

Groton Daily Independent

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Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2026

School Breakfast: Omelets.
School Lunch: Pasta primavera.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.
6th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.
3rd/4th Grade Volleyball Practice, 6 p.m.
5th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.

Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026

School Breakfast: Biscuits.
School Lunch: Sloppy joes, tri taters.
Basketball: Milbank at Groton: (Gym: BC-4, GC-5, Arena: JVGBB-4, JVBBB-5, VGBB-6:15, VBBB-7:30)
2nd Grade BBB Practice, 5 p.m.
4th Grade BBB Practice, 6 p.m.



Friday, Jan. 23, 2026

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.
School Lunch: Chicken ala king, biscuit.
Girls Wrestling at Pierre Invitational, 4 p.m.
Boys Wrestling vs. Deuel/Deubrook Area at Deuel, 6 p.m.
MS BBB at Redfield, 6 p.m.

Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026

Groton Ford "C" Team Classic at Groton with Warner, Mobridge-Pollock and Sisseton, 10 a.m.
Boys Wrestling at Kingsbury County Invitational (Arlington), 10 a.m.

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1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Greenland Dominates Davos

President Donald Trump is scheduled to speak at the World Economic Forum today in Davos, Switzerland. The summit comes amid ongoing tensions between the US and Europe over Trump's push to acquire Greenland from Denmark.

This year is the WEF's biggest gathering yet, with nearly 3,000 delegates in attendance, including business leaders and 64 heads of state. European leaders have gathered on the sidelines to discuss Trump's threat of 10% tariffs on eight countries beginning Feb. 1. Trump said the tariffs will increase to 25% on June 1, unless the US is able to purchase Greenland (see why Trump wants the island here). Europe is considering invoking the Anti-Coercion Instrument—a so-called trade bazooka, which could restrict US companies' access to the EU market.

Trump's speech—reportedly centered on how to make housing more affordable for Americans—will begin at 8:30 am ET (2:30 pm local time).

Trump v. Cook

The Supreme Court will hear arguments today over President Donald Trump's effort to remove Federal Reserve Governor Lisa Cook, in a case that tests presidential power over independent agencies and the central bank's insulation from politics.

Trump announced Cook's firing on social media in August, citing mortgage fraud allegations involving home loans that predate her 2022 appointment, which she denies. Cook sued, arguing the Federal Reserve Act allows removal only "for cause"—the law restricts presidential removals but does not explicitly define the term "cause"—and that her Fed seat is a protected property interest requiring notice and a chance to respond under the Fifth Amendment. A federal district judge temporarily blocked the firing in September.

Trump's lawyers say the limits infringe on his constitutional authority under the unitary executive theory, while Cook's team argues the allegations are untested and unrelated to her duties. A decision is expected by late June.

Penguin Calendars Clash

Penguins' breeding cycles are shifting earlier at a record pace, according to a study published yesterday. Researchers say rising temperatures are the most likely cause of the change, which could push two species to extinction by the end of the century.

The study followed three penguin species in Antarctica and the sub-Antarctic over a decade. Gentoo penguins bred an average of 13 days earlier in 2022 than in 2012, while Adélie and chinstrap penguins bred about 10 days earlier. Meanwhile, average temperatures across all breeding grounds rose by roughly 5.4 degrees Fahrenheit. More aggressive gentoo penguins now nest at the same time as the other two species, intensifying food competition. The study's lead author warns Adélie and chinstrap penguins—who also face competition from commercial fisheries for their primary food source—could be extinct by the end of the century.

Scientists previously documented a 15-day shift in European great tits' breeding cycle, but this occurred over roughly six decades rather than one.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Judge denies Duke University's request to block quarterback Darian Mensah from entering the transfer portal; Mensah has a contract with Duke until Dec. 31.

Carlos Beltran, Andruw Jones elected to Baseball Hall of Fame.

Sabrina Carpenter to perform at Grammy Awards Feb. 1; she's the first of several acts expected to be announced in the coming days.

Thirty-year-old music magazine Pitchfork launches \$5-per-month subscription, enabling users to score albums and comment on reviews.

Science & Technology

OpenAI introduces age prediction feature to ChatGPT, automatically applying additional protections to accounts flagged as belonging to minors.

Researchers confirm brains use frequency waves to recruit ad hoc groups of neurons for cognitive tasks; process enables fast and flexible thinking.

NASA captures near-infrared image of Helix Nebula, offering new insights into how stars recycle material back into the cosmos.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close lower (S&P 500 -2.1%, Dow -1.8%, Nasdaq -2.4%); all three indexes post worst session since October.

Netflix amends \$82.7B bid for Warner Bros. Discovery's studio and streaming assets to an all-cash deal amid Paramount's hostile pursuit.

Netflix's revenue and earnings rise in Q4; streamer reaches new milestone of 325 million global paid subscribers.

AI startup Humans& raises \$480M at nearly \$4.5B valuation in seed round; three-month-old company—founded by alums from Anthropic, xAI, and Google—aims to develop AI that enhances human collaboration.

Politics & World Affairs

Justice Department subpoenas five Democratic leaders in Minnesota, including Gov. Tim Walz (D) and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey (D) as part of investigation into alleged impeding of immigration enforcement.

Supreme Court hears oral arguments on Hawaii's so-called "vampire rule," requiring gun owners with concealed carry permits to ask permission before entering private property open to the public, including restaurants and stores.

National Weather Service warns of major winter storm beginning Friday that could weigh down trees and trigger power outages from Texas to the Carolinas.

Names Released in Lyman County Multi-Vehicle Fatal Crash

What: Multi vehicle fatal crash

Where: Interstate 90, mile marker 244, five miles west of Reliance, SD

When: 3:44 p.m., Friday, January 16, 2026

Driver 1: Drew Allen Kellison, 50-year-old male from Locust Grove, VA, no injuries

Vehicle 1: 2025 Kenworth

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Reed Glenholden Harter, 28-year-old male from Colome, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2008 Mercury Sable

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 2a: Chandler Cole Bakley, 27-year-old male from Martin, SD, fatal injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 2b: Wyatt Philip Kayser, 27-year-old male from Alexandria, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Passenger 2c: Cameron Rick Quigley, 26-year-old male from Hartford, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Driver 3: Curtis W. Roberts, 71-year-old male, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 3: 2025 Ford F-150

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 3a: Kathy Roberts, 72-year-old female, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 3b: Megan Roberts, 46-year-old female, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 3c: Addison Roberts, 19-year-old female, no injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 4: Wade James Ness, 59-year-old male, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Vehicle 4: 2013 Ford F-150

Seat belt Used: No

Passenger 4a: Jennifer Rebecca Ness, 54-year-old female, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: No

Driver 5: Catana Ehlers, 52-year-old female, minor injuries

Vehicle 5: 2010 GMC Yukon

Seat belt Used: Yes

Lyman County, S.D.- Two people died and several were injured in a multi-vehicle crash Friday afternoon, five miles west of Reliance, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Drew Allen Kellison, the driver of a 2025 Kenworth, was traveling westbound on Interstate 90 near mile marker 244 and had slowed down due to a crash in front of him. Reed Glenholden Harter, the driver of a 2008 Mercury Sable, collided with the rear end of the semi, and a

chain reaction of collisions including a 2025 Ford F-150, a 2013 Ford F-150, and a 2010 GMC Yukon occurred.

The two front seat occupants in the Mercury Sable, Harter and Chandler Cole Bakley, were pronounced deceased at the scene. Two other passengers in the vehicle, Wyatt Philip Kayser and Cameron Rick Quigley, sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries.

The driver of the 2025 Ford F-150, Curtis W. Roberts, and two passengers, Kathy and Megan Roberts, sustained serious, non-life-threatening injuries while a fourth passenger, Addison Roberts, was uninjured.

The driver and a passenger in the 2013 Ford F-150, Wade and Jennifer Ness, both received serious, non-life-threatening injuries. Catana Ehlers, driving the 2010 GMC Yukon, sustained minor injuries, and the driver of the Kenworth, Drew A. Kellison, had no injuries.

Weather conditions with whiteout visibility were a contributing factor in the crash.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

Names Released in Clay County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: Intersection of SD 46 and SD 19, two miles south of Centerville, SD

When: 8:14 a.m., Friday, January 16, 2026

Driver 1: James Roy Stewart, 20-year-old male from Harrisburg, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 1: 2025 Ram 3500

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Samuel Kwesi Minlah, 35-year-old male from Vermillion, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 2: 2011 Subaru Legacy

Seat belt Used: Yes

Clay County, S.D.- One person died Friday morning in a two-vehicle crash two miles south of Centerville, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates James Roy Stewart, the driver of a 2025 Ram 3500, was traveling westbound on SD Highway 46 near the intersection of Highway 19. At the same time, Samuel Kwesi Minlah, the driver of a 2011 Subaru Legacy, was traveling southbound on Highway 19, approaching the intersection at Highway 46. The Subaru entered the intersection and collided with the Ram. Both vehicles came to rest in the southwest ditch.

Minlah sustained fatal injuries. Stewart was not injured.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

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

City Council covers summer staffing, youth baseball, disaster planning by Elizabeth Varin

The Groton City Council tackled a mix of summer staffing salaries, a disaster sheltering agreement with the American Red Cross and radar speed sign prices during its meeting Tuesday night.

In addition, the Council heard from a member of the baseball/softball foundation board about a proposal to transition the city's Junior Teener team into a U14 Legion team. While the change would have little impact on the overall structure of the game for the 13 and 14-year-old players, it would move the team from the VFW-affiliated Teener program to the American Legion system, meaning players would wear a different uniform patch, play under Legion rules, and follow a lower pitch count limit.

It would also bring the three teen baseball teams under the same system, meaning the coaches would all be working from the same rule book, said Doug Hamilton, foundation treasurer. At a recent statewide meeting, about 23 to 25 teams indicated they planned to move from Junior Teener to Legion teams, and many regional teams are making that move as well.

Hamilton asked the council to consider transitioning away from the Junior Teener system. Baseball leaders would need to know before the early bird registration deadline in mid-May.

The council did not make any decisions on that baseball question as it was brought before them during public comment, where members of the public can speak to the council, but no action can be taken on items discussed.

The council did, though, take action on a different item related to summer recreation. The council approved its summer salary ordinance, setting pay rates for seasonal summer employees as well as reminding the public that applications for some positions are already due in less than a month.

Applications for baseball coordinator, softball coordinator, junior legion coach, junior teener coach, girls softball coaches (U8/U10/U12/U14/U18), day baseball/softball coach, concessions manager and swimming pool manager are available on the city website and are due by 5 p.m. Feb. 18.

The council also approved the first reading of an ordinance setting summer recreation employee salaries. Those salaries include:

- Public works laborer/park caretaker at \$16.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service
- Cemetery caretaker at \$16.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service
- Swimming pool manager at \$16.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service at the swimming pool
- Assistant part time swimming pool manager at \$14.50 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service at the swimming pool
- Swimming pool lifeguard at \$11.85 per hour plus 25 cents for each year of service
- WSI lifeguards during swimming lessons at their regular salary plus \$1 and a \$25 bonus per private lesson
- WSI assistant lifeguard during swimming lessons at their regular salary plus 50 cents per hour
- Concessions manager at \$75 daily plus 50 percent of net profits (the latter of which will be paid at the end of the season)
- Baseball coordinator at \$2,000 yearly plus \$77.32 per year of service
- Softball coordinator at \$2,000 yearly plus \$25.77 per year of service
- Junior legion baseball coach at \$3,000 yearly plus \$51.55 per year of service
- Junior teener baseball coach at \$3,000 yearly plus \$51.55 per year of service (if one coach is hired) or \$1,500 yearly plus \$38.66 per year of service (if two coaches are hired)
- Day baseball/softball coach at \$2,500 yearly plus \$50 per year of service
- Girls softball coach (U8, U10, U12, U14, U18) at \$1,000 yearly plus \$20.62 per year of service
- Baseball groundskeeper at \$11.85 per hour plus 25 cents per year of service
- Baseball gatekeeper at \$11.85 per hour plus 25 cents per year of service

The council also discussed an agreement to allow the American Red Cross to use the Community Center to provide services during a disaster. After a short discussion, the council approved setting up a facility use agreement.

Finally, the council also agreed to enter into a consulting/assistance agreement with recently retired Public Works Coordinator Terry Herron. Herron can be called for help on an as needed basis by Dwight Zerr, who took over after Herron's retirement, city Finance Officer Douglas Heinrich or city Mayor Scott Hanlon. He will be paid \$39.85 per hour.

In other business, the council chose to hold off on taking action on radar speed sign quotes, requesting additional information be brought back for consideration at a future meeting.

What can \$20 get you?



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for details



Annual Membership Rates

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

Month-to-Month Rates

Student is \$35.15 per month
Single is \$40.48 per month
2-Person is \$59.78 per month
Family is \$72.43 per month

**While many other rates have gone up, ours has not.
Same rates for several years!**

Groton splits at Hamlin triangular

HAYTI, S.D. — The Groton Area wrestling team went 1-1 at a triangular Tuesday night in Hamlin, falling to Clark/Willow Lake 46-30 before bouncing back with a 60-18 win over Hamlin/Castlewood.

Clark/Willow Lake 46, Groton Area 30

Groton opened the dual with a quick pin from Preston Hinkelman at 106 pounds, as he stuck Colt Nichols in 1:28. Clark/Willow Lake responded with a run of victories through the middle weights, as Bentley Ehresmann (113) fell to Maverick Clausen, Luke Gauer (120) was pinned by Cade Gaikowski, Kyson Kucker (126) dropped a 4-2 decision to Benny Pommer, Braeden Flihs (132) was pinned by Kaden Wookey, and Isaiah Scepaniak (138) was defeated by technical fall to Logan Foster.

At 144, Aiden Strom was pinned by Cooper Pommer, and at 150 Grayson Flores fell to Damian Severson. Groton earned points at 157 as Kason Oswald received a forfeit victory. Donavon Block (165) lost by major decision to Isaac Johnson, and Walker Zoellner (175) was defeated by major decision to Austin Vig.

The Tigers finished strong in the upper weights. Isaiah Scepaniak pinned Ridge Moe in 54 seconds at 190, Layne Johnson picked up a forfeit win at 215, and Gavin Englund added another forfeit victory at 285. Clark/Willow Lake ultimately secured the 46-30 team win.

Groton Area 60, Hamlin/Castlewood 18

Groton responded with a dominant performance against the host Bearcats. Hinkelman again delivered early, pinning Parker Roberts in just 18 seconds at 106. Ehresmann (113), Gauer (120), Xavier Ellenbecker (132), Aiden Strom (144), and Kason Oswald (157) all earned forfeit victories.

On the mat, Kyson Kucker pinned Jaden Buehmann at 126, while Noah Scepaniak recorded a fall over Justin Goens at 138. At 190, Isaiah Scepaniak added another forfeit victory. In the heavyweight bout, Gavin Englund pinned Riley Pollard in 56 seconds.

Hamlin/Castlewood's wins came from Dante Schortzmann, who pinned Grayson Flores at 150, Tate Everson, who pinned Donavon Block at 165, and Justin Goens, who earned a forfeit at 215.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

Former Homestake Mine hydro plant in Spearfish Canyon could become an interpretive center

BY: JOSHUA HAIAR

The South Dakota House of Representatives sent a bill to the Senate by a vote of 60-9 on Tuesday that would transfer an old hydroelectric plant in Spearfish Canyon to a foundation for potential conversion to an interpretive center.

The bill would transfer ownership of the Homestake Mine Hydro Electric Plant No. 2 building from the South Dakota Game, Fish, and Parks to the Spearfish Canyon Foundation at no cost. The building is near the entrance to the popular Devil's Bathtub hiking trail.

Majority Leader Scott Odenbach, R-Spearfish, called the building a well-preserved "time capsule" that would turn into a place where visitors can learn about the history of mining in Lawrence County.

"It's like they greased everything in 1916 and they just walked away," Odenbach told fellow representatives in the House.

Of the bill's "no" votes, two came from Rep. Phil Jensen, R-Rapid City, and Rep. Tina Mulally, R-Rapid City. The two argued the state was giving away taxpayer assets without compensation.

Odenbach said the building and the land it sits on are of little value, and they cost the state money to maintain.

Scott Simpson, deputy secretary for the Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, told the House Agriculture and Natural Resource Committee last week that the property became the department's as part of a larger 2014 acquisition from Homestake Mining Co., which also included Roughlock Falls and Spearfish Falls. The hydro plant formerly generated electricity for the Homestake Mine in Lead. The mine has been closed since 2001.

Simpson said the hydro plant site does not fit the department's core mission of managing natural resources and recreation, and the foundation is better positioned to preserve and interpret the building's Homestake-era history.

Simpson said the foundation would assume ownership and liability under the transfer, while a reversion clause would apply if the property is not used for a public purpose. The proposed transfer is 3.5 acres.

Foundation supporters informed the committee that the building remains largely intact on the inside, but requires repairs, including roof work, to prevent further deterioration. Asked whether the foundation would return to the Legislature seeking state funding for renovations, foundation member Bob Ewing said no, explaining the group could pursue grants and local support.

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

Legislation to help with emergency medical staffing advances to SD House

Bills would add legal protections for registered nurses and add law enforcement officers and firefighters to the definition of ambulance operators

BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN

PIERRE — Two bills that could encourage and allow more people to serve in emergency medical service roles moved through a South Dakota legislative committee Tuesday morning.

Rep. Tim Walburg, R-Madison, introduced both bills, which the Health and Human Services Committee endorsed and sent to the House of Representatives.

The first bill would create legal protections for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses who provide care in the back of an ambulance.

Nurse licenses typically allow them to practice emergency medicine, but this legislation would protect them from civil liability while practicing within their scope of care in an ambulance.

It's especially necessary in rural areas, where nurses take on many duties, according to Walburg.

"A lot of these nurses that are in the nursing home do transfer their own patients to the hospitals when needed," Walburg said. "What better way to give a good continuum of care or handoff to that hospital than to hear from that nurse that has been caring for this patient?"

When an ambulance doesn't have advanced medical personnel, the law would allow for the service to use a registered nurse. It would give services more freedom, said Linda Young, executive director of the South Dakota Board of Nursing.

"Nurses have been providing emergency services throughout many, many, many years, in emergency rooms, on air ambulances," Young said. "This bill really does allow them greater flexibility to allow for those nurses to provide care on a ground ambulance."

The second bill that passed through the committee would add firefighters and law enforcement officers to the legal definition of "ambulance operator," and would put decisions about who can drive ambulances in the hands of local officials.

Maynard Konechne, of the South Dakota EMS Association, said emergency medical technicians too often have to drive ambulances. He said the bill would make it easier for local services to find other drivers, so EMTs can "do more of our job in the back of the ambulance, treating that patient."

Law enforcement officers and firefighters would be able to drive an ambulance, as long as they complete CPR certification and at least six hours of training.

In his time as a Highway Patrol trooper, Rep. Jim Halverson, R-Winner, said there were many instances when the person operating the ambulance should have been administering care instead of driving.

"This is a necessary move that we make here," he said.

As a paramedic, Rep. Eric Emery, D-Rosebud, said first responders, especially in rural areas, should work in a collaborative environment.

"Firefighters and law enforcement officers, we work all together, hand in hand," Emery said. "It'll put a lot of people within the EMS community here in South Dakota at ease and hopefully bring back a lot of those volunteers that had left."

Both proposals came from a legislative summer study on emergency medical services, which was motivated in part by staffing concerns. Members of the study committee learned, for example, that the average age of an emergency medical technician in South Dakota is 51.

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

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Bill to ban sale of pot-like Delta-9 to minors is on path to easy passage

Legislation would put offense on par with selling alcohol to underage buyers

BY: JOHN HULT

A bill to ban the sale of marijuana-like products to minors could sail through the South Dakota Senate without debate.

Senate Bill 45 would add delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinolic acid to the list of hemp-derived intoxicants illegal to purchase for people younger than 21. The bill, proposed by Attorney General Marty Jackley, would amend a law that already bars the sale of other hemp-derived compounds that create a marijuana-like high, among them Delta-8, Delta-10, THC-O acetate and hexahydrocannabinol.

The sale of such products to minors, under the terms of the bill, would be a class 1 misdemeanor punishable by up to a year in jail and a \$2,000 fine. That's the same level of criminal offense affixed to the sale of alcohol to minors.

Possession of the hemp-derived products by a minor would be a class 2 misdemeanor, which is the lowest level of criminal offense in South Dakota law with a potential 30-day jail sentence and \$500 fine.

Jackley initially proposed felony penalties for retailers who sell to minors, but he told the Senate Judiciary Committee that discussions with defense lawyers and business leaders convinced him to ask for an amendment to put violations on par with alcohol sales.

There were concerns about the implications of felony charges for businesses with beer or liquor licenses, Jackley said.

"I think this is an appropriate response," he told the committee. "And like always, we hope this has a deterrent value."

The committee on Tuesday approved Jackley's amendment, then approved the bill, with unanimous support from all members present. No one testified in opposition, clearing a path for the bill to appear on the Senate's consent calendar.

Bills on the consent calendar are passed in bulk with a single vote and no debate in the chamber, unless a lawmaker requests that a bill be pulled out for discussion.

Changing landscape for hemp

Lawmakers in Pierre passed a bill in 2024 that makes it a class 2 misdemeanor for anyone to sell — but not to possess — products containing intoxicating, hemp-derived substances, which have exploded in popularity in recent years thanks in part to a 2018 federal farm bill that legalized hemp.

The hemp plant is related to marijuana, but contains far less THC, a compound whose Delta-9 version is responsible for the high produced by the consumption of marijuana.

Once hemp became legal to sell at the federal level through the farm bill, companies began distilling CBD, a non-intoxicating substance present in hemp, to produce THC derivatives like Delta-8 and hemp-derived Delta-9, the latter of which is chemically indistinguishable from traditional marijuana's marquee intoxicant.

Hemp-derived intoxicants are now found in vape pens, gummies and smokable hemp, similar to traditional marijuana.

Delta-9 THC drinks are among the more visible signs of the products' popularity, available at bars and some grocery and liquor stores in South Dakota. Backers of the 2024 bill banning the sale of hemp-derived THC products said at the time that the beverages are outside the scope of the ban because their THC isn't chemically extracted.

States across the U.S., South Dakota among them, have grappled with regulations for hemp-based products. On the federal level, lawmakers in Washington passed a bill that's set to redefine hemp to exclude any product with too much THC, and to limit the amount of THC in individual products to 0.4 milligrams per serving by Nov. 13.

For context, a low-dose Delta-9 drink contains between 2.5 to 5 milligrams per serving, and 10 milligram versions are frequently found alongside them in grocery and liquor stores.

Lawmakers in both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate, including Minnesota Democratic Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Kentucky Republican Sen. Rand Paul, have proposed legislation pushing back the implementation of the new federal rules until 2028.

Industry analysts said last year that the law change would wipe out 95% of the \$28.4 billion hemp industry. South Dakota businesses said the new federal rules would rip away access to products that "consumers said loud and clear that they want."

Back in South Dakota, Piedmont state Sen. John Carley, a Republican, has introduced a bill to ban the sale, production, possession or use of any hemp-derived intoxicant, using the 0.4 milligram intoxicant limit used by Congress, unless the user has a medical marijuana card. A hearing on that bill is scheduled for Wednesday morning in the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

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

Iowa Senate bills would tax CO2 pipelines and expand pipeline corridors

BY: CAMI KOONS

A Senate Republican leader introduced two pieces of legislation Tuesday to address ongoing issues with property rights and eminent domain.

One bill would allow hazardous liquid pipeline operators to choose alternative routes to avoid the use of eminent domain and another would place a severance tax on sequestered carbon dioxide.

Senate Majority Leader Mike Klimesh, R-Spillville, said Tuesday to members of the media that he believes the bills will provide "abundant and affordable energy" while allowing Iowans to "exercise their private property rights," allow private investments to help the state grow and "accelerate Iowa's path to zero income tax."

"I believe the proposals we are introducing today in the Senate will get us to the point where we all but eliminate the need for utilizing eminent domain for carbon capture pipelines or any other (hazardous liquid) pipelines, while still recognizing the fact that Iowa needs to have investment in linear infrastructure, but also recognizing the importance of landowner rights," Klimesh said.

The Senate bills differ from a bill filed and advanced by House Republicans that would ban carbon sequestration pipelines from using eminent domain. Lobbyists for Summit Carbon Solutions, an Iowa-based company seeking to build a carbon capture and sequestration pipeline through the state, said the House bill would kill the Summit pipeline project.

Landowners and lawmakers in support of the House bill have said it is the best way to protect private property rights from a project they argue is not a public use.

Corn farmers and ethanol producers in favor of carbon sequestration pipelines said the Senate bill would help the project secure as many voluntary easements as possible to get the project done.

Kelly Nieuwenhuis, an O'Brien County farmer, said he and his brothers have signed contracts for more than three miles of easements with Summit and he hopes other landowners can do the same if the Senate's bill is successful.

"We've had great negotiations with (Summit), great communications and no issues at all, so I'm hoping more people find that same situation, and so we can find people are willing to have the project go across their property," Nieuwenhuis said while at the Iowa State Capitol Tuesday to speak with lawmakers about the Summit project.

Widening the corridors

Klimesh said under Senate File 2067, eminent domain – or the taking of private property with just com-

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pensation for public use – would be a “last resort” for hazardous liquid pipelines.

Rather than stick directly with their Iowa Utilities Commission approved routes, hazardous liquid pipeline operators, not just carbon sequestration pipeline operators, would be able to “actively pursue alternative routes” with landowners within a voluntary easement corridor. Klimesh explained this corridor included land anywhere within the county or within five miles of the initially proposed route.

“The Senate Republican caucus doesn’t want eminent domain to be utilized,” Klimesh said. “I mean, we want to try to minimize the impact of eminent domain of building any infrastructure projects.”

Under the bill, a pipeline operator must demonstrate to the Iowa Utilities Commission that it “diligently sought to devise a route of voluntary easements” and was unable to do so, before it can request eminent domain power.

Jess Mazour, the conservation program associate with Sierra Club Iowa Chapter, said the proposal from Klimesh “does not address property rights.” The House bill, which is on the schedule for debate Wednesday, she said does protect property rights by blocking the use of eminent domain.

Mazour alleged that Summit has been unwilling to reroute within its existing corridors and wondered what difference a larger corridor, as proposed by Klimesh’s bill, would make.

“A lot of the stuff that he’s saying is simply just a misdirection and a distraction away from the issue at hand, which is property rights, and the ability for someone to say no,” Mazour said. “And that’s not addressed in his bill whatsoever.”

Klimesh argued the bill allows property owners to say no by giving pipeline operators a different option.

“This is a relationship would allow the property owner that does not wish to enter a voluntary easement to say no,” Klimesh said. “Currently under Iowa law, that pipeline company has no other option to go around that landowner – this allows that option to take place.”

The bill also has a provision that would allow landowners to opt out of communications, other than mail, from pipeline operators. Klimesh explained the bill allows a one-year time frame for easement acquisitions, to keep the process from being “open ended.”

According to Klimesh, the bill would affect the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline, which was granted a permit by the IUC in 2024, but he said it also applies to other hazardous liquid pipelines that want to cross through Iowa in the future.

