

Groton Daily Independent

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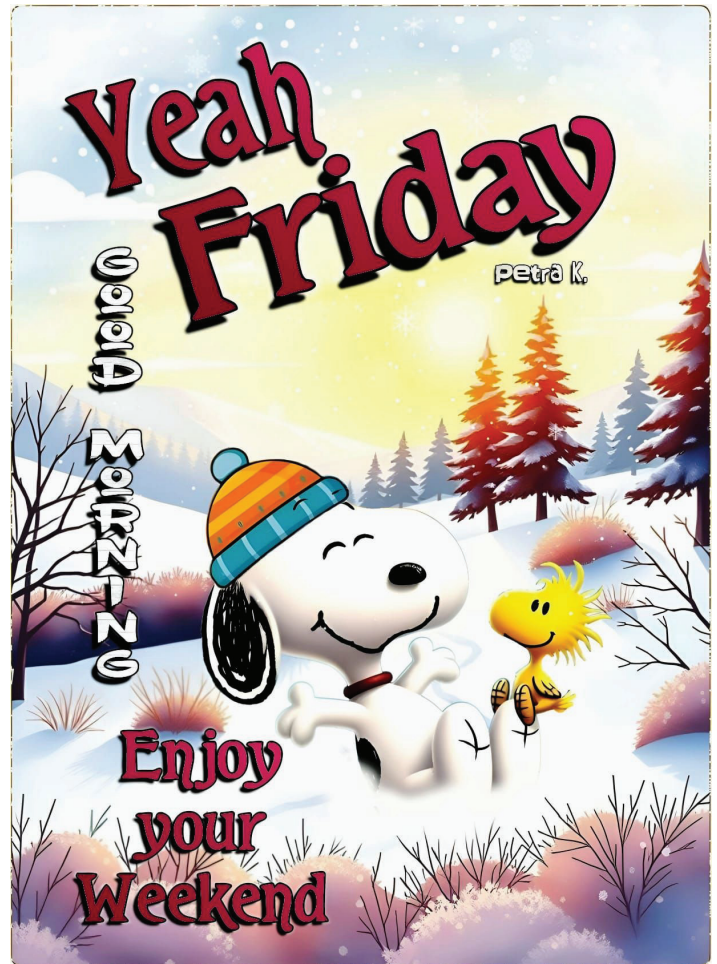
School Breakfast: Cereal.
School Lunch: French bread pizza, corn.
Boys Wrestling at Philip Invitational, 10 a.m.
Girls Wrestling at Harrisburg Invitational, 4 p.m.
JH BBB at Milbank (7th at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m.)

Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026

Boys Wrestling at Battler Invitational (Gettysburg), 10 a.m.
Boys Basketball: Dakota Valley at Groton: (BC-2, JVB-3:15, VB-4:30)

Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; and at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10:15 a.m.; Choir, 6 p.m.
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee



Hour, 10:30 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.
Groton Soccer Association Clinics, GHS Arena, 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
4th Grade BBB Practice, 1 p.m.
6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.
Dance Team Practice, 5 p.m.

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

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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.

Minneapolis Unrest Escalates

President Donald Trump threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act to end ongoing protests in Minneapolis against federal immigration enforcement. The 1807 law empowers the president to deploy the military domestically under specific circumstances.

Trump's threat came after hours of clashes between at least 200 protesters and law enforcement on the south side of Minneapolis, where a federal agent shot and injured a man Wednesday evening. The man, reportedly a Venezuelan national who entered the US illegally, allegedly assaulted the agent after fleeing a traffic stop. The city police chief has asked Minnesota's criminal investigations bureau to investigate the shooting; federal authorities excluded the state bureau from an inquiry into the fatal shooting of Minneapolis woman Renee Good by federal agents last week.

Minneapolis has received roughly 3,000 federal agents—about five times its police force—in recent weeks as part of the Trump administration's crackdown on illegal immigration and an alleged fraud scheme involving the local Somali population.

Trump Meets Machado

Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado presented President Donald Trump with her Nobel Peace Prize award when she met with him at the White House yesterday. The two did not provide a readout of their conversation.

The meeting comes as the US made its first sale of Venezuelan oil since capturing Nicolás Maduro earlier this month. Details of the sale, reportedly valued at \$500M, were not available as of this writing. Trump hopes to sell 30 million to 50 million barrels of sanctioned oil within months. However, US oil companies have expressed hesitation about reentering the Venezuela market—especially if it means helping lower oil prices to Trump's goal of \$50 per barrel.

Separately, the US seized its sixth sanctioned oil tanker with alleged ties to Venezuela. The ship—known by a variety of names, including the Veronica, the Galileo, and the Pegas—was owned and managed by a company in Russia.

NCAA Betting Scandal

Federal prosecutors have charged 26 people in an alleged multiyear scheme to fix at least 29 basketball games in the US and China, accusing them of manipulating games to generate illegal betting profits.

A 70-page indictment alleges the scheme ran from September 2022 through February 2025, starting with point-shaving in Chinese Basketball Association games before expanding to NCAA Division I men's basketball. Thirty-nine players from 17 teams were linked to the operation, with bribes allegedly ranging from \$10K to \$30K per game and wagers placed through legal US sportsbooks and offshore platforms. Twenty defendants are current or former NCAA men's basketball players, several of whom played during the 2023-24 or 2024-25 seasons, including some who appeared in games this season. The other five are described as fixers.

The charges include bribery in sporting contests, conspiracy to commit wire fraud, and wire fraud. Each fraud charge carries a potential sentence of up to 20 years.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

China's Zhejiang University tops global research institution rankings, dethroning Harvard University, now No. 3; seven other Chinese schools make the top 10 as their research outputs surpass top US schools.

NFL playoffs continue tomorrow, with Buffalo Bills at Denver Broncos at 4:30 pm ET, then San Francisco 49ers at Seattle Seahawks at 8 pm ET.

New York Giants expected to hire ex-Baltimore Ravens coach John Harbaugh.

BTS to release fifth studio album March 20 after nearly four-year hiatus.

Harry Styles announces first studio album in four years, out March 6.

Science & Technology

OpenAI rolls out ChatGPT-powered translation tool for text, voice inputs, and images in over 50 languages; claims to consider tone, idioms, and context.

NASA astronauts return to Earth over a month early in the agency's first medical evacuation from space after one suffers from an undisclosed health problem.

Rare mummified cheetahs found in caves in northern Saudi Arabia reveal at least two subspecies lived in the region before cheetahs went locally extinct, expanding pool of subspecies believed suitable for reintroduction.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close higher (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.6%, Nasdaq +0.3%).

US average 30-year fixed mortgage rate falls to 6.06%, the lowest level in more than three years.

Taiwan to invest at least \$250B in US chipmaking under new trade deal.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. plans to increase capital spending to record of up to \$56B this year, reports 35% rise in net profit in latest quarter.

Amazon battling Saks Global in court after owner of Saks Fifth Avenue filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy this week; Amazon owns \$475M stake in Saks Global.

Politics & World Affairs

US military sends carrier strike group toward the Middle East amid heightened tensions with Iran over deadly protests.

European military personnel arrive in Greenland from Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and the UK amid ongoing US-Danish tensions.

Federal appeals court reverses lower court decision that freed pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil, potentially laying the groundwork for his rearrest.

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Coming Up on
GDILIVE.COM

Groton
Area
Tigers
Groton, SD

GDILIVE



A production of the
Groton Daily Independent



For more info: GDILIVE.COM



**Sat., Jan. 17, 2026 - Dakota Valley
Boys Basketball in Groton
C at 2:00, JV at 3:15, Varsity at 4:30**

Ace of Hearts

Deb Frederickson won \$85 Thursday night at the Ace of Heart drawing at the Groton American Legion. She picked card number five, which was the two of hearts. Ticket sales for the week was \$835. The jackpot is over \$20,000. Next Ace of Heart drawing will be next Thursday. You can purchase your ticket(s) at the Groton American Legion, S & S Lumber or from Paper Paul (Paul accepts Venmo, Paypal and Zelle).

Ryder Johnson hits 1,000-point milestone as Tigers roll past Tiospa Zina

GROTON — The Groton Area boys basketball team delivered another dominant performance Thursday night, rolling past Tiospa Zina 83-9 in action at Groton.

The Tigers set the tone immediately, jumping out to a 23-2 first-quarter lead. Groton extended the advantage to 45-2 at halftime and 61-9 after three quarters before closing out the victory.

Groton shot efficiently from the floor, making 31 of 47 two-point attempts (66 percent), 6 of 11 three-pointers (55 percent), and 3 of 5 free throws (60 percent). The Tigers also filled the stat sheet with 32 rebounds, 22 assists, and 21 steals while committing just five turnovers.



Ryder Johnson scored his 1,000th high school career point at the game Thursday night. He is pictured with Coach Greg Kjellsen, who also coached his dad, J.R. Johnson who holds Groton Area's all time scoring record. (Photo courtesy Paula Johnson)



Ryder Johnson gets his 1,000th high school career point by making this basket in the first quarter. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

The night's highlight came early, as Ryder Johnson scored his 1,000th career point in the first quarter, prompting a brief on-court celebration. Johnson finished with 15 points, six rebounds, four assists, and three steals.

"You don't score a thousand points just showing up on game night and expecting to get it done,"

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Gage Sippel goes for this shot. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)



Becker Bosma dunks the ball early in the game. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

said head coach Greg Kjellsen. "It takes a lot of work, and he's put it in. He deserves it. Hats off to him."

Johnson becomes just the 11th player in Groton High School history to reach the milestone. Nearly all reached the mark as four-year varsity players. His father, J.R. Johnson, remains the program's all-time leading scorer with more than 1,600 career points — a fact Kjellsen referenced with a smile.

"He shot it every time he touched it," Kjellsen joked. "There was no shot he didn't like."

Kjellsen also emphasized the character of this year's team, saying their success extends beyond the court.

"They're better kids than they are basketball players," he said. "I haven't had an issue with one of them all year. They come to work hard, they're polite, respectful, and this community should be awful proud of them."

Keegan Tracy added 14 points, four steals, and a block. Gage Sippel scored nine points and grabbed three rebounds. Ryder Schelle finished with eight points. Anthony Tracy posted eight points, four assists, and four steals. Ethan Kroll scored six points, while Jace Johnson added five. Logan Warrington, Asher Johnson, and Jordan Schwan each scored four points. Becker Bosma recorded two points and four assists, and Easton Weber pulled down five rebounds to go with two points. J.J. Muller added an assist and a steal.

For Tiospa Zina, Isaac Rodlund scored six points and Jeffrey Heminger Jr. added three.

Groton also won the junior varsity contest. JV scoring included Jordan Schwan with 11 points, Asher Johnson with nine, Anthony Tracy with six, Zach Fliehs with six, Ethan Kroll with five, Wesley Borg with five, Jace Johnson and Ryder Schelle with four each, Connor Kroll with two, and Briggs Conn with two.

Groton improves to 7-3 on the season and will host Milbank on Thursday in a doubleheader. Tiospa Zina falls to 3-6.



Ryder Johnson goes in for another shot as he led the team with 15 points. (Photo by Tina

Kosel)

Lady Tigers dominate Tiospa Zina Wambdi, 71–3



Rylee Dunker is surrounded by Wambdi players while trying to pass off the ball. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Sydney Locke launches and makes this three-pointer in the second quarter. (Photo

by Paul Kosel)

GROTON — The Groton Area girls basketball team delivered a defensive clinic Thursday night, overwhelming Tiospa Zina Wambdi 71–3 in a lopsided doubleheader sweep at Groton.

The Lady Tigers jumped out quickly, building a 30–1 first-quarter lead and never letting up. Groton extended the margin to 49–3 at halftime and 57–3 after three quarters before closing out the decisive victory.

Head coach Matt Locke said the performance started with clear team objectives before tipoff.

“We tried to make some team goals before the game — points scored, points allowed — and just kept reminding them,” Locke said. “Overall, it was a good defensive night.”

Groton’s pressure defense forced 19 steals and held Tiospa Zina Wambdi to just three total points. Locke credited his team’s mindset for making the game “what it should be.”

“You can do that against good teams as well if you have that mindset,” he said. “Make the game what it should be — that’s what we did so well.”

Offensively, Groton shot 66 percent on two-point attempts (29-of-44), added three three-pointers, and finished with 21 assists on 32 made field goals. The Tigers also controlled the glass with 33 rebounds and committed only eight turnovers.

Taryn Traphagen led Groton with 15 points on 6-of-7 shooting, adding five assists and seven steals in a standout all-around effort. Locke praised her continued development.

“Taryn’s very capable,” Locke said. “We’ve been working on finishes every day in practice, and it’s paying off.”

Jerica Locke scored 11 points with five assists, while Jaedyn Penning added 10 points and eight rebounds. Kella Tracy finished with nine points. McKenna Tietz recorded six points and three steals. Rylee Dunker contributed five points, six rebounds, three assists, and three steals. Talli Wright and Sydney Locke each scored five, with Sydney adding three steals. Tevan Hanson had three points and four rebounds. Makenna Krause added two points and two assists, and Ashlynn Warrington recorded one assist and one block.

Stevie Marks scored two points for Tiospa Zina Wambdi, and Kayleigh Abbey added one.

Locke was also pleased with the team’s depth, as every available player saw significant minutes.

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Jerica Locke pushes her way inside for this basket. Also pictured is Taryn Traphagen.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

"All capable kids," he said. "When they get in there and get the chance, you just have to relax and let them play."

With the win, Groton Area improves to 7-4 on the season. The Tigers will enjoy a brief break before hosting Milbank next Thursday.

"The girls needed it," Locke said with a smile. "We've been running pretty rampant — five games in ten days."

Groton also earned a junior varsity victory. Makenna Krause led with 14 points. Tevan Hanson scored 10. Ashlynn Warrington and Sydney Locke each added eight, Kella Tracy had eight, and Brynlee Dunker finished with four.

Both varsity games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Avantara - Groton, Agtegra, Bierman Farm Service, Bary Keith at Harr Motors, Blocker Construction, Dacotah Bank, Full Circle Ag, Groton Ag Partners, Groton Chamber, Groton Ford, John Sieh Agency, Heartland Energy and The MeatHouse in Andover. Rich Bosma did the commentary, Jeslyn Kosel ran the camera and Paul Kosel did the stats and technology.

Groton Area wrestlers earn dual wins at Redfield triangular

REDFIELD — The Groton Area wrestling team turned in a strong performance Tuesday night at a triangular in Redfield, earning convincing dual victories over both Redfield and Webster Area.

In the opening dual, Groton Area defeated host Redfield 54-24, winning nine of the 14 contested bouts and collecting several key falls to pull away on the scoreboard.

Wyatt Hagen opened the night with a 4-1 decision at 120 pounds, while Kyson Kucker followed with a 15-9 decision at 126. Xavier Ellenbecker (132) picked up a forfeit before Noah Scepaniak delivered one of the highlights of the match, pinning Mason Mogen in 1:31 at 138 pounds.

Groton Area also received falls from Layne Johnson at 215 (4:55) and Gavin Englund at heavyweight (1:14). Additional points came from forfeits by Donovan Block (157), Ben Hoeft (165), Walker Zoellner (175), and Isaiah Scepaniak (190).

Redfield earned wins at 144 and 150, where Kasey Hermann and Conner Zens recorded quick falls, along with victories from Cruz Kimlicka (106) and Jace Edgar (113).

In the second dual of the night, Groton Area overwhelmed Webster Area 75-6, dropping just one bout. The Tigers recorded six falls under 1:40, including lightning-fast pins by Wyatt Hagen (0:15), Kyson Kucker (0:15), and Kason Oswald (0:16).

Noah Scepaniak (132), Aiden Strom (138), Grayson Flores (144), Donovan Block (157), Ben Hoeft (165), Bentley Ehresmann (106), and Isaiah Scepaniak (190) all added victories, while Walker Zoellner earned a 9-5 decision at 175. Gavin Englund closed the night with a fall in 1:36 at 285.

Webster Area's lone points came from a forfeit win at 215.

Groton Area now turns its focus to its next competition as the Tigers continue to build momentum in the heart of the season.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

New state employee is 'looking at the bookkeepers' to catch and prevent problems, legislators learn

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

Half a dozen entities comb through South Dakota's financial records each year to ensure a balanced budget or that details are accurately recorded.

South Dakota Compliance Auditor Missy Lock, who was hired last summer to the new position in the Auditor's Office, said there are plenty of people who "look at the books." But something was missing.

"Nobody's looking at the bookkeepers," Lock said.

That's her job now.

Lock's position was created after lawmakers passed Senate Bill 60 last year, which expanded the auditor's access and investigative authority to monitor state spending.

The state Attorney General's Office has prosecuted numerous cases of criminal activity by state employees over the past two years. One former Department of Social Services employee, Lonna Carroll, was sentenced to seven years in prison for the theft of \$1.8 million from the state across multiple years. In response, lawmakers have called on state offices and departments to improve their internal controls and oversight.

State Auditor Rich Sattgast introduced Lock to the legislative budget committee on Tuesday at the Capitol in Pierre.

Lock reviews bookkeeping processes, checks that new hire background checks are performed, and analyzes day-to-day operations to ensure dual controls, separation of duties and other financial controls are in place. She also meets with the fiscal employees in person.

"We want to be sure that the people who actually have access to our state funds are continuously monitored," Lock told lawmakers.

Sattgast added that Lock will be instrumental in analyzing data from agencies and identifying anomalies or changes to spending. Lock formerly served as the finance officer for the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development and as an investment accountant for the South Dakota Investment Council.

Information Lock needs in her role will be easier to access once the Bureau of Finance and Management's Project Bison financial reporting software is online, Lock said.

Project Bison, which replaces South Dakota's more than 35-year-old financial reporting system, is expected to come online in July, Bureau of Finance and Management Commissioner Jim Terwilliger said.

"We expect greater efficiencies. We expect having better controls in place from a technology perspective," Terwilliger said. "That's something that we work with the State Auditor's Office on. When it comes to issuing payments, a lot of that will be streamlined electronically."

In addition to the multimillion-dollar upgrade to the financial reporting system, the bureau leads the state's Internal Control Board and initiative. Terwilliger told lawmakers that the board reviews procedures and processes to prevent future fraud.

"This has been a multi-year effort in terms of establishing a statewide, consistent framework that's documented in a consistent manner," Terwilliger said.

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Trump threatens to use Insurrection Act and deploy military in Minnesota

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump threatened on Thursday morning to send the military into Minnesota to stop protests, following another shooting by immigration agents that injured one person, seven days after an agent fatally shot a woman in Minneapolis.

Writing on his own social media platform, Trump said he would invoke the Insurrection Act, a 19th-century law empowering the government to deploy the military domestically to “repress insurrections and repel invasions.”

“If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don’t obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job, I will institute the INSURRECTION ACT, which many Presidents have done before me, and quickly put an end to the travesty that is taking place in that once great State. Thank you for your attention to this matter! President DJT,” Trump wrote on Truth Social.

The law grants an exception to the Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits the military from performing domestic law enforcement.

The Insurrection Act was last invoked in 1992 under President George H. W. Bush in response to civil unrest that included the deaths of 63 people, following the acquittal of four white police officers charged with beating to death Black driver Rodney King. The statute has been used about 30 times since the country’s founding, according to records kept by the Brennan Center for Justice.

Protests Wednesday night

Protests erupted across the Twin Cities after Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent Jonathan Ross shot and killed 37-year-old Renee Good in south Minneapolis on Jan. 7.

The demonstrations escalated Wednesday night after a federal immigration agent shot and injured a man in north Minneapolis.

According to a statement issued by the Department of Homeland Security, a man crashed his vehicle and ran away as agents were “conducting a targeted traffic stop” at 6:50 p.m. Central time. An agent fired “a defensive shot to defend his life” after the man and two bystanders “attacked the law enforcement officer with a snow shovel and broom handle,” according to the statement.

The agent shot the man in the leg, according to the department. The statement described the man as “an illegal alien from Venezuela who was released into the country by Joe Biden in 2022.”

States Newsroom’s Minnesota Reformer was unable to confirm the account.

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O’Hara said in a late-night press conference that the man was transported to a hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The Reformer reported that scores of demonstrators arrived at the scene, sparking a back-and-forth with agents, who deployed tear gas and flash bangs. Agents detained at least two people after someone threw fireworks at the agents. At least two vehicles believed to be used by federal officers were vandalized. The clashes largely stopped by 11:30 p.m., according to the Reformer.

Mayor, governor urge that ICE be withdrawn

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, a Democrat, asked for calm and reiterated his call for the Trump administration to remove ICE from the city. Frey urged the protesters to “go home.”

