from its own record set the day before, while the Nasdaq composite added 0.2%.

Some of the market's sharpest drops hit industries that President Donald Trump targeted with criticism on his social media network. Homebuilders fell sharply, for example, after Trump suggested moves to prevent large institutional investors from buying single-family homes, in hopes of making it more affordable for people to buy houses.

The potential removal from the market of some buyers for homes sent D.R. Horton down 3.6% and PulteGroup 3.2% lower. Blackstone, a large investment company, briefly fell more than 9%, before paring its loss to 5.6%.

Moves across the rest of the U.S. stock market were more modest, including for Warner Bros. Discovery after it again rejected a buyout bid from Paramount and told its shareholders to stick with a rival offer from Netflix.

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Warner Bros. Discovery rose 0.4%, while Paramount Skydance fell 1% and Netflix added 0.1%.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 23.89 points to 6,920.93. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 466.00 to 48,996.08, and the Nasdaq composite rose 37.10 to 23,584.27.

In the oil market, crude prices fell after Trump said that Venezuela would provide 30 million to 50 million barrels of oil to the United States. A barrel of benchmark U.S. crude dropped 2% to \$55.99. Brent crude, the international standard, fell a more modest 1.2% to settle at \$59.96 per barrel.

Any additional oil flowing from Venezuela would push down on crude prices by increasing their supplies. Prices for oil have swung this week following Trump's weekend ouster of the president of Venezuela, which is likely sitting on some of the largest deposits of petroleum in the world.

Oil prices had already fallen back to where they were in 2021, before Trump's move against Venezuela, because of expectations for plentiful supplies. To pull much more oil from Venezuela's ground would likely require big investments to improve aging infrastructure.

In the bond market, Treasury yields swung following several mixed reports on the U.S. economy. One of the most impactful said that growth for U.S. retailers, finance companies and other businesses in the services sector accelerated by more last month than economists expected.

Not only that, the report from the Institute for Supply Management also said that a measure of inflation eased to its lowest level since March.

To be sure, company executives are still saying they're feeling pressures from inflation and an uncertain economy. "In general, business is flat," one business in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry told the ISM. "Value brands are still experiencing higher demand. But premium brands struggle to maintain market share."

But any improvements will nevertheless sound good to officials at the Federal Reserve, who are trying to shore up the job market while pushing down on inflation, which has stubbornly remained above the Fed's 2% target.

Separate reports Thursday on the job market offered a mixed view. One said that employers cut back on the number of job openings they were advertising, while a second suggested that employers outside of the government added 41,000 more jobs last month than they cut.

A much more comprehensive look at the U.S. job market will arrive on Friday from the U.S. Labor Department.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.14% from 4.18% late Tuesday following the economic reports. But the two-year yield, which more closely tracks expectations for what the Fed will do, was steadier. It held at 3.47%, where it was late Tuesday.

The hope on Wall Street is that the economy remains solid enough to avoid a recession but not so strong that it keeps the Fed from cutting interest rates. The Fed cut its main interest rate three times last year to shore up the slowing job market, but it's indicated fewer cuts may be ahead because inflation remains high.

Traders are betting on a less than 12% chance that the Fed will cut interest rates at its next meeting later this month. That's down slightly from the day before, according to data from CME Group.

In stock markets abroad, indexes were mixed among some sharp moves across Europe and Asia.

Indexes dropped 0.7% in London, 0.9% in Hong Kong and 1.1% in Tokyo, while rising 0.6% in Seoul.

## **New dietary guidelines urge Americans to avoid processed foods and added sugar**

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Americans should eat more whole foods and protein, fewer highly processed foods and less added sugar, according to the latest edition of federal nutrition advice released Wednesday by the Trump administration.

Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins issued the 2025-2030 U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which offer updated recommendations for a healthy diet and provide the foundation for federal nutrition programs and policies. They come as Kennedy has for months stressed overhauling the U.S. food supply as part of his Make America Healthy Again agenda.

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"My message is clear: Eat real food," Kennedy said at a White House briefing.

The guidelines emphasize consumption of fresh vegetables, whole grains and dairy products, long advised as part of a healthy eating plan. Officials released a new graphic depicting an inverted version of the long-abandoned food pyramid, with protein, dairy, healthy fats and fruits and vegetables at the top and whole grains at the bottom.

But they also take a new stance on "highly processed" foods, and refined carbohydrates, urging consumers to avoid "packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat or other foods that are salty or sweet, such as chips, cookies and candy." That's a different term for ultraprocessed foods, the tasty, energy-dense products that make up more than half the calories in the U.S. diet and have been linked to chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity.

The new guidance backs away from revoking long-standing advice to limit saturated fats, despite signals from Kennedy and Food and Drug Commissioner Marty Makary that the administration would push for more consumption of animal fats to end the "war" on saturated fats.