Summit, in a statement, said it “remain(s) committed” to working with landowners and lawmakers on solutions that “protect property rights and support rural economies.”

“As proposals like this are considered, it’s important to maintain clarity, respect landowner interests, and avoid limiting economic opportunity for agriculture and rural communities,” the statement said.

Mike Henning, a landowner in Greene County affected by and opposed to the pipeline, said the House bill would protect property rights and allow for the development of carbon pipelines.

“We’ve heard what’s in Sen. Klimesh’s bill and it’s not what landowners have spent five years asking for. Nor is it what Governor Reynolds asked for after vetoing our last piece of legislation,” Henning said in a news release.

The Legislature passed a bill to limit the use of eminent domain on carbon sequestration projects in 2025, but Gov. Kim Reynolds vetoed the bill, in part because of its complexity.

Severance tax on CO2

The second bill would apply a severance tax – or a tax applied on the removal of natural resources – on the carbon dioxide transported through the pipeline.

Klimesh said this tax revenue would go to Iowa’s Taxpayer Relief Fund to “continue Iowa’s path to zero income tax.”

The tax would be applied at a flat fee per metric ton.

States like Wyoming, North Dakota and Texas have severance taxes on oil and gas that is extracted in the state.

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Good for corn, 'energy dominance'

Klimesh said his legislative proposals will be good for Iowa farmers as carbon capture pipelines are slated to increase demand in the ethanol industry by allowing refineries to more easily participate in the ultra-low carbon ethanol markets.

He noted that farmers logged a record high year for corn production. According to USDA figures, Iowa farmers produce 2.77 billion bushels of corn in 2025. Nearly 60% of Iowa-grown corn goes to the ethanol industry.

"It's of the utmost importance that we gain access to new low carbon ethanol markets to ensure Iowa farmers and Iowa can not only survive but thrive," Klimesh said.

Nieuwenhuis said there are additional ways for ethanol plants to reduce their carbon intensity score, a figure which represents the greenhouse gas emissions of a product, but none that do so as intensely as access to a carbon sequestration pipeline.

Klimesh additionally stressed the importance of his legislation as it relates to the Trump administration's goal for energy dominance.

Language in the federal "one big beautiful" law made it so carbon sequestration pipelines can get enhanced tax credits when the CO2 is injected into the ground near existing oil fields in a process called enhanced oil recovery.

The pressure from the CO2 can make oil recovery processes more effective.

While Summit lobbyists also mentioned the prospect of enhanced oil recovery during a subcommittee meeting on the House-proposed bill, the company has not said if it intends to change its route from its current ending destination in North Dakota, to an area with greater potential for enhanced oil recovery.

Klimesh, when asked if he had the necessary votes to pass the bill, said he would not discuss "internal caucus matters." The issue of eminent domain has caused a level of division within Iowa Republicans, notably from a group of Republican senators who refused to debate budget bills last session until the chamber held debate on the House's eminent domain bill.

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.

DHS policy to block unannounced lawmaker visits upheld, for now, on technical grounds

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — A Department of Homeland Security policy that barred unannounced visits for lawmakers seeking to conduct oversight at facilities that hold immigrants will remain in place, as ordered by a federal judge Monday.

District of Columbia federal Judge Jia Cobb issued an order that denied a request from a dozen Democratic lawmakers, on the technical grounds that an amended complaint or a supplemental brief must be made to challenge a seven-day notice policy instituted by Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem this month for oversight visits.

"The Court emphasizes that it denies Plaintiffs' motion only because it is not the proper avenue to challenge Defendants' January 8, 2026 memorandum and the policy stated therein, rather than based on any kind of finding that the policy is lawful," according to Cobb's order.

Earlier this month, Democrats brought an emergency request to Cobb after a handful of Minnesota lawmakers were denied an unannounced oversight visit to a federal facility that holds immigrants following the deadly shooting of a woman in Minneapolis by a federal immigration officer.

Under a 2019 appropriations law, any member of Congress can carry out an unannounced visit at a

federal facility that holds immigrants, but in June, multiple Democrats were denied visits to Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities.

Those 12 Democrats sued over the policy that required a week's notice, and in December, Cobb granted the request to stay Noem's policy, finding it violated the 2019 law.

Noem has now argued that the January incident does not violate Cobb's stay from December, because the ICE facilities are using funds through the Republican spending and tax cuts law, known as the "One, Big Beautiful Bill," and not the DHS appropriations bill. Noem argued that those facilities are therefore exempt from unannounced oversight visits by members of Congress.

House Democrats who sued include Joe Neguse of Colorado, Adriano Espaillat of New York, Jamie Raskin of Maryland, Robert Garcia of California, J. Luis Correa of California, Jason Crow of Colorado, Veronica Escobar of Texas, Dan Goldman of New York, Jimmy Gomez of California, Raul Ruiz of California, Bennie Thompson of Mississippi and Norma Torres of California.

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

Trump says people will 'find out' how far he's willing to go to acquire Greenland

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump showed no signs Tuesday of backing off his goal to acquire Greenland, after saying over the weekend he would place a 10% tariff on eight European countries that object to his plans and posting several times on social media.

Trump's insistence that the United States gain control of the Arctic island from Denmark came just hours before he was set to travel to Davos, Switzerland, to meet with other world leaders at the World Economic Forum.

Trump said during an afternoon press conference that threatening tariffs on allied countries that oppose his plans is "the best, the strongest, the fastest, the easiest, the least complicated" way to obtain Greenland.

Trump said he has "other alternatives" and that people will "find out" how far he's willing to go to make Greenland part of the United States, though he seemed somewhat optimistic he can reach a deal.

"I think that we will work something out where NATO is going to be very happy and where we're going to be very happy," Trump said, referring to the military alliance founded after World War II. "But we need it for security purposes, we need it for national security and even world security. It's very important."

Trump said he plans to talk with people living in Greenland when asked about residents not wanting to become part of the United States.

"I haven't spoken to them," Trump said. "When I speak to them, I'm sure they'll be thrilled."

Trump posts about Greenland repeatedly

Trump posted on social media numerous times earlier Tuesday and throughout the weekend, pressing other leaders to help him secure Greenland, despite ongoing opposition.

"I had a very good telephone call with Mark Rutte, the Secretary General of NATO, concerning Greenland," Trump posted at 12:26 a.m. "I agreed to a meeting of the various parties in Davos, Switzerland. As I expressed to everyone, very plainly, Greenland is imperative for National and World Security. There can be no going back — On that, everyone agrees!"

Trump posted an altered image of him showing a map to European leaders that had a version of the U.S. flag covering Canada, Greenland and Venezuela. He also posted a fabricated image of him planting the U.S. flag in Greenland and declaring it a territory with Vice President JD Vance and Secretary of State Marco Rubio standing behind him. Both were published around 1 a.m.

Trump posted screenshots of text message conversations with Rutte, who pledged to find "a way for-

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ward on Greenland” as well as French President Emmanuel Macron, who told Trump that he does “not understand what you are doing on Greenland,” and asked to set up a dinner in Paris with other world leaders to discuss the issue this week.

Trump said during his press conference that he didn’t intend to accept Macron’s invitation.

“No, I wouldn’t do that,” Trump said. “Because, you know, Emmanuel is not going to be there very long and, you know, there’s no longevity there. He’s a friend of mine. He’s a nice guy. I like Macron. But he’s not going to be there very much longer as you know. And I think I have meetings with the people that are directly involved.”

Island of Diego Garcia

Trump posted to social media again around 1:38 a.m., this time criticizing the United Kingdom over its plans “to give away the Island of Diego Garcia, the site of a vital U.S. Military Base, to Mauritius, and to do so FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER.”

“There is no doubt that China and Russia have noticed this act of total weakness. These are International Powers who only recognize STRENGTH, which is why the United States of America, under my leadership, is now, after only one year, respected like never before,” Trump added. “The UK giving away extremely important land is an act of GREAT STUPIDITY, and is another in a very long line of National Security reasons why Greenland has to be acquired. Denmark and its European Allies have to DO THE RIGHT THING.”

A BBC news article from September 2024, where one of its reporters was granted access to the island, notes that “Diego Garcia is one of about 60 islands that make up the Chagos Archipelago or British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT) – the last colony established by the UK by separating it from Mauritius in 1965. It is located about halfway between East Africa and Indonesia.”

The U.K. and U.S. originally signed a 50-year lease in 1966 that was later extended for 20 years and is set to end in 2036, according to the BBC article.

A U.S. military website states that access to “Diego Garcia is restricted, requiring area clearance by U.S. Navy Support Facility Diego Garcia.”

Tariffs, text messages, Nobel Peace Prize

Trump posted on social media Saturday that he would place a 10% tariff on goods coming into the United States from Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom before increasing that to 25% in June if the countries continue to oppose his attempts to acquire Greenland.

Trump wrote the tariffs would stay in place “until such time as a Deal is reached for the Complete and Total purchase of Greenland.”

Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre released a statement Monday that he and Finland’s President Alexander Stubb sent a text message to Trump to express their opposition to his tariff announcement.

“We pointed to the need to de-escalate and proposed a telephone conversation between Trump, Stubb and myself on the same day,” Støre wrote. “The response from Trump came shortly after the message was sent. It was his decision to share his message with other NATO leaders.”

Several news organizations, including PBS News reported that Trump sent a message to Støre stating that because he didn’t receive the Nobel Peace Prize he no longer feels “an obligation to think purely of Peace, although it will always be predominant, but can now think about what is good and proper for the United States of America.”

Støre wrote in his statement that he could confirm the text message conversation and reinforced that European leaders don’t believe the United States needs to acquire Greenland.

“Norway’s position on Greenland is clear. Greenland is a part of the Kingdom of Denmark, and Norway fully supports the Kingdom of Denmark on this matter,” Støre wrote. “We also support that NATO in a responsible way is taking steps to strengthen security and stability in the Arctic. As regards the Nobel Peace Prize, I have clearly explained, including to president Trump what is well known, the prize is awarded by

an independent Nobel Committee and not the Norwegian Government.”

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.

Farm Bureau, soybean and specialty ag groups ask Congress for more support

BY: CAMI KOONS

The American Farm Bureau Federation, along with soybean and specialty crop farm organizations, has asked congressional leadership for economic support to “fill in the gap of remaining losses for both field and specialty crop farmers.”

The letter follows a December announcement from the Trump administration of a \$12 billion one-time package to offset farmer losses across the country.

“These funds could provide a meaningful first step but do not cover the extensive and cumulative losses that farmers have absorbed over the last several years,” the letter said after acknowledging the farmer bridge payment program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is allocating the funding with commodity specific payment rates and set aside \$1 billion of the \$12 billion for specialty crop farmers.

The American Soybean Association, a signee on the recently submitted letter, said in a news release the \$30.88 per acre allotted for soybeans from the payment package was not enough to cover the “significant financial damage soybean farmers sustained this year due to the high cost of production and losses sustained during the China trade war.”

Grant Kimberley, Iowa Soybean Association’s director of market development, said the additional need from farmers is “complicated” and is a result of more than just one event in the past year.

“I think people don’t really realize this has been going on for a couple years now,” Kimberley said. “... Just about every row crop agriculture sector in the whole country has been losing money, probably, for the last three years.”

Kimberley said the ongoing downturn in the industry is due to several factors, including low commodity prices, high input costs, changes in global trade and uncertainty in domestic markets.

Data from Farm Bureau show that commodity prices for major row crops like corn, soybeans, cotton and wheat have declined each year since 2022.

Kimberley said as the prices that farmers can get for their crops has declined, expenses have not declined, and have instead increased. Land, rent, equipment and inputs like fertilizer, seed and chemicals continue to squeeze farmers’ bottom lines, he said.

Farm Bureau economists found that farm expenses in 2025 were 12% higher than the previous five-year average cost.

Another piece to the puzzle, Kimberley explained, is the growing soybean and row crop markets in Brazil and other South American countries. He said the expansion of these markets has interrupted U.S. demand, especially with big buyers like China.

China also declined to purchase U.S. soybeans for the beginning part of harvest season due to President Donald Trump’s trade policies. While the country later agreed to a trade deal, Kimberley said it’s less than what the country previously bought from the U.S. and the gap in purchasing this year has also had an effect.

Kimberley also pointed to the lack of finalized guidance from federal agencies on renewable fuel standards and tax credits. Many of these initiatives, like 45Z tax credits for low-carbon fuel, were initiated during the Biden administration and still do not have finalized guidelines.

Other standards, like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s blending standards, were proposed over the summer and have yet to be finalized. Kimberley, who is also executive director of the Iowa Biodiesel

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Board, said this uncertainty means overall biodiesel production has declined in the state, causing a "ripple in the pond" for soybean demand.

"You can't really just say it's this or that, you know, it's all of these things that have kind of added up a little bit over time," Kimberley said.

The letter from American Farm Bureau Federation also noted the compounding factors squeezing farmers. According to the letter, farmer bankruptcies are increasing and nationwide farmer losses are approaching \$100 billion.

"These trends aren't just statistics; they represent an economic crisis in rural America," the letter said.

Specialty crop farmers are also struggling under similar pressures and asked Congress for relief.

The majority of the more than 50 organizations that signed the letter represented specialty crop growers.

In a news release about the letter, the Specialty Crop Farm Bill Alliance said that despite the fact that specialty crops account for more than one-third of all U.S. crop sales, the farmer bridge program from USDA allocated just \$1 billion to the industry.

"Any agricultural aid package should reflect the economic contribution of specialty crops, which support rural communities and provide key nutrition," the alliance leadership said in the release.

The letter, addressed to House and Senate leadership, ask for "immediate" congressionally approved support.

Kimberley said additional changes need to occur in the farm economy for farmers to be profitable, but those changes won't happen overnight.

"None of these things make farmers whole, and (aid packages) are not preferred, but sometimes they're necessary," Kimberley said.

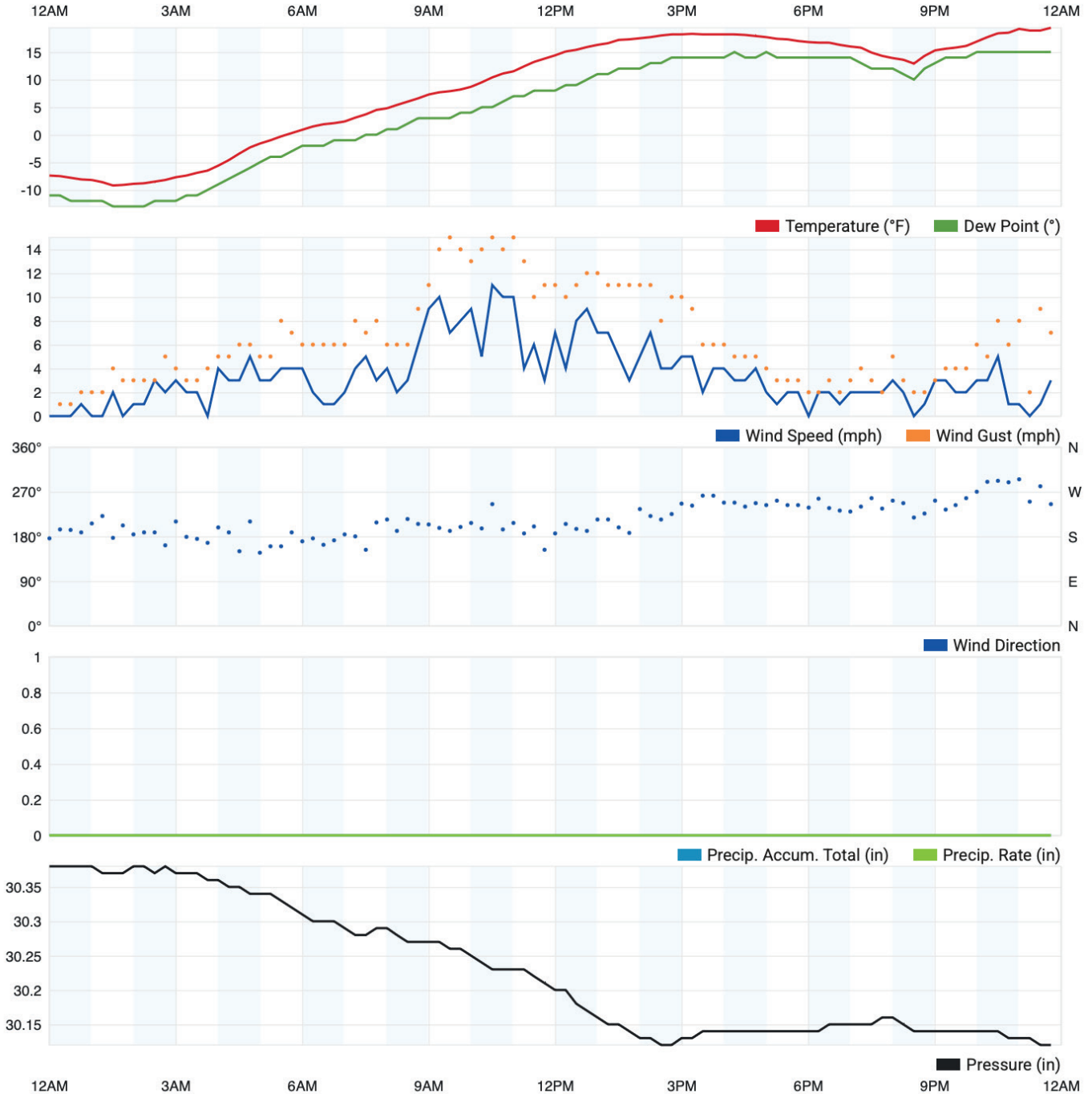
This story was originally produced by Iowa Capital Dispatch, which is part of States Newsroom, a nonprofit news network which includes South Dakota Searchlight, and is supported by grants and a coalition of donors as a 501c(3) public charity.

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.

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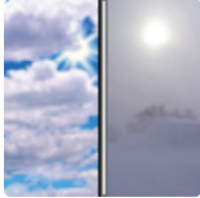


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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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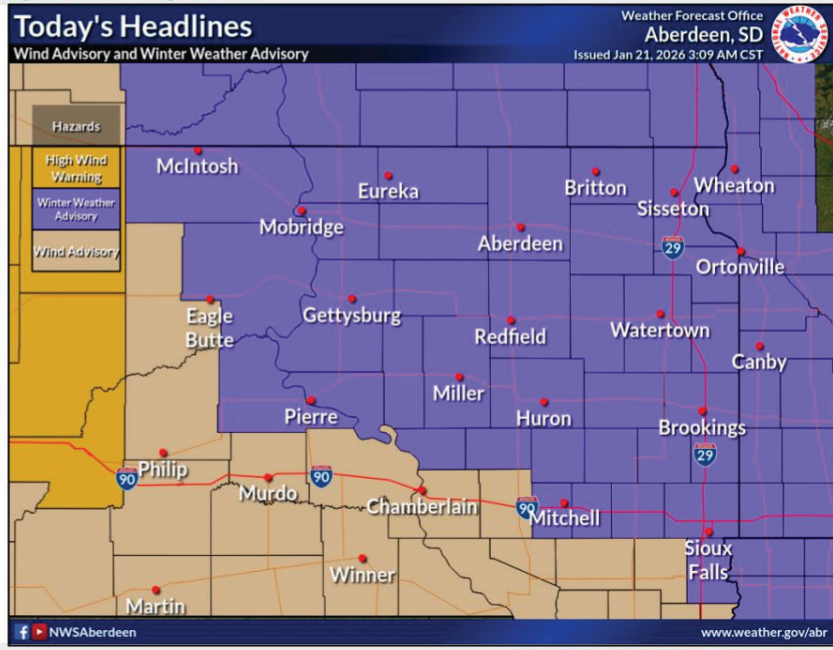
Winter Weather Advisory		Extreme Cold Watch		
Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
80 % → 20 %				
High: 26 °F	Low: 1 °F	High: 6 °F	Low: -22 °F	High: -7 °F
Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Patchy Blowing Snow and Blustery	Mostly Clear	Cold

Light Snow & Strong Winds Today

Winds gusts of 35 to 55 mph leading to blowing snow

January 21, 2026
4:29 AM CST

- ### Key Messages
- **Light snow and strong winds will combine to reduce visibility at times today.**
 - Total snow accumulations of up to 1 inch will be possible.
 - Strong northwesterly winds will **gust as high as 55 mph**.
 - Slippery road conditions may occur, along with the wind, providing additional travel difficulty. **This may affect the morning commute.**
- What Has Changed** NEW
- Minor changes to the timing of the headlines.
- Next Scheduled Update**
- This Afternoon



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Light snow and strong winds will combine to reduce visibility at times today. Total snow accumulations around an inch or less possible (localized areas of 2 inches over the Sisseton Hills) with wind gusts of 35 to 55 mph. Due to this, a Weather Weather Advisory remains in effect for most of the forecast area where drifting and blowing snow is likely. A Wind Advisory remains in effect for Jones and Lyman Counties where little to no snow is anticipated.

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Gusty Winds Today

January 21, 2026
4:36 AM

- Northwest winds will continue to increase this morning, **with gusts of 35 to 55 mph.**
 - Strongest gusts occurring during the mid-morning through the late afternoon (**highlighted in red box**).
- Snow on the ground (plus additional falling snow) will combine with gusty winds, leading to blowing snow and reduced visibilities through the late afternoon.
- Central and northeastern SD could experience intermittent whiteout conditions!**
 - Localized visibility may be reduced to a half mile or less at times.
 - Please use caution if traveling!

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	1/21 Wed												
	6am	7am	8am	9am	10am	11am	12pm	1pm	2pm	3pm	4pm	5pm	6pm
Aberdeen	18	28	32	36	41	45	47	46	44	40	39	33	30
Britton	29	30	32	35	39	41	46	45	41	40	39	36	31
Chamberlain	21	25	32	38	44	48	52	53	52	49	45	38	31
Clark	23	28	30	33	38	41	45	45	45	43	41	37	33
Eagle Butte	24	41	47	53	56	54	51	49	47	45	43	39	30
Eureka	25	35	40	45	49	49	49	49	48	46	43	39	32
Gettysburg	25	35	40	46	52	52	52	51	48	45	43	38	30
McIntosh	33	47	51	53	56	54	52	52	52	48	47	43	32
Milbank	22	23	25	29	32	36	39	40	40	39	38	35	30
Miller	28	33	37	41	48	52	54	54	51	46	41	36	26
Mobridge	25	35	40	46	52	51	48	47	45	41	39	36	30
Murdo	26	36	41	48	54	54	53	51	47	44	39	35	24
Pierre	22	32	37	44	49	49	47	46	45	41	37	32	25
Redfield	25	29	32	38	43	47	51	49	47	43	41	35	29
Sisseton	26	26	29	31	37	39	44	44	44	41	39	37	35
Watertown	17	28	30	33	37	40	43	43	43	41	40	37	33
Webster	26	30	32	35	37	40	44	44	43	40	40	37	33
Wheaton	14	22	23	25	30	33	37	37	37	36	35	33	31



Extreme Cold Friday

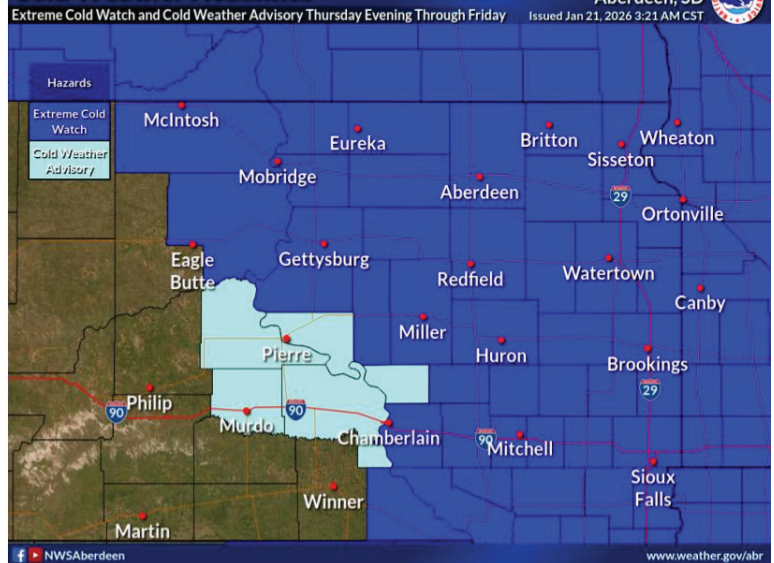
January 21, 2026
4:39 AM CST

Dangerously cold wind chills Friday morning

Key Messages

- An **Extreme Cold Watch** is in effect for north central and northeastern SD through west central MN Thursday evening through Friday afternoon.
 - Dangerously cold wind chills as low as -45° will be possible.
 - At these temperatures, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in as little as 5 to 10 minutes.
- A **Cold Weather Advisory** is in effect for south central SD Thursday evening through Friday afternoon.
 - Dangerously cold wind chills as low as -35°
 - At these temperatures, frostbite can occur on exposed skin in as little as 10 minutes.
- Avoid going outdoors whenever possible. If you must go outside, dress in layers, including a hat, face mask, and gloves. **Bring in your pets!**

Cold Weather Headlines



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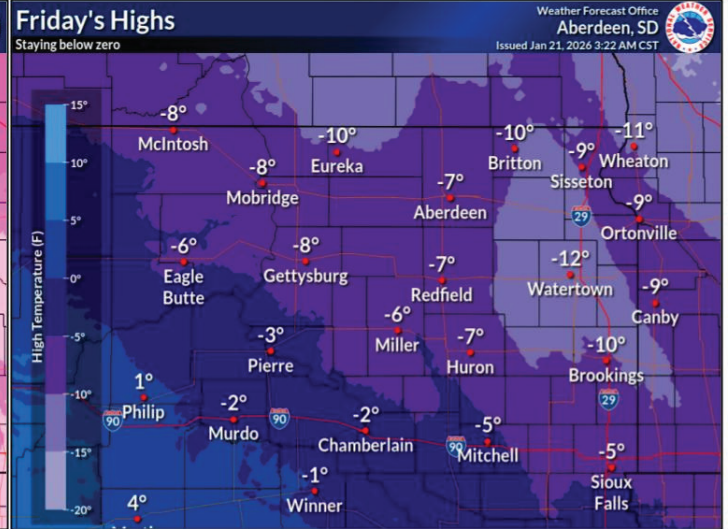
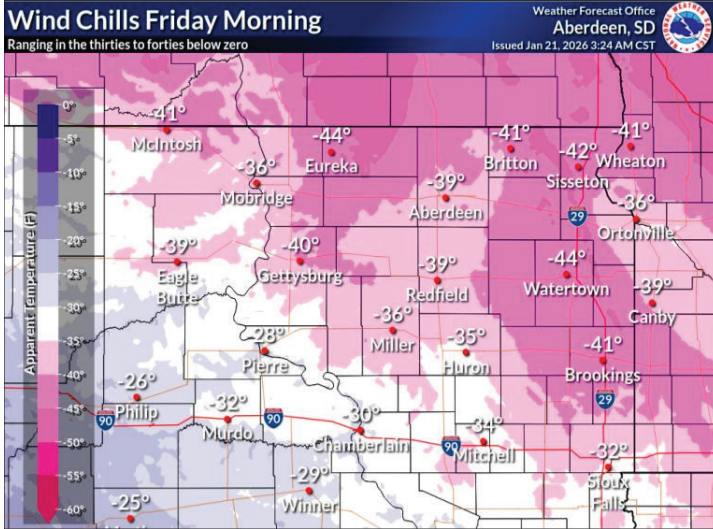
Cold Snap Friday

January 21, 2026
4:45 AM CST

High temperatures struggle to break 0° while wind chills drop below -40° in the morning

- Wind chills as low as -45° will be possible Friday morning.
- At these wind chills, **frostbite can occur in as little as 5-10 minutes.**

- Air temperatures Friday will not reach above 0° for most locations.
- Particularly over northeastern South Dakota, some locations will be approaching record cold daily high temperatures.