“We cannot counter Donald Trump’s chaos with our own brand of chaos,” he said.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz in addition renewed calls Wednesday for Trump to withdraw ICE. Walz also asked residents in a Wednesday evening address to record ICE encounters with the public to help “create a database of the atrocities against Minnesotans, not just to establish a record for posterity but to bank evidence for future prosecution.”

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Minnesota, Minneapolis and St. Paul officials are suing the Trump administration for what they allege is "a federal invasion of the Twin Cities."

Trump surged more ICE agents to Minneapolis following the fatal shooting of Good, bringing the total to roughly 3,000 — far outnumbering the city's 600 local police officers.

Noem talks Insurrection Act with Trump

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem told reporters Thursday morning that she has "no plans" of withdrawing ICE from Minneapolis.

She described the situation on the ground as "violent violation of the law in many places."

"I discussed with the president this morning several things that we are dealing with under the department in different operations. We did discuss the Insurrection Act. He certainly has the constitutional authority to utilize that. My hope is that this leadership team in Minnesota will start to work with us to get criminals off the streets," Noem told reporters at the White House.

Noem attributed current ICE "surge operations" in the Twin Cities to a massive COVID-19 financial fraud case, which federal prosecutors in Minneapolis had already been pursuing for years.

Trump press secretary blames Dems

During an afternoon briefing, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt blamed Democrats for violence in Minneapolis.

"I think the President's Truth Social post spoke very loud and clear to Democrats across this country, elected officials who are using their platforms to encourage violence against federal law enforcement officers," she told reporters.

Leavitt held up photos of vehicles covered in spray paint, alleging that ICE property was "vandalized last night by these left-wing agitators."

Leavitt also said "comrades" of the man pursued, and then shot, by the ICE agent "used a shovel or broom to smash his face in."

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

Trump rolls out framework on health care costs that's silent on ACA tax credits

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump outlined his health care proposals to Congress on Thursday, asking lawmakers to approve several broad policy changes "without delay" — but left out any mention of enhanced tax credits whose expiration has left some Americans with skyrocketing costs.

Health care costs, especially the rising price of health insurance, have become a frequent talking point for politicians from both political parties following last year's government shutdown, when Democrats repeatedly called on Republicans to extend the now-expired enhanced tax credits for Affordable Care Act marketplace plans.

Trump reiterated in a five-minute video that he wants Congress to give Americans money directly so they can use it to offset the cost of health insurance or health care, a proposal that has so far been unable to get the traction needed to advance on Capitol Hill.

Trump didn't detail any income caps on the direct payments, which would likely be sent to Health Savings Accounts as opposed to a simple check. He also didn't say how much per month or annually he wants lawmakers to provide Americans, leaving it for members of Congress to hash out.

"The government is going to pay the money directly to you. It goes to you, and then you take the money and buy your own health care," Trump said. "Nobody has ever heard of that before, and that's the way it

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is. The big insurance companies lose and the people of our country win.”

The enhanced ACA marketplace tax credits, first implemented by Democrats during the coronavirus pandemic, expired at the end of 2025. The subsidies helped to keep premiums lower than they would have otherwise been for about 22 million Americans on those health insurance plans.

The House voted earlier this month to keep the enhanced tax credits going for another three years, but the bill has stalled in the Senate as a bipartisan group of lawmakers tries to reach consensus on two more years of the subsidies with significant changes.

Lower drug prices

Trump said in the video that Congress should approve legislation that requires prescription drug companies to ensure Americans pay the lowest price in the world for pharmaceuticals, a policy known as “most favored nation” that he has pursued during his second term.

“So instead of Americans paying the highest drug prices in the world, which we have for decades, we will now be paying the lowest cost paid by any other nation,” he said. “So any other nation that’s paying the lowest cost, that’s what we’re going to pay. And the American people will get the savings.”

Trump said the legislative request, which he dubbed “The Great Health Care Plan,” would require health insurance companies and health care providers to publicly share easy-to-understand information about what they charge and how much they make in profit.

“As the saying goes, sunlight is the best disinfectant. That is why my plan orders all insurance companies to publish rate and coverage comparisons in very plain English,” Trump said. “It requires insurers to publish detailed information about how much of your money they’re going to be paying out in claims versus how much they’re taking in in profits.”

Health insurance companies, he said, would be required to detail how many claims they deny and whether those refusals to pay for health care were overturned on appeal.

“And most importantly, it will require any hospital or insurer who accepts Medicare or Medicaid to prominently post all prices at their place of business so that you are never surprised and you can easily shop for a better deal or better care,” Trump said, though a 2019 rule created a similar requirement. “We will have maximum price transparency and costs will come down incredibly.”

Path through Congress

A one-page outline of the proposal posted to the White House website doesn’t detail whether Trump wants Congress to approve the policy requests through the complex budget reconciliation process that Republicans used to approve the “big, beautiful” law this summer or to negotiate a bipartisan bill with Democrats.

A White House official, speaking on background on a call with reporters to detail the plan and the next steps, said the administration believes the “proposals all have broad support from the American people.”

“We expect both Republicans and Democrats to be able to embrace them, so reconciliation would not be necessary,” the official said.

The framework is intended to provide “broad direction” to lawmakers, leaving negotiators the ability to take any bill they may write in different directions, the official said, adding the administration is “open to working” with Congress on the details.

“We want to make progress,” the official said. “We’re not laying out a specific path.”

The official said the president leaving out any mention of the expired enhanced tax credits for people who purchase their health insurance from the Affordable Care Act marketplace was not intended to cut off ongoing bipartisan talks in the Senate.

“This does not specifically address those bipartisan congressional negotiations that are going on,” the official said. “It does say that we have a preference that money goes to people, as opposed to insurance companies.”

Engaging drugmakers

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz said on the same call with reporters that the framework focused on “four pillars” the administration believes must be codified into law — solidifying most favored nation drug pricing, lowering health insurance costs, transparency from health insurance companies and more pricing information from health care providers.

“Although we’re taking major action at CMS, including fines and the like, having Congress say, ‘This is how it’s going to be, this is a law of the land’ is important,” Oz said, adding that he really does believe there can be bipartisan support for at least some of the proposals.

Oz said the administration’s approach to bring down the cost of prescription drugs to the lowest level offered anywhere in the world is not intended to impede innovation and reiterated that lawmaking is crucial for longer-term stability.

“We believe by codifying it, we’ll make sure that the drug companies stay engaged for future administrations,” Oz said. “We also believe that by doing it correctly, we’ll not overreach and create challenges to life-saving drugs being continually evolved and developed in the United States.”

The Trump administration, he said, wants Congress to give the Food and Drug Administration more leeway to convert prescription medications to over-the-counter availability, possibly increasing competition and decreasing prices.

Oz said the price transparency portion of the request would help Americans to have more information about how long it takes to get routine appointments and whether health insurance companies are able to keep their rates down by frequently denying claims.

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.

Second person in a week shot by federal immigration agent in Minneapolis

BY: MAX NESTERAK AND ALYSSA CHEN

A federal immigration agent shot a man Wednesday evening after a scuffle in north Minneapolis, drawing a crowd of protesters blowing whistles and engaging in minor skirmishes with law enforcement who deployed chemical irritants.

The shooting comes one week after the killing of Renee Good by federal immigration officer Jonathan Ross in south Minneapolis touched off a wave of protests.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said the man who was shot is an undocumented Venezuelan national who was pulled over in a “targeted traffic stop” but ran away. When the officer caught up to him, they got into a fight, after which two bystanders also attacked the officer, according to DHS.

The weapons used on the federal officer: “a shovel or broom stick,” according to DHS.

“Fearing for his life and safety as he was being ambushed by three individuals, the officer fired a defensive shot to defend his life. The initial subject was hit in the leg,” DHS said.

Their account couldn’t be confirmed.

Minneapolis Police Chief Brian O’Hara said in the briefing Wednesday night that at 6:51 p.m., MPD received 911 calls about the shooting.

The incident began on I-94, O’Hara said, where federal agents were trying to apprehend a man. The man drove towards a house on the 600 block of 24th Avenue North in north Minneapolis, where he crashed the car, ran towards a house and got into a struggle with federal agents when a federal agent shot him.

The man went into the house and refused to come out; eventually, federal agents entered the house. The man was transported to the hospital. His injuries are not life threatening, O’Hara said. He said he heard there was a snow shovel and a broom on the scene.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the state agency that investigates law enforcement shootings,

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was on the scene along with FBI agents to process evidence.

It's unclear if state authorities will be allowed to continue investigating the shooting. The U.S. Department of Justice blocked the BCA from participating in the investigation into the fatal shooting of Good, leading local prosecutors to open their own probe.

Scores of demonstrators showed up to the scene, shouting expletives at federal agents and telling them to get out of Minneapolis. Federal agents deployed tear gas and flash bangs, while some protesters shot fireworks at law enforcement. At least two people were detained by federal agents after someone threw fireworks at the agents. At least two vehicles believed to be used by federal officers were vandalized.

O'Hara said the crowd had crossed the line into an unlawful assembly and State Patrol and Hennepin County sheriff's deputies responded to requests for help with crowd control.

Mayor Jacob Frey renewed his call for residents to remain peaceful and not "take the bait."

"Go home," Frey said. "We cannot counter Donald Trump's chaos with our own brand of chaos."

By 11:30, law enforcement and demonstrators had mostly left the scene, though some remained.

Frey also renewed his call for DHS to end its aggressive operation in the city, which the agency calls its largest operation ever. Minnesota along with the cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul filed a lawsuit seeking to force DHS to end its operation, calling it a "federal invasion."

The roughly 3,000 federal agents in the state far outnumber Minneapolis' roughly 600 police officers, who are struggling to respond to 911 calls and investigate crimes on top of near round-the-clock confrontations between federal agents and residents.

"This is not sustainable. This is an impossible situation that our city is presently being put in," Frey said.

Shawn Jackson was parked nearby the scene with his kids in the car. A law enforcement agency — unclear which one — set off flash bangs that detonated the airbags in his car. Officers then sprayed tear gas. The Minneapolis Fire Department took the children — including a baby suffering breathing problems, Jackson's mother said — to the hospital.

"They out of control," Jackson said.

Patricia Abrams was driving past with her sister when they saw the commotion and stopped.

She told the Reformer that the ICE incursion into Minnesota is illegal and should end.

"The public should know to get these motherf*cking ICE people outta here. They over here illegally trying to lock immigrants up. B*tch, y'all over here illegally — excuse my French — y'all here illegally trying to lock people up."

She added: "D'f*ck's wrong with you?"

Local and state politicians were also on the scene: Rep. Mohamud Noor, DFL-Minneapolis, and Minneapolis council members including Elliott Payne, Jason Chavez, Aisha Chughtai and Jamal Osman.

The shooting happened just moments before Gov. Tim Walz made a statewide address encouraging Minnesotans to record federal immigration actions, promising that "accountability is coming" for abuses by federal officers.

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.

CO2 pipeline eminent domain ban advances from Iowa House committee

BY: CAMI KOONS

A bill that would prohibit the acquisition of land via eminent domain for carbon sequestration pipelines in Iowa advanced Wednesday from a House committee.

House Study Bill 507 is one of several expected bills related to property rights and carbon sequestration pipelines expected in the 2026 session.

Opponents of the bill said it would kill the proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline which, according to lobbyists for the company, already has more than 1,400 easements with willing landowners for the pipeline.

Rep. Steven Holt, R-Denison, sponsored the bill and said it protects Iowans' "fundamental right" to private property.

"Eminent domain should be incredibly rare and must meet the constitutional requirement of a public use," Holt said.

Proponents of the bill said it is a simple bill, unlike the bill that Gov. Kim Reynolds vetoed last year that would have restricted the use of eminent domain by CO2 pipeline operators.

A group of Republican lawmakers have been vocal in their opposition to the carbon sequestration project, which was granted the right of eminent domain by the state utilities commission in 2024. The House passed a similar bill in 2025 to ban the use of eminent domain by carbon capture pipelines, but the Senate did not take up the bill.

Rep. Ross Wilburn, D-Ames, expressed hesitancy advancing the bill Tuesday during a subcommittee meeting on the proposed legislation, because of the Senate's inaction on the similar bill last year and the governor's veto.

Wilburn reiterated his concern Wednesday, noting that Reynolds was "silent" on the issue of eminent domain and property rights during her Tuesday Condition of the State address.

"So when I say nothing has changed, the political conditions around this have not changed," Wilburn, who was one of two no votes on the bill, said.

Holt responded that neither the House nor the Senate can control what the governor does, nor can the two chambers control one another.

"What we do is, we do what is right and we move forward and who knows what dynamics might change," Holt said.

In addition to bringing tax credits associated with the ultra-low carbon ethanol market, lobbyists for Summit argued in the subcommittee Tuesday the pipeline project would also be an economic opportunity for Iowa due to tax credits for enhanced oil recovery that were recently made available in the federal "big beautiful" law.

Ethanol producers would have access to 45Z tax credits for producing the low carbon fuel by sequestering carbon dioxide into the pipeline. The carbon sequestration pipeline would be eligible for 45Q tax credits as it transports the carbon to underground storage and now, as that carbon is strategically pumped underground to increase the efficiency of oil wells.

Holt said the Summit project is not a public use project, but "an economic development project."

Holt said public use refers to infrastructure projects like roads, schools or essential energy projects that are "convenient and necessary."

"The use of government power to seize property for a private economic development project is not constitutional," Holt said.

Senate leadership has also indicated it plans to file a bill that would address the property rights issue by allowing pipeline operators to deviate from their state-approved routes in order to find willing landowners.

House Republicans appear to be united over the eminent domain ban, despite the differences from the Senate. The only other dissenting vote on the bill in committee Wednesday came from Rep. Rick Olson, D-Des Moines.

House Speaker Pat Grassley said in a Wednesday taping of "Iowa Press" that the House's narrow eminent

domain bill was rolled out early on to show that "it still is something that we really care about."

Grassley said the fact that the Senate is working on its own bill is a "positive sign towards finding some level of resolution."

"For the last several years, it's just been bill after bill from the House's perspective, heading over to the Senate," Grassley said. "Regardless if we agree with one another, I think it's a positive step forward ... that there's actual movement on both sides."

This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, 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.

Cami Koons is an Iowa Capital Dispatch reporter covering agriculture and the environment. She previously worked at publications in Kansas and Missouri, covering rural affairs.

North Carolina congresswoman demands Kristi Noem resign from Homeland Security

Ross is second member of Congress from state to call for Noem's exit

BY: BRANDON KINGDOLLAR

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem "should resign or be removed from office," Rep. Deborah Ross urged on Tuesday, joining a chorus of Democratic colleagues in the wake of high-profile clashes between ICE and protesters.

In a statement Tuesday morning, Ross called Noem a "disaster for North Carolina," citing the deployment of ICE and Border Patrol agents en masse in Charlotte, Raleigh, and other cities, as well as delays to federal disaster relief for Western North Carolina under Noem's oversight of FEMA.

After the killing of Renee Good by an ICE agent in Minneapolis, Ross said, Americans are "seeing what North Carolinians already know: DHS desperately needs new leadership."

"Noem authorized and oversaw the devastating immigration raids in Charlotte and Raleigh. At her direction, masked agents descended on our cities, terrorizing law-abiding citizens and abducting people off the streets based on the color of their skin," said Ross, a Democrat representing the Second Congressional District.

A spokesperson for Noem did not respond to a request for comment.

Ross's remarks follow growing Democratic rancor aimed at Noem, with House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) telling reporters Monday that the secretary is "completely and totally unqualified" and "should be run out of town as soon as possible." He did not rule out pursuing her impeachment should Democrats retake control of the House in the 2026 midterm elections.

Ross would support Noem's impeachment, a spokeswoman said.

She joins her Democratic colleague Rep. Valerie Foushee (D-N.C.-04), who called for Noem's resignation or removal in a statement on social media on Jan. 9. Rep. Alma Adams (D-N.C.-12) urged an independent investigation into Good's death but did not reference Noem, while Rep. Don Davis (D-N.C.-01) issued no statement on the shooting.

Democrats sense an opportunity to channel anger over President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown into voter backlash against the president's party in the coming congressional elections. A YouGov poll taken in the wake of the Minneapolis shooting found that a majority of respondents disapprove of ICE, including 56% of independents.

Good's shooting sparked protests across the U.S., including in North Carolina, where demonstrators in Charlotte, Durham, and Wilmington among others mobilized to condemn ICE in the days after the shooting.

DHS leadership has laid the blame for violent clashes on Democratic rhetoric, releasing statistics on Jan. 8 — a day after Good's death — showing 275 assaults on ICE officers and 66 vehicular attacks against them since Trump took office in January 2025.

"This unprecedented increase in violence against law enforcement is a direct result of sanctuary politicians

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and the media creating an environment that demonizes our law enforcement and encourages rampant assaults against them," said DHS Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin.

Finding fault in funding Helene recovery

Ross also laid blame on Noem for a lack of aid to western North Carolina.

"Noem is personally responsible for slowing the flow of federal aid dollars to support Helene reconstruction in Western NC," Ross said. "Because of her, families and communities that lost everything have been forced to wait months for the help they need to get back on their feet."

Under Noem, FEMA has delayed disaster assistance to communities in North Carolina for months, vexing local leaders who have struggled to get through layers of bureaucracy. All payments exceeding \$100,000, for example, require Noem's personal sign-off.

In December, Gov. Josh Stein pleaded with FEMA for swifter aid. "Further delay of these approvals keeps communities and families in limbo, in some cases paying expenses on homes they cannot live in while they await word from FEMA," he wrote.

Taken together, these failures are disqualifying, Ross said.

"We can't trust her when disaster strikes. We can't trust her to obey the law. We can't trust her to protect our rights or our homeland," Ross said. "Enough is enough. Kristi Noem needs to go."

This story was originally produced by NC Newsline, 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.

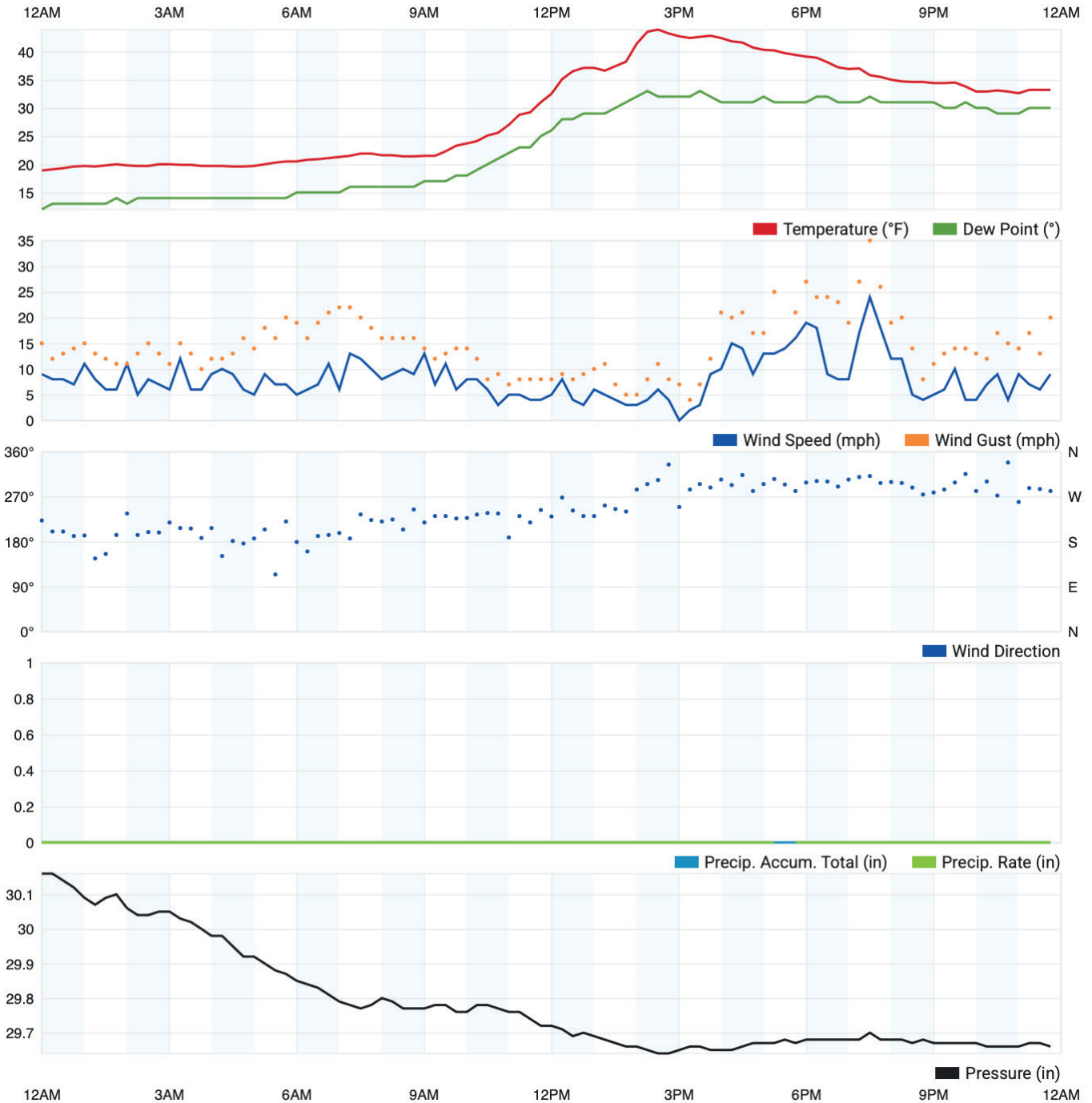
Brandon covers North Carolina government and state politics for NC Newsline.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

January 15, 2026



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Winter Weather Advi...