Instead, the document suggests that Americans should choose whole-food sources of saturated fat — such as meat, whole-fat dairy or avocados — while continuing to limit saturated fat consumption to no more than 10% of daily calories. The guidance says "other options can include butter or beef tallow," despite previous recommendations to avoid those fats.

Guidelines were due for an update

The dietary guidelines, required by law to be updated every five years, provide a template for a healthy diet. But in a country where more than half of adults have a diet-related chronic disease, few Americans actually follow the guidance, research shows.

The new recommendations drew praise from some prominent nutrition and medical experts.

"There should be broad agreement that eating more whole foods and reducing highly processed carbohydrates is a major advance in how we approach diet and health," said Dr. David Kessler, a former FDA commissioner who has written books about diet and nutrition and has sent a petition to the FDA to remove key ingredients in ultraprocessed foods.

"The guidelines affirm that food is medicine and offer clear direction patients and physicians can use to improve health," said Dr. Bobby Mukkamala, president of the American Medical Association.

Other experts were relieved that the guidelines didn't go against decades of nutrition evidence linking saturated fat to heart disease, but they were critical of the guidelines' focus on meat and dairy as a primary source of protein instead of plant-based sources.

"Overall, if people eat the way these are recommended, they will be eating more calories, not less," said Marion Nestle, a nutritionist and food policy expert who advised previous editions of the guidance.

The new document is just 10 pages, upholding Kennedy's pledge to create a simple, understandable guideline. Previous editions of the dietary guidelines have grown over the years, from a 19-page pamphlet in 1980 to the 164-page document issued in 2020, which included a four-page executive summary.

The guidance will have the most profound effect on the federally funded National School Lunch Program, which is required to follow the guidelines to feed nearly 30 million U.S. children on a typical school day.

The Agriculture Department will have to translate the recommendations into specific requirements for school meals, a process that can take years, said Diane Pratt-Heavner, spokesperson for the School Nutrition Association. The latest school nutrition standards were proposed in 2023 but won't be fully implemented until 2027, she noted.

Science advisers didn't make ultraprocessed food recommendations

The new guidelines largely rejected the advice of a 20-member panel of nutrition experts convened by the Biden administration, who met for nearly two years to review the latest scientific evidence on diet and health. Kennedy had criticized the expertise of the panel members and suggested that they had ties to the food industry that influenced their advice.

Instead, the new guidance relied on a new set of experts revealed Wednesday in supporting documents. Of the 10 experts who led the new scientific review under Kennedy, five reported financial ties to beef, pork or dairy industries or to makers of infant formula or supplements.

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The new group rejected more than half the recommendations of the previous panel, the documents showed.

That previous panel didn't make recommendations about ultraprocessed food. Although a host of studies have shown links between ultraprocessed foods and poor health outcomes, the nutrition experts had concerns with the quality of the research and the certainty that those foods, and not other factors, were causing the problems.

The recommendations on highly processed foods drew cautiously positive reactions. The FDA and the Agriculture Department are already working on a definition of ultraprocessed foods, but it's expected to take time.

Not all highly processed foods are unhealthy, said Dr. David Ludwig, an endocrinologist and researcher at Boston Children's Hospital.

"I think the focus should be on highly processed carbohydrates," he said, noting that processing of protein or fats can be benign or even helpful.

More protein recommended

The guidelines made a few other notable changes, including a call to potentially double protein consumption.

The previous recommended dietary allowance called for 0.8 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight — about 54 grams daily for a 150-pound person. The new recommendation is 1.2 to 1.6 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight. An average American man consumes about 100 grams of protein per day, or about twice the previously recommended limit.

Makary said the new advice supersedes protein guidance that was based on the "bare minimum" required for health.

Ludwig also noted that the earlier recommendation was the minimum amount needed to prevent protein deficiency and said higher amounts of protein might be beneficial.

"A moderate increase in protein to help displace the processed carbohydrates makes sense," he said.

Officials with the American Heart Association, however, called for more research on protein consumption and the best sources for optimal health.

"Pending that research, we encourage consumers to prioritize plant-based proteins, seafood and lean meats and to limit high-fat animal products including red meat, butter, lard and tallow, which are linked to increased cardiovascular risk," the group said in a statement.

Avoid added sugars

The guidelines advise avoiding or sharply limiting added sugars or non-nutritive sweeteners, saying "no amount" is considered part of a healthy diet.

No one meal should contain more than 10 grams of added sugars, or about 2 teaspoons, the new guidelines say.

Previous federal guidelines recommended limiting added sugars to less than 10% of daily calories for people older than 2, but to aim for less. That's about 12 teaspoons a day in a 2,000-calorie daily diet. Children younger than 2 should have no added sugars at all, the older guidance said.

In general, most Americans consume about 17 teaspoons of added sugars per day, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Alcohol limits removed

The new guidelines roll back previous recommendations to limit alcohol to one drink or less per day for women and two drinks or less per day for men.

Instead, the guidance advises Americans to "consume less alcohol for better health." They also say that alcohol should be avoided by pregnant women, people recovering from alcohol use disorder and those who are unable to control the amount they drink.