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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 19 °F at 10:59 PM

Low Temp: -9 °F at 1:31 AM

Wind: 17 mph at 10:48 AM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 57 in 1942

Record Low: -31 in 1949

Average High: 24

Average Low: 1

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.39

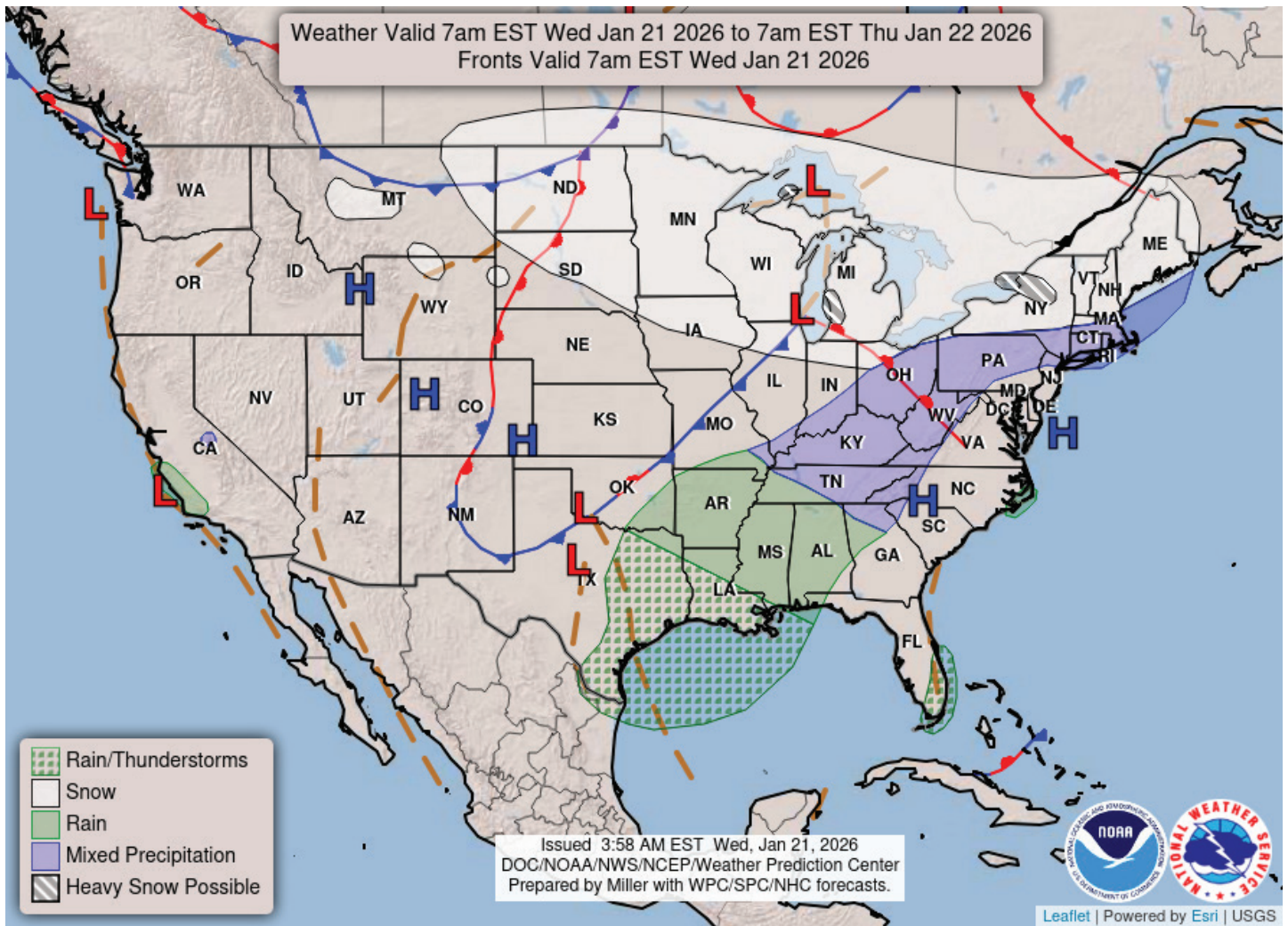
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.39

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:22 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:03 am



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Today in Weather History

January 21, 1999: Widespread dense fog and freezing drizzle created treacherous driving conditions across northeast South Dakota from the evening of the 21st to around noon on the 22nd. The freezing drizzle ended in the early morning hours of the 22nd. As a result, slippery conditions developed, especially across Hamlin, Deuel, and Codington counties. Many vehicles slid into the ditch. A few accidents resulted in minor injuries. Numerous activities were canceled on the evening of the 21st, and many schools had delayed starts on the 22nd.

1863 — A severe coastal storm dropped heavy rain on the Fredericksburg area of Virginia. It disrupted a Union Army offensive in an ill fated "mud march." (David Ludlum)

1963: Up to 3" of snow falls on San Francisco, their heaviest since 1887.

1982 — The second of two major snowstorms to hit southern Minnesota came to an end. Minneapolis received 20 inches of snow in 24 hours to break the previous record of 17 inches in 24 hours established just a few days earlier. A record 38 inches of snow covered the ground following the two storms, with drifts ten feet high. (David Ludlum)

1985: Jacksonville, Florida, recorded its all-time record low of 7 degrees. Macon, Georgia, had its coldest day ever with a temperature of 6 degrees. It was the coldest Inauguration day in history as President Reagan is sworn in for a second term during cold and winds that resulted in wind chill readings of 30 degrees below zero. Because of the bitter cold temperatures, many outdoor Inauguration events were canceled, and President Reagan was sworn in the Capitol Rotunda.

1987 — Low pressure over Minnesota produced high winds in the Northern Plains Region. Winds gusted to 66 mph at Rapid City SD, and reached 70 mph at Belle Fourche SD. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — High pressure over northern Nevada and low pressure off the coast of southern California combined to produce high winds in the southwestern U.S. Wind gusts in the San Francisco area reached 70 mph at Fremont. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Cold and snow prevailed in the northeastern U.S. Up to 13 inches of snow was reported between Woodford and Searsburg in Vermont. Montpelier VT reported a wind chill reading of 42 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the state of Florida. Eight cities reported record high temperatures for the date, including West Palm Beach with a reading of 86 degrees. Rain in southern New England changed to freezing rain, then to sleet, and then to heavy snow during the late morning. Most of Massachusetts was blanketed with 6 to 10 inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1999: A major tornado outbreak occurred from the southwest into central and northeast Arkansas during the afternoon and evening. In the Little Rock Area, 30 tornadoes tracked across 15 counties. Homes and businesses were damaged or destroyed in Little Rock, Beebe, McRae, and areas farther north and east. Eight deaths resulted from the tornadoes, with 140 to 150 injuries also reported.

The Holy Spirit, Our Guide

The leading of the Holy Spirit always aligns with God's Word.

John 16:12-15 : 12 ``I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.
13 ``But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.
14 ``He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.
15 ``All things that the Father has are Mine; therefore I said that He takes of Mine and will disclose it to you.

All of God's children are on a journey. And as we travel through life toward our eternal home, we will face many choices. Forks in the road will challenge and frustrate us. In such circumstances, how can we know which way to go?

Jesus promised to give us an internal and ever-present Guide (John 14:16). Starting at the moment of salvation, everyone who trusts in the Savior is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, who promises to lead believers into all the truth (16:13). We've no reason to fear, because He will direct us. However, while the Spirit's leadership is always right, at times our reception isn't clear. If that happens and we're tempted to tolerate sin in one area, we shouldn't expect to receive His guidance in another.

Sin does to our understanding of the Lord's clear direction what a magnet does to the needle of a compass. It misleads us, pulling us away from the clear path God has planned, just as the magnetic field draws the needle away from true north.

When a decision is unclear, ask yourself questions like, Will Christ be glorified in this? or Will this draw me closer to the Lord? If the answer is no, then don't follow that path, because the Holy Spirit is not guiding you there. His leading always aligns with Scripture and accomplishes God's perfect plan.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.20.26

8 47 50 56 70 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$266,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 2 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.19.26

2 10 15 18 31 9

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$13,300,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 17 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.20.26

6 9 28 41 45 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 32 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.17.26

2 13 24 25 28

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$205,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 32 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.19.26

2 9 25 26 63 8

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 1 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

01.19.26

5 28 34 37 55 17

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$209,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 1 Mins 4 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 71, Tiospa Zina 21
Alcester-Hudson 33, Garretson 18
Avon 54, Viborg-Hurley 24
Beresford 64, Madison 54
Burke 52, Platte-Geddes 42
Canton 68, Elkton-Lake Benton 41
Centerville 57, Freeman 40
Chadron, Neb. 57, Custer 12
Corsica/Stickney 64, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 31
Dell Rapids St Mary's 50, Castlewood 27
Deubrook 47, Tri-Valley 39
Faulkton 50, Aberdeen Christian 23
Florence-Henry 58, Webster 40
Gregory 49, Chamberlain 23
Hanson 40, Howard 36
Hill City 59, Belle Fourche 47
Huron 42, Brookings 30
Ipswich 45, North Central 36
Jones County 47, Stanley County 31
Lakota Tech 76, Todd County 30
Lemmon High School 69, Dupree 34
Lennox 50, Dakota Valley 40
Lower Brule 57, McLaughlin 48
Lyman 58, White River 27
Marty 75, Crow Creek Tribal School 36
Milbank 57, Waubay/Summit 42
Philip 47, New Underwood 41
Redfield 40, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 29
Sioux Falls Jefferson 62, Yankton 32
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 83, Aberdeen Central 55
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 55, Harrisburg 48
Sioux Valley 57, Chester 35
Spearfish 50, Hot Springs 17
St Thomas More 53, Lead-Deadwood 20
St. Francis Indian 68, Pine Ridge 63
T F Riggs High School 69, Douglas 46
Tea 55, Watertown 29
Timber Lake 57, Sully Buttes 49
Tri-State, N.D. 69, Wilmot 38
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 46, Bon Homme 29
Vermillion 53, Elk Point-Jefferson 51
Wagner 58, Miller 36
Wakpala 73, McIntosh High School 38
Wall 69, Kadoka 54
Waverly-South Shore 42, Great Plains Lutheran 35

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West Central 69, Dell Rapids 47

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

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 50, Faulkton 38
Aberdeen Roncalli 71, Tiospa Zina 37
Britton-Hecla 54, Warner 41
Castlewood 56, Dell Rapids St Mary's 28
Centerville 77, Freeman 42
Chadron, Neb. 45, Custer 36
Corsica/Stickney 70, Andes Central/Dakota Christian 56
Crazy Horse 72, Oelrichs 22
Deubrook 44, Tri-Valley 40
Elkton-Lake Benton 64, Canton 58
Estelline-Hendricks 64, Oldham-Ramona-Rutland 27
Flandreau 50, Deuel 34
Garretson 71, Alcester-Hudson 57
Great Plains Lutheran 62, Waverly-South Shore 55
Herreid-Selby 42, Gettysburg 36
Hill City 72, Belle Fourche 40
Howard 51, Hanson 46
Huron 61, Brookings 39
Lemmon High School 68, Harding County 61
Little Wound 82, Lakota Tech 37
Marty 75, Crow Creek Tribal School 49
McCook Central-Montrose 60, Colman-Egan 47
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 61, Redfield 51
North Central 50, Ipswich 41
Platte-Geddes 64, Burke 56
Sioux Falls Jefferson 49, Yankton 47, OT
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 64, Aberdeen Central 38
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 72, Harrisburg 62
Sioux Valley 75, Chester 44
Sisseton 57, Flandreau Indian 39
Spearfish 59, Hot Springs 16
St Thomas More 65, Lead-Deadwood 36
Stanley County 71, Jones County 32
T F Riggs High School 61, Douglas 38
Timber Lake 56, Sully Buttes 51
Tripp-Delmont-Armour 48, Bon Homme 39
Vermillion 53, Elk Point-Jefferson 51
Wagner 68, Miller 60
Waubay/Summit 40, Milbank 38
Winner 67, Lyman 55
Panhandle Conference Tournament=
Hyannis, Neb. 73, Edgemont 15

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

Opening statements begin in sex assault trial of 'Dances With Wolves' actor Nathan Chasing Horse

By JESSICA HILL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Prosecutors say Nathan Chasing Horse used his reputation as a Lakota medicine man to prey on Indigenous women and girls and sexually assault them, while his defense attorney said during opening statements at his trial Tuesday that the former actor is being falsely accused.

Best known for portraying the character Smiles A Lot in the 1990 movie "Dances With Wolves," Chasing Horse pleaded not guilty to 21 charges, including sexual assault and sexual assault of a minor.

The trial marks the climax of a yearslong effort to prosecute Chasing Horse after he was first arrested and indicted in 2023 in a case that sent shock waves through Indian Country. "Dances With Wolves" was one of the most prominent films featuring Native Americans when it premiered in 1990. His trial also comes as authorities have responded more in recent years to an epidemic of violence against Native women.

Wearing a blue tie and black suit with his hair pulled back, he sat quietly and took notes while his family sat in the back row of the crowded Las Vegas courtroom.

Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation. After starring in the Oscar-winning film, Chasing Horse traveled around North America to perform healing ceremonies, according to prosecutors.

Prosecutors said that Chasing Horse sexually assaulted two victims, who were 14 and 19 years old at the time. In 2012, he allegedly told the 14-year-old that the spirits wanted her to give up her virginity to save her mother, who was diagnosed with cancer. He then sexually assaulted her and told her if she told anyone, her mother would die, Clark County Deputy District Attorney Bianca Pucci said.

"She wanted to appease the spirits," she said, referring to the 14-year-old. "She wanted to appease the medicine man."

Craig Mueller, Chasing Horse's defense attorney, said prosecutors would present no evidence of the allegations, including no DNA evidence or eyewitnesses.

Pucci showed photos of Chasing Horse with the 14-year-old girl, who met Chasing Horse when she was 6 and played a respected role in Lakota ceremonies as a pipe girl. Chasing Horse had symbolically adopted her, and she viewed him as a grandfather, Pucci said.

Chasing Horse, who was 36 at the time, allegedly took the 14-year-old on a road trip to different ceremonies, Pucci said. He repeatedly sexually assaulted her in hotel rooms, and he had her get tattoos of a spider on her arms and hand to remind her not to tell anyone, Pucci said. Chasing Horse also has spider tattoos on his neck.

Chasing Horse had her "stuck in his web," Pucci told jurors.

The 14-year-old and her mother moved from California to North Las Vegas to live with Chasing Horse and his multiple wives. There, Pucci said, Chasing Horse continued to sexually assault her before she and her family found another place to live.

In 2014, when she was 16, she moved back in with him and his wives. At 18, she changed her last name to his, convinced that Chasing Horse was doing good work and protecting her mom, who went into remission from cancer, Pucci said.

Mueller compared the woman to an angry wife, saying she made false allegations and had lived happily with Chasing Horse for five years.

Prosecutors made Chasing Horse seem like a monster, when in reality, he is well-respected, Mueller said. He showed the jury pictures, including a family portrait with Chasing Horse and his wives, as well as photos of Chasing Horse at powwows. "Just like any family," Mueller added.

"This isn't some bizarre pedophile at large running around," Mueller said.

Pucci said prosecutors will show the jury a video to back up their allegations.

She said jurors will also hear from another victim who was 19 when Chasing Horse allegedly sexually assaulted her. She also had known him since she was a child through ceremonies.

"She felt like he was a protector, a medicine man, part of the Lakota culture," Pucci said.

The Associated Press typically does not name people who say they've been sexually assaulted or abused.

Man who assassinated former Japanese prime minister gets life in prison

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A Japanese court sentenced a man who admitted assassinating former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to life imprisonment on Wednesday. The case has revealed decades of cozy ties between Japan's governing party and a controversial South Korean church.

Tetsuya Yamagami, 45, earlier admitted to killing Abe in July 2022 as the former prime minister was giving a campaign speech in the western city of Nara.

Abe, one of Japan's most influential politicians, was serving as a regular lawmaker after leaving the prime minister's job when he was killed in 2022 while campaigning in the western city of Nara. It shocked a nation with strict gun control.

Yamagami told investigators he was motivated by a desire to expose Japanese politicians' ties to the Unification Church, which he blamed for encouraging his mother to neglect him during a difficult childhood.

Yamagami pleaded guilty to murder in the trial that started in October. The Nara District Court announced Wednesday that it had issued a guilty verdict and sentenced Yamagami to life in prison, as prosecutors requested.

Takashi Fujimoto, one of the defense lawyers, said the decision did not take into consideration their request for clemency based on the defendant's difficult upbringing and was "regrettable." He added that Yamagami's legal team would consider an appeal after consulting with their client.

Shooter said he was motivated by hatred of a controversial church

Yamagami said he killed Abe after seeing a video message the former leader sent to a group affiliated with the Unification Church. He added that his goal was to hurt the church, which he hated, and expose its ties with Abe, investigators have said.

Prosecutors demanded life imprisonment for Yamagami, noting the seriousness of the attack and the danger it caused at a crowded campaign venue. His lawyers sought a sentence of no more than 20 years, citing his troubles as the child of a church adherent. Japanese law authorizes the death penalty in murder cases, but prosecutors do not usually request it unless at least two people are killed.

The revelation of close ties between the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the church caused the party to pull back from the church. It prompted investigations into the church's fundraising and recruiting tactics that ended with a court decision that stripped the church's Japanese branch of its tax-exempt religious status and ordered it dissolved. The church has since appealed, pending a decision.

The killing also led the National Police Agency to increase police protection of dignitaries.

Abe was one of Japan's most influential politicians

A political blue blood, Abe was Japan's longest-serving postwar leader, holding power for nine years before stepping down in 2021. He led the largest faction of the governing party and forged a friendship with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Abe is remembered for his arch-conservative views on security and historical issues, and was backed by right-wing groups including the Unification Church. Similar views are now represented by his protege Sanae Takaichi, who took office in October as Japan's first female Prime Minister.

An investigation into Abe's assassination revealed close ties between his governing party and the church, dating back to a 1960s anti-communist movement supported by Abe's grandfather, former Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi.

Yamagami said that as he plotted his attack, he saw Abe's appearance in a video message shown to a meeting of church-related Universal Peace Federation.

Shooting at a crowded election campaign venue

Abe was shot on July 8, 2022, while giving a speech outside a train station in Nara. In footage captured by television cameras, two gunshots ring out as the politician raises his fist. He collapses holding his chest,

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his shirt smeared with blood. Officials say Abe died almost instantly.

Yamagami was captured on the spot. He said he initially planned to kill the leader of the Unification Church, but switched targets to Abe because of the difficulty of getting close to the leader.

He told the court last year that he chose Abe as a figure who exemplified the connection between Japanese politics and the church, according to NHK.

Yamagami, apologized to Abe's widow, Akie Abe, in an earlier court session, saying he had no grudge against his family and that he had no excuse to defend him, NHK said.

Yamagami won sympathy from people skeptical of church

Yamagami's case and his descriptions of his childhood brought attention to other children of Unification Church adherents, and influenced a law meant to restrict malicious donation solicitations by religious and other groups.

Investigators said that Yamagami's mother joined the church when he was a child, and began making massive donations that eventually drove the family to bankruptcy, as she neglected him and his two siblings.

Experts say Japanese followers have been asked to pay for "sins" committed by their ancestors during Japan's 1910-1945 colonization of the Korean Peninsula, and that the majority of the church's worldwide funding has come from Japan.

The church has acknowledged excessive donations but says the problem has lessened since it made changes in 2009.

Yamagami survived a suicide attempt, but his elder brother's suicide in 2015 devastated him, apparently causing him to deepen his grudge against the church, his lawyers said.

His case captured attention on the problems of the children of the religious adherents, "but the seriousness of the damage is still not fully understood," said Fujimoto, the lawyer.

Thousands of people signed a petition requesting leniency for Yamagami, and others have sent care packages to his relatives and the detention center where he's being housed.

Another train crashes in Spain, killing at least 1 person

By HERNÁN MUÑOZ and SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

GELIDA, Spain (AP) — Commuter rail service in Spain's northeastern Catalonia region was suspended Wednesday after a Barcelona commuter train crashed the night before, Spanish authorities said.

At least one person died in the Barcelona-area crash, and 37 others were injured as crews worked at night to complete the rescue effort. The train hit a retaining wall that fell onto the tracks, authorities said.

The news late Tuesday of another train crash mere days after Spain's worst railway disaster since 2013 left many Spaniards in disbelief. Emergency workers were still searching for victims in the wreckage from Sunday's high-speed crash in southern Spain that killed at least 42 people and injured dozens some 800 kilometers (497 miles) away.

Three days of national mourning were underway, and the cause of that crash was being investigated.

The victim of the Tuesday-night crash was a trainee train driver, regional authorities said. Of the 37 people affected, five were seriously injured. Six others were in less serious condition, emergency services said. Most of the injured had ridden in the first train car.

The suspension of commuter trains Wednesday morning caused significant traffic jams on roads leading into Barcelona. Regional authorities in Catalonia asked people to reduce unnecessary travel and companies to allow remote work while the disruptions continued.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez acknowledged the Barcelona area crash, writing on X on Tuesday night: "All my affection and solidarity with the victims and their families."

While Spain's high-speed rail network generally runs smoothly, and at least until Sunday had been a source of confidence, commuter rail services are plagued by reliability issues. However, accidents causing injury or death are not common in either.

The commuter train crashed near the town of Gelida, located about 37 kilometers (23 miles) outside Barcelona.

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Spain's railway operator ADIF said the containment wall likely collapsed due to heavy rainfall that swept across the northeastern Spanish region this week.

Rome pays its last tribute to fashion 'Emperor' Valentino in a two-day public viewing

By GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Rome is paying its final tribute to legendary designer Valentino, who made his high-glamour gowns and trademark shade of red an iconic symbol of Italian elegance.

Valentino Garavani, who died aged 93 at his Rome residence on Monday, built his house in the Italian capital, where he will be lying in state at his foundation in Piazza Mignanelli on Wednesday and Thursday, just a few steps away from the world-known Spanish Steps.

His funeral will be held on Friday in the Basilica di Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri in central Rome.

The jet-set Italian designer, universally known by his first name, was adored by generations of royals, first ladies and movie stars, from Jackie Kennedy Onassis to Julia Roberts and Queen Rania of Jordan, who swore the designer always made them look and feel their best.

Hundreds of fashion celebrities, authorities and regular citizens are expected to honor the "last emperor" of Italian fashion during the public viewing. He always maintained his atelier in Rome, while he mostly unveiled his collections in Paris.

Hailing him as one of "Italy's most luminous and beloved figures," Rome's mayor, Roberto Gualtieri, underlined the designer's strong links with the Italian capital.

Never one for edginess or statement dressing, Valentino's nearly half-century career stretched from his early days in Rome in the 1960s through to his retirement in 2008.

He founded the house of Valentino on Rome's central Via Condotti in 1959.

Valentino's fail-safe designs made him the king of the red carpet, the go-to man for A-listers' awards ceremony needs.

His sumptuous gowns have graced countless Academy Awards, notably in 2001, when Roberts wore a vintage black and white column to accept her best actress statue. Cate Blanchett also wore Valentino — a one-shouldered number in butter-yellow silk — when she won the Oscar for best supporting actress in 2005.

Alessandro Michele, the current creative director of the Valentino fashion house, wrote in Instagram that he continues to feel Valentino's "gaze" as he works on the next collection, which will be presented March 12 in Rome, departing from the usual venue of Paris.

Israel agrees to join Trump's Board of Peace as some western European nations say no

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Wednesday that he has agreed to join U.S. President Donald Trump's Board of Peace in a departure from an earlier stance when his office criticized the makeup of the board's committee tasked with overseeing Gaza.

Norway and Sweden, meanwhile, said they would not be joining the board at this stage, following in the footsteps of France, which has expressed concern the board could seek to replace the United Nations as the mediator in global conflicts.

Chaired by Trump, the board was originally envisaged as a small group of world leaders overseeing the Gaza ceasefire plan. The Trump administration's ambitions have since expanded into a more sprawling concept, with Trump extending invitations to dozens of nations and hinting the board will soon broker global conflicts.

Trump headed for the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, where he is expected to provide more details about the board.

Israel, Azerbaijan and Kosovo say yes, Norway and Sweden say no

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Netanyahu's office had previously said the composition of the Gaza executive committee — which includes Turkey, Israel's key regional rival — was not coordinated with the Israeli government and ran "contrary to its policy," without clarifying its objections.

Netanyahu's decision to join the board could now put him in conflict with some of the far-right allies in his coalition, such as Israel's Finance Minister Bezalet Smotrich, who has criticized the board and called for Israel to take unilateral responsibility for Gaza's future.

Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev said Wednesday he was also joining, as did Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani.

Norway's state secretary, Kristoffer Thoner, said in a statement Wednesday that Norway would not join the board because it "raises a number of questions that requires further dialogue with the United States." He said Norway would not attend the signing ceremony in Davos.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on the sidelines of Davos on Wednesday that his country isn't signing up for the board as the text currently stands, Swedish news agency TT reported. Sweden hasn't yet formally responded.

Much of Western Europe, Russia and China have not said whether they will join

Those who previously joined the board are the United Arab Emirates, Armenia, Morocco, Vietnam, Belarus, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Argentina. Bahrain and Egypt said Wednesday they would also join.

Invitation letters from Trump also have been sent to the United Kingdom, Canada, Russia, Ukraine, China, Egypt, Paraguay, Turkey, India, Slovenia, Croatia, Thailand and the European Union's executive arm.

There are many unanswered questions. It was not immediately clear how many other leaders would receive invitations and how broad the board's mandate will be. When asked by a reporter on Tuesday if the board should replace the United Nations, Trump said: "It might."

The makeup of the board

Under the ceasefire deal, the board's Gaza executive committee will be in charge of implementing the tough second phase of the agreement. That includes deploying an international security force, disarming the Palestinian militant Hamas group and rebuilding the war-devastated territory. It will also supervise a newly appointed committee of Palestinian technocrats who will be running Gaza's day-to-day affairs.

The White House says its members include Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan; Qatari diplomat Ali Al-Thawadi; Hassan Rashad, director of Egypt's General Intelligence Agency; Emirati minister Reem Al-Hashimy; Israeli businessman Yakir Gabay; and Sigrid Kaag, the Netherlands' former deputy prime minister and a Mideast expert.