Today



60%

High: 23 °F ↓↓

Snow Likely
and Areas
Blowing Snow

Tonight



40%

Low: -3 °F

Chance Snow
and Blustery

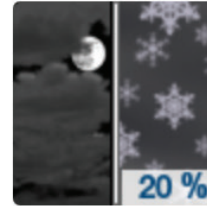
Saturday



High: 7 °F

Partly Sunny
and Blustery
then Mostly
Sunny

Saturday Night



20 %

Low: 1 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance Snow

Sunday



20 %

High: 26 °F

Slight Chance
Snow and
Blustery then
Partly Sunny
and Windy

STRONG STORM IMPACTS THROUGH FRIDAY!



Cold front moving through SD with
Winds Gusting **45-65 MPH!**




Rain to Snow Showers Tonight

White-Out Conditions Likely!

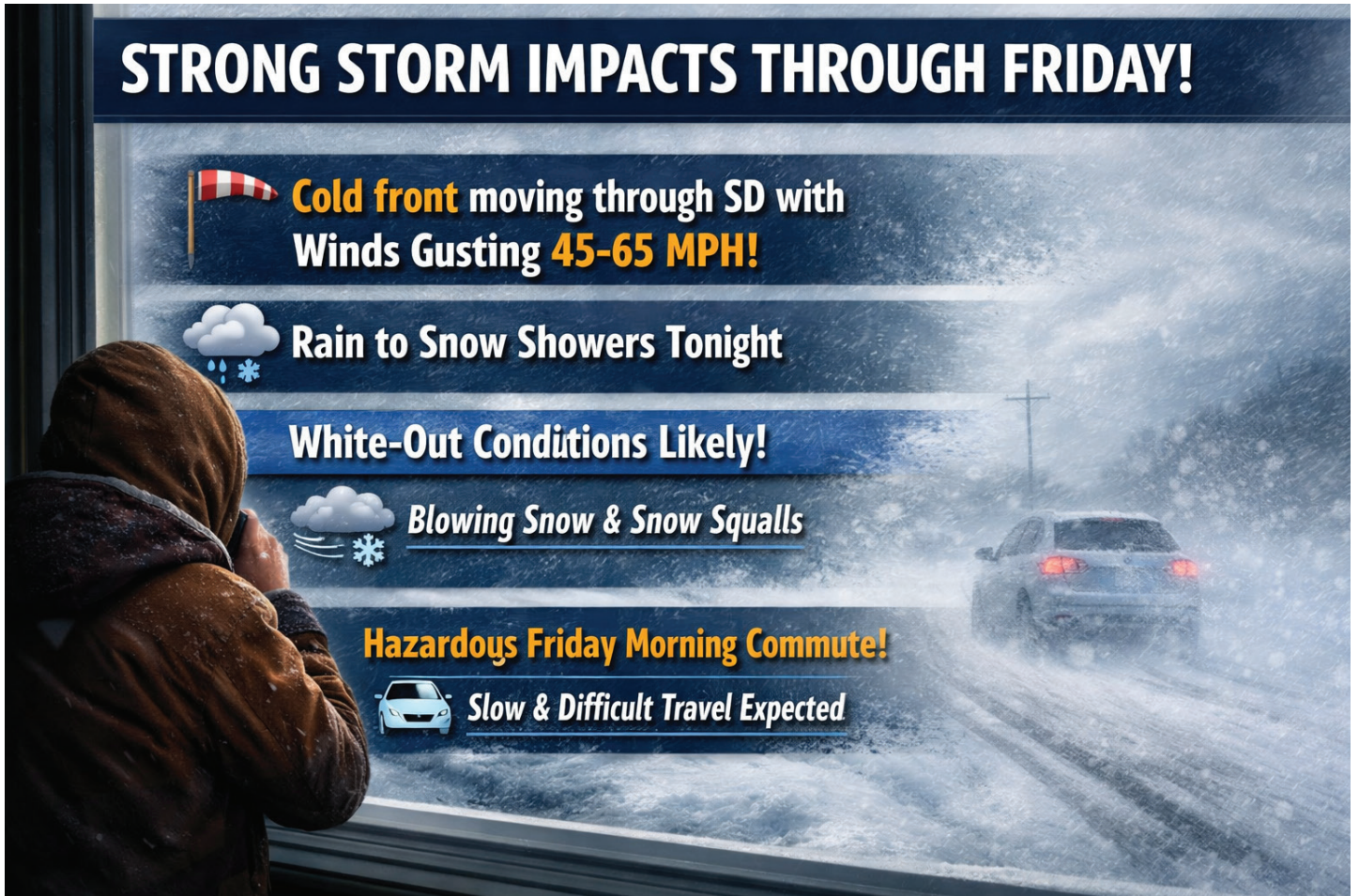


Blowing Snow & Snow Squalls

Hazardous Friday Morning Commute!



Slow & Difficult Travel Expected



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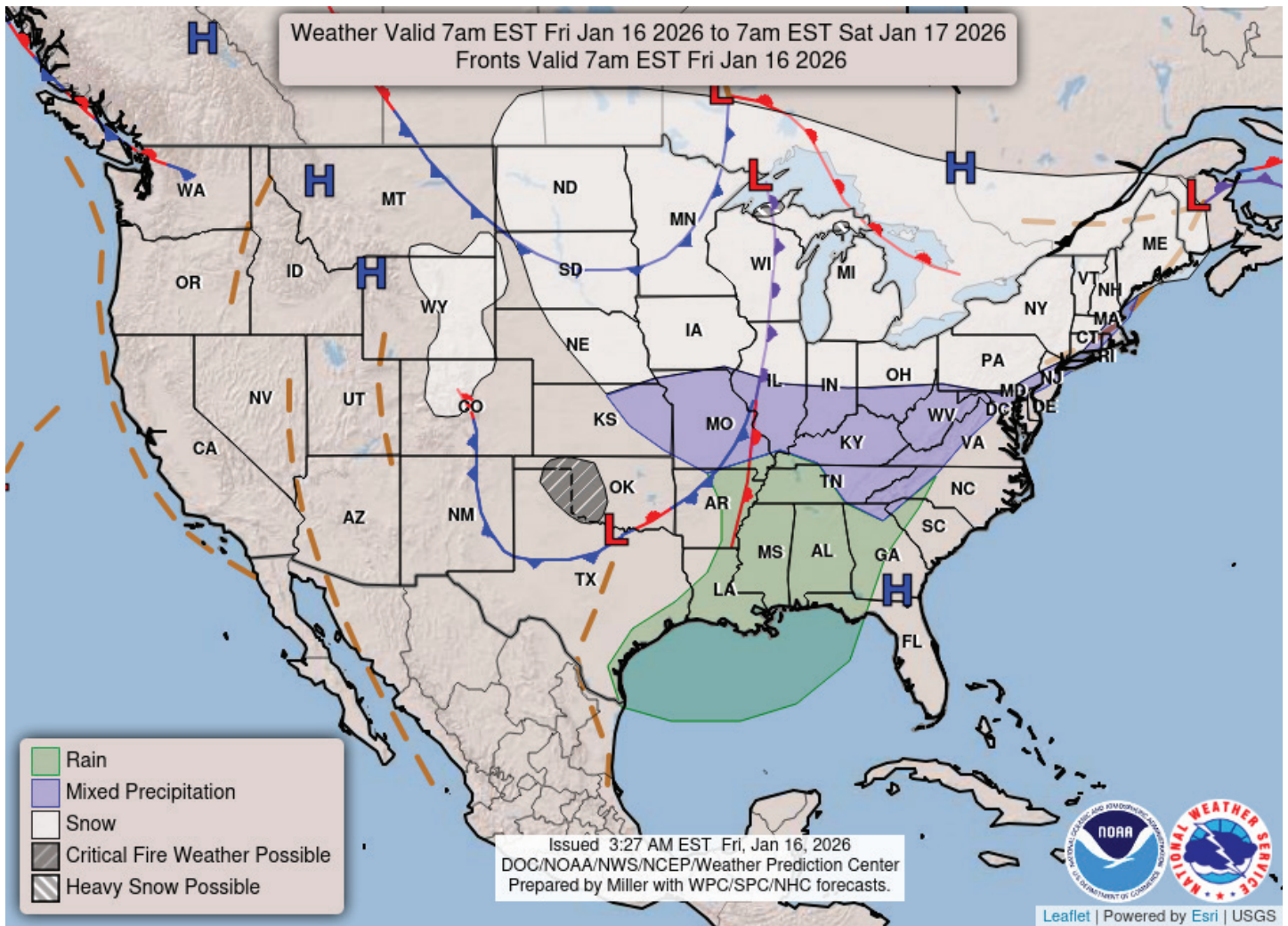
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 44 °F at 2:26 PM
Low Temp: 19 °F at 12:00 AM
Wind: 36 mph at 7:24 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 49 in 1942
Record Low: -30 in 2005
Average High: 23
Average Low: 1
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.31
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.31
Precip Year to Date: 0.00
Sunset Tonight: 5:16 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:07 am



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Today in Weather History

January 16, 1967: In Minnesota, a fast-moving blizzard brought winds over 75 mph. The snowfall was light to moderate, with extensive blowing and drifting snow. Visibility was near zero for an extended time. Temperatures fell rapidly during the storm, and by the morning of the 18th, many record lows temperatures were set. Many vehicles went into the ditch. Thousands of motorists and schoolchildren found shelter wherever they could as travel was halted. A Wheaton man froze to death. In South Dakota, rain followed by a sudden drop in temperatures of nearly 30 degrees in 2 hours resulted in widespread freezing rain and significant icing on roads and trees. Strong winds of 35 to 45 mph with gusts to 75 mph along with the ice halted most travel. The wind and icing also caused the toppling of a 270-foot radio tower near Aberdeen.

January 16, 1997: An intense Arctic High brought widespread blizzard conditions and dangerous wind chills of 40 to 70 below to central and northeast South Dakota and west-central Minnesota. One to 3 inches of snow fell on top of the already deep snowpack of 2 to 5 feet. The blizzard winds brought another round of widespread heavy drifting, blocking area roads and highways. Many area schools were closed once again to add to their large number of days missed for the winter season. Fortunately, this blizzard was short-lived compared to previous blizzards, and the people were better prepared.

January 16, 2014: A strong area of high-pressure building into the region behind an Arctic cold front brought high winds to central and north-central South Dakota during the early morning hours of the 16th. Some of the strongest wind gusts include; 69 mph near Whitlocks Bay; 68 mph near Bullhead; 67 mph near Trail City; 66 mph in Foster Bay; 65 mph near Mellette and in Presho; 64 mph near Harrold and in Murdo; and 63 mph in Pierre, Reliance, and Miranda. The strong winds diminished during the late afternoon hours of the 16th. A clipper system passing across the region brought light snowfall and powerful northwest winds gusting more than 70 mph at times resulting in blizzard conditions. The highest wind gusts include; 76 mph at the Brown County Landfill, 69 mph in Aberdeen and Cravens Corner, 52 mph near Webster, and 52 mph in Sisseton. Blizzard conditions ended during the late afternoon hours. A no travel advisory was issued in Grant, Codington, Hamlin, and Spink Counties due to low visibilities. The blizzard led to the cancellation of several area activities and schools and nearly impossible travel conditions.

1831 — A great snowstorm raged from Georgia to Maine. Snowfall totals greater than 30 inches were reported from Pennsylvania across southern New England. (David Ludlum)

1964 — Fort Worth, TX, received 7.5 inches of snow, and Dallas reported a foot of snow. (David Ludlum)

1987 — A winter storm produced a total of 61 inches of snow at Rye CO, and wind gusts to 100 mph in Utah. The storm then spread heavy snow from the Texas panhandle to Indiana. Tulia TX received 16 inches of snow, and up to 14 inches was reported in western Oklahoma. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — A small storm in the western U.S. produced a foot of snow and wind gusts to 70 mph in the Lake Tahoe Basin of Nevada. Showers and thunderstorms produced 2.28 inches of rain at Brownsville TX, their third highest total for any day in January. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Strong chinook winds plagued much of the state of Wyoming. Winds gusted to 80 mph at Cody, and wind gusts to 100 mph were reported in eastern and northwestern Wyoming. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Heavy snow fell across the Prince Williams Sound area and the Susitna Valley of southern Alaska. Valdez was buried under 64.9 inches of snow in less than two days, including a record 47.5 inches in 24 hours. Up to 44 inches of snow was reported in the Susitna Valley. The heavy snow blocked roads, closed schools, and sank half a dozen vessels in the harbor. (Storm Data)

Testing Builds Endurance

Since God promises to bring good from our trials, we can face them with His peace and joy.

James 1:2-4 : 2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,
3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
4 And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Have you ever wondered, Why would a loving heavenly Father allow His children to go through trials and sorrow? It can be baffling when the all-powerful God of love seems to stand by silently while painful things happen.

The Word of God is the place we can find an answer. Even so, today's reading can be hard to understand or accept. One might read James's exhortation to be joyful in the face of trials and think, Count me out! Difficulties and joy just don't seem to go together—that is, unless we understand God's perspective of what life is about.

In speaking about joy, James isn't referring to a cheery, temporary feeling. Rather, he is talking about an inner sense of calmness, peace, and confidence in the Lord. He's not telling us to feel happy about our trials but to know, as we go through them, that God is up to something good in our life. Our attitude during the struggle will determine what shape we're in once we come out on the other side.

When our faith is tested, the end result is endurance; being aware of this gives us hope and strength. What's more, the Bible promises God will use trials for our good (Romans 5:3-5), so there's no need to be afraid or anxious.

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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paypal.me/paperpaul

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.13.26

16 40 56 64 66 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$230,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 30 Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.14.26

1 10 23 33 35 6

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$12,980,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 45 Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.15.26

3 24 32 39 41 18

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.14.26

2 13 25 30 31

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$197,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.14.26

6 20 28 47 48 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.14.26

6 24 39 43 51 2

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$179,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 29 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Belle Fourche 56, Newcastle, Wyo. 36
Brandon Valley 53, Harrisburg 43
Castlewood 49, Great Plains Lutheran 36
Centerville 56, Irene-Wakonda 32
Chester 60, Baltic 30
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 77, St. Francis Indian 57
Corsica/Stickney 64, Winner 36
Dell Rapids 67, Beresford 60
Deubrook 58, Estelline-Hendricks 16
Freeman 90, Bon Homme 19
Gayville-Volin High School 53, Viborg-Hurley 22
Gettysburg 46, Aberdeen Christian 25
Gregory 47, Kimball-White Lake 17
Groton 71, Tiospa Zina 3
Hamlin 54, Webster 21
Hankinson, N.D. 59, Wilmot 33
Hanson 40, Parker/Marion 33
Lakota Tech 51, Chadron, Neb. 50
Lennox 60, Vermillion 24
Lyman 53, Stanley County 18
Milbank 55, Redfield 29
Miller 45, Sully Buttes 12
Mobridge-Pollock 98, Crow Creek Tribal School 29
Northwestern 42, Ipswich 27
Ponca, Neb. 45, Elk Point-Jefferson 36
Santee, Neb. 80, Flandreau Indian 30
Sioux Falls Jefferson 54, Tea 44
Sioux Valley 59, McCook Central-Montrose 43
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 48, Platte-Geddes 23
Wagner 48, Parkston 37
Wall 67, Chamberlain 18
281 Conference Tournament=
First Round=
Highmore-Harrod 78, Sunshine Bible Academy 26
Sanborn Central-Woonsocket 51, James Valley Christian School 23
Wessington Springs 55, Iroquois-Lake Preston 46
Wolsey-Wessington 57, Hitchcock-Tulare 51

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

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 60, Gettysburg 44
Arlington 73, Elkton-Lake Benton 51
Baltic 63, Chester 34
Britton-Hecla 56, Florence-Henry 43

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Castlewood 61, Great Plains Lutheran 27
Clark-Willow Lake 73, DeSmet 42
Dakota Valley 55, Hartington Cedar Catholic, Neb. 47
Dell Rapids St Mary's 48, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 45
Deubrook 66, Estelline-Hendricks 59
Flandreau 89, Madison 29
Flandreau Indian 89, Santee, Neb. 29
Freeman 60, Bon Homme 36
Gregory 55, Kimball-White Lake 33
Groton 83, Tiospa Zina 9
Hamlin 68, Webster 30
Hanson 66, Parker/Marion 61
Herried-Selby 57, Timber Lake 37
Lennox 60, Vermillion 58
Mobridge-Pollock 56, Crow Creek Tribal School 31
Newcastle, Wyo. 54, Belle Fourche 51, OT
Parkston 62, Wagner 31
Platte-Geddes 73, Tripp-Delmont-Armour 71, OT
Ponca, Neb. 53, Elk Point-Jefferson 41
Redfield 65, Milbank 40
St Thomas More 61, Custer 36
Sully Buttes 60, Miller 57
Viborg-Hurley 61, Gayville-Volin High School 39
Wall 64, Chamberlain 31
Warner 53, Langford 34
Jones County Invitational Tournament=
First Round=
Jones County 46, Crazy Horse 45
Lyman 52, Kadoka 31
Stanley County 66, Philip 22
White River 92, Bennett County 87, 2OT
West River Invitational Tournament=
First Round=
Lead-Deadwood 75, Edgemont 37
New Underwood 67, Moorcroft, Wyo. 55

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

Trump threatens to use the Insurrection Act to end protests in Minneapolis

By STEVE KARNOWSKI, HALLIE GOLDEN and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday threatened to invoke an 1807 law and deploy troops to quell persistent protests against the federal officers sent to Minneapolis to enforce his administration's massive immigration crackdown.

The threat comes a day after a man was shot and wounded by an immigration officer who had been attacked with a shovel and broom handle. That shooting further heightened the fear and anger that has radiated across the city since an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent fatally shot Renee Good in the head.

Trump has repeatedly threatened to invoke the Insurrection Act, a rarely used federal law, to deploy

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the U.S. military or federalize the National Guard for domestic law enforcement, over the objections of state governors. In 2020, for example, he threatened to use the act to quell protests after George Floyd was killed by Minneapolis police, and in recent months he threatened to use it for immigration protests.

"If the corrupt politicians of Minnesota don't obey the law and stop the professional agitators and insurrectionists from attacking the Patriots of I.C.E., who are only trying to do their job, I will institute the INSURRECTION ACT, which many Presidents have done before me, and quickly put an end to the travesty that is taking place in that once great State," Trump said in social media post.

Presidents have invoked the law more than two dozen times, most recently in 1992 by President George H.W. Bush to end unrest in Los Angeles. In that instance, local authorities asked for the assistance.

"I'm making a direct appeal to the President: Let's turn the temperature down. Stop this campaign of retribution. This is not who we are," Gov. Tim Walz, a Democrat, said on X.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison said he would challenge any such action in court. He's already suing to try to stop the surge by the Department of Homeland Security, which says officers have arrested more than 2,500 people since Nov. 29 as part of an immigration operation in the Twin Cities called Metro Surge.

The operation grew when ICE, which is a DHS agency, sent 2,000 officers and agents to the area in early January.

Protests, tear gas and another shooting

Protesters gathered Thursday night at the federal building that is being used as a base for the crackdown, yelling "shame on you" at the officers guarding the facility.

Demonstrations have become common since Good was fatally shot Jan. 7, but this night's protest was slightly more subdued a day after the governor and mayor implored protesters to remain peaceful.

"This is an impossible situation that our city is presently being put in and at the same time we are trying to find a way forward to keep people safe," Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said Wednesday.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota filed a class-action lawsuit on behalf of three people who said they were questioned or detained in recent days. The lawsuit says two are Somali and one is Hispanic; all three are U.S. citizens. The lawsuit seeks an end to what the ACLU describes as a practice of racial profiling and warrantless arrests. The government did not immediately comment.