## **A man and his old dog are home at last after fleeing LA area fires**

By ALEX VEIGA Associated Press

ALTADENA, Calif. (AP) — It is a sight Ted Koerner feared he might never see again after his house burned down: His treasured golden retriever, Daisy Mae, playing in his backyard, under the shade of his 175-year-old Heritage Oak.

A year ago, as the wind-swept Eaton Fire moved in, Koerner fled with then 12-year-old Daisy Mae, grabbing a couple pairs of sweats, long-sleeved shirts, a pillow and two pictures of the dog. He drove away as the flames were at the end of his street in Altadena.

Koerner and Daisy Mae spent the first weeks in a hotel with hundreds of others after the Eaton and Palisades fires destroyed thousands of homes and killed 31 people. They went on walks, the hardened ash crunching beneath his feet and her paws.

“Those first few weeks were beyond devastating,” he said.

His biggest fear was losing Daisy Mae before he could get through a daunting and costly rebuilding process. Koerner has lived alone with the 75-pound, snow white dog for 12 years. He takes her with him to restaurants — even five-star steakhouses — without a leash.

For nearly a year, Koerner raced against time to rebuild his home. He liquidated most of his retirement holdings so he could afford to hire contractors quickly while he waited for his mortgage servicing company to release his insurance payout.

He gave the builder enough money “to build at record speed, because I need to get home with my dog before she passes,” he recalled telling his mortgage servicing company early on. “Because if she passes, I don’t want to come here. And this is a very, very, very special dog.”

The first time Koerner brought Daisy Mae after construction started, the house was framed, with a roof and openings for windows and doors.

“She walked right over to where the front door was supposed to be, went right in the house, walked around the house, walked over to what was the master bedroom sliding door, which was a great big opening, just like it would have been, and sat down and got a big smile on her face and went, ‘OK, the house is still here,’” he said.

Shortly before Thanksgiving, his home was among the first to be rebuilt of the thousands destroyed in the Los Angeles area wildfires a year ago. Construction took just over four months.

“I went into the house and cried a lot,” Koerner said. “It still has that effect. I’m actually home with my dog.”

## **‘One Battle After Another’ dominates SAG’s Actor Awards with 7 nominations**

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

“One Battle After Another” dominated nominations to the Actor Awards on Wednesday, with Paul Thomas Anderson’s ragtag revolutionary saga landing a record seven nods in the annual SAG-AFTRA honors.

In the 31 years of the Actor Awards, formerly known as the Screen Actors Guild Awards, no movie has received more than five nominations. Along with a nod for the guild’s top award, best ensemble, the cast of “One Battle After Another” was showered with nominations for Leonardo DiCaprio, Chase Infiniti, Teyana Taylor, Sean Penn, Benicio Del Toro and its stunt performers.

The four other nominees for best ensemble are: “Sinners,” “Hamnet,” “Marty Supreme” and “Frankenstein.” Usually, to win best picture at the Oscars, a movie needs a SAG ensemble nomination. Only four films in the last three decades have managed the feat without that. Among the films that missed the cut this year were “Sentimental Value,” “Wicked: For Good” and “Train Dreams.”

“Sinners” had an especially good result. Along with a best male actor nod for Michael B. Jordan, supporting actors Miles Caton and Wunmi Mosaku were both nominated. It collected five nominations in total. In television, Apple’s “The Studio,” HBO’s “White Lotus” and Netflix’s “Adolescence” lead the nominees. Historically, the Actor Awards have been one of the strongest Oscar indicators. Actors make up the

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largest branch of the film academy, and, in the past, individual SAG nominees have overlapped with the Oscar field at a rate of roughly four out of five. The Actor Awards are presented by the Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

That means the nominees Wednesday may closely resemble those headed to the Oscars. They are:

Best male actor: DiCaprio, Timothée Chalamet ("Marty Supreme"), Michael B. Jordan ("Sinners"), Ethan Hawke ("Blue Moon") and Jesse Plemons ("Bugonia"). The only surprise of that group was Plemons. The favorite remains the 30-year-old Chalamet who won the same award last year for "A Complete Unknown" and vowed to pursue "greatness" in his acceptance speech.

Best female actor: Infiniti, Jessie Buckley ("Hamnet"), Rose Byrne ("If I Had Legs I'd Kick You"), Kate Hudson ("Song Sung Blue") and Emma Stone ("Bugonia").

In the supporting male actor category, the nominees are: Del Toro, Penn, Caton, Jacob Elordi ("Frankenstein") and Paul Mescal ("Hamnet").

The nominees for best supporting female actor are: Taylor, Mosaku, Ariana Grande ("Wicked: For Good"), Amy Madigan ("Weapons") and Odessa A'zion ("Marty Supreme"). The biggest surprise in that category was the 25-year-old A'zion.