Nickolay Mladenov, a former Bulgarian politician and U.N. Mideast envoy, is to serve as the Gaza executive board's representative overseeing day-to-day matters.

Separate from the Gaza executive committee, the founding executive committee's members include U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Witkoff, Kushner, Blair, Rowan, World Bank President Ajay Banga and Trump's deputy national security adviser Robert Gabriel.

Top ally of South Korea's Yoon given 23 years in prison for rebellion over martial law crisis

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean court ruled Wednesday that the 2024 imposition of martial law by then President Yoon Suk Yeol constituted an act of rebellion as it sentenced his prime minister to 23 years in prison for his involvement.

Ex-Prime Minister Han Duck-soo became the first Yoon administration official convicted of rebellion charges in relation to Yoon's martial law imposition in December 2024. The verdict is expected to set the stage for upcoming rulings involving Yoon and his other associates, who also face rebellion charges.

Han, who was appointed by Yoon prime minister, the No. 2 post in South Korea, served as one of the three caretaker leaders during moments of the martial law crisis that led to Yoon's impeachment and

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eventually his removal from office.

Han gets lengthy prison term for rebellion

Rebellion is one of the gravest criminal charges in South Korea, with the independent counsel recently demanding the death penalty for Yoon, who was charged with masterminding a rebellion. The Seoul Central District Court is to rule on Yoon's rebellion charges on Feb. 19.

In its televised verdict Wednesday, the Seoul court determined Yoon's martial law decree amounted to a rebellion, viewing his dispatch of troops and police officers to the National Assembly and election offices as "a riot" or "a self-coup" that was meant to undermine the constitutional order and was serious enough to disrupt stability in South Korea.

The court sentenced Han for playing a key role in Yoon's rebellion by trying to give procedural legitimacy to his martial law decree by getting it passed through a Cabinet Council meeting. The court also convicted Han of falsifying the martial law proclamation and destroying it and lying under oath.

Han, who could appeal Wednesday's ruling, has steadfastly maintained that he had told Yoon that he opposed his martial law plan. He has denied most of the other charges.

The court said Han neglected his responsibilities as prime minister to protect the constitution, choosing instead to take part in Yoon's rebellion in the belief that it might succeed.

"Because of the defendant's action, the Republic of Korea could have returned to a dark past when the basic rights of the people and the liberal democratic order were trampled upon, becoming trapped in the quagmire of dictatorships for an extended period," Judge Lee Jin-gwan said.

Han was acting president during martial law crisis

Han's lengthy sentence came as a surprise as the independent counsel earlier requested a 15-year prison term for him.

The 76-year-old is a career bureaucrat who served as prime minister twice during his 40 years of public service — first under liberal President Roh Moo-hyun from 2007 to 2008 and later under Yoon.

Han became acting president after Yoon was impeached by the opposition-controlled National Assembly later in December 2024. But he was also quickly impeached following wrangling with opposition lawmakers over his refusal to fill vacant seats at the Constitutional Court, which was deliberating whether to formally throw Yoon out of office. Observers said at the time that restoring a full court bench could increase prospects for Yoon's ouster.

The Constitutional Court later reinstated Han as acting president. But after the court formally dismissed Yoon as president in early April, Han resigned to run for the presidency in last June's snap election. He eventually withdrew from the race after failing to win the main conservative party's nomination.

Lee Jae Myung, a former leader of the main liberal opposition Democratic Party, won the election.

Yoon has denied his rebellion charges

Yoon, who has already been in jail for months, faces eight criminal trials including his rebellion case over the martial law decree and other allegations. Last Friday, Yoon received a five-year prison term at the Seoul court for defying attempts to detain him, fabricating the martial law proclamation and denying some Cabinet members their rights to deliberate on his martial law decree.

Yoon, a conservative, has steadfastly denied the charges of rebellion, saying he only aimed to draw public support of his fight against the Democratic Party which obstructed his agenda. Speaking at Friday's court session, Yoon denounced the investigations of his charges as "frenzied," arguing that they involved "manipulation" and "distortion."

In his martial law declaration, Yoon called the opposition-controlled assembly "a den of criminals" and vowed to eliminate "shameless North Korea followers and anti-state forces." But many of the troops and police officers he sent to the assembly didn't aggressively control the area as thousands of people gathered there to protest Yoon's decree. Enough lawmakers ultimately got in an assembly chamber and voted down Yoon's decree.

No major violence occurred, but Yoon's short-lived martial law enforcement harkened back to past dictatorships that South Koreans hadn't seen since the 1980s. The ensuing political turmoil and power vacuum in the country tarnished its international image and rattled its diplomacy and financial markets.

Besides Han, Yoon's defense, safety and justice ministers, spy and police chiefs as well as some of his top military commanders have been arrested and indicted on rebellion charges.

A look at Trump's Board of Peace and who has been invited

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Board of Peace led by U.S. President Donald Trump was originally envisioned as a small group of world leaders overseeing the Gaza ceasefire plan. Since then, the Trump administration's ambitions have ballooned into a more sprawling concept, with Trump extending invitations to dozens of nations and hinting the board will soon broker global conflicts, like a pseudo-U.N. Security Council.

Trump is headed for the World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, Switzerland, where more details are expected to emerge. Ahead of Davos, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday that he had agreed to join the board, despite his previous criticism of the board's committee overseeing the Gaza ceasefire.

The board's charter has not yet been made public, but a draft version obtained by The Associated Press indicates that much of the power will be concentrated in Trump's hands. A \$1 billion contribution secures permanent membership, the draft says.

Here's what to know:

The scope of the Board of Peace appears to go beyond Gaza

The Trump administration now seems to envision the Board of Peace with a far broader scope beyond Gaza.

In letters sent Friday to various world leaders inviting them to the board, Trump said it would "embark on a bold new approach to resolving global conflict," suggesting it could act as a rival to the U.N. Security Council, the most powerful body of the global organization created in the wake of World War II.

A draft charter for the board, obtained from a European diplomat and confirmed by a U.S. official as accurate as of Monday, uses expansive language to describe its ambitions.

It emphasizes "the need for a more nimble and effective international peace-building body" and says "durable peace" requires "the courage to depart from approaches and institutions that have too often failed." It adds an aim to "secure peace in places where it has for too long proven elusive."

Under the charter, the chairman — which Trump says will be him — has the power to invite member states, break any ties in a vote, decide how frequently it meets, and create or dissolve subsidiary entities.

The expenses of the Board of Peace will be funded by contributions from member states, which serve three-year terms. Members who pay "more than one billion United States dollars in cash" during their first year can have a permanent place on the board, the draft says.

The draft is under constant revision, is not finalized and may undergo significant changes, according to the U.S. official, who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Countries around the world have been invited

Along with Israel, Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Vietnam, Kazakhstan, Hungary, Argentina, Armenia and Belarus have agreed to take part.

Invitation letters from Trump also have been sent to Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Paraguay's leader Santiago Peña, Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Russia, Ukraine, China, Kosovo, India, Slovenia, Croatia, Thailand and the European Union's executive arm have said they also received invitations.

Starmer's spokesman Tom Wells said the United Kingdom was considering the invitation and had concerns about Russia's potential involvement.

The Kremlin is now "studying the details" and will seek clarity of "all the nuances" in contacts with the United States, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Germany offered a guarded and noncommittal response, with Chancellor Friedrich Merz's spokesperson

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Stefan Kornelius on Monday saying his country shares "the aim of serving peace in the world" but that the United Nations remains "the central multilateral framework for international crises and conflict management."

It was not immediately clear how many or which other leaders would receive invitations.

Some US allies have already declined

Norway, Sweden and France will not be joining the board for now, they say.

"The American proposal raises a number of questions that requires further dialogue with the United States," Norway's State Secretary, Kristoffer Thoner said. "Norway will therefore not join the proposed arrangements for the Board of Peace, and will therefore not attend a signing ceremony in Davos."

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said on the sidelines of Davos that his country isn't signing up for the Board of Peace as the text currently stands, Swedish news agency TT reported. Sweden hasn't yet formally responded.

France — which is at odds with the Trump administration over its desire to take over Greenland, a self-governing territory overseen by NATO ally Denmark — apparently doesn't plan to join the board so far.

"Yes to implementing the peace plan presented by the president of the United States, which we wholeheartedly support, but no to creating an organization as it has been presented, which would replace the United Nations," French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said Tuesday.

Hearing late Monday that French President Emmanuel Macron was unlikely to join, Trump said, "Well, nobody wants him because he's going to be out of office very soon."

"I'll put a 200% tariff on his wines and Champagnes and he'll join," Trump told reporters. "But he doesn't have to join."

The other committees that will work with the Board of Peace

The White House said an executive board will work to carry out the vision of the Board of Peace.

The executive board's members include U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Trump envoy Steve Witkoff, Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner, former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Apollo Global Management CEO Marc Rowan, World Bank President Ajay Banga, and Trump's deputy national security adviser Robert Gabriel.

The White House also announced the members of another board, the Gaza Executive Board, which, according to the ceasefire deal, will be in charge of implementing the tough second phase of the agreement. That includes deploying an international security force, disarming the Palestinian militant Hamas group and rebuilding the war-devastated territory.

Nickolay Mladenov, a former Bulgarian politician and U.N. Mideast envoy, is to serve as the Gaza executive board's representative overseeing day-to-day matters. Additional members include: Witkoff, Kushner, Blair, Rowan, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan; Qatari diplomat Ali Al-Thawadi; Hassan Rashad, director of Egypt's General Intelligence Agency; Emirati minister Reem Al-Hashimy; Israeli businessman Yakir Gabay; and Sigrid Kaag, the Netherlands' former deputy prime minister and a Mideast expert.

The board also will supervise a newly appointed committee of Palestinian technocrats who will be running Gaza's day-to-day affairs.

US futures climb and gold hits another record as markets steady ahead of Trump's speech at Davos

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — U.S. futures were higher and world shares traded mixed Wednesday ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

Markets have appeared to steady somewhat after gyrating following Trump's threats to slap higher tariffs on eight European countries over their opposition to his push for U.S. control of Greenland.

Gold prices crossed the \$4,800 mark for the first time, gaining 2.2% as money flowed into assets considered to be safe havens at times of uncertainty.

Bouncing back from steep losses Tuesday, the future for the S&P 500 rose 0.4% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.2%.

Germany's DAX shed 0.4% to 24,607.57 and the CAC 40 in Paris slipped 0.2% to 8,050.40. Britain's FTSE

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100 was nearly unchanged at 10,124.24.

Traders were waiting for Trump's planned speech to world leaders, elites and billionaires gathered in Davos. Trump told reporters he planned to highlight his administration's accomplishments during his address.

U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick, who spoke on a panel on Tuesday, said the U.S. message was that "globalization has failed."

Trump's Air Force One returned to Washington after its crew identified "a minor electrical issue" while he was on his way to Davos. He boarded another aircraft and resumed his trip.

In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 slipped 0.4% to 52,774.64. Markets in Japan have been riled both by geopolitical uncertainty and by domestic issues.

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has called a snap election for Feb. 8, sending yields of long-term government bonds to record levels. The assumption is that Takaichi, who is capitalizing on strong public support ratings to try to consolidate a majority for her Liberal Democratic Party, will cut taxes and boost spending, adding to the challenges Japan faces in handling its massive government debt.

The yield on the 40-year Japanese government bond was trading at 4.061% early Wednesday, down from the all-time high of 4.22% that it hit on Tuesday.

South Korea's Kospi gained 0.5% to 4,909.93.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng rebounded to add 0.4% to 26,585.06. The Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1% higher, to 4,116.94.

In Australia, the S&P/ASX 200 gave back 0.4% to 8,782.90.

Taiwan's TaieX fell 1.6% and India's Sensex lost 0.4%.

Trump has said he will impose 10% tariffs on Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland beginning in February. That would be on top of a 15% tariff specified by a trade agreement with the European Union that has yet to be ratified.

European leaders have hit back as Washington's relations with its Western allies sour, considering countermeasures, including perhaps slow-walking ratification of the trade agreement or ordering retaliatory tariffs, analysts say.

On Tuesday, the S&P 500 fell 2.1%, the steepest drop for the benchmark index since October. The Dow industrials dropped 1.8% and the Nasdaq composite fell 2.4%.

The Federal Reserve is set to meet next week for a policy meeting, and Wall Street is betting it will hold steady its benchmark interest rate. Japan's central bank will wrap up its first monetary policy meeting of 2026 on Friday.

In other dealings early Wednesday, U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 71 cents to \$59.65 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, shed 88 cents to \$64.04 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar dropped to 157.94 Japanese yen from 158.16 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1708 from \$1.1726.

Trump is on his way to Davos, where his quest to own Greenland could overshadow his other goals

By JOSH BOAK and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE (AP) — President Donald Trump heads to the World Economic Forum in the Swiss Alps on Wednesday where his ambitions to wrest control of Greenland from NATO ally Denmark could tear relations with European allies and overshadow his original plan to use his appearance at the gathering of global elites to address affordability issues back home.

Trump arrives for the international forum at Davos on the heels of threatening tariffs on Denmark and seven other allies unless they negotiate a transfer of the semi-autonomous territory — a concession the European leaders indicated they are not willing to make. Trump said the tariffs would start at 10% next month and climb to 25% in June, rates that would be high enough to increase costs and slow growth, potentially hurting Trump's efforts to tamp down the high cost of living.

The president in a text message that circulated among European officials this week also linked his ag-

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gressive stance on Greenland to last year's decision not to award him the Nobel Peace Prize. In the message, he told Norway's prime minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, that he no longer felt "an obligation to think purely of Peace."

In the midst of an unusual stretch of testing the United States relations with longtime allies, it seems uncertain what might transpire during Trump's two days in Switzerland.

On Tuesday, U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told a Davos panel he and Trump planned to deliver a stark message: "Globalization has failed the West and the United States of America. It's a failed policy," he said.

"This will be an interesting trip," Trump told reporters as he departed the White House on Tuesday evening for his flight to Davos. "I have no idea what's going to happen, but you are well represented."

In fact, his trip to Davos got off to a difficult start. There was a minor electrical problem on Air Force One, leading the crew to turn around the plane about 30 minutes into the flight out of an abundance of caution and delaying the president's arrival in Switzerland.

Wall Street wobbled on Tuesday as investors weighed Trump's new tariff threats and escalating tensions with European allies. The S&P 500 fell 2.1%, its biggest drop since October. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1.8%. The Nasdaq composite slumped 2.4%.

"It's clear that we are reaching a time of instability, of imbalances, both from the security and defense point of view, and economic point of view," French President Emmanuel Macron said in his address to the forum. Macron made no direct mention of Trump but urged fellow leaders to reject acceptance of "the law of the strongest."

Meanwhile, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned the bloc's response, should Trump move forward with the tariffs, "will be unflinching, united and proportional." She pointedly suggested that Trump's new tariff threat could also undercut a US-EU trade framework reached this summer that the Trump administration worked hard to seal.

"The European Union and the United States have agreed to a trade deal last July," von der Leyen said in Davos. "And in politics as in business — a deal is a deal. And when friends shake hands, it must mean something."

Why Trump is talking about housing in Davos

Trump, ahead of the address, said he planned on using his Davos appearance to talk about making housing more attainable and other affordability issues that are top priorities for Americans.

But Trump's Greenland tariff threat could disrupt the U.S. economy if it blows up the trade truce reached last year between the U.S. and the EU, said Scott Lincicome, a tariff critic and vice president on economic issues at the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

"Significantly undermining investors' confidence in the U.S. economy in the longer term would likely increase interest rates and thus make homes less affordable," Lincicome said.

Trump also on Tuesday warned Europe against retaliatory action for the coming new tariffs.

"Anything they do with us, I'll just meet it," Trump said on NewsNation's "Katie Pavlich Tonight." "All I have to do is meet it, and it's going to go ricocheting backward."

Davos — a forum known for its appeal to the global elite — is an odd backdrop for a speech on affordability. But White House officials have promoted it as a moment for Trump to try to rekindle populist support back in the U.S., where many voters who backed him in 2024 view affordability as a major problem. About six in 10 U.S. adults now say that Trump has hurt the cost of living, according to the latest survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

U.S. home sales are at a 30-year low with rising prices and elevated mortgage rates keeping many prospective buyers out of the market. So far, Trump has announced plans to buy \$200 billion in mortgage securities to help lower interest rates on home loans, and has called for a ban on large financial companies buying houses.

Trump will promote his 'Board of Peace'

The White House has said Trump plans to meet with leaders on the sidelines of the forum, after he gives his keynote address. There are more than 60 other heads of state attending.

On Thursday, Trump plans to have an event to talk about the "Board of Peace," a new body meant to oversee the end of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, and possibly take on a broader mandate, potentially rivaling the United Nations.

Fewer than 10 leaders have accepted invitations to join the group so far, including a handful of leaders considered to be anti-democratic authoritarians. Several of America's main European partners have declined or been noncommittal, including Britain, France and Germany.

Trump on Tuesday told reporters that his peace board "might" eventually make the U.N. obsolete but insisted he wants to see the international body stick around.

"I believe you got to let the U.N. continue, because the potential is so great," Trump said.

Iran's top diplomat issues most direct threat yet to US as crackdown over protests squeezes nation

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's foreign minister issued the most direct threat yet Wednesday against the United States after Tehran's bloody crackdown on protesters, warning the Islamic Republic will be "firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack."

The comments by Abbas Araghchi, who saw his invitation to the World Economic Forum in Davos rescinded over the killings, comes as an American aircraft carrier group moves westward toward the Middle East from Asia. American fighter jets and other equipment appears to be moving in the Mideast after a major U.S. military deployment in the Caribbean saw troops seize Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro.

Meanwhile, an Iranian Kurdish separatist group in Iraq claimed Iran targeted one of its bases in a drone and missile attack that killed at least one fighter. Iran did not immediately acknowledge the attack, which would be the first foreign operation Tehran has launched since the protests started.

Araghchi makes threat in column

Araghchi made the threat in an opinion article published by The Wall Street Journal. In it, the foreign minister contended "the violent phase of the unrest lasted less than 72 hours" and sought again to blame armed demonstrators for the violence. Videos that have slipped out of Iran despite an internet shutdown appear to show security forces repeatedly using live fire to target apparently unarmed protesters, something unaddressed by Araghchi.

"Unlike the restraint Iran showed in June 2025, our powerful armed forces have no qualms about firing back with everything we have if we come under renewed attack," Araghchi wrote, referring to the 12-day war launched by Israel on Iran in June. "This isn't a threat, but a reality I feel I need to convey explicitly, because as a diplomat and a veteran, I abhor war."

He added: "An all-out confrontation will certainly be ferocious and drag on far, far longer than the fantasy timelines that Israel and its proxies are trying to peddle to the White House. It will certainly engulf the wider region and have an impact on ordinary people around the globe."

Araghchi's comments likely refer to Iran's short- and medium-range missiles. The Islamic Republic relied on ballistic missiles to target Israel in the war and left its stockpile of the shorter-range missiles unused, something that could be fired to target American bases and interests in the Persian Gulf. Already, there have been some restrictions on U.S. diplomats traveling to American bases in both Kuwait and Qatar.

Mideast nations, particularly diplomats from Gulf Arab countries, had lobbied Trump not to attack. Last week, Iran shut its airspace, likely in anticipation of a strike.

The USS Abraham Lincoln, which had been in the South China Sea in recent days, had passed through the Strait of Malacca, a key waterway connecting the South China Sea and Indian Ocean, by Tuesday, ship-tracking data showed.

A U.S. Navy official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the aircraft carrier and three accompanying destroyers were heading west.

While naval and other defense officials stopped short of saying the carrier strike group was headed to the

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Middle East, its current heading and location in the Indian Ocean means it is only days away from moving into the region. Meanwhile, U.S. military images released in recent days showed F-15E Strike Eagles arriving in the Mideast and forces in the region moving a HIMARS missile system, the type used with great success by Ukraine after Russia's full-scale invasion in the country in 2022.

Kurdish exiles claim Iranian attack in Iraq

The National Army of Kurdistan, the armed wing of the Kurdistan Freedom Party, or PAK, claimed Iran launched an attack against one of its bases near Irbil, some 320 kilometers (200 miles) north of Baghdad. It said one fighter had been killed, releasing mobile phone footage of a fire in the predawn darkness.

Iranian state television, which has confirmed attacks on the group in the past, did not acknowledge the assault.

A handful of Iranian Kurdish dissident or separatist groups — some with armed wings — have long found a safe haven in northern Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdish region, where their presence has been a point of friction between the central government in Baghdad and Tehran. The PAK has claimed it launched attacks in Iran as a crackdown on the demonstrations took place, something reported by semiofficial Iranian news agencies as well.

Protest death toll rises

The death toll from the protests has reached at least 4,519 people, the U.S.-based Human Rights Activists News Agency said. The agency has been accurate throughout the years on demonstrations and unrest in Iran, relying on a network of activists inside the country that confirms all reported fatalities. The Associated Press has been unable to independently assess the death toll.

The death toll exceeds that of any other round of protest or unrest in Iran in decades, and recalls the chaos surrounding the 1979 revolution that brought the Islamic Republic into being. Although there have been no protests for days, there are fears the death toll could increase significantly as information gradually emerges from a country still under a government-imposed shutdown of the internet since Jan. 8.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Saturday that the protests had left "several thousand" people dead and blamed the United States. It was the first indication from an Iranian leader of the extent of the casualties.

More than 26,300 people have been arrested, according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency. Comments from officials have led to fears of some of those detained being put to death in Iran, one of the world's top executioners. That and the killing of peaceful protesters have been two red lines laid down by Trump in the tensions.

Legal battles over immigration enforcement operation in Minnesota intensify

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — As confrontations with federal officers over their massive immigration enforcement operation in Minnesota showed no signs of stopping Wednesday, legal battles over the surge and the local response were also intensifying.

Federal prosecutors served grand jury subpoenas Tuesday to Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz's office and five other officials in the state as part of an investigation into whether they obstructed or impeded law enforcement during a sweeping immigration operation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, a person familiar with the matter said.

The subpoenas, which seek records, were also sent to the offices of Attorney General Keith Ellison, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her and officials in Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the person said.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The subpoenas came a day after the government urged a judge to reject efforts to stop the immigration

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enforcement surge that has roiled Minneapolis and St. Paul for weeks.

The Justice Department called the state's lawsuit, filed soon after the fatal shooting of Renee Good by an immigration officer, "legally frivolous." Ellison has said the government is violating free speech and other constitutional rights.

Vice President JD Vance, meanwhile, is expected to travel to Minneapolis on Thursday for a roundtable with local leaders and community members, according to sources familiar with his plans who spoke on condition of anonymity because the trip had not yet been officially announced.

Mayor: Subpoenas are to stoke fear

The subpoenas are related to an investigation into whether Minnesota officials obstructed federal immigration enforcement through public statements they made, two people familiar with the matter said Friday. They said then that it was focused on the potential violation of a conspiracy statute.

In a subpoena released by Frey's office, the long list of documents required include "any records tending to show a refusal to come to the aid of immigration officials."

Frey said: "We shouldn't have to live in a country where people fear that federal law enforcement will be used to play politics or crack down on local voices they disagree with."

The governor's office referred reporters to a statement earlier Tuesday in which Walz said the Trump administration was not seeking justice, only creating distractions.

Hard to track arrests

Greg Bovino of U.S. Border Patrol, who has commanded the Trump administration's big-city immigration crackdown, said more than 10,000 people in the U.S. illegally have been arrested in Minnesota in the past year, including 3,000 "of some of the most dangerous offenders" in the last six weeks during Operation Metro Surge.

Julia Decker, policy director at the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, expressed frustration that advocates have no way of knowing whether the government's arrest numbers and descriptions of the people in custody are accurate.

Good, 37, was killed on Jan. 7 as she was moving her vehicle, which had been blocking a Minneapolis street where ICE officers were operating. Trump administration officials say the officer, Jonathan Ross, shot her in self-defense, although videos of the encounter show the Honda Pilot slowly turning away from him.

Since then, the public has repeatedly confronted officers, blowing whistles and yelling insults at ICE and Border Patrol. They, in turn, have used tear gas and chemical irritants against protesters. Bystanders have recorded video of officers using a battering ram to get into a house as well as smashing vehicle windows and dragging people out of cars.

Bovino defended his "troops" and said their actions are "legal, ethical and moral."

Pastor says protesters invaded church

A Minnesota church targeted by an anti-ICE protest Sunday decried it as unlawful, while one of the protest leaders called for the resignation of a church leader who works at a local ICE office. About three dozen people entered Cities Church in St. Paul, some walking right up to the pulpit.

"Invading a church service to disrupt the worship of Jesus — or any other act of worship — is protected by neither the Christian Scriptures nor the laws of this nation," Cities Church in St. Paul said Tuesday in a statement shared by its pastor, Jonathan Parnell.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem described the protesters as "agitators" in a post on X and said, "arrests coming."

Nekima Levy Armstrong, a lawyer and local activist, called for another pastor who works at ICE to resign from the church, saying his dual role poses a "fundamental moral conflict." _____

Richer reported from Washington. Associated Press reporters Ed White in Detroit; Sarah Raza, Jack Brook and Giovanna Dell'Orto in Minneapolis; Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho, and Ali Swenson in Washington contributed.

'Miracle' 6-year-old girl is the only member of her family to survive Spanish train wreck

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — The roar was deafening inside the train car as it hurtled off the tracks, then slid down a steep slope, ripping open its frame. And then, amid the twisted metal of the wreckage, the cries of the injured and the silence of the dead.

Surrounded by bodies after the train accident in southern Spain, one little girl somehow emerged virtually unscathed.

Newspaper La Vanguardia reported that a Civil Guard officer found her barefoot on the tracks after she escaped through a broken window.

Relative Juan Barroso told reporters the 6-year-old is in good health after receiving three stitches in her head at a hospital. The mayor of her family's village said he was finding a measure of solace in the fact this girl was out of harm's way.

"There are many people who are very sad for the victims of this terrible accident, but there were also many who survived, like the miracle of the girl who is safe," Punta Umbria's Mayor José Carlos Hernández told reporters Tuesday after leading a minute of silence for the victims.

Among them were the girl's parents, brother and a cousin. At least 42 people were killed in the brutal accident that has shaken the nation and left the 6-year-old child an orphan.

Her family's last names are Zamorano Álvarez, the town hall said. but The Associated Press is not disclosing her first name.

Punta Umbria has declared three days of mourning for victims including the Zamorano Álvarez family. They were seated in the front carriages that bore the brunt of the impact when a train coming the opposite direction suddenly jumped its track for reasons still unknown.

Mayor Hernández said that the girl is now with her grandparents in a hotel in Cordoba, the nearest city to the crash.

"She has a tremendous family who will do what it takes for her to have a happy life," the mayor said.

In their words: Trump's threats over Greenland draw warnings and profanities at global forum

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — There were grave warnings from European leaders and expletives from California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Tuesday as leaders at the World Economic Forum grappled with the Greenland crisis and heightened concerns over global trade.

The gathering in Davos, Switzerland, comes as U.S. President Donald Trump continues to push for the seizure of Greenland and the imposition of related trade tariffs.

French President Emmanuel Macron, wearing aviator sunglasses because of an eye infection, warned of a "new colonial approach" that would undermine decades of collaboration.