Similar lawsuits have been filed in Los Angeles and Chicago and despite seeing initial success, have tended to fizzle in the face of appeal. In Chicago, for example, last year a judge ordered a senior U.S. Border Patrol official to brief her nightly following a lawsuit by news outlets and protesters who said agents used too much force during demonstrations. But three days later, an appeals court stopped the updates.

Shooting followed a chase

Homeland Security said in a statement that federal law enforcement officers on Wednesday stopped a driver from Venezuela who is in the U.S. illegally. The person drove off then crashed into a parked car before fleeing on foot, DHS said.

Officers caught up, then two other people arrived and the three started attacking the officer, according to DHS.

"Fearing for his life and safety as he was being ambushed by three individuals, the officer fired a defensive shot to defend his life," DHS said. The confrontation took place about 4.5 miles (7.2 kilometers) from where Good was killed.

Police Chief Brian O'Hara said the man who was shot did not have a life-threatening injury. O'Hara's account of what happened largely echoed that of Homeland Security, which later said the other two men were also in the U.S. illegally from Venezuela.

The FBI said several government vehicles were damaged and property inside was stolen when agents responded to the shooting. Photos show broken windows and insults made with paint. A reward of up to \$100,000 is being offered for information. The FBI's Minneapolis office did not immediately reply to messages seeking more details.

Classroom changes announced

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St. Paul Public Schools, with more than 30,000 students, said it would begin offering an online learning option for students who do not feel comfortable coming to school. Schools will be closed next week until Thursday to prepare for those accommodations.

Minneapolis Public Schools, which has a similar enrollment, is also offering temporary remote learning. The University of Minnesota will start a new term next week with different options depending on the class.

Fens scores 31, has double-double as South Dakota beats UMKC 99-83

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Cameron Fens' 31 points and double-double led South Dakota past UMKC 99-83 on Thursday.

Fens also contributed 15 rebounds and two blocks for the Coyotes (10-9, 2-2 Summit League). Isaac Bruns added 22 points while going 8 of 16 from the floor, including 2 for 3 from 3-point range, and 4 for 5 from the line to go with seven rebounds. Jordan Crawford had 16 points and went 5 of 9 from the field (4 for 8 from 3-point range).

The Roos (4-15, 1-4) were led by Kasheem Grady II, who recorded 21 points and seven rebounds off the bench. CJ Evans added 14 points and three steals for UMKC. Chris Dockery had 13 points.

The Coyotes led 56-36 at halftime after an early 11-0 run. They added a 9-0 run in the second half to create a 20-point cushion.

Oglala Sioux president walks back claims of DHS pressure, member arrests

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE, REBECCA SANTANA and GRAHAM LEE BREWER Associated Press

The president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe has walked back claims he made in a memo and press release earlier this week that immigration enforcement arrested four tribal members and that the federal government tried to extract an "immigration agreement" out of the tribe in return for information about their members' whereabouts.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security said it can't verify claims that any of their officers arrested or "even encountered" members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe or found anyone in their detention centers claiming to be a tribal member. They denied asking the tribe for any kind of agreement.

Tribal President Frank Star Comes Out has not responded to repeated requests for comment, including after his updated memo was released on Thursday.

The accusations of arrests came at a time when many Native Americans are already concerned over the Trump administration's immigration enforcement agenda and racial profiling by federal agents ensnaring them as well, and as some tribes have grappled with whether to engage in agreements with DHS tied to the crackdown.

Star Comes Out said Tuesday in a message on Facebook that the men were arrested in Minneapolis, where Immigration and Customs Enforcement has launched its biggest operation ever and is increasingly clashing with protesters and residents angry at the agency's tactics.

Star Comes Out also said that when the tribe reached out about the arrests, "federal officials told us that the Tribe could access that information if we entered an immigration agreement with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security."

But in the memo Thursday, Star Comes Out said his earlier statement had been "misinterpreted" and that there was no such demand from federal officials. He said the tribe had been in "cooperative communications" with federal officials about the issue and that federal officials had said that "one option for the Tribe to have easier access to information is to enter into an immigration agreement" with Immigration and Customs Enforcement and DHS. He did not specify what type of agreement.

He also said the tribe was "working with Tribal, State, and Federal officials to verify" reports that tribal members living in Minneapolis were arrested by ICE. Earlier in the week he said he had been "made aware

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that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detained four Oglala Sioux tribal members in Minneapolis" and that the tribe had their first names. He called the arrests "a treaty violation."

A series of ICE arrests of tribal citizens

The Department of Homeland Security pushed back, saying that they "have not uncovered any claims by individuals in our detention centers that they are members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe" and haven't been able to verify that their officers arrested anyone from the tribe. They also denied asking for any type of agreement from the tribe in return for giving out information.

"ICE did NOT ask the tribe for any kind of agreement, we have simply asked for basic information on the individuals, such as names and date of birth so that we can run a proper check to provide them with the facts," Homeland Security spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said.

Last year, Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren said that several tribal citizens reported being stopped and detained by ICE officers in Arizona and New Mexico. He and other tribal leaders have advised their members to carry tribal IDs with them at all times.

Last November, Elaine Miles, a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in Oregon and an actress known for her roles in "Northern Exposure" and "The Last of Us," said she was stopped by ICE officers in Washington state who told her that her tribal ID looked fake.

A member of the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Arizona was arrested in Iowa in November and was mistakenly slated to be turned over to the ICE before the error was caught and she was released, according to local media reports.

Recent clashes between Kristi Noem and Native American reservations

There is a history of tension between the Oglala Sioux and DHS that dates back to when Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was governor of South Dakota. In 2024, Star Comes Out banned Noem from the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota after Noem said — without evidence — that cartels were infiltrating reservations in the state.

During her time as governor, Noem was banned from most of the nine reservations in the state.

Noem told federal lawmakers that a gang calling itself the Ghost Dancers was affiliated with drug cartels and was committing murder on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Star Comes Out said at the time that he took deep offense at her reference, saying the Ghost Dance is one of the Oglala Sioux's "most sacred ceremonies," and was used by Noem "with blatant disrespect and is insulting to our Oyate," using the Lakota word for "people" or "nation."

At the time Noem said Star Comes Out's decision was "unfortunate" and that her focus was on working together.

Controversial collaborations with immigration agencies

The controversy between the Oglala Sioux Tribe and ICE comes as some Native American tribes with contracts with Homeland Security are rethinking those agreements.

A tribal business entity associated with the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation ended a nearly \$30 million federal contract signed in October to come up with an early design for immigrant detention centers across the U.S, after the deal was derided online as "disgusting" and "cruel" by tribe members. Many questioned how a tribe whose own ancestors were uprooted two centuries ago from the Great Lakes region and corralled on a reservation south of Topeka could participate in the Trump administration's mass deportation efforts.

In Alaska, Indigenous shareholders penned an op-ed in the Anchorage Daily News advocating that the Bering Straits Native Corporation — owned by thousands of Native American shareholders in Alaska — divest from all immigration detention centers across the country.

A spokesperson for the company didn't respond to an e-mailed request for comment.

A South Korean court sentences Yoon to 5 years in prison on charges related to martial law decree

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean court sentenced former President Yoon Suk Yeol to five years in prison Friday in the first verdict from eight criminal trials over the martial law debacle that forced him out of office and other allegations.

Yoon was impeached, arrested and dismissed as president after his short-lived imposition of martial law in December 2024 triggered huge public protests calling for his ouster.

The most significant criminal charge against him alleges that his martial law enforcement amounted to a rebellion. An independent counsel has requested the death sentence over that charge, and the Seoul Central District Court will decide on that in a ruling on Feb. 19.

Yoon has maintained he didn't intend to place the country under military rule for an extended period, saying his decree was only meant to inform the people about the danger of the liberal-controlled parliament obstructing his agenda. But investigators have viewed Yoon's decree as an attempt to bolster and prolong his rule, charging him with rebellion, abuse of power and other criminal offenses.

Yoon gets 5-year prison term in 1st verdict from 8 trials

In Friday's case, the Seoul court sentenced Yoon for defying attempts to detain him, fabricating the martial law proclamation and sidestepping a legally mandated full Cabinet meeting, depriving some Cabinet members who were not convened of their rights to deliberate on his decree.

Judge Baek Dae-hyun said in the televised ruling that imposing "a heavy punishment" was necessary because Yoon hasn't shown remorse and has only repeated "hard-to-comprehend excuses." The judge also said restoring legal systems damaged by Yoon's action was necessary.

Yoon's defense team said they will appeal the ruling, which they believe was "politicized" and reflected "the unliberal arguments by the independent counsel." Yoon's defense team argued the ruling "oversimplified the boundary between the exercise of the president's constitutional powers and criminal liability."

Yoon will likely avoid death sentence in rebellion trial

Park SungBae, a lawyer who specializes in criminal law, said there is little chance the court would decide Yoon should face the death penalty in the rebellion case. He said the court will likely issue a life sentence or a sentence of 30 years or more in prison.

South Korea has maintained a de facto moratorium on executions since 1997 and courts rarely hand down death sentences. Park said the court would take into account that Yoon's decree didn't cause casualties and didn't last long, although Yoon hasn't shown genuine remorse for his action.

South Korea has a history of pardoning former presidents who were jailed over diverse crimes in the name of promoting national unity. Those pardoned include strongman Chun Doo-hwan, who received the death penalty at a district court over his 1979 coup, the bloody 1980 crackdowns of pro-democracy protests that killed about 200 people, and other crimes.

Even if Yoon is spared the death penalty or life imprisonment at the rebellion trial, he may still face other prison sentences in the multiple smaller trials he faces.

Some observers say Yoon is likely retaining a defiant attitude in the ongoing trials to maintain his support base in the belief that he cannot avoid a lengthy sentence but could be pardoned in the future.

Yoon's decree plunged South Korea into political turmoil

On the night of Dec. 3, 2024, Yoon abruptly declared martial law in a televised speech, saying he would eliminate "anti-state forces" and protect "the constitutional democratic order." Yoon sent troops and police officers to encircle the National Assembly, but many apparently didn't aggressively cordon off the area, allowing enough lawmakers to get into an assembly hall to vote down Yoon's decree.

No major violence occurred, but Yoon's decree caused the biggest political crisis in South Korea in decades and rattled its diplomacy and financial markets. For many, his decree, the first of its kind in more than 40 years in South Korea, brought back harrowing memories of past dictatorships in the 1970s and 1980s, when military-backed leaders used martial law and emergency measures to deploy soldiers and

tanks on the streets to suppress demonstrations.

After Yoon's ouster, his liberal rival Lee Jae Myung became president via a snap election last June. After taking office, Lee appointed three independent counsels to look into allegations involving Yoon, his wife and associates.

Yoon's other trials deal with charges like ordering drone flights over North Korea to deliberately inflame animosities to look for a pretext to declare martial law. Other charges accuse Yoon of manipulating the investigation into a marine's drowning in 2023 and receiving free opinion surveys from an election broker in return for a political favor.

Asian shares are mixed and US futures edge higher after Wall Street steadies

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Friday after Wall Street broke a two-day losing streak and edged back toward record levels, helped by advances for Big Tech companies like Nvidia.

U.S. futures advanced and oil prices slipped.

Tech shares regained momentum after Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., a major supplier to the industry, reported strong profits and investment plans. TSMC gained 3% early Friday and Taiwan's benchmark Taiex was up 1.9%.

The frenzy around AI has sent Nvidia and other superstar stocks to dizzying heights, stirring criticism that their prices had shot too high. Nvidia rose 2.1% on Thursday after TSMC's Chief Financial Officer Wendell Huang said it's seeing "continued strong demand" in an encouraging signal for the entire AI industry.

TSMC's stock that trades in the United States rose 4.4% on Thursday.

The gains also followed the signing of a U.S.-Taiwan trade deal involving \$250 billion in new investments by Taiwan's semiconductor and tech companies in the U.S. In exchange, the Trump administration will cut tariffs on Taiwanese goods. The deal aims to establish a strategic economic partnership and upgrade U.S. industrial infrastructure.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 shed 0.3% to 53,936.17, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng gave up 0.6% to 26,770.56. The Shanghai Composite index lost 0.3% to 4,101.91.

China is due to report its economic growth data for 2025 on Monday. Forecasts are for the economy to have expanded at about a 4.5% annual pace, slowing from earlier in the year.

Elsewhere in Asia, South Korea's Kospi rose 0.9% to a record 4,840.74. The benchmark has been trading at record highs for weeks, helped by a recovery in confidence in AI-related shares. Samsung Electronics gained 3.5%.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 gained 0.5% to 8,903.90. India's Sensex rose 0.4%.

Wall Street steadied on Thursday as stocks related to artificial-intelligence bounced back.

The S&P 500 rose 0.3% and the Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.6%. The Nasdaq composite rose 0.2% to 23,530.02.

Easing oil prices also helped to calm investors' jitters.

Early Friday, a barrel of benchmark U.S. crude cost \$59.21, up 14 cents from a day earlier. It sank 4.6% on Thursday after Trump said he had heard "on good authority" that plans for executions in Iran had stopped amid widespread protests against the country's leadership.

Brent crude, the international standard, added 10 cents to \$63.86 per barrel. It dropped 4.1% on Thursday.

Financial markets took Trump's comments about Iran as a signal that tensions flaring above some of the world's largest oil deposits could ease, which in turn could lower the possibility of disruptions to oil supplies.

Earnings reporting season for big U.S. companies continued to pick up pace, meanwhile, with several more big financial companies delivering their results for the last three months of 2025.

"As we dive into the heart of earnings season in the coming weeks, tech results will be scrutinized in far greater detail," Ipek Ozkardeskaya of Swissquote said in a commentary.

"Concerns around circular AI deals, leverage and delayed returns on investment remain front of mind

for investors. These are compounded by rising electricity and metals costs, higher memory-chip prices, and the risk of supply disruptions," she said.

BlackRock, the giant that's now overseeing more than \$14 trillion in investments, rose 5.9% after reporting stronger profit and revenue than analysts expected.

Encouraging reports on the U.S. economy contributed to the upbeat mood.

One said fewer workers applied for unemployment benefits last week in an indication layoffs may be slowing. Other reports said manufacturing was significantly stronger in the mid-Atlantic region and in New York state than economists had forecast.

The stronger-than-expected data on the U.S. economy helped stocks of smaller companies to lead the market. Their profits can be tied more closely to the strength of the U.S. economy than their bigger, multinational rivals, and the Russell 2000 index rose 0.9%.

In other dealings early Friday, the U.S. dollar fell to 158.19 Japanese yen from 158.63 yen.

The euro rose to \$1.1614 from \$1.1609.

Social media platforms removed 4.7 million accounts after Australia banned them for children

By CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-McLAY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Social media companies have revoked access to about 4.7 million accounts identified as belonging to children in Australia since the country banned use of the platforms by those under 16, officials said.

"We stared down everybody who said it couldn't be done, some of the most powerful and rich companies in the world and their supporters," communications minister Anika Wells told reporters on Friday. "Now Australian parents can be confident that their kids can have their childhoods back."

The figures, reported to Australia's government by 10 social media platforms, were the first to show the scale of the landmark ban since it was enacted in December over fears about the effects of harmful on-line environments on young people. The law provoked fraught debates in Australia about technology use, privacy, child safety and mental health and has prompted other countries to consider similar measures.

Officials said the figure was encouraging

Under Australian law, Facebook, Instagram, Kick, Reddit, Snapchat, Threads, TikTok, X, YouTube and Twitch face fines of up to 49.5 million Australian dollars (\$33.2 million) if they fail to take reasonable steps to remove the accounts of Australian children younger than 16. Messaging services such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger are exempt.

To verify age, platforms can either request copies of identification documents, use a third party to apply age estimation technology to an account holder's face, or make inferences from data already available such as how long an account has been held.

About 2.5 million Australians are aged between 8 and 15, said the country's eSafety Commissioner Julie Inman Grant, and past estimates suggested 84% of 8- to 12-year-olds held social media accounts. It was not known how many accounts were held across the 10 platforms but Inman Grant said the figure of 4.7 million "deactivated or restricted" was encouraging.

"We're preventing predatory social media companies from accessing our children," Inman Grant said.

The 10 biggest companies covered by the ban were compliant with it and had reported removal figures to Australia's regulator on time, the commissioner said. She added that social media companies were expected to shift their efforts from enforcing the ban to preventing children from creating new accounts or otherwise circumventing the prohibition.

Meta removed 550,000 accounts

Australian officials didn't break the figures down by platform. But Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and Threads, said this week that by the day after the ban came into effect it had removed nearly 550,000 accounts belonging to users understood to be under 16.

In the blog post divulging the figures, Meta criticized the ban and said smaller platforms where the ban

doesn't apply might not prioritize safety. The company also noted browsing platforms would still present content to children based on algorithms — a concern that led to the ban's enactment.

The law was widely popular among parents and child safety campaigners. Online privacy advocates and some groups representing teenagers opposed it, with the latter citing the support found in online spaces by vulnerable young people or those geographically isolated in Australia's sprawling rural areas.

Some said they had managed to fool age assessing technologies or were helped by parents or older siblings to circumvent the ban.

Other countries might follow

Since Australia began debating the measures in 2024, other countries have considered following suit. Denmark's government is among them, saying in November that it had planned to implement a social media ban for children under 15.

"The fact that in spite of some skepticism out there, it's working and being replicated now around the world, is something that is a source of Australian pride," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Friday.

Opposition lawmakers have suggested that young people have circumvented the ban easily or are migrating to other apps that are less scrutinized than the largest platforms. Inman Grant said Friday that data seen by her office showed a spike in downloads of alternative apps when the ban was enacted but not a spike in usage.

"There is no real long-term trends yet that we can say but we're engaging," she said.

Meanwhile, she said, the regulator she heads planned to introduce "world-leading AI companion and chatbot restrictions in March." She didn't disclose further details.

In their words: Greenlanders talk about Trump's desire to own their Arctic island

By EMMA BURROWS AP European Security Correspondent

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump has turned the Arctic island of Greenland into a geopolitical hotspot with his demands to own it and suggestions that the U.S. could take it by force.

The island is a semiautonomous region of Denmark, and Denmark's foreign minister said Wednesday after a meeting at the White House that a "fundamental disagreement" remains with Trump over the island.

The crisis is dominating the lives of Greenlanders and "people are not sleeping, children are afraid, and it just fills everything these days. And we can't really understand it," Naaja Nathanielsen, a Greenlandic minister said at a meeting with lawmakers in Britain's Parliament this week.

Here's a look at what Greenlanders think:

Trump "undermining" Greenlandic culture

Trump has dismissed Denmark's defenses in Greenland, suggesting it's "two dog sleds."

By saying that, Trump is "undermining us as a people," Mari Laursen told AP.

Laursen said she used to work on a fishing trawler but is now studying law. She approached AP to say she thought previous examples of cooperation between Greenlanders and Americans are "often overlooked when Trump talks about dog sleds."

She said during World War II, Greenlandic hunters on their dog sleds worked in conjunction with the U.S. military to detect Nazi German forces on the island.

"The Arctic climate and environment is so different from maybe what they (Americans) are used to with the warships and helicopters and tanks. A dog sled is more efficient. It can go where no warship and helicopter can go," Laursen said.

Greenlanders don't believe Trump's claims

Trump has repeatedly claimed Russian and Chinese ships are swarming the seas around Greenland. Plenty of Greenlanders who spoke to AP dismissed that claim.

"I think he (Trump) should mind his own business," said Lars Vintner, a heating engineer.

"What's he going to do with Greenland? He speaks of Russians and Chinese and everything in Green-

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landic waters or in our country. We are only 57,000 people. The only Chinese I see is when I go to the fast food market. And every summer we go sailing and we go hunting and I never saw Russian or Chinese ships here in Greenland," he said.

Down at Nuuk's small harbor, Gerth Josefsen spoke to AP as he attached small fish as bait to his lines. He said, "I don't see them (the ships)" and said he had only seen "a Russian fishing boat ten years ago."

Trump is interested in Greenland's critical minerals

Maya Martinsen, 21, a shop worker, told AP she doesn't believe Trump wants Greenland to enhance America's security.

"I know it's not national security. I think it's for the oils and minerals that we have that are untouched," she said, suggesting the Americans are treating her home like a "business trade."

She said she thought it was good that American, Greenlandic and Danish officials met in the White House Wednesday and said she believes that "the Danish and Greenlandic people are mostly on the same side," despite some Greenlanders wanting independence.