Snubbed altogether was Joachim Trier's acclaimed Norwegian drama "Sentimental Value." Both Renate Reinsve, in lead female actor, and Stellan Skarsgård, for supporting male actor, have been viewed as shoo-ins. Many analysts have even considered Skarsgård the favorite to win. With more than 122,000 voting members, the actors guild has tended to skew more populist and the guild often shies away from non-English language nominees.

Membership in the academy, meanwhile, has grown increasingly international. Along with "Sentimental Value," movies like the Iranian revenge drama "It Was Just an Accident" and the Brazilian political thriller "The Secret Agent" should have greater success come Oscar nominations on Jan. 22.

There have been some prominent differences between SAG and the Oscars. Last year, Chalamet won best male actor but lost to Adrien Brody ("The Brutalist") at the Oscars. The papal drama "Conclave" took best ensemble, but Sean Baker's "Anora" won best picture at the Academy Awards.

On the television side, the leader in comedy was "The Studio," which scored nods for its ensemble, Seth Rogen, Kathryn Hahn, Catherine O'Hara and Ike Barinholtz. The top drama was "The White Lotus," which collected four nominations including best ensemble and nods for Parker Posey, Walton Goggins and Aimee Lee Wood. The limited series "Adolescence" also landed four nominations, for Owen Cooper, Stephen Graham, Erin Doherty and Christine Tremarco.

The Actor Awards will take place Sunday, March 1, at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. Netflix will stream the ceremony live. Harrison Ford will be presented with the guild's life achievement award.

## Warner Bros rejects Paramount takeover again and tells shareholders to stick with Netflix bid

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS and MICHELLE CHAPMAN undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Warner Bros. again rejected a takeover bid from Paramount and told shareholders Wednesday to stick with a rival offer from Netflix.

Warner's leadership has repeatedly rebuffed Skydance-owned Paramount's overtures — and urged shareholders just weeks ago to back the sale of its streaming and studio business to Netflix for \$72 billion. Paramount, meanwhile, has made efforts to sweeten its \$77.9 billion hostile offer for the entire company.

Warner Bros. Discovery said Wednesday that its board determined Paramount's offer is not in the best interests of the company or its shareholders. It again recommended shareholders support the Netflix deal.

"Paramount's offer continues to provide insufficient value, including terms such as an extraordinary amount of debt financing that create risks to close and lack of protections for our shareholders if a transaction is not completed," Warner Bros. Discovery Chair Samuel Di Piazza Jr. said in a statement. In contrast, he added, the company's agreement with Netflix "will offer superior value at greater levels of certainty."

Paramount did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The company's hostile bid is still on

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the table. Warner shareholders currently have until Jan. 21 to “tender” their shares.

Late last month, Paramount announced an “irrevocable personal guarantee” from Oracle founder Larry Ellison — who is the father of Paramount CEO David Ellison — to back \$40.4 billion in equity financing for the company’s offer. Paramount also increased its promised payout to shareholders to \$5.8 billion if the deal is blocked by regulators, matching Netflix’s breakup fee.

In its Wednesday letter to shareholders, Warner expressed concerns about a potential deal with Paramount. Warner said it essentially considers the offer a leveraged buyout, which includes a lot of debt, and also pointed to operating restrictions that it said were imposed by Paramount’s offer and could “hamper WBD’s ability to perform” throughout a transaction.

The battle for Warner and the value of each offer grows complicated because Netflix and Paramount want different things. Netflix’s proposed acquisition includes only Warner’s studio and streaming business, including its legacy TV and movie production arms and platforms like HBO Max. But Paramount wants the entire company — which, beyond studio and streaming, includes networks like CNN and Discovery.

If Netflix is successful, Warner’s news and cable operations would be spun off into their own company, under a previously-announced separation.

A merger with either company could take over a year to close — and will attract tremendous antitrust scrutiny along the way. Due to its size and potential impact, it will almost certainly trigger a review by the U.S. Justice Department, which could sue to block the transaction or request changes. Other countries and regulators overseas may also challenge the merger. And politics are expected to come into play under President Donald Trump, who has made unprecedented suggestions about his personal involvement on whether a deal will go through.

Trade groups across the entertainment industry have continued to sound the alarm about both deals.

In a statement addressed to a Congressional antitrust subcommittee on Wednesday, Cinema United — which represents more than 60,000 movie screens worldwide — reiterated it was “deeply concerned” that Netflix’s acquisition could harm both moviegoers and people who work in theaters, pointing to the streaming giant’s past reliance on its online platform. The group said its concerns were “no less serious” for Paramount’s bid — warning of consequences of further consolidation overall, which it said could result in job losses and less diversity in filmmaking.

## Trump leaves Venezuela’s opposition sidelined and Maduro’s party in power

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela’s opposition supporters have long hoped for the day when Nicolás Maduro is no longer in power — a dream that was fulfilled when the U.S. military whisked the authoritarian leader away. But while Maduro is in jail in New York on drug trafficking charges, the leaders of his repressive administration remain in charge.