Mark Carney, the Canadian prime minister and former central banker, urged countries below the top tier of global power to continue multilateral cooperation with a new, "dense web of connections."

And in the forum's entrance hall, Newsom was the most blunt, telling European leaders: "It's time to get serious and stop being complicit. It's time to stand tall and firm – have a backbone."

Here's a look at what attendees said:

Gavin Newsom

"I can't take this complicity. People rolling over. I should've brought a bunch of knee pads for all the world leaders," the California governor and prominent Democrat said. "I hope people understand how pathetic they look on the world stage. I mean, at least from an American perspective, it's embarrassing."

He added: "Diplomacy with Donald Trump? He's a T-Rex. You mate with him or he devours you. One or the other ... Wake up! Where the hell has everybody been? Stop with this (expletive) diplomacy of sort of niceties and somehow we're all going to figure it out, saying one thing privately and another publicly.

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Have some spine, some goddamn (expletive)."

Emmanuel Macron

Before expressing his concern, the French president began his address with a joke: "It's a time of peace, stability and predictability."

Warning major powers against the temptation of modern colonial adventures, he added: "It's a shift towards a world without rules. Where international law is trampled underfoot and where the only law that seems to matter is that of the strongest, and imperial ambitions are resurfacing."

Then he took aim at the Trump administration, denouncing "competition from the United States of America, through trade agreements that undermine our export interests, demand maximum concessions, and openly aim to weaken and subordinate Europe, combined with an endless accumulation of new tariffs that are fundamentally unacceptable, even more so when they are used as leverage against territorial sovereignty."

Mark Carney

"Great powers can afford for now to go it alone. They have the market size, the military capacity, and the leverage to dictate terms. Middle powers do not," the Canadian prime minister said.

"In a world of great power rivalry, the countries in between have a choice: compete with each other for favor or to combine to create a third path with impact," he said. "(We) argue the middle powers must act together because if we're not at the table, we're on the menu."

Carney strongly opposed U.S. aspirations to expand its Arctic territory. "We stand firmly with Greenland and Denmark and fully support their unique right to determine Greenland's future."

Scott Bessent

With President Trump not due to address the elite global gathering until Wednesday, it fell to his treasury secretary to take up his defense in Switzerland.

"I think our relations have never been closer," Scott Bessent said, playing down the rift among Western countries over Greenland. "Calm down the hysteria. Take a deep breath."

He added: "We are in the middle of President Trump's policies. And of course, Europe is an ally, the U.S.-NATO membership is unquestioned. We are partners in trying to stop this tragic war between Russia and Ukraine, but that does not mean that we cannot have disagreements on the future of Greenland."

Bart De Wever

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever said that with Trump's Greenland provocations, "so many red lines have been crossed" in Europe.

"Being a happy vassal is one thing. Being a miserable slave is something else. If you back down now you're going to lose your dignity," he said during a Davos panel discussion on redefining Europe's place in the world.

De Wever said that he and Belgium's King Philippe will meet with Trump on Wednesday when they will plan to press for a return to the old military alliance between Brussels and Washington.

"We either stand together or we will stand divided, and if we are divided, there is the end of an era, of 80 years of Atlanticism, really drawing to a close," he said.

The former mayor of Antwerp, quoting the Italian philosopher Antonio Gramsci, said that in a time of great transformation that it is up to U.S. president if the alliance holds. "It's up to him (Trump) to decide if he wants to be a monster - yes or no."

Ursula von der Leyen

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said a diplomatic "downward spiral" in the West would only embolden its adversaries.

"The proposed additional tariffs are a mistake, especially between long-standing allies. The European Union and the United States have agreed to a trade deal last July. And in politics, as in business, a deal is a deal," the EU's top official said.

The Commission president said Europe was obliged to respond to international pressure.

"My point is: if this change is permanent, then Europe must change permanently too. It is time to seize this opportunity and build a new independent Europe," von der Leyen said. "We consider the people of

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the United States not just our allies, but our friends. And plunging us into a downward spiral would only aid the very adversaries we are both so committed to keeping out of the strategic landscape.”

Donald Tusk

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, writing on X, called on Europeans to beware of “appeasement.”

“Appeasement is always a sign of weakness. Europe cannot afford to be weak — neither against its enemies, nor ally. Appeasement means no results, only humiliation. European assertiveness and self-confidence have become the need of the moment.”

After Minneapolis, Democrats confront political vulnerabilities to battle Trump on immigration

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats had planned to campaign in the midterm elections on affordability and health care, two issues where Americans are particularly unhappy with President Donald Trump.

But the aggressive immigration crackdown in Minnesota, including the killing of an American mother during a confrontation with federal agents, has scrambled the party’s playbook.

Now Democrats are trying to translate visceral outrage into political strategy, even though there’s little consensus on how to press forward on issues where the party has recently struggled to earn voters’ trust.

Some Democrats want to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement, a proposal that echoes “defund the police” rhetoric from Trump’s first term, and impeach administration officials like Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

Others have taken a different approach, introducing legislation intended to curb alleged abuses by federal agents. However, those ideas have been criticized by activists as insufficient, and there’s mounting pressure to obstruct funding for deportations in an ongoing funding debate.

“We’re Democrats. I’m sure we’re going to have 50 different ideas and 50 different ways to say it,” said Chuck Rocha, a party strategist who is advising several House and Senate candidates on immigration this year.

If Democrats fail to strike the right balance, they could imperil their efforts to retake control of Congress and statehouses around the country. They could also hamper a chance to rebuild credibility with voters whose dissatisfaction with border enforcement under President Joe Biden helped return Trump to the White House.

Neera Tanden, president of the Center for American Progress and Biden’s former domestic policy adviser, believes the party can thread the needle.

“It’s not too much to ask that we have a government that can produce a secure border, that can deport people who are not legally here, and that can also respect people’s civil and human rights,” she told The Associated Press. “This country has done that before, and it can do it again.”

Violent scenes force a strong Democratic response

Immigration crackdowns have spread from city to city since Trump took office, but the latest operation in Minnesota has generated some of the most intense controversy.

Renée Good, 37, was fatally shot by a federal agent earlier this month, prompting protests and angry responses from local Democratic leaders. Administration officials accused Good of trying to hit an agent with her car, an explanation that has been widely disputed based on videos circulating online.

“I think the party is very unified in our disdain and concern of the actions certainly of DHS and ICE,” said Rep. Robert Garcia of California, the top Democrat on the House Oversight Committee. “We should campaign on fairness and due process for all people,” Garcia added, “which is being violated every single day by ICE and DHS. We should be aggressive in that posture.”

But pushing back on the administration requires Democrats to step onto difficult political terrain.

About 4 in 10 U.S. adults trusted Republicans more to handle immigration, according to a Washington Post/Ipsos poll from September, higher than about 3 in 10 who said the same about Democrats.

On the issue of crime, Republicans also held the advantage. About 44% thought Republicans were bet-

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ter, compared to 22% for the Democrats.

Republicans feel confident that their intertwined messages on crime and immigration will resonate with voters in the midterms. They frequently highlight violent criminals detained or deported, downplaying examples of nonviolent migrants who have been swept up.

"If Democrats want to make 2026 a referendum on which party stands for strong immigration policies and protecting public safety, we will take that fight any day of the week," said Republican National Committee spokeswoman Delanie Bomar.

Some Democrats are more interested in using the issue as a way to pivot back to core messages about health care and the cost of living.

"I want everybody to understand, the cuts to your health care are what's paying for ICE to be doing this," Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York said last week. "The cuts to your health care are what's paying for this."

Democratic strategists have circulated the clip as an example of a potentially effective pitch, particularly after Trump slashed funding for some safety net programs during his first year in office.

Trump faces his own public opinion challenges

The president's approval may be slipping on the issue of immigration.

His approval rating on the issue has fallen since the start of his term, according to AP-NORC polling, from 49% last March to 38% in January.

Juan Proaño, CEO of the League of United Latin American Citizens, the oldest Hispanic civil rights group in the U.S., said crackdowns have hurt Trump politically.

"Republican members of Congress are really uncomfortable with these agencies and their existing tactics, because they know it's going to hurt them back at home come election cycle," he said.

Proaño said he had been disappointed with how Democrats had accommodated the Trump administration on immigration in the last year, but he praised changes in the party's strategy since Good's death was captured on video.

"I think everyone just gasped at that, and I think there has been a marked shift since then," he said.

Some people who have vocally supported Trump in the past, like podcast host Joe Rogan, have expressed reservations.

"Are we really going to be the Gestapo?" he asked recently.

But Trump has not shown any sign of backing down. The administration has ramped up the number of federal agents deployed to Minnesota and the Justice Department issued subpoenas to the state's Democrats, including Gov. Tim Walz and Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, as part of an investigation into whether they obstructed or impeded enforcement operations.

Democratic National Committee Chair Ken Martin, who used to lead the party in his home state of Minnesota, said "there's a lot of pain and anguish."

"It's heartbreaking," he said in a recent interview. "It's chilling to think that this is the United States of America, what is supposed to be a beacon for democracy and freedom."

A former flight attendant posed as a pilot and received hundreds of free flights, US authorities say

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A former flight attendant for a Canadian airline posed as a commercial pilot and as a current flight attendant to obtain hundreds of free flights from U.S. airlines, authorities said.

Dallas Pokornik, 33, of Toronto, was arrested in Panama after being indicted on wire fraud charges in federal court in Hawaii last October. He pleaded not guilty Tuesday following his extradition.

According to court documents, Pokornik was a flight attendant for a Toronto-based airline from 2017 to 2019, then used fake employee identification from that carrier to obtain tickets reserved for pilots and flight attendants on three other airlines.

U.S. prosecutors said Tuesday that Pokornik even requested to sit in an extra seat in the cockpit — the

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"jump seat" — typically reserved for off-duty pilots. It was not clear from court documents whether he ever actually rode in a plane's cockpit, and the U.S. Attorney's Office declined to say.

The indictment did not identify the airlines except to say they are based in Honolulu, Chicago and Fort Worth, Texas. Representatives for Hawaiian Airlines, United Airlines and American Airlines — which are respectively based in those cities — didn't immediately respond to emails from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Air Canada, which is based in Toronto, also did not respond to an email seeking comment.

The scheme lasted four years, the U.S. prosecutors in Hawaii said.

A U.S. magistrate judge on Tuesday ordered Pokornik to remain in custody. His federal defender declined to comment.

In 2023, an off-duty airline pilot riding in the cockpit of a Horizon Air flight said "I'm not OK" just before trying to cut the engines midflight. That pilot, Joseph Emerson, later told police he had been struggling with depression.

A federal judge sentenced him to time served last November.

The allegations against Pokornik are reminiscent of "Catch Me If You Can," the movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio that tells the story of Frank Abagnale posing as a pilot to defraud an airline and obtain free flights.

Israel's settler movement takes victory lap as a sparse outpost becomes a settlement within a month

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

YATZIV SETTLEMENT, West Bank (AP) — Celebratory music blasting from loudspeakers mixed with the sounds of construction, almost drowning out calls to prayer from a mosque in the Palestinian town across this West Bank valley.

Orthodox Jewish women wearing colorful head coverings and with babies on their hips, shared platters of fresh vegetables as soldiers encircled the hilltop, keeping guard.

The scene Monday reflected the culmination of Israeli settlers' long campaign to turn this site overlooking the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour into a settlement. Over the years they fended off plans to build a hospital for Palestinian children on the land, always holding to the hope it would one day become theirs.

That moment is now, they say.

Smotrich goes on settlement spree

After two decades of efforts, it took just a month for their new settlement, called "Yatziv," to go from an unauthorized outpost of a few mobile homes to a fully recognized settlement. Fittingly, the new settlement's name means "stable" in Hebrew.

"We are standing stable here in Israel," Finance Minister and settler leader Bezalel Smotrich told The Associated Press at Monday's inauguration ceremony. "We're going to be here forever. We will never establish a Palestinian state here."

With leaders like Smotrich holding key positions in Israel's government and establishing close ties with the Trump administration, settlers are feeling the wind at their backs.

Smotrich, who has been in charge of Israeli settlement policy for the past three years, has overseen an aggressive construction and expansion binge aimed at dismantling any remaining hopes of establishing a Palestinian state in the occupied West Bank.

While most of the world considers the settlements illegal, their impact on the ground is clear, with Palestinians saying the ever-expanding construction hems them in and makes it nearly impossible to establish a viable independent state. The Palestinians seek the West Bank, captured by Israel in 1967, as part of a future state.

With Netanyahu and Trump, settlers feel emboldened

Settlers had long set their sights on the hilltop, thanks to its position in a line of settlements surrounding Jerusalem and because they said it was significant to Jewish history. But they put up the boxy prefab

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homes in November because days earlier, Palestinian attackers had stabbed an Israeli to death at a nearby junction.

The attack created an impetus to justify the settlement, settlement council chair, Yaron Rosenthal, told the AP. With the election of Israel's far-right government in late 2022, Trump's return to office last year and the November attack, conditions were ripe for settlers to make their move, Rosenthal said.

"We understood that there was an opportunity," he said. "But we didn't know it would happen so quickly."

"Now there is the right political constellation for this to happen."

Smotrich announced approval of the outpost, along with 18 others, on Dec. 21. That capped 20 years of effort, said Nadia Matar, a settler activist.

"Shdema was nearly lost to us," said Matar, using the name of an Israeli military base at the site. "What prevented that outcome was perseverance."

Back in 2006, settlers were infuriated upon hearing that Israel's government was in talks with the U.S. to build a Palestinian children's hospital on the land, said Hagit Ofran, a director at Peace Now, an anti-settlement watchdog group, especially as the U.S. Agency for International Development was funding a "peace park" at the base of the hill.

The mayor of Beit Sahour urged the U.S. Consulate to pressure Israel to begin hospital construction, while settlers began demonstrations at the site calling on Israel to quash the project, according to consulate files obtained through WikiLeaks.

It was "interesting" that settlers had "no religious, legal, or ... security claim to that land," wrote consulate staffer Matt Fuller at the time, in an email he shared with the AP. "They just don't want the Palestinians to have it — and for a hospital no less — a hospital that would mean fewer permits for entry to Jerusalem for treatment."

The hospital was never built. The site was converted into a military base after the Netanyahu government came to power in 2009. From there, settlers quickly established a foothold by creating a makeshift cultural center at the site, putting on lectures, readings and exhibits

Speaking to the AP, Ehud Olmert, the Israeli prime minister at the time the hospital was under discussion, said that was the tipping point.

"Once it is military installation, it is easier than to change its status into a new outpost, a new settlement and so on," he said.

Olmert said Netanyahu — who has served as prime minister nearly uninterrupted since then — was "committed to entirely different political directions from the ones that I had," he said. "They didn't think about cooperation with the Palestinians."

Palestinians say the land is theirs

The continued legalization of settlements and spiking settler violence — which rose by 27% in 2025, according to Israel's military — have cemented a fearful status quo for West Bank Palestinians.

The land now home to Yatziv was originally owned by Palestinians from Beit Sahour, said the town's mayor, Elias Isseid.

"These lands have been owned by families from Beit Sahour since ancient times," he said.

Isseid worries more land loss is to come. Yatziv is the latest in a line of Israeli settlements to pop up around Beit Sahour, all of which are connected by a main highway that runs to Jerusalem without entering Palestinian villages. The new settlement "poses a great danger to our children, our families," he said.

A bypass road, complete with a new yellow gate, climbs up to Yatziv. The peace park stands empty.

'West Wing' actor Timothy Busfield released from New Mexico jail pending trial

By MORGAN LEE and SAVANNAH PETERS Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Actor Timothy Busfield was released from jail Tuesday night in New Mexico, where he is facing counts of child sexual abuse.

Hours earlier, Busfield's attorneys successfully argued that the actor best known for appearances in "The

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West Wing," "Field of Dreams" and "Thirtysomething" wasn't a danger to the community and shouldn't be behind bars while he awaits trial. Prosecutors sought to keep him in jail, outlining what they said was grooming behavior and abuse of power by Busfield over three decades.

State District Court Judge David Murphy said while the crimes Busfield is accused of inherently are dangerous and involve children, prosecutors didn't prove the public wouldn't be safe if he's released.

"There's no evidence of a pattern of criminal conduct, there are no similar allegations involving children in his past," Murphy said. "Rather this defendant self-surrendered and submitted himself to this court's jurisdiction, demonstrating compliance with the court order for his arrest."

Outside the courthouse, Busfield's wife, actor Melissa Gilbert, thanked Murphy for the ruling. She also thanked friends, relatives, co-workers and strangers who she said have showered their family with love. Gilbert, who played Laura Ingalls in the 1970s to '80s TV series "Little House on the Prairie," sat behind Busfield during the hearing. He was handcuffed and dressed in an orange jail jumpsuit.

Prosecutors declined to comment on the ruling.

Busfield is facing two counts of criminal sexual contact of a minor and one count of child abuse while working as a director on the set of the TV series "The Cleaning Lady," allegations that he denies. He was booked into jail after a warrant was issued for his arrest and he turned himself in.

According to the criminal complaint, an investigator with the Albuquerque Police Department said a boy reported that Busfield touched him on his private areas over his clothing on one occasion when he was 7 years old and another time when he was 8. The boy's twin brother told authorities he was also touched by Busfield, but he did not specify where and didn't say anything because he didn't want to get in trouble, the complaint said.

During the hearing Tuesday, Busfield's attorneys pointed out that the children initially said during interviews with police that Busfield didn't touch them inappropriately. Busfield's attorneys then accused the boys' parents of coaching their children toward incriminating statements after the boys lost lucrative roles on the show.

Busfield's defense team called just one witness — Alan Caudillo, director of photography on "The Cleaning Lady" — to testify that children on set were never left alone with individuals, and that the parents were the ones who encouraged hugs with adults on the set.

According to the criminal complaint, one of the boys later disclosed during a therapy session that he was inappropriately touched by Busfield. Those records were obtained by police during the investigation.

Assistant District Attorney Savannah Brandenburg-Koch called evidence of abuse against Busfield strong and specific. She also said witnesses expressed fear about potential retaliation and professional harm.

"The boys' allegation are supported by medical findings and by their therapist," Brandenburg-Koch said. "Their accounts were specific and not exaggerated."

Arguing for Busfield's release, defense attorney Amber Fayerberg said her client will be under intense scrutiny because of publicity surrounding the charges.

"That bell can't be un-rung," Fayerberg said. "The idea that he (Busfield) could then go out and be dangerous with a child — in the world where everybody knows who he is — is absurd."

Busfield submitted letters vouching for his character, and his attorneys say he passed an independent polygraph test.

Legal experts say New Mexico is among a few states that allow polygraph evidence in criminal cases, but a judge has final say over whether one can be used. There are strict requirements for admission in court.

Trump's Greenland threats spark outrage from EU and test longtime NATO alliance

By WILL WEISSERT, JAMEY KEATEN and EMMA BURROWS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's pledge to provoke a sweeping tariff fight with Europe to get his way in taking control of Greenland has left many of America's closest allies warning of a rupture with Washington capable of shattering the NATO alliance that had once seemed unshakable.

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The European Union's top official on Tuesday called Trump's planned new tariffs on eight of its countries over Greenland a "mistake" and questioned Trump's trustworthiness. French President Emmanuel Macron said the EU could retaliate by deploying one of its most powerful economic tools, known colloquially as a trade "bazooka."

The rising tensions concerning Greenland, and threats of a deepening trade war between the U.S. and Europe, caused global investors to shudder Tuesday, as stocks on Wall Street slumped.

Trump prides himself on ratcheting up pressure to try to negotiate through a position of strength. He was leaving Washington Tuesday — the anniversary of his inauguration — for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, a venue that offers Trump the chance to defuse tensions as quickly as he stirred them up.

But European leaders — digging in and vowing to defend Denmark and its control over semiautonomous Greenland — may be trying just as hard to meet an extraordinary moment with a show of their fierce resolve.

That could hurt the chances of Trump finding a quick way to turn around the crisis. Greenland's leader insisted on respect for its territorial integrity and called international law "not a game."

'We will work something out'

Trump made an unusual appearance in the White House briefing room and spoke at length while stocks fell. Asked how far he'd be willing to go to acquire Greenland, Trump said only, "You'll find out." He also mistakenly referred to Greenland as Iceland at one point.

Still, the president predicted there could be a deal in the making. "I think that we will work something out where NATO is going to be very happy, and where we're going to be very happy," he said, without providing specifics.

Trump said he'd been encouraged that NATO had increased military spending, but he also belittled the alliance, saying other members may not protect Washington's interests. The president suggested NATO members expect the U.S. to come to their rescue but "I just really do question whether or not they'll come to ours."

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pushed back against Trump's announcement that, starting in February, a 10% import tax will be imposed on goods from eight European nations that have rallied around Denmark. Greenland is a semiautonomous territory of Denmark, a NATO member.

"The European Union and the United States have agreed to a trade deal last July," von der Leyen said in Davos. "And in politics as in business — a deal is a deal. And when friends shake hands, it must mean something."

"We consider the people of the United States not just our allies, but our friends. And plunging us into a downward spiral would only aid the very adversaries we are both so committed to keeping out of the strategic landscape," she added.

She vowed that the EU's response "will be unflinching, united and proportional."

Taking firmer stances defied the approach that many European leaders have offered since Trump returned to office. It had mostly entailed saying nice things about the president to try to stay in his good graces, while working furiously through other avenues to find compromise.

Trump says the U.S. needs Greenland to deter possible threats from China and Russia. But his continued insistence in recent weeks that anything short of the U.S. owning Greenland is unacceptable is testing the limits of the softer strategy.

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said "the worst may still be ahead of us." Speaking to parliament, she said: "We have never sought conflict. We have consistently sought cooperation."

'We need to have respect for international law'

Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen said at a news conference in the island's capital, Nuuk, that "we need to have respect for international law and territorial integrity." He said those principles should unite Western democratic countries, and expressed gratitude for EU allies' support.

"International law, it's not a game," he said, adding, "We are willing to cooperate much more, but of course in mutual respect, and if we cannot see that, it will be very difficult to have a good and reliable

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partnership.”

Trump’s threats have sparked outrage and a flurry of diplomatic activity across Europe, as leaders consider possible countermeasures, including retaliatory tariffs and the unprecedented use of the EU’s anti-coercion instrument.

Unofficially known as the “trade bazooka,” the instrument could sanction individuals or institutions found to be putting undue pressure on the EU. The EU has two other major economic tools it could use to pressure Washington: new tariffs or a suspension of the U.S.-EU trade deal.

Macron warned in Davos that the additional tariffs could force the EU to use its anti-coercion mechanism for the first time against the United States.

“Can you imagine that?” he said, arguing that allied countries should be focusing instead on bringing peace to Ukraine. “This is crazy.”

In general, he said, the mechanism “is a powerful instrument and we should not hesitate to deploy it in today’s tough environment.”

The U.S. president, in a television interview that aired Tuesday evening, downplayed the retaliatory threat.

“Anything they do with us, I’ll just meet it,” Trump said on NewsNation’s “Katie Pavlich Tonight.” “All I have to do is meet it, and it’s going to go ricocheting backward.”

Still, Trump said he believed it was possible an agreement could be worked out, perhaps while he’s at Davos.

Trump earlier posted a text message from Macron in which the French president suggested a meeting of members of the Group of Seven industrialized democracies in Paris after the Davos gathering. An official close to Macron, who spoke anonymously in line with the French presidency’s customary practices, confirmed the message shared by Trump is genuine.

In his latest threat of tariffs, Trump indicated that the import taxes would be retaliation for last week’s deployment of symbolic numbers of troops from the European countries to Greenland — though he also suggested he was using the tariffs as leverage to negotiate with Denmark.

‘In the midst of a rupture’

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, whose country is a founding NATO member, warned of global fissures beyond Greenland, suggesting it was an “illusion” and “fiction” that there remains a rules-based international order.

“Let me be direct: We are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition,” Carney said during a speech in Davos.

Belgian Prime Minister Bart De Wever said at Davos that Europe cannot be a “miserable slave to Trump.”

Others encouraged NATO leaders to stand up to Trump. Speaking on the sidelines of Davos, California Gov. Gavin Newsom slammed Europe’s response to Trump’s tariff threats as “pathetic” and “embarrassing,” and urged continental leaders to unite and stand up to the United States.

“It’s time to stand tall and firm, have a backbone,” Newsom, a Democrat, told reporters.

Greenland’s European backers have also looked at establishing a more permanent military presence to help guarantee security in the Arctic region, a key demand of the United States, Swedish Defense Minister Pål Jonson said.

In Moscow, meanwhile, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov strongly denied any intention by Russia and China to threaten Greenland, while also describing Greenland as a “colonial gain” for Denmark.

Trump was asked Tuesday what would happen to his tariff threats related to Greenland if the Supreme Court rules against his ability to impose import tariffs as part of a case it is considering.

“Well, I’ll have to use something else,” Trump said. “We have other alternatives.” He didn’t respond when asked about using force.

Carlos Beltrán and Andruw Jones elected to baseball's Hall of Fame

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Carlos Beltrán fielded a question about the impact of his role in the Houston Astros' cheating scandal as deftly as he grabbed so many balls hit to him in center field.

"There's no doubt that the Astros situation has been a topic," he said. "I feel like a lot of times there are agendas that are not positive toward my way. ... There's no doubt that in baseball you're going to go through ups and downs in life. You're going to make good decisions, so-so decisions, right, and also you're going to make bad decisions."

Beltrán was elected to baseball's Hall of Fame on Tuesday along with Andruw Jones, center fielders born one day apart who excelled at the plate and with their gloves.

Making his fourth appearance of the ballot, Beltrán received 358 of 425 votes for 84.2% from the Baseball Writers' Association of America, 39 above the 319 needed for the 75% threshold. Jones, in the ninth of 10 possible appearances, was picked on 333 ballots for 78.4%.

Beltrán moved up steadily from 46.5% in 2023 to 57.1% the following year and 70.3% in 2025, when he fell 19 votes short as Ichiro Suzuki, CC Sabathia and Billy Wagner were elected.

Beltrán was hired as the New York Mets' manager on Nov. 1, 2019, then fired on Jan. 16, 2020, without having managed a game. New York announced its decision three days after he was the only Astros player mentioned by name in a report by Major League Baseball regarding the team's illicit use of electronics to steal signs during Houston's run to the 2017 World Series championship — his final season.

He was hired by the Mets as a special assistant to the general manager in February 2023.

"When I retired from baseball, I thought that everything that I built in the game of baseball, like relationships and the good people that I was I able to relate myself with, I thought that was going to be lost, right?" he said. "And being back in the game of baseball, I still receive love from the people. I still receive love from the players. The teammates that I had inside the clubhouse, they know the type of person that I am. But at the same time I understand that that's also a story that I have to deal with."

Beltrán and Jones will be inducted in Cooperstown, New York, on July 26 along with second baseman Jeff Kent, voted in last month by the contemporary era committee. Jones was born on April 23, 1977, and Beltrán one day later.

"Competing against each other for so many years it's just a great honor to be in the same elite group with him," Jones said.

Jones received just 7.3% in his first appearance in 2018 and didn't get half the total until receiving 58.1% in 2023. He increased to 61.6% and 66.2%, falling 35 votes short last year.