"It is nerve-wrecking, that the Americans aren't changing their mind," she said, adding that she welcomed the news that Denmark and its allies would be sending troops to Greenland because "it's important that the people we work closest with, that they send support."

Greenlanders get support from Denmark

Tuuta Mikaelson, a 22-year-old student, told AP that she hopes the U.S. got the message from Danish and Greenlandic officials to "back off."

She said she didn't want to join the United States because in Greenland "there are laws and stuff, and health insurance .. we can go to the doctors and nurses ... we don't have to pay anything," she said adding "I don't want the U.S. to take that away from us."

Greenland is at the center of a media storm

In Greenland's parliament, Juno Berthelsen, MP for the Naleraq opposition party that campaigns for independence in the Greenlandic parliament told AP that he has done multiple media interviews every day for the last two weeks.

When asked by AP what he would say to Trump and Vice President JD Vance if he had the chance, Berthelsen said:

"I would tell them, of course, that — as we've seen — a lot of Republicans as well as Democrats are not in favor of having such an aggressive rhetoric and talk about military intervention, invasion. So we would tell them to move beyond that and continue this diplomatic dialogue and making sure that the Greenlandic people are the ones who are at the very center of this conversation."

"It is our country," he said. "Greenland belongs to the Greenlandic people."

Inside a year of firings that have shaken the Trump Justice

Department: 'A great deal of fear'

By ERIC TUCKER and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michael Ben'ary was driving one of his children to soccer practice on an October evening last year when he paused at a red light to check his work phone. He was in the middle of a counterterrorism prosecution so important that President Donald Trump highlighted it in his State of the Union address.

Ben'ary said he was shocked to see his phone had been disabled. He found the explanation later in his personal email account, a letter informing him he had been fired.

A veteran prosecutor, Ben'ary handled high-profile cases over two decades at the Justice Department, including the murder of a Drug Enforcement Administration agent and a suicide-bomb plot targeting the U.S. Capitol. Most recently he was leading the case arising from a deadly attack on American service members in Afghanistan.

Yet the same credentials that enhanced Ben'ary's resume spelled the undoing of his government career. His termination without explanation came hours after right-wing commentator Julie Kelly told hundreds

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of thousands of online followers that he had previously served as a senior counsel to Lisa Monaco, the No. 2 Justice Department official in the Biden administration. Kelly also suggested Ben'ary was part of the "internal resistance" to prosecuting former FBI Director James Comey, even though Ben'ary was never involved in the case.

As Attorney General Pam Bondi approaches her first year on the job, the firings of attorneys like Ben'ary have defined her turbulent tenure. The terminations and a larger voluntary exodus of lawyers have erased centuries of combined experience and left the department with fewer career employees to act as a bulwark for the rule of law at a time when Trump is testing the limits of executive power by demanding prosecutions of his political enemies.

Interviews by The Associated Press of more than a half-dozen fired employees offer a snapshot of the toll throughout the department. The departures include lawyers who prosecuted violent attacks on police at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, environmental, civil rights and ethics enforcers, counterterrorism prosecutors, immigration judges and attorneys who defend administration policies. They continued this week, when several prosecutors in Minnesota moved to resign amid turmoil over an investigation into the shooting of a woman by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer.

"To lose people at that career level, people who otherwise intended to stay and now are either being discharged or themselves are walking away, is immensely damaging to the public interest," said Stuart Gerson, a senior official in the George H.W. Bush administration and acting attorney general early in the Clinton administration. "We're losing really capable people, people who have never viewed themselves as political and attempted to do the right thing."

Justice Connection, a network of department alumni, estimates that more than 230 lawyers, agents and other employees from across the department were fired last year — apparently because of their work on cases they were assigned, past criticism of Trump or seemingly no reason. More than 6,400 employees are estimated to have left a department that at the end of 2025 had roughly 108,000, the group says.

The Justice Department, for its part, says it has hired thousands of career attorneys over the last year. The Trump administration has characterized some of the fired and departed workers as out-of-step with its agenda.

Ben'ary left with unfinished business, including the prosecution stemming from the Kabul airport bombing and the national security unit he led at the U.S. attorney's office for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Left to pack his belongings, he posted a typed note near his door that functioned as a distress call, reminding colleagues they had sworn an oath to follow the facts "without fear or favor" and "unhindered by political interference."

But, he warned, "In recent months, the political leadership of the Department have violated these principles, jeopardizing our national security and making Americans less safe."

Unparalleled in scale, scope and motivation

Since its founding in 1870, the Justice Department has occupied elevated status in American democracy, sustained through transitions of power by reliance on facts, evidence and law.

To be sure, there has always been a political component to the department, with lawyers appointed by the president.

But even during turbulent times, when attorneys general have been pushed out by presidents or resigned rather than accede to White House demands — as in the Watergate-era "Saturday Night Massacre" — the department's rank-and-file have generally been insulated thanks to long-recognized civil service protections.

"This is completely unprecedented in both its scale and scope and underlying motivation," said Peter Keisler, a senior official in the George W. Bush Justice Department.

In his first term, Trump pushed out one attorney general and accepted another's resignation but the workforce remained largely intact. He returned to office seething over Biden-era prosecutions of him, vowing retribution.

The firings began even before Bondi arrived last February. Prosecutors on special counsel Jack Smith's

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team that investigated Trump were terminated days after the inauguration, followed by prosecutors hired on temporary assignments for cases resulting from the 2021 Capitol insurrection.

"The people working on these cases were not political agents of any kind," said Aliya Khalidi, a Jan. 6 prosecutor who was fired. "It's all people who just care about the rule of law."

The firings have continued, at times surgical, at times random — almost always without explanation.

Adam Schleifer, a Los Angeles prosecutor targeted in a social media post by far-right activist Laura Loomer over past critical comments of Trump, was fired in March. The Justice Department the following month fired attorney Erez Reuveni, who conceded in court that Salvadoran national Kilmar Abrego Garcia was mistakenly deported. Reuveni later accused the department of trying to mislead judges to execute deportations. Department officials deny the assertion.

Two weeks after Maurene Comey completed a sex trafficking trial against Sean "Diddy" Combs, the New York prosecutor was fired, also without explanation. Like Ben'Ary, she penned a pointed farewell, telling colleagues that "fear is the tool of a tyrant." Her father — former FBI Director James Comey, a frequent Trump target — uttered those same words after being indicted in September in a case that has been dismissed.

Among the most affected sections is the storied Civil Rights Division. A recent open letter of protest was signed by over 200 employees who left in 2025, with several supervisors recently giving notice of plans to depart. The Public Integrity Section, which prosecutes sensitive public corruption cases, has also been hollowed out by resignations.

The Justice Department has disputed the accounts of some of those who have been fired or quit and has defended the termination of those who investigated Trump as "consistent with the mission of ending the weaponization of government."

"This is the most efficient Department of Justice in American history, and our attorneys will continue to deliver measurable results for the American people," the department said in a statement. More than 3,400 career attorneys have been hired since Trump took office, the department says.

The departures have caused backlogs and staff shortages, with senior leaders soliciting job applications. It has affected the department's daily business as well as efforts to fulfill Trump's desires to prosecute political opponents.

Desperate for lawyers willing to file criminal cases against Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James, the administration in September forced out the veteran U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, replacing him with Lindsey Halligan, a White House aide with no experience as a federal prosecutor.

Halligan secured the indictments but the win was short-lived.

One judge later identified grave missteps in how Halligan presented the Comey case to a grand jury. Another dismissed both prosecutions outright, calling Halligan's appointment unlawful.

Smith, the special counsel who investigated Trump but left before he could be fired, has himself lamented the losses. "These are not partisans," he recently told lawmakers.

"They just want to do good work," he added, "and I think when you lose that culture, you lose a lot."

'Our dream was to be federal prosecutors'

Khalidi joined the department in 2023 in a group of new prosecutors hired to help with the hundreds of cases stemming from the Capitol riot.

Upon Trump's return to the White House, she watched cases she prosecuted get dismantled by Trump's sweeping clemency for all 1,500 defendants charged in the riot, including those who attacked police.

Less than two weeks later, a Justice Department demand for the names of FBI agents involved in Jan. 6 investigations triggered rumors of potential mass firings. Worried about the agents she worked with, Khalidi spent the day checking in on them. But as she started preparing dinner one Friday evening, she received an email suggesting she had lost her own job.

Attached was a memo from then-Acting Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove ordering the firings of prosecutors like Khalidi who'd been hired for temporary assignments but were moved into permanent roles after Trump's win, a maneuver Bove called "subversive personnel actions by the previous administration."

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Neither the email nor memo identified the fired prosecutors, leaving them to guess.

Khalidi grabbed a suitcase to collect family photos and other personal items she kept at work and rushed to the office, retreating with fellow shocked prosecutors to a bar where they received termination emails.

The group of 15 fired attorneys later assembled to surrender their computers and phones, entering the same room where they gathered on their first day in 2023.

"For a lot of us, our dream was to be federal prosecutors," Khalidi said. "And so we had happy memories of that room, of being excited on our first day. So it was just kind of surreal to be back there turning in our stuff."

The news came for Anam Petit, an immigration judge, during a break between hearings.

Appointed during the Biden administration, she said she felt uneasy when Trump won but also figured her position would probably be safe because immigration judges bear responsibility for issuing removal orders for those in the country illegally, a core presidential priority.

Petit arrived on September 5 bracing for bad news because it was the Friday of the pay period before her two-year work anniversary, when her temporary appointment was poised to become permanent. Though she said she had received strong performance reviews and had already exceeded her case completion goal for the year, she had grown anxious as colleagues were fired amid an administration push to accelerate deportations.

She was in the courtroom between hearings when she learned via email she'd been fired. She left to text her husband, then returned to work.

"I just put my phone back in my pocket and I went into the courtroom to deliver my decision, with a very shaky voice and shaky hands, trying to center myself back to that decision to so that I could relay it," Petit said.

Joseph Tirrell was concerned about job security as far back as last fall. As the department's chief ethics officer, he had affirmed that Smith, the special counsel, was entitled to a law firm's free legal services, a decision he sensed might rile incoming leadership.

But he remained in the position and over the ensuing months counseled Bondi's staff in sometimes strained conversations on the propriety of accepting various gifts, including a cigar box from mixed martial arts fighter Conor McGregor.

He was fired in July, just before a FIFA World Cup Final in New Jersey that Tirrell had said Bondi could not ethically accept a free invitation to. He was not terribly surprised, he says, when it was later reported that Bondi attended in Trump's box. The Justice Department maintains the invitation did not constitute a gift and that Bondi's attendance in her capacity as a FIFA task force officer complied with ethics rules.

"There's a great deal of fear there just because I was fired and just because so many others were summarily fired," Tirrell said. "Are you going to get fired because you provided ethics advice? Are you going to get fired because you have a pride flag on your desk?"

'Our country depends on you'

Trump was touting his administration's commitment to counterterrorism during his State of the Union address last March when he announced a success: the capture of an ISIS-K militant charged in a Kabul airport bombing that killed 13 American servicemembers during the 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Mohammad Sharifullah arrived the following day in the U.S., encountering Ben'ary in an Alexandria, Virginia, courtroom.

Ben'ary spent the next several months working on the case, but on Oct. 1, he was fired. It was the apparent result, he told colleagues, of a social media post he said contained "false information" — a reference to the one from Julie Kelly.

The termination was so abrupt, he couldn't tell his colleagues where he had saved important filings and notes. Another prosecutor listed on the case, Comey's son-in-law, Troy Edwards, had resigned days earlier upon Comey's indictment. Once set for trial last month, the case has been postponed.

In his farewell note, he observed that he was not alone, that in "just a few short months" career employ-

ees like himself had been removed from U.S. attorneys offices, the FBI "and other critical parts of DOJ."

"While I am no longer your colleague, I ask that each of you continue to do the right thing, in the right way, for the right reasons," Ben'ary wrote. "Follow the facts and the law. Stand up for what we all believe in — our Constitution and the rule of law. Our country depends on you."

Venezuela's Machado says she presented her Nobel Peace Prize to Trump during their meeting

By WILL WEISSERT, JOEY CAPPELLETTI and REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado said she presented her Nobel Peace Prize medal to President Donald Trump at the White House on Thursday even as he has questioned her credibility to take over her country after the U.S. ousted then-President Nicolás Maduro.

The Nobel Institute has said Machado could not give her prize to Trump, an honor that he has coveted. Even if it the gesture proves to be purely symbolic, it was extraordinary given that Trump has effectively sidelined Machado, who has long been the face of resistance in Venezuela. He has signaled his willingness to work with acting President Delcy Rodríguez, who had been Maduro's second in command.

"I presented the president of the United States the medal, the Nobel Peace Prize," Machado told reporters after leaving the White House and heading to Capitol Hill. She said she had done so "as a recognition for his unique commitment with our freedom."

Trump confirmed later on social media that Machado had left the medal for him to keep, and he said it was an honor to meet her.

"She is a wonderful woman who has been through so much. María presented me with her Nobel Peace Prize for the work I have done," Trump said in his post. "Such a wonderful gesture of mutual respect. Thank you María!"

The White House later posted a photo of Machado standing next to Trump in the Oval Office as he holds the medal in a large frame. A text in the frame reads, "Presented as a personal symbol of gratitude on behalf of the Venezuelan people in recognition of President Trump's principled and decisive action to secure a free Venezuela."

Trump has raised doubts about his stated commitment to backing democratic rule in Venezuela, giving no timetable on when elections might be held. Machado indicated that he had provided few specifics on that front during their discussion.

She did not provide more information on what was said.

'We can count on President Trump'

After the closed-door meeting, Machado greeted dozens of cheering supporters waiting for her near the White House gates, stopping to hug many.

"We can count on President Trump," she told them without elaborating, prompting some to briefly chant, "Thank you, Trump."

Before her visit to Washington, Machado had not been seen in public since she traveled last month to Norway, where her daughter received the peace prize on her behalf. She had spent 11 months in hiding in Venezuela before she appeared in Norway after the ceremony.

The jubilant scene after her meeting with Trump stood in contrast to political realities in Venezuela. Rodríguez remains in charge of day-to-day government operations, along with others in Maduro's inner circle. In her first state of the union speech Thursday, the interim president promoted the resumption of diplomatic ties between the historic adversaries and advocated for opening the state-run oil industry to more foreign investment after Trump pledged to seize control of Venezuelan crude sales.

Trump has said it would be difficult for Machado to lead because she "doesn't have the support within or the respect within the country." Her party is widely believed to have won 2024 elections rejected by Maduro.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt called Machado "a remarkable and brave voice" but also

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said the meeting didn't mean Trump's opinion of her changed, calling it "a realistic assessment."

Leavitt told reporters that Trump supported new Venezuelan elections "when the time is right" but did not say when he thought that might be.

A 'frank and positive discussion' about Venezuela

Leavitt said Machado had sought the face-to-face meeting without setting expectations for what would occur. She spent about two and a half hours at the White House.

"I don't think he needs to hear anything from Ms. Machado," the press secretary said while the meeting was still going on, other than to have a "frank and positive discussion about what's taking place in Venezuela."

After leaving the White House, Machado went on to a closed-door meeting with a bipartisan group of senators.

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said Machado told them that "if there's not some progress, real progress towards a transition in power, and/or elections in the next several months, we should all be worried."

"She reminded us that Delcy Rodríguez is, in many ways, worse than Maduro," he added.

Asked if Machado had heard any commitment from the White House on holding elections in Venezuela, Murphy said, "No, I don't think she got any commitment from them."

Sen. Bernie Moreno, an Ohio Republican, was exultant following the meeting, saying Machado "delivered a message that loud and clear: What President Trump did was the most important, significant event in Latin America. That getting rid of Maduro was absolutely essential."

Machado's Washington stop coincided with U.S. forces in the Caribbean Sea seizing another sanctioned oil tanker that the Trump administration says had ties to Venezuela. It is part of a broader U.S. effort to take control of the South American country's oil after U.S. forces captured Maduro and his wife less than two weeks ago at a heavily guarded compound in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas and brought them to New York to stand trial on drug trafficking charges.

Leavitt said Venezuela's interim authorities have been fully cooperating with the Trump administration and noted that Rodríguez's government said it planned to release more prisoners detained under Maduro. Among those released were five Americans this week.

Trump said Wednesday that he had a "great conversation" with Rodríguez, their first since Maduro was ousted.

Machado doesn't get the nod from Trump

Just hours after Maduro's capture, Trump said of Machado that "it would be very tough for her to be the leader." Machado had steered a careful course to avoid offending Trump, notably after winning the peace prize, and had sought to cultivate relationships with him and key administration voices like Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

The industrial engineer and daughter of a steel magnate, Machado began challenging the ruling party in 2004, when the nongovernmental organization she co-founded, Súmate, promoted a referendum to recall then-President Hugo Chávez. The initiative failed, and Machado and other Súmate executives were charged with conspiracy.

A year later, she drew the anger of Chávez and his allies again for traveling to Washington to meet President George W. Bush, whom Chávez considered an adversary.

Almost two decades later, she marshaled millions of Venezuelans to reject Chávez's successor, Maduro, for another term in the 2024 election. But ruling party-loyal electoral authorities declared him the winner despite ample credible evidence to the contrary. Ensuing anti-government protests ended in a brutal crackdown.

Venezuela's new leader calls for opening oil industry to foreign investment and warmer US ties

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez used her first state of the union message Thursday to advocate for opening the crucial state-run oil industry to more foreign investment following the Trump administration's pledge to seize control of Venezuelan crude sales.

For the first time, Rodríguez laid out a vision for Venezuela's new political reality — one that challenges her government's most deeply rooted beliefs less than two weeks after the United States captured and toppled former President Nicolás Maduro.

Under pressure from the U.S. to cooperate with its plans for reshaping Venezuela's sanctioned oil industry, Maduro's former vice president declared that a "new policy is being formed in Venezuela."

She urged the foreign diplomats in attendance to tell investors abroad about the changes and called on lawmakers to approve oil sector reforms that would secure foreign firms' access to Venezuela's vast reserves.

"Venezuela, in free trade relations with the world, can sell the products of its energy industry," she said.

The Trump administration has said it plans to control future oil export revenues to ensure it benefits the Venezuelan people.

In that vein, Rodríguez described cash from the oil sales flowing into two sovereign wealth funds, one to support crisis-stricken health services and another to bolster public infrastructure, much of which was built under Maduro's predecessor, Hugo Chávez, and has since deteriorated.

These days the country's hospitals are so poorly equipped that patients are asked to provide supplies needed for their care, from syringes to surgical screws.

While Rodríguez criticized the U.S. capture of Maduro and referred to a "stain on our relations," she also promoted the resumption of diplomacy between the historic adversaries. Her succinct, 44-minute speech and mollifying tone marked a dramatic contrast to her predecessors' fiery rants against U.S. imperialism that often went on for hours.

"Let us not be afraid of diplomacy," Rodríguez. "I ask that politics not be transformed, that it not begin with hatred and intolerance."

The day before, she gave a 4-minute briefing to the media to say her government would continue releasing prisoners detained under Maduro's harsh rule. But human rights groups have verified just a fraction of the releases that she claimed took place.

Rodríguez appears to be threading a needle.

A portrait of Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, was displayed next to her as she spoke. She called for the U.S. government to "respect the dignity" of Maduro, who is being held in a Brooklyn jail after pleading not guilty to drug-trafficking charges. She portrayed herself as defending Venezuela's sovereignty even as the country warmed up to the U.S. with dizzying speed.

"If one day, as acting president, I have to go to Washington, I will do so standing up, walking, not being dragged," she said. "I'll go standing tall ... never crawling."

Rodríguez delivered her speech as Venezuela's Nobel Prize-winning opposition leader María Corina Machado was the one in Washington to meet President Donald Trump.

Since Maduro's ouster, Trump has frozen Machado out of discussions about the nation's political fate while embracing Rodríguez, praising Maduro's long-time loyalist as a "terrific person" after holding his first known phone call with her on Wednesday.

Machado, whose party is considered to have won the tumultuous 2024 presidential elections despite Maduro's claims of victory, said she presented her Nobel Peace Prize medal to Trump during their closed-door conversation.

Emerging from the White House afterward, she greeted dozens of cheering supporters. "We can count on President Trump," she told them, without elaborating.

Her role in Venezuelan politics remains uncertain as Rodríguez's government has been effectively relieved

of having to hold elections for the foreseeable future.

Machado's meeting with Trump received no coverage in Venezuela.

The country's state-run TV still pumps out a steady stream of pro-government images, including various statements from Iranian and Russian officials decrying "U.S. aggression" and wall-to-wall coverage of state-orchestrated rallies demanding Maduro's return.