The nation’s opposition — backed by consecutive Republican and Democratic administrations in the U.S. — for years vowed to immediately replace Maduro with one of their own and restore democracy to the oil-rich country. But U.S. President Donald Trump delivered them a heavy blow by allowing Maduro’s vice president, Delcy Rodríguez, to assume control.

Meanwhile, most opposition leaders, including Nobel Peace Prize winner María Corina Machado, are in exile or prison.

“They were clearly unimpressed by the sort of ethereal magical realism of the opposition, about how if they just gave Maduro a push, it would just be this instant move toward democracy,” David Smilde, a Tulane University professor who has studied Venezuela for three decades, said of the Trump administration.

The U.S. seized Maduro and first lady Cilia Flores in a military operation Saturday, removing them both from their home on a military base in Venezuela’s capital, Caracas. Hours later, Trump said the U.S. would “run” Venezuela and expressed skepticism that Machado could ever be its leader.

“She doesn’t have the support within, or the respect within, the country,” Trump told reporters. “She’s

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a very nice woman, but she doesn't have the respect."

Ironically, Machado's unending praise for the American president, including dedicating her Nobel Peace Prize to Trump and her backing of U.S. campaigns to deport Venezuelan migrants and attack alleged drug traffickers in international waters, has lost her some support at home.

The rightful winner of Venezuela's presidential election

Machado rose to become Maduro's strongest opponent in recent years, but his government barred her from running for office to prevent her from challenging — and likely beating — him in the 2024 presidential election. She chose retired ambassador Edmundo González Urrutia to represent her on the ballot.

Officials loyal to the ruling party declared Maduro the winner mere hours after the polls closed, but Machado's well-organized campaign stunned the nation by collecting detailed tally sheets showing González had defeated Maduro by a 2-to-1 margin.

The U.S. and other nations recognized González as the legitimate winner.

However, Venezuelans identify Machado, not González, as the winner, and the charismatic opposition leader has remained the voice of the campaign, pushing for international support and insisting her movement will replace Maduro.

In her first televised interview since Maduro's capture, Machado effusively praised Trump and failed to acknowledge his snub of her opposition movement in the latest transition of power.

"I spoke with President Trump on Oct. 10, the same day the prize was announced, not since then," she told Fox News on Monday. "What he has done as I said is historic, and it's a huge step toward a democratic transition."

Hopes for a new election

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Sunday seemed to walk back Trump's assertion that the U.S. would "run" Venezuela. In interviews, Rubio insisted that Washington will use control of Venezuela's oil industry to force policy changes, and called its current government illegitimate. The country is home to the world's largest proven crude oil reserves.

Neither Trump nor Rodríguez has said when, or if, elections might take place in Venezuela.

Venezuela's constitution requires an election within 30 days whenever a president becomes "permanently unavailable" to serve. Reasons listed include death, resignation, removal from office or "abandonment" of duties as declared by the National Assembly. That electoral timeline was rigorously followed when Maduro's predecessor, Hugo Chávez, died of cancer in 2013.

On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a close Trump ally who traveled with the president on Air Force One on Sunday, said he believes an election will happen but did not specify when or how.

"We're going to build the country up — infrastructure wise — crescendoing with an election that will be free," the South Carolina Republican told reporters.

But Maduro loyalists in the high court Saturday, citing another provision of the constitution, declared Maduro's absence "temporary" meaning there is no election requirement. Instead, the vice president — which is not an elected position — takes over for up to 90 days, with a provision to extend to six months if approved by the National Assembly, which is controlled by the ruling party.

Challenges lie ahead for the opposition

In its ruling, Venezuela's Supreme Court made no mention of the 180-day limit, leading to speculation that Rodríguez could try to cling to power as she seeks to unite ruling party factions and shield it from what would certainly be a stiff electoral challenge.

Machado on Monday criticized Rodríguez as "one of the main architects of torture, persecution, corruption, narco-trafficking ... certainly not an individual that can be trusted by international investors."

Even if an election takes place, Machado and González would first have to find a way back into Venezuela.

González has been in exile in Spain since September 2024 and Machado left Venezuela last month when she appeared in public for the first time in 11 months to receive her Nobel Prize in Norway.

Ronal Rodríguez, a researcher at the Venezuela Observatory in Colombia's Universidad del Rosario, said the Trump administration's decision to work with Rodríguez could harm the nation's "democratic spirit."

"What the opposition did in the 2024 election was to unite with a desire to transform the situation in

Venezuela through democratic means, and that is embodied by María Corina Machado and, obviously, Edmundo González Urrutia," he said. "To disregard that is to belittle, almost to humiliate, Venezuelans."

## US military action in Venezuela is seen as both a blessing and a curse for Russia's Putin

By The Associated Press undefined

The lightning U.S. operation to capture Venezuelan leader Nicolas Maduro can be seen as both a benefit and a burden for Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose forces botched an attempt to capture Ukraine's capital and topple its leader at the start of Moscow's invasion nearly four years ago.