"The first year I heard a lot of my friends were telling me, you barely made it, you're barely hanging there," Jones said.

BBWAA members with 10 or more consecutive years in the organization were eligible to vote.

Chase Utley (59.1%) was the only other candidate to get at least half the vote, improving from 39.8% last year. He was followed by Andy Pettitte at 48.5%, an increase from 27.9% last year, and Félix Hernández at 46.1%, up from 20.6%.

Cole Hamels topped first-time candidates at 23.8%. The other first-time players were all under 5% and will be dropped from future votes.

Steroids-tainted players again were kept from the hall. Alex Rodriguez received 40% in his fifth appearance, up from 37.1%, and Manny Ramirez 38.8% in his 10th and final appearance.

David Wright increased to 14.8% from 8.1%.

There were 11 blank ballots.

A nine-time All-Star, the switch-hitting Beltrán batted .279 with 435 homers and 1,587 RBIs over 20 seasons with Kansas City (1999-2004), Houston (2004, '17), the Mets (2005-11), San Francisco (2011), St. Louis (2012-13), the New York Yankees (2001-16) and Texas (2016). He had 124 homers hitting right-handed and 311 batting left — crediting coach Kevin Long for his left-handed success.

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Beltrán was the 1999 AL Rookie of the Year and won three Gold Gloves, also hitting .307 in the post-season with 16 homers and 42 RBIs in 65 games.

While the hall makes the decision on the cap for his plaque, Beltrán said: "There's no doubt that the Mets are a big part of my identity."

He still has managerial aspirations.

"In order for you to have opportunities in baseball, you have to stay relevant, you have to stay in the game," Beltrán said. "Managing is something that I would love to try it at some point."

Jones batted .254 with 434 homers, 1,289 RBIs and 152 stolen bases in 17 seasons with Atlanta (1996-2007), the Los Angeles Dodgers (2008), Texas (2009), the Chicago White Sox (2010) and the Yankees (2011-12). He finished his career with the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles of Japan's Pacific League from 2013-14.

His batting average is the second-lowest for a position player voted to the Hall of Fame, just above the .253 of Ray Schalk, a superior defensive catcher, and just below the .256 of Harmon Killebrew, who hit 573 homers.

A five-time All-Star, Jones earned 10 Gold Gloves. He joins Braves teammates Greg Maddux, Tom Glavine, John Smoltz, Chipper Jones and Fred McGriff in the hall along with manager Bobby Cox.

In the 1996 World Series opener at Yankee Stadium, Jones at 19 years, 5 months became the youngest player to homer in a Series game, beating Mickey Mantle's old mark by 18 months. Going deep against Pettitte in the second inning and Brian Boehringer in the third of a 12-1 rout, Jones became the second player to homer in his first two Series at-bats after Gene Tenace in 1972.

"I didn't play this game to be Hall of Famer," Jones said. "I played this game too to help my team win."

Justice Department subpoenas Walz and others in immigration enforcement obstruction investigation

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Federal prosecutors served grand jury subpoenas Tuesday to Minnesota officials as part of an investigation into whether they obstructed or impeded law enforcement during a sweeping immigration operation in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, a person familiar with the matter said.

The subpoenas, which seek records, were sent to the offices of Gov. Tim Walz, Attorney General Keith Ellison, Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, St. Paul Mayor Kaohly Her and officials in Ramsey and Hennepin counties, the person said.

The person was not authorized to publicly discuss an ongoing investigation and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The subpoenas are related to an investigation into whether Minnesota officials obstructed federal immigration enforcement through public statements they made, two people familiar with the matter said Friday. They said then that it was focused on the potential violation of a conspiracy statute.

Mayor: Subpoenas are to stoke fear

Walz and Frey, both Democrats, have called the probe a bullying tactic meant to quell political opposition. Frey's office released a subpoena, which requires a long list of documents for a grand jury on Feb. 3, including "any records tending to show a refusal to come to the aid of immigration officials."

"We shouldn't have to live in a country where people fear that federal law enforcement will be used to play politics or crack down on local voices they disagree with," Frey said.

Her, a Hmong immigrant and a Democrat, also acknowledged a subpoena, saying she's "unfazed by these tactics." The governor's office referred reporters to a statement earlier Tuesday in which Walz said the Trump administration was not seeking justice, only creating distractions.

Vice President JD Vance, meanwhile, is expected to travel to Minneapolis on Thursday for a roundtable with local leaders and community members, according to sources familiar with his plans who spoke on condition of anonymity because the trip had not yet been officially announced.

The subpoenas came a day after the government urged a judge to reject efforts to stop the immigration

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enforcement surge that has roiled Minneapolis and St. Paul for weeks.

The Justice Department called the state's lawsuit, filed soon after the fatal shooting of Renee Good by an immigration officer, "legally frivolous."

"Put simply, Minnesota wants a veto over federal law enforcement," government attorneys wrote.

Ellison said the government is violating free speech and other constitutional rights. He described the armed officers as poorly trained and said the "invasion" must cease. It's not known when U.S. District Judge Katherine Menendez will make a decision.

Ilan Wurman, who teaches constitutional law at University of Minnesota Law School, doubts the state's arguments will be successful. He said immigration enforcement is clearly a matter of federal control.

Hard to track arrests

Greg Bovino of U.S. Border Patrol, who has commanded the Trump administration's big-city immigration crackdown, said more than 10,000 people in the U.S. illegally have been arrested in Minnesota in the past year, including 3,000 "of some of the most dangerous offenders" in the last six weeks during Operation Metro Surge.

He highlighted the capture of three people with criminal records from Laos, Guatemala and Honduras.

"These are not technical violations. As I mentioned, these are individuals responsible for serious harm," Bovino said at a news conference.

Julia Decker, policy director at the Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota, expressed frustration that advocates have no way of knowing whether the government's arrest numbers and descriptions of the people in custody are accurate.

"These are real people we're talking about, that we potentially have no idea what is happening to them," Decker said.

Bovino defends his 'troops' as ethical

Good, 37, was killed on Jan. 7 as she was moving her vehicle, which had been blocking a Minneapolis street where ICE officers were operating. Trump administration officials say the officer, Jonathan Ross, shot her in self-defense, although videos of the encounter show the Honda Pilot slowly turning away from him.

Since then, the public has repeatedly confronted officers, blowing whistles and yelling insults at ICE and Border Patrol. They, in turn, have used tear gas and chemical irritants against protesters. Bystanders have recorded video of officers using a battering ram to get into a house as well as smashing vehicle windows and dragging people out of cars.

Bovino defended his "troops" and said their actions are "legal, ethical and moral."

"What we see when folks get swept up, as you say, oftentimes it's as agitators, as rioters, and now I call them anarchists," he told reporters, not "ordinary citizens, Ma, Pa America."

Police in the region, meanwhile, said off-duty law enforcement officers have been racially profiled by federal officers and stopped without cause. In Brooklyn Park, a suburb of Minneapolis, police Chief Mark Bruley said he has received complaints from residents who are U.S. citizens, including his own officers.

Pastor says protesters invaded church

A Minnesota church targeted by an anti-ICE protest Sunday decried it as unlawful, while one of the protest leaders called for the resignation of a church leader who works at a local ICE office. About three dozen people entered Cities Church in St. Paul, some walking right up to the pulpit.

"Invading a church service to disrupt the worship of Jesus — or any other act of worship — is protected by neither the Christian Scriptures nor the laws of this nation," Cities Church in St. Paul said Tuesday in a statement shared by its pastor, Jonathan Parnell.

Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem described the protesters as "agitators" in a post on X and said, "arrests coming."

Nekima Levy Armstrong, a lawyer and local activist, called for another pastor who works at ICE to resign from the church, saying his dual role poses a "fundamental moral conflict." _____

Richer reported from Washington. Associated Press reporters Ed White in Detroit; Sarah Raza, Jack Brook and Giovanna Dell'Orto in Minneapolis; Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho, and Ali Swenson in Washington

contributed.

FACT FOCUS: Trump highlights familiar false claims as he reviews his first year back in office

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

President Donald Trump marked his first year back in office by presiding over a meandering, nearly two-hour-long press briefing to recount his accomplishments, repeating many false claims he made throughout 2025.

Among the topics about which he continued to spread falsehoods were the 2020 election, foreign policy, the economy and energy.

Here's a closer look at the facts.

2020 election

TRUMP, referencing former President Joe Biden: "... a man that didn't win the election, by the way, it's a rigged election. Everybody knows that now.

THE FACTS: This is a blatant falsehood that has been disproven many times over — the 2020 election was not stolen. Biden earned 306 electoral votes to Trump's 232. He also won over 7 million more popular votes than Trump.

But Trump has been persistent in claiming that he won the 2020 race since its completion, even after he earned a second term in 2024, and has continued to claim the lead-up to the 2026 midterms.

Biden's Electoral College victory was nearly the same margin that Trump had in 2016 when he beat Hillary Clinton 227 to 306 (304 after two electors defected). Biden triumphed by prevailing in key states such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona and Georgia.

Allegations from Trump of massive voting fraud have been refuted by a variety of judges, state election officials and an arm of his own administration's Homeland Security Department. In 2020, then-Attorney General William Barr, a Trump appointee, told the AP that no proof of widespread voter fraud had been uncovered. "To date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that could have effected a different outcome in the election," he said at the time.

International conflicts

TRUMP: "You have to understand, I settled eight wars."

THE FACTS: This statistic, which Trump frequently cites as one of his accomplishments, is highly exaggerated. Although he has helped mediate relations among many nations, his impact isn't as clear-cut as he makes it seem.

The conflicts Trump counts among those that he has solved are between Israel and Hamas, Israel and Iran, Egypt and Ethiopia, India and Pakistan, Serbia and Kosovo, Rwanda and Congo, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and Cambodia and Thailand.

There is far more work that remains before any declaration of an end to the war in Gaza and although Trump is credited with ending the 12-day war between Israel and Iran, this can be seen as a temporary respite from an ongoing cold war. Fresh fighting broke out last month between Cambodia and Thailand, and between Congolese forces and Rwanda-backed rebels.

The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan signed a deal aimed at ending a decades-long conflict at the White House in August. But the leaders have yet to sign a peace treaty and parliaments have yet to ratify it. After the April killing of tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir pushed India and Pakistan closer to war than they had been in years, a ceasefire was reached. Trump claimed that the U.S. brokered the ceasefire and Pakistan thanked him, while India denied his claims.

Friction between Egypt and Ethiopia over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is best described as heightened tensions, not war. There has been no threat of war between Serbia and Kosovo during Trump's second term, nor has he made any significant contribution to improving relations in his first year back in the White House.

The economy

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TRUMP: "We inherited, remember this — inflation was at a historic high. We had never had inflation like that. They say 48 years. But whether it's 48 years or ever, we had the highest inflation, in my opinion, that we've ever had."

THE FACTS: This is false. Biden-era inflation peaked at 9.1% in June 2022, a consequence of supply chain interruptions, potentially excessive amounts of government aid and Russia's invasion of Ukraine driving up food and energy costs.

But Americans have known even worse and more sustained inflation than that. For example, higher than 13% in 1980 during an extended period of price pain. And by some estimates, inflation approached 20% during World War I.

Inflation had been falling during the first few months of Trump's presidency, but it picked back up after the president announced his tariffs in April. It was at 2.7% as of December 2025.

Energy policy

TRUMP: "I say clean, beautiful coal. I never say the word coal, it has to be preceded by the words clean, beautiful coal."

THE FACTS: The production of coal is cleaner now than it has been historically, but that doesn't mean it's clean.

Trump, however, continually omits this crucial context.

Planet-warming carbon dioxide emissions from the coal industry have decreased over the past 30 years, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And yet United Nations-backed research has found that coal production worldwide still needs to be reduced sharply to address climate change.

Along with carbon dioxide, burning coal emits sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides that contribute to acid rain, smog and respiratory illnesses, according to the EIA.

Coal once provided more than half of U.S. energy production. Today, coal accounts for about 15% of U.S. electricity production.

California wildfires

TRUMP, discussing approvals for reconstruction after the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires: "... the 20,000 houses or more that burned down in Los Angeles because they didn't have the water, they didn't allow the water to come down from the Pacific Northwest. They routed the water into the Pacific Ocean ... They didn't want to do it. They want to protect the tiny little fish."

THE FACTS: Trump again tried to blame the fact that some Los Angeles fire hydrants ran dry during last year's wildfires on the state's water policies that aim to protect endangered species, including a tiny fish known as the Delta smelt. Local officials say the hydrant outages occurred because the municipal system was not designed to deal with such a massive disaster.

Trump later ordered water released from two dams in California's Central Valley agricultural hub, but the water never went to Los Angeles, instead going to a dry lake basin more than 100 miles away.

Most of California's water comes from the north, where it melts from mountain snow and runs into rivers that connect to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. From there, much of it is sent farther south to farmers and cities like Los Angeles through two large pumping and canal systems. One is run by the federal government and the other by the state. Contrary to Trump's claim, no water supply from the Pacific Northwest connects to California's system. ____

Associated Press writer Matthew Daly in Washington contributed to this report.

US forces seize seventh sanctioned tanker linked to Venezuela in Trump's effort to control its oil

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN and MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military forces boarded and took control of a seventh oil tanker connected with Venezuela on Tuesday as part of the Trump administration's broader efforts to take control of the South American country's oil.

U.S. Southern Command said in a social media post that U.S. forces apprehended the Motor Vessel Sagitta

“without incident” and that the tanker was operating in defiance of President Donald Trump’s “established quarantine of sanctioned vessels in the Caribbean.”

The military command did not say whether the U.S. Coast Guard took control of the tanker as has been the case in prior seizures. Both the Pentagon and Southern Command said they had nothing to add when asked for more details.

The Sagitta is a Liberian-flagged tanker and its registration says it is owned and managed by a company in Hong Kong. The ship last transmitted its location more than two months ago when exiting the Baltic Sea in northern Europe.

The tanker was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department under an executive order related to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

The post from U.S. Southern Command indicated the ship had taken oil from Venezuela. It said the capture of the tanker “demonstrates our resolve to ensure that the only oil leaving Venezuela will be oil that is coordinated properly and lawfully.”

The military command posted what appeared to be aerial footage of the Sagitta sailing on the ocean, but unlike in prior videos the clip did not show U.S. forces flying toward it in helicopters or landing on the deck of the ship.

Since the U.S. ouster of Venezuela President Nicolás Maduro in a surprise nighttime raid on Jan. 3, the Trump administration has set out to control the production, refining and global distribution of Venezuela’s oil products.

Officials in Trump’s Republican administration have made it clear they see seizing the tankers 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 nearly two weeks ago to discuss his goal of investing \$100 billion in Venezuela to repair and upgrade its oil production and distribution. He said at the time that the U.S. expected to sell at least 30 million to 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil.

Trump told reporters on Tuesday that the U.S. already has taken 50 million barrels of oil out of Venezuela. “We’ve got millions of barrels of oil left,” he said at the White House. “We’re selling it on the open market. We’re bringing down oil prices incredibly.”

The first tanker was seized off the coast of Venezuela on Dec. 10. Most of the other tankers also have been captured in the waters near Venezuela, with the exception of the Bella 1, which was captured in the North Atlantic.

The Bella 1 had been cruising across the Atlantic and nearing the Caribbean when on Dec. 15 it abruptly turned and headed north, toward Europe. The ship was ultimately captured on Jan. 7.

Barcelona commuter train crashes, killing 1, days after deadly train collision in Spain

By JOSEPH WILSON and SUMAN NAISHADHAM Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — A Barcelona commuter train crashed Tuesday after a retaining wall fell onto the tracks, Spanish regional authorities said, killing at least one person and injuring 37 others.

The crash in Catalonia in northeastern Spain came just two days after a separate deadly train collision killed at least 42 people in the country’s south and injured dozens more.

Emergency workers Tuesday were still searching for more victims in the wreckage from Sunday’s deadly train accident that took place some 800 kilometers (497 miles) away as the nation began three days of mourning.

Emergency services in Catalonia said of the 37 people affected by Tuesday’s crash, five were seriously injured. Six others were in less serious condition. Emergency services said 20 ambulances had been sent to the site of the crash, and that the injured were taken to hospitals in the area. Regional firefighters said most of the injured had ridden in the first train car.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez acknowledged the Barcelona area crash, writing on X: “All my affection and solidarity with the victims and their families.”

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While Spain's high-speed rail network generally runs smoothly, and at least until Sunday had been a source of confidence, the commuter rail service is plagued by reliability issues. However, accidents causing injury or death are not common in either.

The commuter train crashed near the town of Gelida, located about 35 minutes outside of Barcelona.

Spain's railway operator ADIF said the containment wall likely collapsed due to heavy rainfall that swept across the northeastern Spanish region this week. Commuter train service was canceled along the line, it said.

More bodies discovered in Sunday derailment

The Sunday crash happened at 7:45 p.m. when the tail end of a train carrying 289 passengers on the route from Malaga to the capital, Madrid, derailed and crashed into an incoming train traveling from Madrid to Huelva, another southern city, according to rail operator Adif. Authorities were still recovering more bodies on Tuesday.

Fidel Sáez lost his mother in the wreck, but his two children, his brother and a nephew survived. Their trip to the capital to see musical "The Lion King" turned into a nightmare on the way home.

"My brother has been taken off respirator. He told me that it was a miracle that he is alive. He had to get the children through a window," Sáez told national TV broadcaster TVE. "He also asked me to tell the story of our mother, how good she was."

Health authorities said 39 people remained in hospitals on Tuesday morning, while 83 people were treated and discharged.

Among them was Emil Johnson, a Swedish citizen based in Malaga who was traveling to Madrid to renew his passport.

"It was probably two, three seconds. And everything was broken," Jonsson, sitting in a wheelchair due to bruises on his ribs and back and dressed in part of a hospital gown, told reporters. "When we crashed, I didn't know who was alive and who was dead."

Amid the tragedy, it emerged that a 6-year-old girl who survived the wreck was virtually unscathed, while her parents, brother and cousin all perished.

The mayor of their hometown called her survival a "miracle."

Carriages came off tracks

The front of the second train, which was carrying 184 people, took the brunt of the impact, which knocked its first two carriages off the track and down a 4-meter (13-foot) slope. Some bodies were found hundreds of meters (feet) from the crash site, according to Andalusia regional President Juanma Moreno.

Associated Press images taken Tuesday showed the remains of the first two cars of the second train, severed from the rest of the train and lying beside the tracks. Train seats had been ejected onto the rocks that provide packing under the tracks.

Further along the tracks, Civil Guard officers inspected the interior of the first train with dogs as passengers' belongings lay scattered on the floor, according to the video distributed by authorities. The last carriage was lying on its side on the tracks, and the second-to-last carriage was leaning to one side with all its windows shattered.

'All hypotheses are open'

Officials are continuing to investigate the causes of the accident that Puente has called "truly strange" since it occurred on a straight line and neither train was speeding.

Puente said officials had found a broken section of track that could possibly be related to the accident's origin, while insisting that is just a hypothesis and that it could take weeks to reach any conclusions.

"Now we have to determine if that is a cause or a consequence (of the derailment)," Puente told Spanish radio Cadena Ser.

At this time, "all hypotheses are open," Grande Marlaska told a press conference. Accident investigators will analyze "the rails at the point where the derailment began and inspect the wheels" of the first train in a laboratory, he added.

The train that jumped the track belonged to the private company Iryo, while the second train belonged to Spain's public train company, Renfe.

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Iryo said in a statement Monday that its train was manufactured in 2022 and had passed a safety check on Jan. 15.

Puente and Renfe president Álvaro Fernández said that both trains were traveling well under the speed limit of 250 kph (155 mph) and "human error could be ruled out."

The accident shook a nation that leads Europe in high-speed train mileage and takes pride in a network that is considered at the cutting edge of rail transport.

"It is undoubtedly a hard blow, and I have to work so it doesn't affect the credibility and strength of the network," Puente told Spanish national radio RNE on Tuesday when asked about the damage to the reputation of the rail system.

Royals visit scene

Spain's King Felipe and Queen Letizia visited the scene of the accident, where they greeted emergency workers as well as some local residents who helped in the initial stages of the rescue. Afterward, they went to hospital in Cordoba where many of the injured remain under care.

"We are all responsible for not looking away when the debris of a catastrophe is being cleared away," said Letizia to reporters after the visit.

Spain's Civil Guard is collecting DNA samples from family members who fear they have loved ones among the unidentified dead.

High-speed trains resumed service Tuesday from Madrid to Sevilla and Malaga, the largest cities in Andalusia, Spain's most populous region, but passengers had to travel a stretch of the journey by buses provided by the rail service. Minister Puente said that the normal train service won't resume until early February.

Spanish airline Iberia added more flights to southern cities until Sunday to help stranded travelers. Some bus companies also reinforced their services in the south.

The US is on the verge of losing its measles elimination status.

Here's why that matters

By DEVI SHASTRI AP Health Writer

It's been a year since a measles outbreak began in West Texas, and international health authorities say they plan to meet in April to determine if the U.S. has lost its measles-free designation.

Experts fear the vaccine-preventable virus has regained a foothold and that the U.S. may soon follow Canada in losing the achievement of having eliminated it.

The reevaluation is largely symbolic and hinges on whether a single measles chain has spread uninterrupted within the U.S. for at least 12 months.

Public health scientists around the country are investigating whether the now-ended Texas outbreak is linked to active ones in Utah, Arizona and South Carolina. But doctors and scientists say the U.S. — and North America overall — has a measles problem, regardless of the decision.

"It is really a question of semantics," said Dr. Jonathan Temte, a Wisconsin family physician who helped certify the U.S. was measles-free in 2000. "The bottom line is the conditions are sufficient to allow this many cases to occur. And that gets back to de-emphasizing a safe and effective vaccine."

Last year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention confirmed 2,242 measles cases across 44 states — the most since 1991 — and nearly 50 separate outbreaks.

The problem has been years in the making, as fewer kids get routine vaccines due to parental waivers, health care access issues and rampant disinformation. More recently, Trump administration health officials including Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. have questioned and sown doubt about the established safety of vaccines at an unprecedented level while also defunding local efforts to improve vaccination rates.

"The most important thing that we can do is to make sure the people who aren't vaccinated get vaccinated," said Jennifer Nuzzo, director of Brown University's Pandemic Center. "We have not issued a clear enough message about that."

A Department of Health and Human Services spokesperson said Thursday that Kennedy has emphasized

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vaccines as the best way to prevent measles, adding that the CDC is responding to outbreaks and working to increase vaccination rates.

In a briefing Tuesday, department officials said they don't yet have evidence that a single chain of measles has spread for a year.

But CDC's principal deputy director said he would consider the loss of elimination status to be the "cost of doing business" globally.

"We have these communities that choose to be unvaccinated," said Dr. Ralph Abraham. "That's their personal freedom."

Measles finds the unvaccinated

There is little room for error in trying to stop measles. The virus is one of the most contagious, infecting 9 out of every 10 unvaccinated people exposed. Community-level protection takes a 95% vaccination rate. The current rate nationally is 92.5%, according to CDC data, but many communities fall far below that.

The patient in Texas' first known case developed the telltale rash on Jan. 20, 2025, according to state health department data.

From there, the outbreak exploded. Officially, 762 people fell ill, most of them in rural Gaines County, and two children died. Many more got sick and were never diagnosed: 182 potential measles cases among children in Gaines County went unconfirmed in March 2025 alone, state health officials said, a possible undercount of 44% in that county.

Such data gaps are common, though, making it especially hard to track outbreaks. Many people living in communities where the virus is spreading face barriers, including access to health care and distrust of the government.

Contact tracing so many cases is also expensive, said behavioral scientist Noel Brewer, who chairs the U.S. committee that will finalize the data for international health officials. Research shows a single measles case can cost public health departments tens of thousands of dollars.

CDC data on measles is still among the best worldwide, Brewer said, but "the U.S. has changed its investment in public health, so we're less able to do the case tracking that we used to do."

Genetic sequencing can fill some gaps.

Scientists have confirmed the same measles strain in Texas, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona, South Carolina, Canada, Mexico and several other North American countries, said Sebastian Oliel, a spokesperson for the Pan American Health Organization, which plans to make the final decision on U.S. measles elimination at an April 13 meeting.

But that's not always enough to say the outbreaks are connected. Genetically, the measles virus doesn't change as often as, say, flu.

"Within an outbreak, everybody is going to look the same," said Justin Lessler, a University of North Carolina disease researcher.

The key question may then be how PAHO experts will navigate final data gaps, said Dr. Andrew Pavia, a Utah physician and longtime CDC consultant.

"My best guess is we will lose elimination status," Pavia said. "The case for this not being continuous transmission is tenuous, and I think they are likely to err on the side of declaring it a loss of elimination status."

Oliel said when there is a case of unknown origin in a country with ongoing local spread, "the most conservative approach is to consider the case part of the existing national transmission."

Mexico also up for review

PAHO will review Mexico's measles-free status alongside the U.S., Oliel said. The country's largest outbreak has roots in Texas. It started when an 8-year-old boy from Chihuahua state got sick after visiting family in Seminole, Texas. Since last February, 6,000 people have gotten sick in Mexico, and 21 have died in Chihuahua state.

But under PAHO's definition of elimination, borders matter. If, for example, the chain of measles that started in the U.S. spread to Mexico and then returned to the U.S. anew, it would be considered a new

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chain, experts said. Still, many experts call that standard outdated.

What's clear is that measles found ample ground in the U.S. in 2025, infiltrating schools and day cares, churches, hospital waiting rooms and a detention center. New Mexico logged 100 cases and one adult died. Kansas officials spent seven months trying to control an outbreak that sickened nearly 90 people across 10 counties. Ohio confirmed 40 cases. Montana, North Dakota and Wisconsin each had 36.

Now, more than 800 people have gotten sick across Utah, Arizona and South Carolina since late summer, with no end in sight.

"2025 was the year of measles," Brewer said. "Will 2026 be the year of rising or falling measles cases? Does it get worse or does it get better? No one knows the answer."

Wall Street sinks as Trump threatens 8 European countries with tariffs over Greenland

By DAMIAN J. TROISE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks slumped on Wall Street Tuesday after President Donald Trump threatened to hit eight European countries with new tariffs as tensions escalate over his attempts to assert American control over Greenland.

The losses were widespread, with nearly every sector losing ground. Major indexes in the U.S. extended losses from last week in what has been a wobbly start to the year.

The S&P 500 fell 143.15 points, or 2.1%, to 6,796.86. It is the steepest drop for the benchmark index since October.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 870.74 points, or 1.8%, to 48,488.59. The Nasdaq composite fell 561.07 points, or 2.4%, to 22,954.32.

Technology stocks were the heaviest weights on the market. Nvidia, one of the most valuable companies in the world, plunged 4.4%. Apple fell 3.5%.

Retailers, banks and industrial companies also fell sharply. Lowe's fell 3.3%, JPMorgan Chase fell 3.1%, and Caterpillar lost 2.5%.

European markets and markets in Asia fell. Long-term bond yields in Japan rose to record levels on concerns over the government's fiscal policy, adding to anxiety in global markets.