Crowds of teachers on Thursday marched through the streets of Venezuela's capital, Caracas, carrying posters condemning the U.S. for "kidnapping" Maduro and chanting slogans in support of the government. National police wearing riot gear were everywhere. Pro-government graffiti scrawled across city walls read: "To doubt is to betray."

"They've kept the same anti-imperialist rhetoric going, but more moderated," said David Smilde, a Venezuela expert at Tulane University who has studied Venezuela for 30 years. "Their idea is to give Trump everything he wants economically, but stay the course politically."

On the streets of central Caracas, most Venezuelans going about their days declined to be interviewed about their opinions, fearful of government reprisals as Maduro's security apparatus remains intact. Others were simply at a loss of what to say about their country's strange new reality in which the U.S. claims to call the shots.

"It's a complete sea of uncertainty, and the only one who now has the power to make decisions is the United States government," said Pablo Rojas, 28, a music producer.

He said he was following Trump's meeting with Machado closely "to see if she takes a leadership position, if they consider her ready to lead the country or be a candidate." He shook his head in puzzlement. "It's impossible to know what will happen."

Court ruling jeopardizes freedom for pro-Palestinian activist Mahmoud Khalil

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

A federal appeals panel on Thursday reversed a lower court decision that released former Columbia University graduate student Mahmoud Khalil from an immigration jail, bringing the government one step closer to detaining and ultimately deporting the Palestinian activist.

The three-judge panel of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals didn't decide the key issue in Khalil's case: whether the Trump administration's effort to throw Khalil out of the U.S. over his campus activism and criticism of Israel is unconstitutional.

But in its 2-1 decision, the panel ruled a federal judge in New Jersey didn't have jurisdiction to decide the matter at this time. Federal law requires the case to fully move through the immigration courts first, before Khalil can challenge the decision, they wrote.

"That scheme ensures that petitioners get just one bite at the apple — not zero or two," the panel wrote. "But it also means that some petitioners, like Khalil, will have to wait to seek relief for allegedly unlawful government conduct."

Ruling won't result in immediate detention

Thursday's decision marked a major win for the Trump administration's sweeping campaign to detain and deport noncitizens who joined protests against Israel.

Tricia McLaughlin, a Homeland Security Department spokesperson, called the ruling "a vindication of the rule of law."

In a statement, she said the department will "work to enforce his lawful removal order" and encouraged Khalil to "self-deport now before he is arrested, deported, and never given a chance to return."

It was not immediately clear whether the government would seek to detain Khalil, a legal permanent resident, again while his legal challenges continue.

In a statement distributed by the American Civil Liberties Union, Khalil called the appeals ruling "deeply disappointing."

"The door may have been opened for potential re-detainment down the line, but it has not closed our

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commitment to Palestine and to justice and accountability," he said. "I will continue to fight, through every legal avenue and with every ounce of determination, until my rights, and the rights of others like me, are fully protected."

Baher Azmy, one of Khalil's lawyers, with the Center for Constitutional Rights, said the ruling was "contrary to rulings of other federal courts."

"Our legal options are by no means concluded, and we will fight with every available avenue," he said.

The ACLU said the Trump administration cannot lawfully re-detain Khalil until the order takes formal effect, which won't happen while he can still immediately appeal.

Khalil's lawyers can request that the panel's decision be set aside and the matter reconsidered by a larger group of judges on the 3rd Circuit Court of Appeals, or they can go to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Khalil calls allegations 'baseless'

An outspoken leader of the pro-Palestinian movement at Columbia, Khalil was arrested last March. He then spent three months detained in a Louisiana immigration jail, missing the birth of his first child.

Federal officials have accused Khalil of leading activities "aligned to Hamas," though they have not presented evidence to support the claim and have not accused him of criminal conduct. They also accused Khalil, 31, of failing to disclose information on his green card application.

The government justified the arrest under a seldom-used statute that allows for the expulsion of non-citizens whose beliefs are deemed to pose a threat to U.S. foreign policy interests.

In June, a federal judge in New Jersey ruled that justification would likely be declared unconstitutional and ordered Khalil released.

President Donald Trump's administration appealed that ruling, arguing the deportation decision should fall to an immigration judge, rather than a federal court.

Khalil has dismissed the allegations as "baseless and ridiculous," framing his arrest and detention as a "direct consequence of exercising my right to free speech as I advocated for a free Palestine and an end to the genocide in Gaza."

New York City's new mayor, Zohran Mamdani, said on social media Thursday that Khalil should remain free.

"Last year's arrest of Mahmoud Khalil was more than just a chilling act of political repression, it was an attack on all of our constitutional rights," Mamdani wrote on X. "Now, as the crackdown on pro-Palestinian free speech continues, Mahmoud is being threatened with rearrest. Mahmoud is free — and must remain free."

'Now-or-never claims'

Judge Arianna Freeman dissented Thursday, writing that her colleagues were holding Khalil to the wrong legal standard. Khalil, she wrote, is raising "now-or-never claims" that can be handled at the district court level, even though his immigration case isn't complete.

Both judges who ruled against Khalil, Thomas Hardiman and Stephanos Bibas, were Republican appointees. President George W. Bush appointed Hardiman to the 3rd Circuit, while Trump appointed Bibas. President Joe Biden, a Democrat, appointed Freeman.

The two-judge majority rejected Freeman's worry that their decision would leave Khalil with no remedy for unconstitutional immigration detention, even if he later can appeal.

"But our legal system routinely forces petitioners — even those with meritorious claims — to wait to raise their arguments," the judges wrote.

The decision comes as an appeals board in the immigration court system weighs a previous order that found Khalil could be deported to Algeria, where he maintains citizenship through a distant relative, or Syria, where he was born in a refugee camp to a Palestinian family.

His attorneys have said he faces mortal danger if forced to return to either country.

Aggressive tactics used on Minneapolis protesters raise concerns about federal officer training

By CLAUDIA LAUER Associated Press

Federal immigration agents deployed to Minneapolis have used aggressive crowd-control tactics that have become a dominant concern in the aftermath of the deadly shooting of a woman in her car last week.

They have pointed rifles at demonstrators and deployed chemical irritants early in confrontations. They have broken vehicle windows and pulled occupants from cars. They have scuffled with protesters and shoved them to the ground.

The government says the actions are necessary to protect officers from violent attacks. The encounters in turn have riled up protesters even more, especially as videos of the incidents are shared widely on social media.

What is unfolding in Minneapolis reflects a broader shift in how the federal government is asserting its authority during protests, relying on immigration agents and investigators to perform crowd-management roles traditionally handled by local police who often have more training in public order tactics and de-escalating large crowds.

Experts warn the approach runs counter to de-escalation standards and risks turning volatile demonstrations into deadly encounters.

The confrontations come amid a major immigration enforcement surge ordered by the Trump administration in early December, which sent more than 2,000 officers from across the Department of Homeland Security into the Minneapolis-St. Paul area. Many of the officers involved are typically tasked with arrests, deportations and criminal investigations, not managing volatile public demonstrations.

Tensions escalated after the fatal shooting of Renee Good, a 37-year-old woman killed by an immigration agent last week, an incident federal officials have defended as self-defense after they say Good weaponized her vehicle.

The killing has intensified protests and scrutiny of the federal response.

On Monday, the American Civil Liberties Union of Minnesota asked a federal judge to intervene, filing a lawsuit on behalf of six residents seeking an emergency injunction to limit how federal agents operate during protests, including restrictions on the use of chemical agents, the pointing of firearms at non-threatening individuals and interference with lawful video recording.

Stepping outside their traditional role

"There's so much about what's happening now that is not a traditional approach to immigration apprehensions," said former Immigration and Customs Enforcement Director Sarah Saldaña.

Saldaña, who left the post at the beginning of 2017 as President Donald Trump's first term began, said she can't speak to how the agency currently trains its officers. When she was director, she said officers received training on how to interact with people who might be observing an apprehension or filming of officers, but agents rarely had to deal with crowds or protests.

"This is different. You would hope that the agency would be responsive given the evolution of what's happening — brought on, mind you, by the aggressive approach that has been taken coming from the top," she said.

Ian Adams, an assistant professor of criminal justice at the University of South Carolina, said the majority of crowd-management or protest training in policing happens at the local level — usually at larger police departments that have public order units.

"It's highly unlikely that your typical ICE agent has a great deal of experience with public order tactics or control," Adams said.

DHS Secretary Tricia McLaughlin said in a written statement that ICE officer candidates receive extensive training over eight weeks in courses that include conflict management and de-escalation. She said many of the candidates are military veterans and about 85% have previous law enforcement experience.

"All ICE candidates are subject to months of rigorous training and selection at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, where they are trained in everything from de-escalation tactics to firearms to driving

training. Homeland Security Investigations candidates receive more than 100 days of specialized training," she said.

Ed Maguire, a criminology professor at Arizona State University, has written extensively about crowd-management and protest-related law enforcement training. He said while he hasn't seen the current training curriculum for ICE officers, he has reviewed recent training materials for federal officers and called it "horrifying."

Tactics that escalate tension

Maguire said what he's seeing in Minneapolis feels like a perfect storm for bad consequences.

"You can't even say this doesn't meet best practices. That's too high a bar. These don't seem to meet generally accepted practices," he said.

"We're seeing routinely substandard law enforcement practices that would just never be accepted at the local level," he added. "Then there seems to be just an absence of standard accountability practices."

Adams noted that police department practices have "evolved to understand that the sort of 1950s and 1960s instinct to meet every protest with force, has blowback effects that actually make the disorder worse."

He said police departments now try to open communication with organizers, set boundaries and sometimes even show deference within reason. There's an understanding that inside of a crowd, using unnecessary force can have a domino effect that might cause escalation from protesters and from officers.

Despite training for officers responding to civil unrest dramatically shifting over the last four decades, there is no nationwide standard of best practices. For example, some departments bar officers from spraying pepper spray directly into the face of people exercising Constitutional speech. Others bar the use of tear gas or other chemical agents in residential neighborhoods.

Regardless of the specifics, experts recommend that departments have written policies they review regularly.

"Organizations and agencies aren't always familiar with what their own policies are," said Humberto Cardounel, senior director of training and technical assistance at the National Policing Institute.

"They go through it once in basic training then expect (officers) to know how to comport themselves two years later, five years later," he said. "We encourage them to understand and know their training, but also to simulate their training."

Adams said part of the reason local officers are the best option for performing public order tasks is they have a compact with the community.

"I think at the heart of this is the challenge of calling what ICE is doing even policing," he said.

"Police agencies have a relationship with their community that extends before and after any incidents. Officers know we will be here no matter what happens, and the community knows regardless of what happens today, these officers will be here tomorrow."

Saldaña noted that both sides have increased their aggression.

"You cannot put yourself in front of an armed officer, you cannot put your hands on them certainly. That is impeding law enforcement actions," she said.

"At this point, I'm getting concerned on both sides — the aggression from law enforcement and the increasingly aggressive behavior from protesters."

European troops arrive in Greenland as talks with US highlight 'disagreement' over island's future

By EMMA BURROWS, CLAUDIA CIOBANU and DANIEL NIEMANN Associated Press

NUUK, Greenland (AP) — Troops from several European countries continued to arrive in Greenland on Thursday in a show of support for Denmark as talks among representatives of Denmark, Greenland and the U.S. highlighted "fundamental disagreement" over the future of the Arctic island.

The disagreement came into starker focus Thursday, with the White House describing plans for more talks with officials from Denmark and Greenland as "technical talks on the acquisition agreement" for the

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U.S. to acquire Greenland.

That was a far cry from the way Danish Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen described it as a working group that would discuss ways to work through differences between the nations.

"The group, in our view, should focus on how to address the American security concerns, while at the same time respecting the red lines of the Kingdom of Denmark," he said Wednesday after the meeting.

Before the talks began Wednesday, Denmark announced it would increase its military presence in Greenland. Several European partners — including France, Germany, the U.K., Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands — started sending symbolic numbers of troops or promised to do so in the following days.

The troop movements were intended to portray unity among Europeans and send a signal to President Donald Trump that an American takeover of Greenland is not necessary as NATO together can safeguard the security of the Arctic region amid rising Russian and Chinese interest.

The European troops did little to dissuade Trump.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Thursday that it had no impact on the U.S. president's decision-making or goal of acquiring Greenland.

"The president has made his priority quite clear, that he wants the United States to acquire Greenland. He thinks it's in our best national security to do that," she said.

Rasmussen, flanked by his Greenlandic counterpart Vivian Motzfeldt, said Wednesday that a "fundamental disagreement" over Greenland remained after they met at the White House with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

Rasmussen said it remains "clear that the president has this wish of conquering over Greenland" but dialogue with the U.S. would continue at a high level over the following weeks.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron announced Wednesday that "the first French military elements are already en route" and "others will follow," as French authorities said about 15 soldiers from the mountain infantry unit were already in Nuuk for a military exercise.

Germany will deploy a reconnaissance team of 13 personnel to Greenland on Thursday, the Defense Ministry said.

On Thursday, Danish Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen said the intention was "to establish a more permanent military presence with a larger Danish contribution," according to Danish broadcaster DR. He said soldiers from several NATO countries will be in Greenland on a rotation system.

'Greenland does not want to be part of the United States'

Inhabitants of Greenland and Denmark reacted with anxiety but also some relief that negotiations with the U.S. would go on and European support was becoming visible.

Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen welcomed the continuation of "dialogue and diplomacy."

"Greenland is not for sale," he said Thursday. "Greenland does not want to be owned by the United States. Greenland does not want to be governed from the United States. Greenland does not want to be part of the United States."

In Greenland's capital, Nuuk, local residents told The Associated Press they were glad the first meeting between Greenlandic, Danish and American officials had taken place but suggested it left more questions than answers.

Several people said they viewed Denmark's decision to send more troops, and promises of support from other NATO allies, as protection against possible U.S. military action. But European military officials have not suggested the goal is to deter a U.S. move against the island.

Maya Martinsen, 21, said it was "comforting to know that the Nordic countries are sending reinforcements" because Greenland is a part of Denmark and NATO.

The dispute, she said, is not about "national security" but rather about "the oils and minerals that we have that are untouched."

More troops, more talks

On Wednesday, Poulsen announced a stepped-up military presence in the Arctic "in close cooperation with our allies," calling it a necessity in a security environment in which "no one can predict what will

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happen tomorrow.”

“This means that from today and in the coming time there will be an increased military presence in and around Greenland of aircraft, ships and soldiers, including from other NATO allies,” Poulsen said.

Denmark informed NATO that it will be conducting exercises in Greenland, and the alliance’s Supreme Allied Commander Alexis Grynkewich spoke Thursday with Denmark’s chief of defense, Col. Martin O’Donnell, a spokesperson for Grynkewich told the AP.

He said such dialogue is typical and added that “we all agree the Arctic – including Greenland – is important for transatlantic security.”

The Danish exercises and deployment of additional troops “bolster our collective defenses there,” O’Donnell said.

The Russian embassy in Brussels on Thursday lambasted what it called the West’s “bellicose plans” in response to “phantom threats that they generate themselves”. It said the planned military actions were part of an “anti-Russian and anti-Chinese agenda” by NATO.

“Russia has consistently maintained that the Arctic should remain a territory of peace, dialogue and equal cooperation,” the embassy said.

Some diplomatic progress

Commenting on the outcome of the Washington meeting on Thursday, Poulsen said the working group was “better than no working group” and “a step in the right direction.” He added nevertheless that the dialogue with the U.S. did not mean “the danger has passed.”

The most important thing for Greenlanders is that they were directly represented at the meeting in the White House and that “the diplomatic dialogue has begun now,” Juno Berthelsen, a lawmaker for the pro-independence Naleraq opposition party, told AP.

A relationship with the U.S. is beneficial for Greenlanders and Americans and is “vital to the security and stability of the Arctic and the Western Alliance,” Berthelsen said. He suggested the U.S. could be involved in the creation of a coast guard for Greenland, providing funding and creating jobs for local people who can help to patrol the Arctic.

In Washington, Rasmussen and Motzfeldt also met with a bipartisan group of senators at the U.S. Capitol. “We really appreciate that we have close friends in the Senate and the House as well,” Rasmussen told reporters, adding that Denmark would work to “accommodate any reasonable American requests” with Greenland.

There has been significant concern among lawmakers of both political parties that Trump could upend the NATO alliance by insisting on using military force to possess Greenland. Key Republican lawmakers have pushed back on those plans and suggested that the Trump administration should work with Denmark to enhance mutual security in the Arctic.

Line McGee, 38, from Copenhagen, told AP that she was glad to see some diplomatic progress. “I don’t think the threat has gone away,” she said. “But I feel slightly better than I did yesterday.”

Trump, in his Oval Office meeting with reporters, said: “We’ll see how it all works out. I think something will work out.”

A scheme to rig college basketball games has been uncovered. Here’s what we know

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — A federal investigation into a sprawling betting scheme to fix basketball games stretched from the Chinese Basketball Association to the NCAA and has ensnared 26 people, including current and former college players, prosecutors revealed Thursday.

The charges filed in federal court in Philadelphia include bribery, wire fraud and conspiracy.

How did the scheme work?

A group of fixers, including gamblers, recruited players with the promise of a big payment in exchange for purposefully underperforming during a game, prosecutors said. Those fixers would then bet against

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the players' teams in those games, defrauding sportsbooks and other bettors, authorities said.

How did the players get paid?

In cash, hand-delivered by fixers after a game was successfully rigged, prosecutors say. That meant fixers flying into more than a dozen states to drop off cash to players on their campuses or while they were traveling between games.

How much money was involved?

Prosecutors didn't say exactly how much the fixers allegedly received in ill-gotten gains. However, they said that the fixers wagered millions of dollars, generating "substantial proceeds" for themselves, and paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to players in bribes.

Payments to players typically ranged from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per game. Meanwhile, fixers put nearly \$200,000 in bribe payments and shared winnings from two rigged Chinese Basketball Association games into one player's storage locker in Florida, authorities said.

How many games were involved?

At least 29 NCAA games as recently as January 2025, the indictment said, plus two games in the Chinese Basketball Association.

Did any of the charged players compete this season?

Four of the players charged — Simeon Cottle, Carlos Hart, Oumar Koureissi and Camian Shell — played for their current teams within the last few days, although the allegations against them don't involve this season, but the 2023-24 season.

When did this start?

Fixers started in 2023 with the two games in the Chinese Basketball Association and, successful there, moved on to rigging NCAA games after that.

Who were the alleged fixers?

Six men primarily, prosecutors say. Three had connections to players through coaching and training, two were described as gamblers and sports handicappers, and one is former NBA player Antonio Blakeney, prosecutors say.

Is the investigation over?

The indictment suggests that many others, including unnamed players, had a role in the scheme but weren't charged, and U.S. Attorney David Metcalf said the investigation was continuing.

How does this fit into broader concerns about sports gambling?

The indictment is the latest gambling scandal to hit the sports world since a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision unleashed a meteoric rise in legal sports betting. It follows a federal takedown of illegal gambling operations linked to professional basketball, NCAA lifetime bans on at least 10 basketball players for betting and two Major League baseball players facing federal charges that they took bribes to help gamblers.

Netanyahu says the announced start of Gaza ceasefire's next phase is a 'declarative move'

By WAFAA SHURAFU and SAM METZ Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israeli strikes in Gaza on Thursday killed nine people, including three women, a day after the U.S. announced that the fragile ceasefire would advance to its second phase.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the ceasefire announcement largely symbolic, raising questions about how its more challenging elements will be carried out.

Speaking with the parents of the last Israeli hostage whose remains are still in Gaza, Netanyahu late Wednesday said the governing committee of Palestinians announced as part of the second phase was merely a "declarative move," rather than the sign of progress described by U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff.

Israeli police officer Ran Gvili's parents had earlier pressed Netanyahu not to advance the ceasefire until their son's remains were returned, Israel's Hostage and Missing Families Forum said Wednesday.

Netanyahu told Gvili's parents that his return remained a top priority.

The announcement of the ceasefire's second phase marked a significant step forward but left many

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questions unanswered.

Those include the makeup of the proposed, apolitical governing committee of Palestinian experts and an international "Board of Peace."

The committee's composition was coordinated with Israel, said an Israeli official speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Questions also include the timing of deployment of international forces and the reopening of Gaza's southern Rafah border crossing, as well as concrete details about disarming Hamas and rebuilding Gaza.

In an interview on Wednesday with the West Bank-based Radio Basma, Ali Shaath, the engineer and former Palestinian Authority official slated to head the committee, said he anticipated reconstruction and recovery to take roughly three years. He said it would start with immediate needs like shelter.

"If I bring bulldozers, and push the rubble into the sea, and make new islands (in the sea), new land, it is a win for Gaza and (we) get rid of the rubble," Shaath, a Gaza native, said.