The ouster of Maduro highlights another Kremlin failure to support an ally, following the downfall of Syria's former President Bashar Assad in 2024 and last year's U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran. With the U.S. determined to establish control over Venezuela, Russia stands to lose a strategic foothold in the Western Hemisphere, along with billions of dollars invested in its oil industry.

But President Donald Trump's actions in Venezuela also are causing unease in Western nations and giving the Kremlin fresh talking points to defend its war in Ukraine.

In addition, Trump's interest in wresting control of Greenland from NATO ally Denmark also threatens to destabilize the alliance at the moment when the U.S.-led efforts to broker peace in Ukraine enter a pivotal stage, distracting its members from their efforts to support Kyiv and provide it with security guarantees.

Putin himself hasn't commented on the U.S. actions in Venezuela, which his diplomats have denounced as a blatant act of aggression. Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's former president who serves as his deputy on the presidential Security Council, similarly rebuked Washington for trampling international law — but also complimented Trump on defending U.S. interests.

"Even though Trump's action is completely unlawful, he cannot be denied a certain consistency -- he and his team are very aggressively upholding their country's national interests," Medvedev said.

On Wednesday, the U.S. said it seized two sanctioned oil tankers linked to Venezuela, including one flagged to Russia in the North Atlantic.

Moscow's 'spheres of influence'

Since 2014's illegal annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula that followed the ouster of a pro-Kremlin president in Kyiv, Putin has sought to justify his action by describing his neighbor as part of Russia's sphere of influence where Western encroachment can't be allowed.

Putin has argued that just as the U.S. would bristle at any foreign military presence in the Western Hemisphere, Russia sees NATO's expansion to its borders as a major security threat. He cited Ukraine's bid to join the military alliance as a key reason behind his full-scale invasion of the country.

"We have made it clear and unambiguous that further eastward expansion of NATO is unacceptable," Putin said shortly before sending troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. "Are we the ones placing missiles near the U.S. borders? No, it's the U.S. that has brought its missiles to our doorstep."

Long before the invasion, Russia tested the ground on a possible deal under which it would refrain from meddling in Latin America in exchange for the U.S. offering Moscow free rein in Europe.

Fiona Hill, who oversaw Russia and Europe on Trump's National Security Council during his first term, testified before Congress in 2019 that the Russians were signaling their willingness to make such an arrangement involving Venezuela and Ukraine.

Russia never made a formal offer, Hill told The Associated Press in an interview, but Moscow's then-ambassador to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, "hinted ... many times" to her that Russia could cede its influence in Venezuela to the U.S. in exchange for a sphere of influence in Europe.

She said Trump's administration wasn't interested in the Russian overtures that she described as a "hint-hint, nudge-nudge, wink-wink, how-about-doing-a-deal" offer. In April 2019, Hill was sent to Moscow to convey the message that "nobody's interested. ... Ukraine and Venezuela are not related to each other."

Hill said she did not know if the winds have now changed and whether there was any deal between the U.S. and Russia to swap spheres of influence in Venezuela and Ukraine, but she noted that many officials,

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including herself, who were involved in “restraining” Trump in his first term aren’t around for his second. She argued that U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio would likely be the only member of the Trump administration who would now resist such a proposal, but added that others, including Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, could have a different view.

“Who knows what Witkoff and others have been chatting about recently?” Hill asked.

Before Maduro was captured, AP reported Russia had started evacuating families of diplomats from Venezuela. When asked about the move, Hill said it would not be “implausible” that Witkoff gave Moscow a “courtesy heads-up.”

Sam Greene, a Russia expert at King’s College London, observed that Moscow may have backed down on Venezuela in the expectation of the U.S. giving it a free hand on Ukraine.

“My worry is that it may be part of a tacit agreement, by which Washington, Moscow and Beijing agree not to deter one another against interventions in their putative spheres of influence,” he wrote on X.

Russia’s foothold in Western Hemisphere

Before the invasion of Ukraine, senior Russian officials had issued vague warnings that Moscow could deploy troops or military assets to Cuba and Venezuela — statements that the U.S. dismissed as bluster. Some drew parallels to the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis — when the Soviet Union deployed missiles to Cuba and the U.S. imposed a naval blockade of the island.

Russian-Cuban ties withered after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, plunging Cuba into a grueling depression. Soon after his first election in 2000, Putin ordered the closure of a Soviet-built military surveillance facility in Cuba as he sought to improve ties with Washington. As tensions with the U.S. and its allies mounted, however, Moscow again intensified trade and other contacts with Cuba and sent warships to visit the island.

Russia also has invested heavily in Venezuela’s oil industry, as did China, and offered Caracas generous loans to purchase top-of-the-line air defense missiles, fighter jets and other weapons. On several occasions, most recently in 2018, it dispatched its nuclear-capable Tu-160 bombers to Venezuela in a projection of force.

Military experts have said, however, that any attempt by Russia to establish a permanent military foothold in the Western Hemisphere would face overwhelming logistical challenges.