Trump's trade policy has roiled markets since the start of his second term. Stocks have sold off on the threat of steep tariffs, then rallied when Trump delays or cancels a tariff, or negotiates a lower rate.

Trump said Saturday that he would charge a 10% import tax starting in February on goods from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland. The annual combined imports from European Union nations are greater than those from the top two biggest individual importers into the U.S., Mexico and China.

Gold prices surged 3.7% and silver prices soared 6.9%. Such assets are often considered safe havens in times of geopolitical turmoil.

The trade tensions apparently short-circuited a recent rally in bitcoin. The cryptocurrency rose above \$96,000 late last week but has dropped back to around \$89,700.

Treasury yields were mixed in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose to 4.29% from 4.23% late Friday. The yield on the two-year Treasury held steady at 3.60% from late Friday.

Companies that focus on consumer staples held up better than most of the market. Colgate-Palmolive rose 1.1% and Campbell's rose 1.5%.

The price of U.S. crude oil rose 1.5% to \$60.34 per barrel. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, rose 1.5% to \$64.92.

Trump linked his aggressive stance on Greenland to last year's decision not to award him the Nobel Peace Prize, telling Norway's prime minister that he no longer felt "an obligation to think purely of Peace," in a text message released Monday.

Trump's message to Jonas Gahr Støre appeared to ratchet up a standoff between Washington and its closest allies over his threats to take over Greenland, a self-governing territory of NATO member Denmark.

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Trump's threats have sparked outrage and a flurry of diplomatic activity across Europe, as leaders consider possible countermeasures, including retaliatory tariffs and the first-ever use of the European Union's anti-coercion instrument.

The trade and political conflict with Europe is heating up just as world leaders meet at the World Economic Forum annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland this week. Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives said the new tariff threat "is clearly an overhang on the conference," but that it would likely simmer over time.

"Our view is just like over the last year the bark will be worse than the bite on this issue and tariff threats as negotiations take place and tensions ultimately calm down between Trump and EU leaders," Ives wrote in a note to clients.

Tariffs threaten to boost inflation, although so far the increases have been less than many experts feared. Still, the threat of tariffs reigniting already high inflation could further complicate the Federal Reserve's job.

The central bank cut its benchmark interest rate three times late in 2025 to help bolster the economy as the job market weakened. The Fed has taken a more cautious view because of the risk of rising inflation, which remains above its target of 2%.

Lower interest rates on loans can help bolster economic activity, but they could also fuel inflation, which could counter any benefit from lower interest rates.

The Fed, and Wall Street, will get another update on inflation on Thursday, when the government releases the personal consumption expenditures price index, or PCE. It is the Fed's preferred measure for inflation.

The Fed will meet next week for its policy meeting on interest rates and Wall Street is betting that the central bank will hold its benchmark interest rate steady.

Wall Street is also in the midst of the latest round of corporate earnings, which could help provide more insight into how companies are handling uncertainty from tariffs, geopolitics and cautious consumers.

Industrial and consumer conglomerate 3M slumped 7% after reporting mixed results for its most recent quarter. Companies from a wide range of industries will report their results this week, including Johnson & Johnson, Halliburton and Intel.

Forecasters warn of a 'potentially catastrophic' storm from Texas to the Carolinas

By JEFF MARTIN and HAYA PANJWANI Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — With many Americans still recovering from multiple blasts of snow and unrelenting freezing temperatures in the nation's northern tier, a new storm is set to emerge this weekend that could coat roads, trees and power lines with devastating ice across a wide expanse of the South.

The storm arriving late this week and into the weekend is shaping up to be a "widespread potentially catastrophic event from Texas to the Carolinas," said Ryan Maue, a former chief scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

"I don't know how people are going to deal with it," he said.

Forecasters on Tuesday warned that the ice could weigh down trees and power lines, triggering widespread outages.

"If you get a half of an inch of ice — or heaven forbid an inch of ice — that could be catastrophic," said Keith Avery, CEO of the Newberry Electric Cooperative in South Carolina.

Here's what to know:

'Great swaths' of heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain expected

The National Weather Service warned of "great swaths of heavy snow, sleet, and treacherous freezing rain" starting Friday in much of the nation's midsection and then shifting toward the East Coast through Sunday.

Temperatures will be slow to warm in many areas, meaning ice that forms on roads and sidewalks might stick around, forecasters say.

The exact timing of the approaching storm — and where it is headed — remained uncertain on Tuesday.

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Forecasters say it can be challenging to predict precisely which areas could see rain and which ones could be punished with ice.

Cold air clashing with rain to fuel a 'major winter storm'

An extremely cold arctic air mass is set to dive south from Canada, setting up a clash with the cold temperatures and rain that will be streaming eastward across the southern U.S.

"This is extreme, even for this being the peak of winter," National Weather Service meteorologist Bryan Jackson said of the cold temperatures.

When the cold air meets the rain, the likely result will be "a major winter storm with very impactful weather, with all the moisture coming up from the Gulf and encountering all this particularly cold air that's spilling in," Jackson said.

An atmospheric river could set up across the southern U.S.

An atmospheric river of moisture could be in place by the weekend, pulling precipitation across Texas and other states along the Gulf Coast and continuing across Georgia and the Carolinas, forecasters said.

"Global models are painting a concerning picture of what this weekend could look like, with an increasingly strong signal for ice storm potential across North Georgia and portions of central Georgia," according to the National Weather Service's Atlanta office.

If significant accumulations of ice strike metro Atlanta, it could be a problem through the weekend since low temperatures early Monday are expected to be around 22 degrees (minus 5.6 Celsius) in Atlanta. The city's high temperature on Monday is forecast to be around 35 degrees (1.7 Celsius).

Highway and air travel could be tangled by the storm

Travel is a major concern, as southern states have less equipment to remove snow and ice from roads, and extremely cold temperatures expected after the storm could prevent ice from melting for several days. In Michigan, more than 100 vehicles crashed into each other or slid off an interstate southwest of Grand Rapids on Monday.

The storm is also expected to impact many of the nation's major hub airports, including those in Dallas; Atlanta; Memphis, Tennessee; and Charlotte, North Carolina.

Polar air from Canada to keep northern states in a deep freeze

Unusually cold temperatures are already in place across much of the northern tier of the U.S., but the blast of arctic air expected later this week "will be the coldest yet," Jackson said.

"There's a large sprawling vortex of low pressure centered over Hudson Bay," Jackson said of the sea in northern Canada that's connected to the Arctic Ocean. "And this is dominating the weather over all of North America."

Texas could be a harbinger for other parts of the South

Some of the storm's earliest impacts could be in Texas on Friday, as the arctic air mass slides south through much of the state, National Weather Service forecaster Sam Shamburger said in a briefing on the storm.

"At the same time, we're expecting rain to move into much of the state," Shamburger said.

Low temperatures could fall into the 20s or even the teens in parts of Texas by Saturday, with the potential for a wintery mix of weather in the northern part of the state.

Forecasters cautioned that significant uncertainty remains, particularly over how much ice or snow could fall across north and central Texas.

"It's going to be a very difficult forecast," Shamburger said.

At an Arkansas hardware store, customers gear up for storm

In Little Rock, Arkansas, a steady stream of customers on Tuesday were stocking up on supplies at Fuller and Son Hardware.

"Right now parents of young children are getting sleds," said James Carter, the company's director of operations.

People were also getting shovels, ice-melting products and covers for outside faucets to keep them from freezing, since low temperatures in the Little Rock area are forecast to fall into the teens, he said.

Netflix intensifies bid for Warner Bros making its \$72 billion offer all cash

By MICHELLE CHAPMAN and WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writers

Netflix is now offering to buy Warner Bros. Discovery's studio and streaming business in all cash — in an effort to win over the Hollywood giant's shareholders for its \$72 billion merger and potentially thwart a hostile bid from Skydance-owned Paramount.

Back in December, Netflix struck a cash and stock deal with Warner valued at \$27.75 per share, giving it a total enterprise value of \$82.7 billion, including debt. But on Tuesday, the companies announced that they would be revising the transaction to simplify its structure, provide more certainty of value for Warner stockholders and speed up the path to a shareholder vote — which they said could arrive by April.

The all-cash transaction is still valued at \$27.75 per Warner share. Warner stockholders will also receive the additional value of shares of Discovery Global, which would become a separate public company following a previously-announced separation from Warner Bros.

Warner leadership has repeatedly backed a merger with Netflix — and the boards of both companies approved the all-cash deal announced Tuesday. In a statement, Warner CEO David Zaslav said the revised agreement “brings us even closer to combining two of the greatest storytelling companies in the world.”

A spokesperson for Paramount declined to comment when reached by The Associated Press on Tuesday. Unlike Netflix, Paramount wants to acquire Warner's entire company — including networks like CNN and Discovery — and went straight to shareholders with all cash, \$77.9 billion offer last month.

Warner stockholders have until 5 p.m. ET Wednesday to tender their shares in support of Paramount's bid, which has an enterprise value of \$108 billion including debt. But that deadline could be pushed back further. While Paramount declined to share further details on Tuesday, the Wall Street Journal reported last week that the company was planning on another extension.

Beyond its tender offer, Paramount has promised a proxy fight. Last week, the company said it would nominate its own slate of directors before the Warner's next shareholder meeting, the date of which has still not been set.

Paramount also filed a suit in Delaware Chancery Court seeking to compel Warner Bros. to disclose to shareholders how it values its bid and the competing offer from Netflix. But a judge on Thursday denied Paramount's request to expedite that proceeding.

In a statement at the time, Warner applauded the court's decision and called Paramount's lawsuit “yet another unserious attempt to distract.” Paramount, meanwhile, maintained that the ruling wasn't about the merits of its allegations and said Warner shareholders “should ask why their Board is working so hard to hide this information.”

Regardless of who eventually wins the upper hand, a Warner Bros. Discovery sale could be a long, drawn-out process that is almost certain to attract tremendous antitrust scrutiny. On Tuesday, Netflix and Warner maintained that they expect to close on a merger 12 to 18 months from December's agreement.

Still, Paramount's hostile bid could complicate that timeline. Politics are also expected to come into play under President Donald Trump, who has made unprecedented suggestions about his personal involvement on whether a deal will go through.

Trade groups across the media and entertainment industry have sounded the alarm over both bids, warning that further consolidation in the industry could result in job losses and less diversity in content — with particularly negative consequences for filmmaking.

The companies have spoken on those concerns. On Tuesday, Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos said combining with Warner “will deliver broader choice and greater value to audiences worldwide” both at home and in theaters — while “driving job creation and long-term industry growth.”

Netflix's stock inched up just under 1% Tuesday morning, while shares of Warner Bros. Discovery and Paramount-Skydance fell slightly.

Spain's high-speed train crash casts a shadow over a world-class rail system

By JOSEPH WILSON Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — The deadly train wreck in southern Spain has cast a pall over one of the nation's symbols of success.

Sunday's collision killed at least 42 people and injured dozens more, according to officials on Tuesday.

"It is undoubtably a hard blow, and I have to work so it doesn't affect the credibility and strength of the network," Spanish Transport Minister Oscar Puente told Spanish national radio RNE when asked about the knock to the reputation of the rail system.

Here's a look at the history of a rail network that became a crown jewel of contemporary Spain, by the numbers.

34 years

The time since Spain inaugurated its first high-speed AVE, which means "bird" in Spanish.

Both before and after that milestone, successive Spanish governments devoted tax revenues and European Union development aid to its high-speed rail network that quickly caught up with and surpassed high-speed pioneers Japan and France.

The first high-speed train to speed across Spain preceded the opening of the 1992 Summer Olympic Games in Barcelona by two months.

Both marked high points in Spain's recent history after it emerged from the economic doldrums and cultural and political isolation of the 20th-century dictatorship of Gen. Francisco Franco.

3,900 kilometers

The length, equal to 2,400 miles, of high-speed rail that Spain has laid over the past three-plus decades for its 49 million residents.

Only China — with 45,000 kilometers (28,000 miles) for its 1.4 billion people — has more high-speed track, according to the International Union of Railways.

Spain's commitment to high-speed rail, which the railway union defines as rails for trains going 250 kph (155 mph), has helped Spain shed its reputation of often being behind the industrial curve compared to other leading economies.

Spain's train builders have been able to capitalize on its domestic expansion. A Spanish consortium built Saudi Arabia's high-speed line connecting the holy cities of Mecca and Medina that opened service in 2018.

7 vs. 2½ hours

The approximate time a train trip took between Madrid and Barcelona before and after the 2008 adoption of high-speed rail.

On an old, slow train, the 600-kilometer (385-mile) journey between Spain's biggest cities used to take around seven hours, meaning many business travelers opted to take a plane.

Now that trip can be done in 2½ hours, and Spain announced plans in November to modernize the Madrid-Barcelona line to allow trains to reach 350 kph (218 mph), matching the fastest Chinese trains. That would bring the transit time down to less than two hours.

The AVE has helped unite a country whose main population centers other than Madrid are located on its coasts, separated by some of the most sparsely populated areas in Europe.

Every region and provincial capital has pushed hard for its own high-speed line. Some critics say the administrations may have spent too much on questionable lines to the detriment of investing in local commuter lines, which suffer many more delays than high-speed rail does.

Missing out on an AVE line and stop has become synonymous with economic decline for a provincial city.

"The high-speed train has proven to be a catalyst for the nation's society and economy," Zacarias Grande, professor of civil engineering of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya told The Associated Press.

"It has tightened links between Spain's different regions over its three decades, significantly boosting business relations and their cultural, technological and professional development."

The move away from air travel to rail also remains a key plank of Spain's green energy and electrification

plan to fight climate change.

One crash

The number of deadly crashes on a stretch of high-speed rail tracks in Spain's history. One official described Sunday's collision as transforming a train into a "mass of twisted metal."

Spanish officials say they are still at a loss to understand what went wrong Sunday night when one high-speed train jumped the track and collided with another fast train going in the other direction.

Alvaro Fernández, the president of public train company Renfe, told Spanish public radio station RNE that both trains were traveling well under the speed limit and "human error could be ruled out."

One of the two trains was operated by Renfe and another by a private company.

Spain's worst train crash this century occurred in 2013, when 80 people died after a train derailed in the country's northwest on a track that wasn't designed for high speeds. While the train itself was capable of high-speed travel, an investigation concluded that it was going 179 kph (111 mph) on a stretch with an 80 kph (50 mph) speed limit when it left the tracks.

Three companies

The number of operators with high-speed trains in Spain.

Only recently did Spain open its rail network to private companies to compete against Renfe.

The first private company to get into Spain's high-speed rail market was the French-owned Ouigo in 2021. The Italian-owned Iryo followed in 2022.

It was an Iryo train that first derailed on Sunday, knocking the Renfe train off its track. Iryo has said that it's working with officials to determine the causes of the crash.

Supreme Court takes up politically charged case with independence of the Federal Reserve at stake

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's unprecedented bid to reshape the Federal Reserve board is putting the Supreme Court in a familiar position, weighing an emergency appeal from the president's lawyers in a politically charged case.

The court is hearing arguments Wednesday over Trump's effort to oust Federal Reserve governor Lisa Cook based on allegations she committed mortgage fraud, which she denies.

No president has fired a sitting Fed governor in the agency's 112-year history.

The true motivation, Trump's critics say, is the Republican president's desire to wrest control of U.S. interest rate policy. Trump wants interest rates to fall sharply so the government can borrow more cheaply and Americans can pay lower borrowing costs for new homes, cars or other large purchases, as worries about high costs have soured some voters on his economic management.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell and the board cut a key interest rate three times in a row in the last four months of 2025, but that's more slowly than Trump wants. The Fed also suggested it may leave rates unchanged in coming months, concerned about triggering higher inflation.

Powell is expected to be in attendance when the justices take up an emergency plea from the Trump administration to be allowed to remove Cook from her job while her challenge to the firing plays out in court. Judges on lower courts have allowed her to remain in her post as one of seven central bank governors.

If Trump could name someone to take Cook's place, he would have four of his appointees on the seven-member board. Cook, the first Black woman to serve on the Fed's governing board, was appointed in 2022 by President Joe Biden, a Democrat.

The justices are being asked to effectively bless Trump's effort to undermine the Fed's independence, said Columbia University law professor Lev Menand, who has joined a brief in support of Cook.

"This case is about much more than Cook," Menand said. "It's about whether President Trump will be able to take over the Federal Reserve board in the coming months."

The threat to the Fed's independence spurred Powell's three living predecessors, Alan Greenspan, Ben Bernanke and Janet Yellen, to weigh in on Cook's behalf. They were joined by five former Treasury secre-

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taries appointed by presidents of both political parties and other former high-ranking economic officials. In their filing, lawyers for the former officials wrote that immediately ousting Cook "would expose the Federal Reserve to political influences, thereby eroding public confidence in the Fed's independence and jeopardizing the credibility and efficacy of U.S. monetary policy."

Economists warn that a politicized Fed that caves in to the president's demands will damage its credibility as an inflation fighter and likely lead investors to demand higher rates before investing in U.S. treasuries.

With Cook's case under review at the high court, Trump dramatically escalated his confrontation with the Fed. The Justice Department has opened a criminal investigation of Powell and has served the central bank with subpoenas.

Powell himself took the rare step of responding to Trump, calling the threat of criminal charges "pretexts" that mask the real reason, Trump's frustration over interest rates. The Justice Department has said the dispute is ostensibly about Powell's testimony to Congress in June over the cost of a massive renovation of Fed buildings.

In Trump's first year in office, the justices generally, but not always, went along with Trump's pleas for emergency action to counteract lower-court rulings against him, including allowing the firings of the heads of other governmental agencies at the president's discretion, with no claim that they did anything wrong.

But the court has sent signals that it is approaching the independence of the nation's central bank more cautiously, calling the Fed "a uniquely structured, quasi-private entity."

In Cook's case, Trump is not asserting that he can fire Fed governors at will.

Cook is one of several people, along with Democratic New York Attorney General Letitia James and Democratic Sen. Adam Schiff of California, who have been accused of mortgage fraud by federal housing official Bill Pulte. They have denied the allegations against them.

The case against Cook stems from allegations she claimed two properties, in Michigan and Georgia, as "primary residences" in June and July 2021, before she joined the Fed board. Such claims can lead to a lower mortgage rate and smaller down payment than if one of them was declared as a rental property or second home.

Cook has denied any wrongdoing and has not been charged with a crime. "There is no fraud, no intent to deceive, nothing whatsoever criminal or remotely a basis to allege mortgage fraud," a Cook lawyer, Abbe Lowell, wrote to Attorney General Pam Bondi in November.

Cook specified that her Atlanta condo would be a "vacation home," according to a loan estimate she obtained in May 2021. In a form seeking a security clearance, she described it as a "2nd home." Lowell wrote that the case against her largely rests on "one stray reference" in a 2021 mortgage document that was "plainly innocuous in light of the several other truthful and more specific disclosures" about the homes she has purchased.

U.S. District Judge Jia Cobb ruled that the Trump administration had not satisfied a legal requirement that Fed governors can only be fired "for cause," which she said was limited to misconduct while in office.

Cobb also held that Trump's firing would have deprived Cook of her due process, or legal right, to contest the firing.

By a 2-1 vote, a panel of the federal appeals court in Washington rejected the Trump administration's request to let Cook's firing proceed.

At the Supreme Court, the administration argues Cook has no right to a hearing and courts have no role to play in reviewing Trump's actions.

Trump lawfully fired Cook, Solicitor General D. John Sauer wrote, "after concluding that the American people should not have their interest rates determined by someone who made misrepresentations material to her mortgage rates that appear to have been grossly negligent at best and fraudulent at worst."

Sauer will face off against Paul Clement, a conservative lawyer who served in Sauer's role under President George W. Bush and has argued for expanding gun rights, against same-sex marriage and for striking down the Affordable Care Act. Both men once worked as law clerks for Justice Antonin Scalia.

Cook's fate should not be determined by "untested allegations" or "before any facts are found," her lawyers told the court. She should be able to remain in her job at least while her case proceeds, they wrote.

Israeli crews target UN facilities for Palestinian refugees in east Jerusalem

By SAM METZ Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli forces on Tuesday targeted at least two United Nations facilities, pushing forward with a crackdown against the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees tasked with delivering humanitarian services to millions of people across the region.

Crews began bulldozing the United Nations Relief and Works Agency's offices in Sheikh Jarrah and fired tear gas at a vocational school in Qalandia, marking Israel's latest and most dramatic step against UNRWA.

Israel has long railed against the agency, accusing it of being infiltrated by Hamas and saying that some of its employees were involved in the October 2023 attack that triggered Israel's two-year war in Gaza. UNRWA leaders have said they took swift action against the employees accused of taking part in the attack, and have denied allegations that the agency tolerates or collaborates with Hamas.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday condemned Israel's destruction of the agency's compound and called for it to be returned to the U.N.'s control.

"The Secretary-General views as wholly unacceptable the continued escalatory actions against UNRWA, which are inconsistent with Israel's clear obligations under international law," said Farhan Haq, the deputy U.N. spokesperson.

Roland Friedrich, the agency's West Bank director, said UNRWA received word that demolition crews and police arrived at their east Jerusalem headquarters early on Tuesday. Staff have not operated out of the facility for almost a year out of safety concerns, but Israeli forces confiscated devices and forced out private security guards protecting the facility.

"What we saw today is the culmination of two years of incitement and measures against UNRWA in east Jerusalem," Friedrich said.

He said forces also began firing tear gas outside the vocational school on the outskirts of Jerusalem on Tuesday afternoon before ultimately leaving. More than 300 young refugees receive job training in technology and welding there.

Some children on their way home from the school were overcome by the tear gas and a 15-year-old was hit in the eye with a rubber bullet, according to the Palestinian Authority's Jerusalem governorate, which monitors Palestinian affairs in the area.

Israeli leaders celebrate demolition

Israel's Foreign Ministry said the demolition enforced a new law banning UNRWA, noting that Israel owns the site and rejecting UNRWA's claims that the move violated international law.

Israel has long claimed the agency has an anti-Israel bias. Often with little evidence, it says UNRWA employs and maintains ties with militant groups including Hamas. The U.N. has ardently denied such claims and UNRWA has said it acts quickly to purge any suspected militants among its staff.

UNRWA's mandate is to provide aid and services to some 2.5 million Palestinian refugees in Gaza, the occupied West Bank and east Jerusalem, as well as 3 million more refugees in Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The group has for years maintained infrastructure in refugee camps and also run schools and provided health care. But its operations were curtailed last year when Israel's Knesset passed legislation severing ties and banning it from functioning in what it defines as Israel — including east Jerusalem.

The agency said the demolitions could imperil operations at the vocational center in Qalandia and health facility in Shu'afat, where it still provides education and health services.

An Israeli flag was seen hoisted above the facility in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, where some Israeli politicians arrived on the scene to celebrate the organization's fate. National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir called it "a historic day."

'This must be a wake-up call'

The demolition marked the culmination of years of criticism from Israel and its leaders. Since the start of the Israel-Hamas war more than two years ago, it has ramped up such attacks, saying the militants

used UNRWA facilities and seized aid. It has provided little evidence for the claims, which the U.N. has denied. The International Court of Justice said in October that Israel must allow the agency to provide humanitarian assistance in Gaza.

Since Israel passed its law banning the agency last year, its facilities — schools and health centers — and its headquarters have repeatedly been closed, raided or left unprotected.

“This must be a wake-up call,” Philippe Lazzarini, UNRWA’s commissioner-general, said in a statement on X. “What happens today to UNRWA will happen tomorrow to any other international organisation or diplomatic mission, whether in the Occupied Palestinian Territory or anywhere around the world.”

More aid groups in Gaza face pressure

Israel’s ban on UNRWA dovetailed with broader efforts to deregister aid groups operating in Gaza and the occupied West Bank. Israel has passed laws requiring nongovernmental organizations not to hire staff involved in activities that “delegitimize Israel” or support boycotts, demanding they register lists of names as a condition of being allowed to work.

Israel told dozens of groups — including Doctors Without Borders and CARE — that their licenses would expire at the end of 2025. The organizations say the rules are arbitrary and warned that the new ban would harm people desperately in need of humanitarian aid.

Settler violence in the West Bank rose last year

The Israeli military said Tuesday that attacks carried out by Jewish settlers against Palestinians and Israeli security forces in the West Bank increased by 27% last year compared with 2024.

There were 867 reports of “nationalistic crimes” — with the number of severe incidents up by more than 50%, according to internal statistics from the Israeli military and the country’s Shin Bet domestic security service.

Mounting settler violence in the West Bank has emptied villages since the war between Israel and Hamas erupted, according to B’Tselem, an Israeli rights group helping the residents.

The Israeli military has carried out large-scale operations in the West Bank targeting militants that have killed hundreds of Palestinians. There also has been a rise in Palestinian attacks on Israelis.

Israeli authorities have a mixed relationship with settlers, at times dismantling unauthorized outposts while also deploying forces to protect them from Palestinians.

Anthony Joshua’s driver arraigned after deadly crash in southwest Nigeria

SAGAMU, Nigeria (AP) — The driver in a deadly car crash that injured British heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua and killed his two friends in Nigeria was arraigned on Tuesday on four counts, including dangerous driving causing death and driving without a valid national driver’s license.

Adeniyi Mobolaji Kayode, 46, appeared at a local court in southwestern Ogun state following the accident in December that occurred near the economic hub of Lagos.

Kayode was driving Joshua and his friends in a Lexus SUV when it hit a stationary truck on the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway which links Ogun state to Lagos, causing minor injuries to Joshua and the death of his two close associates, Sina Ghami and Latif “Latz” Ayodele. Officials later said they found the driver to be driving at high speed.

The defendant was first charged early January for dangerous driving causing death, reckless and negligent driving, driving without due care and driving without a valid national driver’s license. He was at the time granted bail of 5 million naira (\$3,480).

The defendant arrived at the Sagamu Magistrates Court in Ogun on Tuesday morning wearing a black hoodie and black trousers and in the company of his lawyers.

The court, however, adjourned the trial until Feb. 25 following a request by prosecutors.

Defense lawyers appeared to push back the application for adjournment. “Coupled with the fact that the matter is slated for definite hearing for today, and their witnesses are in court, nothing stops the court from going on,” Abiodun Olalekan, the defense counsel, told reporters.

Joshua, a two-time heavyweight champion, returned to the United Kingdom after the accident that raised questions about road safety in Nigeria.

Joshua has family roots in Nigeria and he briefly attended boarding school there as a child. He also holds Nigerian nationality.

Trump slams UK deal to hand over Chagos Islands after he previously backed it

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A startled British government on Tuesday defended its decision to hand sovereignty of the Chagos Islands to Mauritius, after U.S. President Donald Trump attacked the plan, which his administration had previously supported.

Trump said that relinquishing the remote Indian Ocean archipelago, home to a strategically important American naval and bomber base, was an act of stupidity that shows why he needs to take over Greenland.

"Shockingly, our 'brilliant' NATO Ally, the United Kingdom, is currently planning to give away the Island of Diego Garcia, the site of a vital U.S. Military Base, to Mauritius, and to do so FOR NO REASON WHATSOEVER," he said in a post on his social media platform Truth Social. "There is no doubt that China and Russia have noticed this act of total weakness."