Progress announced but hardship endures

Palestinians in Gaza who spoke to The Associated Press questioned what moving into phase two would actually change on the ground, pointing to ongoing bloodshed and challenges securing basic necessities.

More than 450 people have been killed since Israel and Hamas agreed to halt fighting in October, Gaza's Health Ministry said Thursday.

Nine people were killed Thursday in several strikes, according to local hospitals. The first strike killed two men, while three women and a man were killed in the second strike, according to Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. Later, two people were killed and five injured when a strike hit a house, according to Al-Awda Hospital in Nuseirat. In addition, one person was killed in Gaza City, Shifa Hospital said.

Israeli military officials did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment on the strikes.

Separately, the military said that it had killed someone Thursday who had approached troops near the so-called Yellow Line — which divides the Israeli-held part of Gaza from the rest — and posed an imminent threat.

"We see on the ground that the war has not stopped, the bloodshed has not stopped, and our suffering in the tents has not ended," said Samed Abu Rawagh, a man displaced to southern Gaza from Jabaliya.

The casualties since the October ceasefire, which UNICEF said include more than 100 children, are among the 71,441 Palestinians killed since the start of Israel's offensive, according to the ministry, which does not say how many were fighters or civilians.

The ministry is part of the Hamas-run government and staffed by medical professionals. The U.N. and independent experts consider it the most reliable source on war casualties. Israel disputes its figures but has not provided its own.

Hamza Abu Shahab, a man from eastern Khan Younis in southern Gaza, said he was waiting for tangible changes, such as easier access to food, fuel and medical care, rather than promises.

"We were happy with this news, but we ask God that it is not just empty words," he told the AP in Khan Younis. "We need this news to be real, because in the second phase we will be able to return to our homes and our areas ... God willing, it won't just be empty promises."

Gaza's population of more than 2 million people has struggled to keep cold weather and storms at bay while facing shortages of humanitarian aid and a lack of more substantial temporary housing, which is badly needed during the winter months.

This is the third winter since the war between Israel and Hamas started on Oct. 7, 2023, when militants stormed into southern Israel and killed around 1,200 people and abducted 251 others.

Challenges lie ahead

The second phase of the ceasefire will confront thornier issues than the first, including disarming Hamas and transitioning to a new governance structure after nearly two decades of the group's rule in the strip.

The U.N. has estimated reconstruction will cost over \$50 billion. This process is expected to take years and little money has been pledged so far.

Hamas has said it will dissolve its existing government to make way for the committee announced as

part of the ceasefire's second phase. But it has not made clear what will happen to its military arm or the scores of Hamas-affiliated civil servants and the civilian police.

Bassem Naim, a member of the group's political bureau, said Thursday that Hamas welcomed the announcement of the committee as a step toward establishing an independent Palestinian state, but did not elaborate on the issues in question. He said on X that "the ball is now in the court" of the United States and international mediators to allow it to operate.

Israel has insisted Hamas must lay down its weapons, while the groups' leaders have rejected calls to surrender despite two years of war, saying Palestinians have "the right to resist."

NCAA basketball players and gamblers are charged for allegedly rigging games

By MARC LEVY and TASSANEE VEJPONGSA Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — An investigation into a sprawling betting scheme to rig NCAA and Chinese Basketball Association games has ensnared 26 people, including more than a dozen college basketball players who tried to fix games as recently as last season, federal prosecutors said Thursday.

The scheme generally revolved around gamblers who placed bets and recruited players with the promise of a big payment in exchange for purposefully underperforming during a game, prosecutors said. Those fixers would then bet against the players' teams in those games, defrauding sportsbooks and other bettors, authorities said.

Calling it an "international criminal conspiracy," U.S. Attorney David Metcalf told reporters in Philadelphia that this case represents a "significant corruption of the integrity of sports." The indictment suggests many others, including unnamed players, had a role in the scheme but weren't charged, and Metcalf said the investigation was continuing.

The indictment is the latest gambling scandal to hit the sports world since a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court decision unleashed a meteoric rise in legal sports betting.

It follows a federal takedown of illegal gambling operations linked to professional basketball, NCAA lifetime bans on at least 10 basketball players for betting and two Major League baseball players facing federal charges that they took bribes to help gamblers.

The varying charges against the 26 defendants, filed in federal court in Philadelphia, include bribery, wire fraud and conspiracy. Five of the defendants were described as fixers; three with connections to players through coaching and training and two described as gamblers and sports handicappers.

The fixers started with two games in the Chinese Basketball Association in 2023 and, successful there, moved on to rigging NCAA games as recently as January 2025, the indictment said. Their scheme grew to involve more than 39 players on more than 17 different NCAA Division I men's basketball teams, who then rigged and attempted to rig more than 29 games, prosecutors said.

They wagered millions of dollars, raking in "substantial proceeds" for themselves, and paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to players in bribes, prosecutors said. Payments to players typically ranged from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per game, they said.

In a statement, NCAA President Charlie Baker said protecting the integrity of competition is of the utmost importance for the NCAA and that is investigating, or has finished investigating, almost all of the teams in the indictment.

Prosecutors named more than 40 schools involved in games that were targeted by the scheme. Those included Tulane University and DePaul University.

Rigged games included major conferences and some playoffs, including the first round of the Horizon League championship and the second round of the Southland Conference championship, prosecutors said.

Players often recruited teammates to cooperate by playing badly, sitting out or keeping the ball away from players who weren't in on the scheme to prevent them from scoring. Sometimes the attempted fix failed, meaning the fixers lost their bets.

To entice players, fixers would text photos of stacks of cash. In one case, a fixer encouraged a player

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to recruit a Saint Louis University teammate by texting him one such photo: "send that to him if he bite he bite if he don't so be it lol," the indictment said.

In another instance, a fixer trying to persuade an Eastern Michigan University player to get two of his teammates to help fix a game against Wright State University texted, "bro let me send 3k right now a band for each of yall so you know I ain't joking," the indictment said.

Cash payments were hand delivered, although prosecutors noted that a fixer didn't deliver the cash he promised to four Alabama State University players who helped fix a 2024 game against the University of Southern Mississippi.

Four of the players charged — Simeon Cottle, Carlos Hart, Oumar Koureissi and Camian Shell — played for their current teams in the last few days, although the allegations against them don't involve this season, but the 2023-24 season.

Of the defendants, 15 played basketball for Division I NCAA schools during 2024-25 season, prosecutors say. Five others last played in the NCAA in the 2023-24 season while another, former NBA player Antonio Blakeney, played in the Chinese Basketball Association in the 2022-23 season.

At the end of the Chinese Basketball Association's 2022-23 season, fixers put nearly \$200,000 in bribe payments and shared winnings from two rigged games into Blakeney's storage locker in Florida, authorities said.

In 2023, court papers said one fixer reassured another by texting him there were no guarantees "in this world but death taxes and Chinese basketball."

US seizes sixth sanctioned tanker it says has ties to Venezuela in Trump's effort to control its oil

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. forces in the Caribbean Sea have seized another sanctioned oil tanker that the Trump administration says has ties to Venezuela, part of a broader U.S. effort to take control of the South American country's oil.

The U.S. Coast Guard boarded the tanker, named Veronica, early Thursday, Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem wrote on social media. The ship had previously passed through Venezuelan waters and was operating in defiance of President Donald Trump's "established quarantine of sanctioned vessels in the Caribbean," she said.

U.S. Southern Command said Marines and sailors launched from the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford to take part in the operation alongside a Coast Guard tactical team, which Noem said conducted the boarding as in previous raids. The military said the ship was seized "without incident."

Several U.S. government social media accounts posted brief videos that appeared to show various parts of the ship's capture. Black-and-white footage showed at least four helicopters approaching the ship before hovering over the deck while armed troops dropped down by rope. At least nine people could be seen on the deck of the ship.

The Veronica is the sixth sanctioned tanker seized by U.S. forces as part of the effort by Trump's administration to control the production, refining and global distribution of Venezuela's oil products and the fourth since the U.S. ouster of Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid almost two weeks ago.

The Veronica last transmitted its location on Jan. 3 as being at anchor off the coast of Aruba, just north of Venezuela's main oil terminal. According to the data it transmitted at the time, the ship was partially filled with crude.

Days later, the Veronica became one of at least 16 tankers that left the Venezuelan coast in contravention of the quarantine that U.S. forces have set up to block sanctioned ships, according to Samir Madani, the co-founder of TankerTrackers.com. He said his organization used satellite imagery and surface-level photos to document the ship movements.

The ship is currently listed as flying the flag of Guyana and is considered part of the shadow fleet that

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moves cargoes of oil in violation of U.S. sanctions.

According to its registration data, the ship also has been known as the Gallileo, owned and managed by a company in Russia. In addition, a tanker with the same registration number previously sailed under the name Pegas and was sanctioned by the Treasury Department for being associated with a Russian company moving cargoes of illicit oil.

As with prior posts about such raids, Noem and the military framed the seizure as part of an effort to enforce the law. Noem argued that the multiple captures show that “there is no outrunning or escaping American justice.”

Speaking to reporters at the White House later Thursday, Noem declined to say how many sanctioned oil tankers the U.S. is tracking or whether the government is keeping tabs on freighters beyond the Caribbean Sea.

“I can’t speak to the specifics of the operation, although we are watching the entire shadow fleet and how they’re moving,” she told reporters.

But other officials in Trump’s Republican administration have made clear they see the actions as a way to generate cash as they seek to rebuild Venezuela’s battered oil industry and restore its economy.

Trump met with executives from oil companies last week to discuss his goal of investing \$100 billion in Venezuela to repair and upgrade its oil production and distribution. His administration has said it expects to sell at least 30 million to 50 million barrels of sanctioned Venezuelan oil.

Minifridge recall expands to 964,000 Frigidaires after fire reports

NEW YORK (AP) — An appliance distributor is expanding a minifridge recall that now covers roughly 964,000 Frigidaire-branded products sold in the U.S., after multiple fire reports.

Following a recall of about 634,000 minifridges last year, Canada-based Curtis International recalled an additional 330,000 of another model on Thursday. According to a notice published U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, the recalled fridges have electrical components that can short circuit and ignite the plastic used to make the product — risking fires and potential burns for users.

The 330,000 Frigidaire minifridges now under recall carry the model number EFMIS121 and were sold exclusively at Target. Per the Commission, six reports of fires resulting in property damage have been linked to these products to date.

The Associated Press reached out to Target and Curtis International for further comments on Thursday.

The 634,000 minifridges recalled last year had model numbers EFMIS129, EFMIS137, EFMIS149 and EFMIS175. Another 26 incidents that included the products overheating, melting or catching fire were reported at the time, as well as two related smoke inhalation injuries.

Owners of the recalled minifridges are urged to stop using them immediately and visit Curtis International’s website to learn how to request a refund. Eligible consumers will need cut their product’s power cord, write “recall” in permanent marker on the fridge’s front door and send photos to the company.

Curtis International says the recalled fridges were made between January 2020 and December 2023. The EFMIS121 model fridges recalled on Thursday were sold at both in-stores and online at Target for about \$30 — and the Frigidaire-branded products recalled last year were sold by retailers like Walmart and Amazon for between \$36 and \$40, per the CPSC.

Curtis International has licenses to make and distribute a range of consumer electronics and appliances — including some Frigidaire products. But the larger Frigidaire brand is owned by the Electrolux Group, a Swedish company.

Trump's ceasefire plan faces great uncertainty as it moves into a new phase

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The White House says it is moving into the second phase of President Donald Trump's Gaza ceasefire plan — breathing new life into a proposal that aims to rebuild the war-ravaged area and reshape the wider Middle East.

Trump's Mideast envoy, Steve Witkoff, broke the news Wednesday in a post on X, saying the new phase will include the establishment of a transitional Palestinian governing committee and begin the complicated tasks of disarming Hamas and reconstruction.

But the announcement included few details about the new Palestinian committee or other key aspects of the plan, signaling just how much work lies ahead.

Trump's 20-point plan — which was approved by the U.N. Security Council — lays out an ambitious vision for ending Hamas' rule in Gaza. If successful, it would see the rebuilding of a demilitarized Gaza under international supervision, the normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab world, and the creation of a possible pathway to Palestinian independence.

But if the deal stalls, Gaza could be trapped in an unstable limbo for years to come, with Hamas remaining in control of parts of the territory, Israel's army enforcing an open-ended occupation, and its residents stuck homeless, unemployed, unable to travel abroad and dependent on international aid to stay alive.

"We're going to do our best to try and see if we can work with the Palestinian people to try something new," said a U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the evolving plan. "It will be hard to do," he acknowledged.

Here is a closer look at the next stages of the ceasefire and the potential pitfalls.

Phase 1 isn't complete

The ceasefire took effect on Oct. 10, halting two years of fighting between Israel and Hamas. It also included the release of all remaining hostages held in Gaza in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians held by Israel.

The ceasefire has largely held, though both sides accuse each other of ongoing violations. Israeli fire has killed more than 400 Palestinians, according to Gaza health officials. Israel says it has targeted militants or responded to violations of the ceasefire, but the Palestinians say scores of civilians have been shot.

Palestinian militants, meanwhile, continue to hold the remains of the last hostage — an Israeli police officer killed in the Hamas-led Oct. 7, 2023, attack that triggered the war. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made clear he is in no rush to move forward until the remains are returned.

Netanyahu appeared to play down Witkoff's announcement as symbolic, calling the creation of a new Palestinian committee a "declarative move."

A new government

The new committee will consist of independent Palestinian experts who are to run Gaza's daily affairs under American supervision.

Wednesday's announcement didn't say who will serve on the committee. But the other mediators of the ceasefire — Egypt, Turkey and Qatar — said it would be led by Ali Shaath, an engineer and former deputy minister in the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

The U.S. official who spoke on the condition of anonymity said other names are expected in the next two days, and the committee will focus on attracting investment and improving the quality of life.

"This really will be a technocratic committee," he said. "They seem to be a group that wants to have peace."

The committee will report to the Board of Peace, a group of world leaders supervising the ceasefire and led by Trump. If the Palestinian committee is seen as just a façade, it risks not gaining public support.

Also, its exact powers remain unclear. Hamas has said it will dissolve its government once the committee takes office, but it has shown no signs that it will dismantle its military wing or security forces.

Board of Peace

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The board will oversee the ceasefire, reconstruction and an open-ended reform process by the Palestinian Authority, with the goal of one day allowing the internationally recognized authority to return to Gaza to govern.

The U.S. official said invitations for the board have been extended, but he declined to name any of the people expected to join. "It's going to be a great list," he said.

The key challenge will be forming a board that can work with Israel, Hamas, the mediators and international aid agencies.

One key appointment appears to have been made. Nickolay Mladenov, a former Bulgarian politician and U.N. Mideast envoy, is expected to serve as the board's on-the-ground representative. He already has met with Netanyahu and Palestinian leaders in the occupied West Bank.

Troops for Gaza

Trump's plan calls for the formation of an International Stabilization Force to maintain security and train Palestinian police to one day to take over. That force hasn't been formed yet, and a deployment date hasn't been announced.

The U.S. official insisted there is "great excitement" over the force and said there would be important announcements in the coming weeks.

But the force's command structure and authorities remain unknown.

Hamas said it will oppose any attempts by the force to disarm it, and contributing nations may not want to risk clashes with the militant group. Israel, meanwhile, is hesitant to trust an international body with its security needs.

Reconstruction

Trump's plan calls for an economic development outline to "rebuild and energize Gaza," which suffered widespread destruction during the war and where most of the territory's 2 million people are displaced and unemployed.

Still, no such plan has been announced, and it remains unclear who will pay for a process the U.N. estimates will cost \$70 billion.

Disarmament

The ceasefire deal calls for Hamas to surrender its weapons under the supervision of international monitors. Militants who disarm will be granted amnesty and the option to leave Gaza.

However, Hamas, whose ideology is based on armed resistance against Israel, has said it won't disarm until Israel ends its occupation of Palestinian territories.

Bassem Naim, a senior Hamas official, told The Associated Press last month that the group is open to "freezing or storing" its weapons while a political process takes place, perhaps over many years. It is unclear whether that would be sufficient for Israel.

Failure to disarm Hamas could lead to renewed fighting with Israel and clashes with international troops, and could block progress on the rest of the peace plan.

Israeli withdrawals

Under the ceasefire, Israel is to withdraw from all of Gaza, with the exception of a small buffer zone along the border. At the moment, Israel retains control of just over half of Gaza.

The plan says further withdrawals will be based upon "standards, milestones and timeframes linked to demilitarization" to be negotiated by Israel, the U.S., the international force and other "guarantors."

There are no firm timelines for further withdrawals, and Israel may refuse to pull back further.

Palestinian Authority

The plan calls for an overhaul of the Palestinian Authority, which runs the West Bank, and the creation of conditions for a "credible pathway" to Palestinian statehood.

Palestinian officials say they have begun making reforms in key areas such as corruption, the education system and payments to families of prisoners convicted in attacks on Israelis.

Israel rejects the creation of a Palestinian state and opposes any role for the authority in postwar Gaza. Without a pathway to statehood, any Palestinian support for the new system could crumble. The plan also

offers no clear benchmarks or timelines for the reform process.

What to know about UK legal changes aiming to regulate AI-generated nude images

By SYLVIA HUI Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Laws that will make it illegal to create online sexual images of someone without their consent are coming into force soon in the U.K., officials said Thursday, following a global backlash over the use of Elon Musk's artificial intelligence chatbot Grok to make sexualized deepfakes of women and children.

Musk's company, xAI, announced late Wednesday that it has introduced measures to prevent Grok from allowing the editing of photos of real people to portray them in revealing clothing in places where that is illegal.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed the move, and said X must "immediately" ensure full compliance with U.K. law. He stressed that his government will remain vigilant on any transgressions by Grok and its users.

"Free speech is not the freedom to violate consent," Starmer said Thursday. "I am glad that action has now been taken. But we're not going to let this go. We will continue because this is a values argument."

The chatbot, developed by Musk's company xAI and freely accessed through his social media platform X, has faced global scrutiny after it emerged that it was used in recent weeks to generate thousands of images that "undress" people without their consent. The digitally-altered pictures included nude images as well as depictions of women and children in bikinis or in sexually explicit poses.

Critics have said laws regulating generative AI tools are long overdue, and that the U.K. legal changes should have been brought into force much sooner.

A look at the problem and how the U.K. aims to tackle it:

Non-consensual deepfakes

Britain's media regulator has launched an investigation into whether X has breached U.K. laws over the Grok-generated images of children being sexualized or people being undressed. The watchdog, Ofcom, said such images — and similar productions made by other AI models — may amount to pornography or child sexual abuse material.

The problem stemmed from the launch last year of Grok Imagine, an AI image generator that allows users to create videos and pictures by typing in text prompts. It includes a so-called "spicy mode" that can generate adult content.

Technology Secretary Liz Kendall cited a report from the internet Watch Foundation saying the deepfake images included sexualization of 11-year-olds and women subjected to physical abuse.

"The content which has circulated on X is vile. It is not just an affront to decent society, it is illegal," she said.

What the UK is enforcing

Authorities said they are making legal changes to criminalize those who use or supply "nudification" tools.

First, the government says it is fast-tracking provisions in the Data (Use and Access) Act making it a criminal offense to create or request deepfake images. The act was passed by Parliament last year, but had not yet been brought into force.

The legislation is set to come into effect on Feb. 6

"Let this be a clear message to every cowardly perpetrator hiding behind a screen: you will be stopped and when you are, make no mistake that you will face the full force of the law," Justice Secretary David Lammy said

Separately, the government said it is also criminalizing "nudification" apps as part of the Crime and Policing Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

The new criminal offense will make it illegal for companies to supply tools designed to create non-consensual intimate images. Kendall said this would "target the problem at its source."

Further warnings

The investigation by Ofcom is ongoing. Kendall said X could face a fine of up to 10% of its qualifying global revenue depending on the investigation's outcome and a possible court order blocking access to the site.

Starmer has faced calls for his government to stop using X. Downing Street said this week it was keeping its presence on the platform "under review."

Musk insisted Grok complied with the law. "When asked to generate images, it will refuse to produce anything illegal, as the operating principle for Grok is to obey the laws of any given country or state," he posted on X. "There may be times when adversarial hacking of Grok prompts does something unexpected. If that happens, we fix the bug immediately."

Exiled crown prince's plan for Iran is mostly aimed at Trump, experts say

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — No pursuit of nuclear weapons. Confronting drug trafficking. An immediate recognition of the state of Israel. Exporting copious amounts of oil and gas.

Exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi laid out his aspirations Thursday for Iran if its theocracy is toppled — and experts say they sound exactly like what U.S. President Donald Trump wants to hear.

That plan likely is aimed at trying to secure support to lead Iran if the nationwide protests succeed in ousting the Islamic Republic. Activists describe a bloody crackdown by security forces that has killed 2,637 people and broadly smothered the demonstrations.

But Trump has yet to fully embrace Pahlavi.

"He's really struggling to win Trump's approval, to give the impression he has that strong support, but it doesn't seem to be working," said Trita Parsi, executive vice president of the Quincy Institute, a Washington think tank and author of several books on Iran. Many of his goals also dovetail with the wishes of hard-line Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has forged a close partnership with Trump.

"He's trying to get support from the U.S. government because he's not trying to do a revolution from below, but he's trying to get installed from above. That's a reflection of the lack of confidence and shows he has a real lack of a base of support," Parsi said.

Pahlavi's father, Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution that ushered in the current Islamic Republic. Pahlavi urged protesters onto the streets last week as Iranian authorities shut down the internet and launched their crackdown.

"The fall of the Islamic Republic and the establishment of a secular, democratic government in Iran will not only restore dignity to my people, it will benefit the region and the world," Pahlavi posted in a video on X, laying out his plan. Pahlavi did not immediately respond to a request seeking further comment on his plans.

Seeking Trump's approval

"He's trying to tick the boxes of everything that can correlate with Trump," said Danny Citrinowicz, who once headed research on Iran in one of the Israeli military's intelligence branches and is now a senior researcher with the Institute for National Security Studies, an Israeli defense think tank.

Around the world, many protesters held up his photo. But how much support Pahlavi has among the public inside Iran is unclear, although he does seem to have a "small modicum," Parsi said.

People are yelling "Pahlavi" in the streets of Iran, not because they actually want him, but because there's no other name to yell, Citrinowicz said. Nearly 50 years of theocratic rule has left little opportunity for major opposition figures to coalesce, leaving Pahlavi as one of only a few recognizable faces. Pahlavi himself has done little to build or strengthen an opposition movement during more than four decades in exile, Parsi added.

"They don't want to replace one dictatorship with another, and he's not a unifying figure," Citrinowicz said. "He has been trying to build himself as the role of the successor, but it's not there."

Trump's reservations over a 'nice guy'

Trump also expressed reservations about Pahlavi, frequently calling him a "nice guy" in interviews but

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raising doubts about whether Iranians would accept his leadership.

"He seems very nice, but I don't know how he'd play within his own country," Trump told Reuters on Wednesday. "And we really aren't up to that point yet."

The president added: "I don't know whether or not his country would accept his leadership, and certainly if they would, that would be fine with me." Pahlavi released his video on X soon after the interview.

Diehard Iranian monarchists in exile have long touted dreams of the Pahlavi dynasty returning to power. But Pahlavi has been hampered in gaining wider appeal by factors including bitter memories of his father's rule and suppression of any opposition by the feared SAVAK intelligence agency. There's also the perception that he and his family, who have lived abroad for nearly 50 years, are out of touch with their homeland.

Iranian state media, which for years mocked Pahlavi as corrupt, has blamed "monarchist terrorist elements" for the recent demonstrations.

On Thursday, the Student News Network, a media agency that is believed to be close to the Revolutionary Guard's Basij force, broadcast interviews with people on the street that were dismissive of Pahlavi.

"He's making a big mistake. Tell him to get lost," one person said. Another yelled, "Death to the shah!"

An appeal that's seen for a foreign audience

Pahlavi's video on his post-theocracy plan was made in English, not Farsi, because he's trying to appeal to Trump, rather than the Iranian people, Citrinowicz said.

Pahlavi's only hope of gaining power is with Washington's support, including U.S. military intervention, he added. Trump has appeared to walk back threats of U.S. military intervention in recent days but hasn't ruled it out.

Pahlavi has long cultivated a relationship with Israel, which had a close relationship with Iran before the Islamic Revolution. Pahlavi visited Israel in 2023 and met Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a longtime hawk on Iran whose criticism of Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal fueled Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the accord.

Israeli media on Thursday made passing reference to Pahlavi's promise to renew Israeli-Iranian relations but focused more on the immediate threat of Israel getting dragged into a possible war if the U.S. attacked.

Both Iran and Israel are still recovering from the 12-day war last summer. Israeli strikes on Iran killed 1,190 people and wounded another 4,475, according to the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency, while Iran's missile barrages killed nearly 30 people in Israel and wounded 1,000.

The current demonstrations began Dec. 28 over the collapse of the Iranian rial currency, as the country's economy is squeezed by international sanctions levied in part over its nuclear program.

The death toll of 2,637 since last month — also from the Human Rights Activists News Agency — exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades. The agency has been accurate through multiple years of demonstrations, relying on a network of activists inside Iran that confirms all reported fatalities.

With communications greatly limited in Iran, The Associated Press has been unable to independently confirm the group's toll. The theocratic government of Iran has not provided overall casualty figures for the demonstrations.

Grok blocked from undressing images in places where it's illegal, X says

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Elon Musk's AI chatbot Grok won't be able to edit photos to portray real people in revealing clothing in places where that is illegal, according to a statement posted on X.

The announcement late Wednesday followed a global backlash over sexualized images of women and children, including bans and warnings by some governments.

The pushback included an investigation announced Wednesday by the state of California, the U.S.'s most populous, into the proliferation of nonconsensual sexually explicit material produced using Grok that it said

was harassing women and girls.

Initially, media queries about the problem drew only the response, "legacy media lies."

Musk's company, xAI, now says it will geoblock content if it violates laws in a particular place.

"We have implemented technological measures to prevent the Grok account from allowing the editing of images of real people in revealing clothing such as bikinis, underwear and other revealing attire," it said.

The rule applies to all users, including paid subscribers, who have access to more features.

xAI also has limited image creation or editing to paid subscribers only "to ensure that individuals who attempt to abuse the Grok account to violate the law or our policies can be held accountable."

The Associated Press confirmed on Thursday morning that the image editing tool was still available to free users on X using the "Edit image" button, as well as on the standalone Grok website and app. The tool was also able to generate images of people in bikinis on a free account based in California.

Grok's "spicy mode" had allowed users to create explicit content, leading to a backlash from governments worldwide.

Malaysia and Indonesia took legal action and blocked access to Grok, while authorities in the Philippines said they were working to do the same, possibly within the week. The U.K. and European Union were investigating potential violations of online safety laws.

France and India have also issued warnings, demanding stricter controls. Brazil called for an investigation into Grok's misuse.

The British government, which has been one of Grok's most vociferous critics in recent days, has welcomed the change, while the country's regulator, Ofcom, said it would carry on with its investigation.

"I shall not rest until all social media platforms meet their legal duties and provide a service that is safe and age-appropriate to all users," Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta urged xAI to ensure there is no further harassment of women and girls from Grok's editing functions.

"We have zero tolerance for the AI-based creation and dissemination of nonconsensual intimate images or of child sexual abuse material," he said.

California has passed laws to shield minors from AI-generated sexual imagery of children and require AI chatbot platforms to remind users they aren't interacting with a human.

But Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom also vetoed a law last year that would have restricted children's access to AI chatbots.

Moscow agrees with Trump that Ukraine is holding up a peace deal, the Kremlin says

The Associated Press undefined

Moscow agrees with U.S. President Donald Trump's view that Ukraine is holding up a peace deal to end the almost four years of fighting since Russia invaded its neighbor, a Kremlin official said Thursday.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, "Yes, we can agree with it, it's indeed so." His comments came after Trump said in published remarks Wednesday that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is an obstacle in U.S.-led peace talks.

That assessment is at odds with the sentiment of European officials, who have repeatedly accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of stalling in negotiations while his bigger army tries to push deeper into Ukraine and Russia relentlessly bombards Ukrainian cities.

Kyiv and Moscow still appear publicly far apart on their terms for a peace deal.

"I think he's ready to make a deal," Trump was quoted as saying of the Russian president in an interview with Reuters. "I think Ukraine is less ready to make a deal," he said, naming Zelenskyy as obstructing a settlement.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, who along with many European and NATO member nations has strongly backed Ukraine, pushed back on Trump's reported comments.

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"It is Russia who rejected the peace plan prepared by the U.S.," not Zelenskyy, Tusk posted on X on Thursday. "The only Russian response (was) further missile attacks on Ukrainian cities. This is why the only solution is to strengthen pressure on Russia. And you all know it."

Putin said Thursday that Moscow, like Ukraine, demands security guarantees as part of a prospective peace deal.

"We must proceed from the premise that security must be truly universal, and therefore equal and indivisible, and it cannot be ensured for some at the expense of the security of others," Putin said after receiving credentials from foreign ambassadors in the Kremlin.

"In the absence of it, Russia will continue to consistently pursue the goals it has set," Putin added.

Trump's position appeared to deviate from recent comments by U.S. officials that the American president is running out of patience with Putin.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., said last week that Trump is on board with a tough sanctions package intended to economically cripple Russia.

"This will be well-timed, as Ukraine is making concessions for peace and Putin is all talk, continuing to kill the innocent," Graham said in a statement.

Also, the United States accused Russia on Monday of a "dangerous and inexplicable escalation" of its war at a time when the Trump administration is trying to advance negotiations toward peace.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington think tank, said late Wednesday that "the Kremlin has been delaying the peace process for months in order to protract the war and achieve Russia's original war aims through military means."

A Russian drone struck a playground in the western city of Lviv overnight, according to the head of the regional military administration Maksym Kozytskyi. The blast shattered over a hundred windows in the area, though nobody was injured, he said.

Peskov, the Kremlin spokesman, said that no date has been agreed for U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff to make another visit to Moscow for further peace talks.

In a warming world, freshwater production is moving deep beneath the sea

By ANNIKA HAMMERSCHLAG Associated Press

CARLSBAD, Calif. (AP) — Some four miles off the Southern California coast, a company is betting it can solve one of desalination's biggest problems by moving the technology deep below the ocean's surface.

OceanWell's planned Water Farm 1 would use natural ocean pressure to power reverse osmosis — a process that forces seawater through membranes to filter out salt and impurities — and produce up to 60 million gallons (nearly 225 million liters) of freshwater daily. Desalination is energy intensive, with plants worldwide producing between 500 and 850 million tons of carbon emissions annually — approaching the roughly 880 million tons emitted by the entire global aviation industry.

OceanWell claims its deep sea approach — 1,300 feet (400 meters) below the water's surface — would cut energy use by about 40% compared to conventional plants while also tackling the other major environmental problems plaguing traditional desalination: the highly concentrated brine discharged back into the ocean, where it can harm seafloor habitats, including coral reefs, and the intake systems that trap and kill fish larvae, plankton and other organisms at the base of the marine food web.

"The freshwater future of the world is going to come from the ocean," said OceanWell CEO Robert Bergstrom. "And we're not going to ask the ocean to pay for it."

It's an ambitious promise at a time when the world desperately needs alternatives. As climate change intensifies droughts, disrupts rainfall patterns and fuels wildfires, more regions are turning to the sea for drinking water. For many countries, particularly in the arid Middle East, parts of Africa and Pacific island nations, desalination isn't optional — there simply isn't enough freshwater to meet demand. More than 20,000 plants now operate worldwide, and the industry has been expanding at about 7% annually since 2010.

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"With aridity and climate change issues increasing, desalination will become more and more prevalent as a key technology globally," said Peiyong Hong, a professor of environmental science and engineering at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia.

But scientists warn that as desalination scales, the cumulative damage to coastal ecosystems — many already under pressure from warming waters and pollution — could intensify.

A search for solutions

Some companies are powering plants with renewable energy, while others are developing more efficient membrane technology to reduce energy consumption. Still others are moving the technology underwater entirely. Norway-based Flocean and Netherlands-based Waterise have tested subsea desalination systems and are working toward commercial deployment. Beyond southern California, OceanWell has signed an agreement to test its system in Nice, France — another region facing intensifying droughts and wildfires — beginning this year.

For now, its technology remains in development. A single prototype operates in the Las Virgenes Reservoir where the local water district has partnered with the company in hopes of diversifying its water supply. If successful, the reverse osmosis pods would eventually float above the sea floor in the Santa Monica Bay, anchored with minimal concrete footprint, while an underwater pipeline would transport freshwater to shore. The system would use screens designed to keep out even microscopic plankton and would produce less concentrated brine discharge.

Gregory Pierce, director of UCLA's Water Resources Group, said deep sea desalination appears promising from an environmental and technical standpoint, but the real test will be cost.

"It's almost always much higher than you project" with new technologies, he said. "So that, I think, will be the make or break for the technology."

Las Virgenes Reservoir serves about 70,000 residents in western Los Angeles County. Nearly all the water originates in the northern Sierra Nevada and is pumped some 400 miles (640 kilometers) over the Tehachapi Mountains — a journey that requires massive amounts of energy. During years of low rainfall and snowpack in the Sierra, the reservoir and communities it serves suffer.

California's desalination dilemma

About 100 miles (160 kilometers) down the coast, the Carlsbad Desalination Plant has become a focal point in the state's debate over desalination's environmental tradeoffs.

The plant came online in 2015 as the largest seawater desalination facility in North America. Capable of producing up to 54 million gallons (204 million liters) of drinking water daily, it supplies about 10% of San Diego County's water — enough for roughly 400,000 households.

In Southern California, intensifying droughts and wildfires have exposed the region's precarious water supply. Agricultural expansion and population growth have depleted local groundwater reserves, leaving cities dependent on imported water. San Diego imports roughly 90% of its supply from the Colorado River and Northern California — sources that are becoming increasingly strained by climate change. Desalination was pitched as a solution: a local, drought-proof source of drinking water drawn from the Pacific Ocean.

But environmental groups have argued the plant's seawater intake and brine discharge pose risks to marine life, while its high energy demands drive up water bills and worsen climate change. Before the plant came online, environmental organizations filed more than a dozen legal challenges and regulatory disputes. Most were dismissed but some resulted in changes to the project's design and permits.

"It sucks in a tremendous amount of water, and with that, sea life," said Patrick McDonough, a senior attorney with San Diego Coastkeeper, which has participated in multiple legal challenges to the project. "We're not just talking fish, turtles, birds, but larvae and spores — entire ecosystems."

A 2009 Regional Water Quality Control Board order estimated the plant would entrap some 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) of fish daily and required offsetting those impacts by restoring wetlands elsewhere. Seventeen years later, that restoration remains incomplete. And a 2019 study found the plant's brine discharge raises offshore salinity above permitted levels, though it detected no significant biological changes — likely because the site had already been heavily altered by decades of industrial activity from a neighboring power plant.

Those impacts are especially acute in California, where roughly 95% of coastal wetlands have been lost largely to development, leaving the remaining lagoons as vital habitats for fish and migratory birds.

"When we start messing with these very critical and unfortunately sparse coastal lagoons and wetlands, it can have tremendous impacts in the ocean," McDonough said.

Michelle Peters, chief executive officer of Channelside Water Resources, which owns the plant, said the facility uses large organism exclusion devices and one-millimeter screens to minimize marine life uptake, though she acknowledged some smaller species can still pass through.

The plant dilutes its brine discharge with additional seawater before releasing it back into the ocean, and years of monitoring have shown no measurable impacts to surrounding marine life, she said.

Peters said the Carlsbad plant has significantly cut its energy consumption through efficiency improvements and operates under a plan aimed at making the facility carbon net-neutral.

Many experts say water recycling and conservation should come first, noting wastewater purification typically uses far less energy than seawater desalination and can substantially reduce impacts on marine life. Las Virgenes is pursuing a wastewater reuse project alongside its desalination partnership.

"What we are looking for is a water supply that we can count on when Mother Nature does not deliver," Las Virgenes' Pedersen said. "Developing new sources of local water is really a critical measure to be more drought and climate ready."

Ukrainians endure freezing temperatures at home as crews rush to restore power

By VASILISA STEPANENKO Associated Press

BORYSPIL, Ukraine (AP) — Emergency repair crews are working flat out to restore power in the Kyiv region of Ukraine, officials said Wednesday, after relentless Russian barrages on energy infrastructure left Ukrainians at the mercy of the coldest winter in years.

In Boryspil, a town in the Kyiv region with a population of around 60,000, workers dismantled and rebuilt burned-out electrical systems as they rushed to fix the damage.

They work in the snow amid temperatures of -15 C (5 degrees F) from early morning till midnight, Yurii Bryzh, who leads the Boryspil regional department of private electricity provider DTEK, told The Associated Press.

They have managed to restore the supply for four hours a day. But Bryzh said the problem was "when the power comes back on, people turn on all the electrical equipment that is available in the house" as they dash to wash, cook or recharge their phones. That collapses the system again, he said.

The hardship of civilians is acute amid what Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko described as the longest and broadest outages since Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor almost four years ago. Some homes have been going without electricity for days.

Apartments in the capital are freezing, and when venturing outside people wear heavy layers of clothes against the bitter cold that chills to the bone. Across Kyiv, snow covers the ground and roofs and is piled up next to sidewalks. At night, the streets are dark and towering apartment blocks show no light in the windows.

Kyiv residents told the AP how they cope with the lack of light and heat at home.

A married couple, scientists Mykhailo, 39, and Hanna, 43, said the temperature in the bedroom of their 5-year-old daughter Maria has fallen to -15 degrees C (5 degrees F). They gave only their first names for security reasons.

They have a gas stove to cook but at night they huddle together in the same bed under heavy blankets. "We have to use all the blankets we have in the house," Hanna said.

The couple take their daughter to work with them during the day, because the premises have a generator whereas Maria's kindergarten has no heating.

Christmas decorations still hang on the walls of their apartment, occasionally lit up by their flashlights.

Zinaida Hlyha, 76, said she heats water on her gas stove and puts it in bottles that she tucks into bed.

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She says she doesn't complain because Ukrainian soldiers on the roughly 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line have it worse.

"Of course it's hard, but if you imagine what our guys in the trenches are going through now, you have to endure," she said. "What can you do? This is war."

Tetiana Tatarenko said two of her sons are fighting in the war. She grew more fearful of Russia's nighttime barrages after a Shahed drone hit the apartment building next door.

In her cold apartment, it seemed that normal life has shut down.

"It's as if life in the house has stopped, that's the feeling," she said.

Her neighbor, 89-year-old physicist Raisa Derhachova, lives alone and sometimes plays the piano in what she calls "this terrifying cold."

"Of course, it's hard to survive this. We survived World War II, and now this terrible war is upon us," she said.

Russian barrages are aiming at power plants and large substations, and procuring replacement equipment such as transformers can take months, according to Dennis Sakva, an energy sector analyst at Dragon Capital, a Ukrainian investment company.

"There are two types of heroes in Ukraine," he said. "They are the military and energy workers."

Today in History: January 16 Bush announces Operation Desert Storm

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Jan. 16, the 16th day of 2026. There are 349 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 16, 1991, in a televised address to the nation, U.S. President George H.W. Bush announced the start of Operation Desert Storm, a combat operation that drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait.

Also on this date:

In 1865, Union Maj. Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman decreed that 400,000 acres of confiscated land in the South would be divided into 40-acre lots and given to former enslaved people. (The order, later revoked by President Andrew Johnson, inspired the expression, "40 acres and a mule.")

In 1942, actor Carole Lombard, 33, her mother, Elizabeth Peters, and 20 other people were killed when their plane crashed near Las Vegas, Nevada, while returning to California from a war-bond promotion tour.

In 1989, three days of rioting began in Miami when a police officer fatally shot a Black motorcyclist, causing a crash that also claimed the life of his passenger. (The officer was convicted of manslaughter, but later acquitted in a retrial.)

In 1996, Wayne Newton performed his 25,000th Las Vegas show. Newton had performed more shows as a headliner in Las Vegas than any other entertainer.

In 2001, Congolese President Laurent-Désiré Kabila was fatally shot by one of his own bodyguards.

In 2006, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became the first elected female head of state in Africa when she was sworn in as president of Liberia.

In 2018, authorities in Denmark charged inventor Peter Madsen with killing Swedish journalist Kim Wall onboard his private submarine. (Madsen would be convicted and sentenced to life in prison.)

Today's birthdays: Opera singer Marilyn Horne is 92. Hall of Fame auto racer A.J. Foyt is 91. Country musician Ronnie Milsap is 83. Filmmaker John Carpenter is 78. Actor-dancer-choreographer Debbie Allen is 76. Singer Sade (shah-DAY') is 67. Boxing Hall of Famer Roy Jones Jr. is 57. Model Kate Moss is 52. Actor-producer-songwriter Lin-Manuel Miranda is 46. Baseball great Albert Pujols is 46. Singer-Songwriter Yebba is 31.