The ‘might-makes-right’ doctrine

The U.S. seizure of Maduro and his wife was seen worldwide as the return of the “might- makes-right” doctrine, backing Moscow’s argument that its action in Ukraine protects its vital interests the way the U.S. did in Venezuela.

After its action in Venezuela, the U.S. has “nothing to formally reproach our country for,” Medvedev noted.

Hill noted that Maduro’s capture makes it harder for countries to condemn Russia’s action in Ukraine because “we’ve just had a situation where the U.S. has taken over — or at least decapitated the government of another country — using fiction.”

An indictment accuses Maduro and others of working with drug cartels to facilitate the shipment of thousands of tons of cocaine into the U.S.

Fyodor Lukyanov, a Kremlin-connected, Moscow-based foreign policy expert, observed that “if we consider what’s happening from the perspective of setting a precedent, then we couldn’t ask for anything better, and this includes Trump’s conviction that the authorities in Venezuela must be approved by Washington.”

Russian hawks, meanwhile, argue the U.S. action in Venezuela has created a new sense of urgency for Moscow to dramatically speed up its offensive in Ukraine.

“Ukraine under our full control is our pass to the Great Powers club,” Alexander Dugin, a hard-line nationalist ideologue, wrote in a commentary.

## Iran army chief threatens preemptive attack over 'rhetoric' targeting country after Trump's comments

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's army chief threatened preemptive military action Wednesday over the "rhetoric" targeting the Islamic Republic, likely referring to U.S. President Donald Trump's warning that if Tehran "violently kills peaceful protesters," the United States "will come to their rescue."

The comments by Maj. Gen. Amir Hatami come as Iran tries to respond to what it sees as a dual threat posed by Israel and the United States, as well as the protests sparked by its economic woes that have grown into a direct challenge to its theocracy.

Seeking to halt the anger, Iran's government began Wednesday paying the equivalent of \$7 a month to subsidize rising costs for dinner table essentials like rice, meat and pastas. Shopkeepers warn prices for items as basic as cooking oil likely will triple under pressure from the collapse of Iran's rial currency and the end of a preferential subsidized dollar-rial exchange rate for importers and manufacturers — likely fueling further popular anger.

"More than a week of protests in Iran reflects not only worsening economic conditions, but longstanding anger at government repression and regime policies that have led to Iran's global isolation," the New York-based Soufan Center think tank said.

### Army chief's threat

Hatami spoke to military academy students. He took over as commander in chief of Iran's army, known by the Farsi word "Artesh," after Israel killed a number of the country's top military commanders in June's 12-day war. He is the first regular military officer in decades to hold a position long controlled by Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard.

"The Islamic Republic considers the intensification of such rhetoric against the Iranian nation as a threat and will not leave its continuation without a response," Hatami said, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

He added, "I can say with confidence that today the readiness of Iran's armed forces is far greater than before the war. If the enemy commits an error, it will face a more decisive response, and we will cut off the hand of any aggressor."

Iranian officials, including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have been responding to Trump's comments, which took on more significance after the U.S. military raid that seized Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, a longtime ally of Tehran, over the weekend. But there's been no immediate public sign of Iran preparing for an attack in the region.

### New subsidy payment begins

Iranian state television reported on the start of a new subsidy of the equivalent of \$7, put into the bank accounts of heads of households across the country. More than 71 million people will receive the benefit, which is 10 million Iranian rials, it reported. The rial now trades at over 1.4 million to \$1 and continues to depreciate.

The subsidy is more than double than the 4.5 million rial people previously received. But already, Iranian media report sharp rises in the cost of basic goods, including cooking oil, poultry and cheese, placing additional strain on households already burdened by international sanctions targeting the country and inflation.

Iran's vice president in charge of executive affairs, Mohammad Jafar Ghaempanah, told reporters on Wednesday that the country was in a "full-fledged economic war." He called for "economic surgery" to eliminate rentier policies and corruption within the country.

### More protests

Iran has faced rounds of nationwide protests in recent years. As sanctions tightened and Iran struggled after the June war with Israel, its rial currency sharply fell in December. Protests began soon after on Dec. 28. They reached their 11th day on Wednesday and didn't appear to be stopping.

Social media videos purported to show new cities like Bojnourd, Kerman, Rasht, Shiraz and Tabriz, as well as some smaller towns, joining the demonstrations on Wednesday.

The U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency offered the latest death toll of 36 for the demonstrations. It said 30 protesters, four children and two members of Iran's security forces have been killed. Demonstrations have reached over 310 locations in 28 of Iran's 31 provinces. More than 2,100 people have been arrested, it said.

The group, which relies on an activist network inside of Iran for its reporting, has been accurate in past unrest.

## China announces another new trade measure against Japan as tensions rise

By SIMINA MISTREANU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China escalated its trade tensions with Japan on Wednesday by launching an investigation into imported dichlorosilane, a chemical gas used in making semiconductors, a day after it imposed curbs on the export of so-called dual-use goods that could be used by Japan's military.