"The UK giving away extremely important land is an act of GREAT STUPIDITY, and is another in a very long line of National Security reasons why Greenland has to be acquired," Trump said.

The blast from Trump was a rebuff to efforts by Prime Minister Keir Starmer to calm tensions over Greenland and patch up a frayed trans-Atlantic relationship. Starmer on Monday called Trump's statements about taking over Greenland "completely wrong," but called for the rift to be "resolved through calm discussion."

The British government said Tuesday that despite the president's post, it believes the U.S. still supports the Chagos deal.

Cabinet Minister Pat McFadden said that a flurry of social media posts from Trump "criticizing a number of world leaders" showed the president "is frustrated right now" as European allies push back on his desire for Greenland.

"I don't really believe this is about Chagos. I think it's about Greenland," McFadden said.

Remote but strategic

The United Kingdom and Mauritius signed a deal in May to give Mauritius sovereignty over the Chagos Islands after two centuries under British control, though the U.K. will pay Mauritius at least 120 million pounds (\$160 million) a year to lease back the island of Diego Garcia, where the U.S. base is located, for at least 99 years.

The U.S. government welcomed the agreement at the time, saying it "secures the long-term, stable, and effective operation of the joint U.S.-U.K. military facility at Diego Garcia."

In recent years, the United Nations and its top court have urged Britain to return the islands to Mauritius, and the British government says it's acting to protect the security of the base from international legal challenge.

A government spokesperson said that "the U.K. will never compromise on our national security," and "this deal secures the operations of the joint U.S.-U.K. base on Diego Garcia for generations, with robust provisions for keeping its unique capabilities intact and our adversaries out."

But the deal has met strong opposition from British opposition parties, which say that giving up the islands puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.

Islanders who were displaced from the islands to make way for the U.S. base say they weren't consulted and worry the deal will make it harder for them to go home.

Strong opposition

Legislation to approve the agreement has been passed by the House of Commons, but faced strong opposition in Parliament's upper chamber, the House of Lords, which approved it, while also passing a "motion of regret" lamenting the legislation. It's due back in the Commons on Tuesday for further debate.

Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch criticized Starmer's Labour Party government over the agreement.

Badenoch said in an X post that Trump is right and that Starmer's "plan to give away the Chagos Islands is a terrible policy that weakens UK security and hands away our sovereign territory. And to top it off, makes us and our NATO allies weaker in the face of our enemies."

Reform UK leader Nigel Farage, an ally of the president said: "Thank goodness Trump has vetoed the surrender of the Chagos islands."

The U.S. has described the Diego Garcia base, which is home to about 2,500 mostly American personnel, as "an all but indispensable platform" for security operations in the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa.

The Chagos Islands have been under British control since 1814, when they were ceded by France. Britain split the islands away from Mauritius, a former British colony, in 1965, and evicted as many as 2,000 people from the islands so the U.S. military could build the Diego Garcia base.

An estimated 10,000 displaced Chagossians and their descendants now live primarily in Britain, Mauritius and the Seychelles. Some have fought unsuccessfully in U.K. courts for many years for the right to go home.

The U.K.-Mauritius deal calls for a resettlement fund to be created for displaced islanders to help them move back to the islands — apart from Diego Garcia.

Russia batters Ukraine's power grid again as officials seek momentum in US-led peace talks

By KAMILA HRABCHUK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia bombarded Ukraine with more than 300 drones and ballistic and cruise missiles in its latest nighttime attack on the Ukrainian power grid, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Tuesday, as Moscow gave no public sign that it's willing to end the invasion of its neighbor anytime soon.

The attack knocked out heating to more than 5,600 apartment buildings in the capital, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. Nearly 80% of the affected buildings had recently had their heating supply restored after a major Russian barrage on Jan. 9 that plunged thousands of people into a dayslong blackout, he said.

Ukraine is enduring one of its coldest winters for years, with temperatures in Kyiv falling to minus 20 C (minus 4 F). At the same time, Russia has escalated its aerial attacks on the electricity supply, aiming to deny Ukrainians heat and running water and wear down their resistance almost four years after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian officials are trying to keep up the momentum of U.S.-led peace talks. A Ukrainian negotiating team arrived in the United States on Saturday. Their main task was to convey how the relentless Russian strikes are undermining diplomacy, according to Zelenskyy.

The Ukrainian leader said last week that the delegation would also try to finalize with U.S. officials documents for a proposed peace settlement that relate to postwar security guarantees and economic recovery. If American officials approve the proposals, the U.S. and Ukraine could sign the documents at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, this week, he said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Tuesday that presidential envoy Kirill Dmitriev plans to meet with some American representatives at Davos.

He refused to name the officials Dmitriev would meet with, but media reports said they would include U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and U.S. President Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

Attacks described as 'cruel'

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said his country needs urgent assistance and additional sanctions on Russia to make Moscow change course.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's "barbaric strike this morning is a wake-up call to world leaders gathering in Davos," Sybiha said on X.

U.N. Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said that he was outraged by the repeated large-scale attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, which especially affect children, older people and those with disabilities.

The strikes "can only be described as cruel," he said in Geneva. "They must stop. Targeting civilians and

civilian infrastructure is a clear breach of the rules of warfare.”

Several electrical substations providing power vital for nuclear safety in Ukraine were affected, said Rafael Mariano Grossi, director-general of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Air defense systems are expensive

Ukraine’s air force command said that 27 missiles and 315 drones were shot down or jammed, while five missiles and 24 drones hit 11 locations.

The Russian Defense Ministry claimed that its forces targeted Ukrainian military and industrial installations as well as energy and transport infrastructure used by the Ukrainian armed forces.

The constant attacks have stretched Ukraine’s air defenses and, according to Zelenskyy, some systems recently ran out of ammunition before a new shipment arrived.

The fight is also expensive: The air defense ammunition that Ukraine used against the Russian missiles overnight cost about 80 million euros (\$93 million), Zelenskyy said.

Ukrainian air defenses are adopting a new approach, with the appointment of a new deputy air force commander, Pavlo Yelizarov, according to Zelenskyy.

“This system will be transformed,” he said late Monday, without providing details.

Ukraine relies on sophisticated air defense systems produced by Western countries, especially the U.S., to thwart Russia’s missile and drone attacks.

The new ‘Be The People’ campaign wants to unite hundreds of millions of Americans to solve problems

By THALIA BEATY Associated Press

As the official celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence culminate on July 4, a well-financed, privately funded initiative will kick off to try to connect hundreds of millions of Americans with efforts to solve local problems.

The “Be The People” campaign aspires to change the perception that the U.S. is hopelessly divided and that individuals have little power to overcome problems like poverty, addiction, violence and stalled economic mobility. It also wants to move people take action to solve those problems.

Brian Hooks, chairman and CEO of the nonprofit network Stand Together, said the 250th anniversary is a unique moment “to show people that they matter, that they have a part to play, and that the future is unwritten, but it depends on each one of us stepping up to play our part.”

Funded by a mix of 50 philanthropic foundations and individual donors, Be The People builds on research that indicates many people want to contribute to their communities but don’t know how. The initiative is targeting more than \$200 million for its first year’s budget.

Founding members range from nonprofits — including GivingTuesday, Goodwill Industries, Habitat for Humanity and More Perfect, businesses like Ron Howard’s Imagine Entertainment and the National Basketball Association, to funders like the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

Hooks said this is a 10-year commitment toward trying to achieve what would be a profound shift in behavior and culture. He referenced a 2024 Pew Research Center survey that found most Americans in 2023 and 2024 did not believe that the U.S. could solve its most important problems, saying it was a “red alert” for the country.

Hooks said the initiative envisions actions far beyond volunteering or service that people could do in their free time. He pointed to a role for businesses and schools and said the initiative would launch a major data collection effort to track whether people are actually more engaged and whether problems are actually getting solved.

Stand Together, which was founded by the billionaire Charles Koch, works across a broad range of issues and communities in the U.S. and has carved out a role for itself as a convener that can bring coalitions together across ideological lines.

“Be The People,” will not incorporate as a new nonprofit, but act more like a banner for groups to organize

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under and use to connect to resources. As an example, at the Atlanta Hawks game on Monday, Martin Luther King III and his wife, Arndrea Waters King, linked a program they launched last year, Realize the Dream, which aims to increase acts of service, to the new campaign.

"Our vision is that 'Be The People' helps lift up what is already happening in communities across the country and reminds people that service and shared responsibility are defining parts of the American story," the Kings said in a written statement.

Asha Curran, the CEO of the nonprofit GivingTuesday, said small actions can build on each other like exercising a muscle.

"Our experience with GivingTuesday is that when people volunteer together, when people work together on something to do with positive social impact, they find it harder and harder to demonize each other," said Asha Curran, its CEO.

The initiative comes against a backdrop of deep polarization, economic inequality and the degradation of democratic norms and institutions in the U.S.

Hahrie Han, a political scientist at Johns Hopkins University, has studied civic engagement and said people need more opportunities to authentically participate as problem solvers when connecting with local organizations.

"They're more likely to be invited into things where people are asked to let professional staff do most of the problem solving and they show up and give their time or their money," she said.

The result is that people feel less committed and don't see their participation as helping to achieve their interests or goals.

A growing number of private foundations have started funding issues related to the health of U.S. democracy, said Kristin Goss, a professor who directs the Center for the Study of Philanthropy and Voluntarism at Duke University. While foundations cannot participate in elections, Goss said they can influence policy or public opinion in other ways.

"Funders are getting more concerned about of the health of American democracy, the future of the democratic experiment and pluralism and inclusion," Goss said.

Another group of funders, including the Freedom Together Foundation, launched a project last year to recognize people and groups who stand up for their communities, which they called a "civic bravery" award. In a November report, they issued a similar call for funders to invest in helping individuals organize together in response to a rise in authoritarianism.

Hooks and the other leaders of "Be The People" have also convened major communications teams to help tell these stories, which they think are lost in the current information ecosystem.

"What we're doing is we're helping to lift up the story of Americans that is unfolding at the local level, but is not breaking through," Hooks said. "So we're holding up a mirror and a microphone to Americans to reveal to each other who we truly are."

Jury selection begins for luxury real estate brothers accused of sexually abusing women

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Jury selection began in New York City on Tuesday in the federal trial of two luxury real estate brokers and their brother, who are accused of sexually abusing dozens of women.

Prosecutors allege that Oren, Tal and Alon Alexander showered victims with free travel and luxury accommodations before drugging and raping them in vacation destinations such as the Hamptons.

Judge Valerie E. Caproni began jury selection by describing the case against the brothers and asking each of them to stand and face dozens of prospective jurors in the packed Manhattan courtroom. She told the jury pool that the trial, which is expected to last about a month, includes charges of sex trafficking, sexual abuse and the sexual exploitation of a minor.

Opening statements are scheduled to begin Monday.

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Oren and Tal Alexander co-founded a real estate company, Official, that specialized in high-end properties in Miami, New York and Los Angeles.

Prosecutors say the brothers typically met their victims on dating apps, at social events, bars and nightclubs, and sometimes through party promoters, and that they gave them drugs such as cocaine and psychedelic mushrooms or drugged their drinks before sexually assaulting them.

Defense lawyers acknowledge that the men had sex with women but say the women were willing participants. The brothers have been held without bail since their December 2024 arrest in Miami, where they lived. All three have repeatedly pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Oren and Alon Alexander are 38-year-old twins and Tal Alexander is 39. Alon, who went to law school, was an executive at his family's security firm.

In papers filed Saturday, defense lawyers complained that prosecutors treated their clients unfairly by rewriting the indictment to add charges the defense has not had time to investigate. That includes a charge that Oren Alexander sexually exploited an underage girl.

Prosecutors allege that in 2009, Oren Alexander persuaded or coerced an incapacitated 17-year-old girl into sexually explicit conduct that could be filmed. The defense lawyers say her birth certificate can't be authenticated because it was issued by a former Soviet republic that is now in a war zone.

Defense lawyers urged Caproni to drop some charges from consideration, including a conspiracy count. "The defense should not be forced to trial on a conspiracy count that was changed at the last minute," the lawyers wrote.

Caproni has shown some sympathy for the defense protest of late changes to the indictment. On Friday, she denied the government's request to call a certain witness at trial to support a conspiracy charge, saying the request came well after the deadline to notify the defense of evidence in the case.

Meanwhile, The New York Times reported last week that a 45-year-old Australian woman who had accused Oren and Alon Alexander of sexual assault was found dead near Sydney late last year. The newspaper said a spokesperson for the New South Wales coroner's office said the death was deemed to be "non-suspicious."

No. 1 Indiana tops final AP Top 25 football poll of season as Big Ten's title run reaches 3 straight

By ERIC OLSON AP College Football Writer

Indiana achieved one more first to end its magical season full of firsts: The national champion Hoosiers are No. 1 in the final Associated Press Top 25 college football poll.

After beating Miami in the College Football Playoff title game to cap a 16-0 season that was unprecedented in the modern era, the Hoosiers on Tuesday became the third straight Big Ten team to finish on top of the rankings. Indiana's championship and No. 1 final ranking followed those of fellow Big Ten teams Ohio State in 2024 and Michigan in 2023.

No. 2 Miami (13-3) moved up eight spots and ended with its highest ranking since the 2002 season, when it was second behind Ohio State. The 2003 Miami team had been the most recent to finish in the top 10.

Mississippi (13-2), which lost to Miami in the CFP semifinals after it beat Tulane and Georgia following coach Lane Kiffin's departure for LSU, was No. 3, its highest final ranking since 1962.

No. 4 Oregon (13-2) finished in the top 10 for a third straight year and No. 5 Ohio State was in the final top 10 for the 12th straight year. The Big Ten had three teams in the final top five for the second straight year.

Georgia (12-2), Texas Tech (12-2), Texas A&M (11-2), Alabama (11-4) and Notre Dame (10-2) rounded out the top 10.

The Bulldogs were No. 6 in the final poll for the second straight season and have ended in the top 10 every since since 2017. Texas Tech is a season-ending top-10 team for the first time. Texas A&M hadn't been ranked in a final poll season since Jimbo Fisher's 2020 team was No. 4. Alabama, which had ended

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every season between 2008-23 in the top 10, was back after slipping to No. 17 last year.

Notre Dame won 10 straight games following an 0-2 start, was left out of the playoff and opted to not play in a bowl game. The Irish slipped one spot and were ranked in a ninth straight final poll.

The Hoosiers were No. 20 in the preseason poll after going 11-2 in Curt Cignetti's first season. They earned their then-highest ranking ever at No. 3 after they won at Oregon to go 6-0. They moved up to No. 2 the following week and stayed there for seven straight polls. Their 13-10 win over Ohio State in the Big Ten championship game pushed them to No. 1 heading into the playoff.

Poll points

— No. 17 Iowa was ranked for the first time this season after winning three straight, including a bowl win over Vanderbilt. No. 22 Houston beat Baylor and LSU to end the season and was ranked for the first time in four polls. No. 25 TCU, which had been 18 spots out of the Top 25, was ranked for the first time since September after beating Houston, Cincinnati and USC.

— Arizona (21), Georgia Tech (24) and Missouri (25) dropped out.

— The SEC had seven teams in the final Top 25 for the second straight year. Last season was the first time that had happened since 2013.

— No. 15 Vanderbilt has its highest final ranking since the 1948 team was No. 12.

— No. 19 James Madison No. 24 North Texas are in the final poll for the first time.

Conference call

SEC (7 ranked teams): No. 3 Mississippi, No. 6 Georgia, No. 8 Texas A&M, No. 9 Alabama, No. 12 Texas, No. 13 Oklahoma, No. 15 Vanderbilt.

Big Ten (6): No. 1 Indiana, No. 4 Oregon, No. 5 Ohio State, No. 17 Iowa, No. 20 Southern California, No. 21 Michigan.

Big 12 (5): No. 7 Texas Tech, No. 11 BYU, No. 14 Utah, No. 22 Houston, No. 25 TCU.

American (3): No. 18 Tulane, No. 23 Navy, No. 24 North Texas.

ACC (2): No. 2 Miami, No. 16 Virginia.

Independent (1): No. 10 Notre Dame.

Sun Belt (1): No. 19 James Madison.

Indiana completes undefeated season and wins first national title, beating Miami 27-21 in CFP final

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — Fernando Mendoza lowered his pads into a defender, spun in a full circle, used his hand to keep his balance, then launched himself horizontally and reached the ball over the goal line — an Indiana touchdown and a ready-made poster pic for a title run straight from the movies.

Maybe they'll call it "Hoosiers."

The Heisman Trophy winner's touchdown Monday night put an exclamation point on a 27-21 win over Miami that closed out an undefeated season and brought an improbable — maybe impossible? — national championship to a program that had known nothing but losing and indifference for almost 140 years.

"Let me tell you: We won the national championship at Indiana University. It can be done," said coach Curt Cignetti, who took over a program with a nation-leading 713 losses and turned it into the game's biggest winner in the span of two years.

Cignetti, the 64-year-old coaching lifer, started it. Mendoza helped get the Hoosiers over the line. He finished with 186 yards passing, but it was that tackle-breaking, sprawled-out 12-yard touchdown run on fourth-and-4 with 9:18 left that defined this game — and the Hoosiers' season.

Indiana would not be denied.

"I had to go airborne," said Mendoza, who had his lip split and his arm bloodied by a ferocious Miami defense that sacked him three times and hit him many more. "I would die for my team."

Mendoza's TD gave Indiana a 24-14 lead — barely enough breathing room to hold off a frenzied charge

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by the hard-hitting Hurricanes — a team that barely made the College Football Playoff and barely showed up in the first half of the final before coming to life behind 112 yards and two scores from Mark Fletcher.

"They're the best thing that happened to the University of Miami in 25 years," said coach Mario Cristobal, who was part of the title run that put this colorful program on the map in the 1980s and '90s.

The CFP trophy now heads to the most unlikely of places: Bloomington, Indiana — home of the college that famously boasts the most living alumni (805,000), including billionaire Mark Cuban and several thousand of his closest friends who packed Miami's home stadium and turned a title-game ticket into a \$4,000-or-more splurge.

"It's way up there, that's for damn sure," Cuban said when asked where this ranked among the out-of-nowhere success stories he helped bankroll on his reality show "Shark Tank."

Indiana finished 16-0 — using the extra games afforded by the expanded 12-team playoff to match a perfect-season win total last compiled by Yale in 1894. President Donald Trump was in the stands for what he said "turned out to be a great game" after a slow start — Indiana led 10-0 at half.

In a fitting bit of symmetry, this undefeated title comes 50 years after Bob Knight's basketball team went 32-0 to win it all in that state's favorite sport.

That hasn't happened since, and there's already some thought that college football — in its evolving, money-soaked, name-image-likeness era — might not see a team like this again, either.

Players like Mendoza — a transfer from Cal who grew up just a few miles away from Miami's campus, "The U" — certainly don't come around often.

Two fourth-down gambles by Cignetti in the fourth quarter, after Fletcher's second touchdown carved the Hurricanes' deficit to 17-14, put the QB in position to shine.

The first was a 19-yard-completion to Charlie Becker on a back-shoulder fade those guys have been perfecting all season. Four plays later came a decision and play that wins championships.

Cignetti sent his kicker out on fourth-and-4 from the 12, but quickly called his second timeout. The team huddled on the field and the coach drew up a quarterback draw, hoping the Hurricanes would be in a defense they had shown before.

"We rolled the dice and said, 'They're going to be in it again and they were,'" Cignetti said. "We blocked it well, he broke a tackle or two and got in the end zone."

Mendoza's play could very well join John Elway's "helicopter" run in Super Bowl 32 as one of the greatest examples of a quarterback willing to put everything on the line to win it all. Mendoza might soon have something else in common with Elway: This game did little to diminish his projection as the first pick in the upcoming NFL draft.

"Everyone on the team, including my coach, makes fun of my running style," Mendoza said. "But it's fourth down, so you've got to put it all on the line. Every player, if they had that opportunity, they'd put their body on the line, too."

For Miami, it was a very close call.

A team listed 18th in the first CFP rankings moved to 10th and sneaked into the playoff, bringing as many questions about the process as the selection itself.

The Hurricanes proved they belonged all the way. Fletcher was a one-man force, hitting triple digits for the third time in four playoff games and turning a moribund offense into something much more.

His first touchdown run was a 57-yard burst through the right side that pulled Miami within 10-7 early in the third quarter.

But after Miami got the ball back and stalled deep in its own territory, Hoosiers lineman Mikail Kamara slid past the 'Canes' punt protectors and blocked the kick. The ball ended up in the end zone and Isaiah Jones recovered to make it 17-7. Miami was in comeback mode the rest of the way.

It ended as a one-score game, and the 'Canes — the visiting team playing on their home field — moved into Indiana territory before Carson Beck's heave got picked off by Jamari Sharpe, a Miami native who made sure the only miracle in this season would be Indiana's.

How big a miracle?

This was a program that was so bad that coach Lee Corso stopped a game in 1976 to take a picture of a scoreboard when it read "Indiana 7, Ohio State 6." Indiana lost 47-7.

There were hundreds of losses in front of half-empty stadiums between then and now.

But those days are over. The Hoosiers — yes, the Hoosiers — are national champions.

"I know nobody thought it was possible," Cignetti said. "It probably is one of the greatest sports stories of all time."

What to know about the Chagos Islands as Trump slams the UK's sovereignty deal

LONDON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump has turned his fire on a deal between Britain and Mauritius to settle the future of the Chagos Islands, the contested Indian Ocean archipelago that is home to a strategic U.S. military base.

Trump said on social media that a deal to transfer sovereignty of the islands from the U.K. to Mauritius is "an act of GREAT STUPIDITY."

That's despite the Trump administration previously welcoming the agreement as a way to ensure the security of the American base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the island chain.

Here's what to know about the disputed islands.

The Chagos Islands are remote but strategic

The remote chain of more than 60 islands is located in the middle of the Indian Ocean off the tip of India, south of the Maldives.

The Chagos Islands have been under British control since 1814, when they were ceded by France.

The archipelago is best known for the military base on Diego Garcia, which has supported U.S. military operations from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2008, the U.S. acknowledged it also had been used for clandestine rendition flights of terror suspects.

Britain split the Chagos Islands away from Mauritius, a former British colony, in 1965, three years before Mauritius gained independence, and called the Chagos archipelago the British Indian Ocean Territory.

The U.S. has described the base, which is home to about 2,500 mostly American personnel, as "an all but indispensable platform" for security operations in the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa.

Most recently, the U.S. deployed several nuclear-capable B-2 Spirit bombers to Diego Garcia amid an intense airstrike campaign targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Why they are contested

In the 1960s and 1970s, Britain evicted as many as 2,000 people from the islands so the U.S. military could build the Diego Garcia base.

In recent years, criticism grew over Britain's control of the archipelago and the way it forcibly displaced the local population.

The United Nations and the International Court of Justice have both urged Britain to end its "colonial administration" of the islands and transfer sovereignty to Mauritius.

The British government says it struck a deal with Mauritius to protect the security of the Diego Garcia base from international legal challenge.

What's in the deal

Negotiations on handing the islands to Mauritius began in 2022 under the U.K.'s previous Conservative government and resumed after Prime Minister Keir Starmer's Labour Party was elected in 2024.

Talks dragged on amid a change of government in Mauritius and disputes over money, but the agreement was signed of in May 2025 after Britain had sought and received backing from the Trump administration.

Under the agreement, Britain will pay Mauritius to lease back Diego Garcia for at least 99 years.

What the reaction has been

The deal has been opposed by many opposition politicians in Britain who say giving up the islands puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.

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Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch said the agreement “weakens U.K. security and hands away our sovereign territory.”

Trump now appears to agree that it is a bad deal and links it to his desire to acquire Greenland.

He wrote on social media that handing over sovereignty would benefit China and Russia and is “another in a very long line of National Security reasons why Greenland has to be acquired.

What the deal means for displaced islanders

An estimated 10,000 displaced Chagossians and their descendants now live primarily in Britain, Mauritius and the Seychelles. Many of them want to return to the islands, and some have fought unsuccessfully in U.K. courts for many years for the right to go home.

Chagossians say they were left out of the political negotiations, which have left them unclear on whether they and their descendants could ever be allowed to return to their homeland.

Human Rights Watch has said that Britain’s forced displacement of the Chagossians and ongoing refusal to let them go home “amount to crimes against humanity committed by a colonial power against an Indigenous people.”

Two Chagossian women, Bernadette Dugasse and Bertrice Pompe, who challenged the handover deal in the British courts, argued it will become even harder to return once Mauritius takes control of the islands.

The deal calls for a resettlement fund to be created for displaced islanders to help them move back to the islands, apart from Diego Garcia. But details of how that will work remain sketchy.

Today in History: January 21, first US case of COVID-19 confirmed

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 21, the 21st day of 2026. There are 344 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Jan. 21, 2020, the U.S. reported its first known case of the 2019 novel coronavirus circulating in China, saying a Washington state resident who had returned the previous week from the outbreak’s epicenter was hospitalized near Seattle.

Also on this date:

In 1793, during the French Revolution, King Louis XVI, condemned for treason, was executed by guillotine.

In 1861, Jefferson Davis of Mississippi, with a dramatic farewell speech, resigned his U.S. Senate seat after his state and others seceded from the Union. He would later be elected president of the Confederacy shortly before the Civil War began.

In 1924, Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin died at age 53, setting off a bloody power struggle that would lead to the rise of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin.

In 1950, former State Department official Alger Hiss, accused of being part of a Communist spy ring, was found guilty in New York of lying to a grand jury. (Hiss, who proclaimed his innocence, served less than four years in prison.)

In 1960, the collapse of a mine in Coalbrook, South Africa, killed 437 miners.

In 1976, British Airways and Air France inaugurated scheduled passenger service on the supersonic Concorde jet.

In 1977, on his first full day in office, President Jimmy Carter pardoned almost all Vietnam War draft evaders.

In 1985, Galaxy Airlines Flight 203 crashed in a field shortly after takeoff from Reno, Nevada, killing all but one of the 71 people aboard. The survivor was a 17-year-old boy who was thrown clear of the aircraft and found conscious and still in his seat.

In 2010, a deeply divided U.S. Supreme Court, in Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission, vastly increased the influence of big business and labor unions by allowing unlimited contributions to political campaigns.

In 2017, a day after Donald Trump’s first presidential inauguration, an estimated 3 million to 5 million people rallied at Women’s March demonstrations across the U.S. to support civil rights and to protest

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Trump's rhetoric and policies.

In 2023, a gunman opened fire and killed 11 people at a ballroom dance hall in Monterey Park, California, during the city's Lunar New Year festivities. The gunman killed himself as police closed in on him.

Today's birthdays: Golf Hall of Famer Jack Nicklaus is 86. Opera singer Plácido Domingo is 85. Singer-songwriter Billy Ocean is 76. Artist Jeff Koons is 71. Actor-director Robby Benson is 70. Actor Geena Davis is 70. Republican Sen. Kevin Cramer of North Dakota is 65. Basketball Hall of Famer Hakeem Olajuwon is 63. Singer Emma Bunton (Spice Girls) is 50. Actor Luke Grimes is 42. Mixed martial artist Ilia Tuporia is 29. Singer-songwriter Em Beihold is 27.