The Chinese Commerce Ministry said in a statement that it had launched the investigation following an application from the domestic industry showing the price of dichlorosilane imported from Japan had decreased 31% between 2022 and 2024.

"The dumping of imported products from Japan has damaged the production and operation of our domestic industry," the ministry said.

The measure comes a day after Beijing banned exports to Japan of dual-use goods that can have military applications.

Beijing has been showing mounting displeasure with Tokyo after new Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggested late last year that her nation's military could intervene if China were to take action against Taiwan — an island democracy that Beijing considers its own territory.

Tensions were stoked again on Tuesday when Japanese lawmaker Hei Seki, who last year was sanctioned by China for "spreading fallacies" about Taiwan and other disputed territories, visited Taiwan and called it an independent country. Also known as Yo Kitano, he has been banned from entering China. He told reporters that his arrival in Taiwan demonstrated the two are "different countries."

"I came to Taiwan ... to prove this point, and to tell the world that Taiwan is an independent country," Hei Seki said, according to Taiwan's Central News Agency.

"The nasty words of a petty villain like him are not worth commenting on," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning retorted when asked about his comment.

### Fears of a rare earths curb

Masaaki Kanai, head of Asia Oceanian Affairs at Japan's Foreign Ministry, urged China to scrap the trade curbs, saying a measure exclusively targeting Japan that deviates from international practice is unacceptable. Japan, however, has yet to announce any retaliatory measures.

As the two countries feuded, speculation rose that China might target rare earths exports to Japan, in a move similar to the rounds of critical minerals export restrictions it has imposed as part of its trade war with the United States.

China controls most of the global production of heavy rare earths, used for making powerful, heat-resistant magnets used in industries such as defense and electric vehicles.

While the Commerce Ministry did not mention any new rare earths curbs, the official newspaper China Daily, seen as a government mouthpiece, quoted anonymous sources saying Beijing was considering tightening exports of certain rare earths to Japan. That report could not be independently confirmed.

### Improved South Korean ties contrast with Japan row

As Beijing spars with Tokyo, it has made a point of courting a different East Asian power — South Korea.

On Wednesday, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung wrapped up a four-day trip to China — his first since taking office in June. Lee and Chinese President Xi Jinping oversaw the signing of cooperation agreements in areas such as technology, trade, transportation and environmental protection.

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As if to illustrate a contrast with the China-Japan trade frictions, Lee joined two business events at which major South Korean and Chinese companies pledged to collaborate.

The two sides signed 24 export contracts worth a combined \$44 million, according to South Korea's Ministry of Trade, Industry and Resources.

During Lee's visit, Chinese media also reported that South Korea overtook Japan as the leading destination for outbound flights from China's mainland over the New Year's holiday.

China has been discouraging travel to Japan, saying Japanese leaders' comments on Taiwan have created "significant risks to the personal safety and lives of Chinese citizens in Japan."

## Today in History: January 8 Lyndon Johnson declares 'war on poverty'

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Thursday, Jan. 8, the eighth day of 2026. There are 357 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 8, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, declared an "unconditional war on poverty in America."

Also on this date:

In 1790, President George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address in New York City.

In 1815, the last major engagement of the War of 1812 came to an end as U.S. forces defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans, not having received word of the December signing of a peace treaty.

In 1867, the U.S. House of Representatives joined the Senate in overriding President Andrew Johnson's veto of the District of Columbia Suffrage Act, giving Black men in the nation's capital the right to vote.

In 1998, Ramzi Yousef (RAHM'-zee YOO'-sef), the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was sentenced in New York to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In 2011, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., was shot and critically wounded when a gunman opened fire as the congresswoman met with constituents in Tucson; six people were killed and 12 others were injured. (Gunman Jared Lee Loughner was sentenced in 2012 to seven consecutive life sentences, plus 140 years.)

In 2016, Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman, the world's most-wanted drug lord, was captured for a third time in a daring raid by Mexican marines, six months after walking through a tunnel to freedom from a maximum-security prison.

In 2020, Iran struck back at the United States for killing Iran's top military commander, firing missiles at two Iraqi military bases housing American troops. More than 100 U.S. service members were diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries later. As Iran braced for a counterattack the same day, the country's Revolutionary Guard shot down a Ukrainian jetliner departing Tehran after apparently mistaking it for a missile, killing all 176 people on board.

In 2023, supporters of former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro who refused to accept his election defeat, stormed Congress, the Supreme Court and the presidential palace in the capital of Brasilia, a week after the inauguration of his leftist rival, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.

Today's birthdays: Singer Shirley Bassey is 89. Fashion designer Carolina Herrera is 87. Country-gospel singer Cristy Lane is 86. Rock musician Robby Krieger (The Doors) is 80. Singer Jenny Lewis is 50. Filmmaker and actor Sarah Polley is 47. Actor Gaby Hoffman is 44. Actor Cynthia Erivo is 39. Actor Drew Scheid is 28.