

Groton Daily Independent

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Sunday, March 22

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

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

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

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

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

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Groton Soccer Association Clinics, 11:30 a.m., Arena.

6th grade BB Practice, 6 pm., Arena
Puzzle, Popcorn, Pop Challenge at Wage Memorial Library, 1 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Monday, March 23

Senior Menu: Baked hot ham and cheese, tomato soup, fruit.

School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.

School Lunch: Chicken nachos.

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

Pickleball, 5:30 a.m., Elementary Gym

Winter Sports Awards, 7 p.m. The Welcome home will be held prior to the awards ceremony.

Groton Senior Citizens, potluck at noon, Community Center

Tuesday, March 24

Senior Menu: Pork loin, roasted potatoes, glazed carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Chicken breast, try taters.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Milbank CDE State Qualifier

Indoor Track Meet at NSU, 3:30 p.m.

HS Baseball Practice, 6 p.m., HS Gym

Biogirls, 3:45 p.m., elementary gym

We the People

The South Dakota Humanities Council is making available a weekly column -- "We the People" -- that focuses on the U.S. Constitution. It is written by David Adler, who is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality, and civic education.



By David Adler

Otis, Paine and Adams: Surging Momentum Toward July 4, 1776

Americans' deep interest in our nation's history, super-charged by the fast-approaching 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, has brought renewed focus on the early controversies, personalities and events that launched the American Revolution. The founders, themselves, were quick to identify intellectual influences that shook the tectonic plates of history and triggered the earthquake that produced a republic.

John Adams, who, with Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin, constituted the "Holy Trinity" of the revolutionary Enlightenment Period, was at the epicenter of the political earthquake. In 1761, Adams was a spectator in a crowded Boston courtroom, drawn by the growing reputation of the brilliant, young fire-brand attorney, James Otis, Jr., who was there to argue in what has become immortalized as the "Writs of Assistance Case," on behalf of outraged, local merchants against the parliamentary statute that authorized sweeping searches and seizures—fishing expeditions-- of private property. In a losing cause, Otis had sounded a bold and unprecedented trumpet call: not only was the law unconstitutional, but that it was the duty of the courts to pass such a law into disuse. Otis's conception of the embryonic doctrine of judicial review, introduced at that juncture for political, constitutional and, indeed, revolutionary purposes, fired the imagination of Adams, who grasped, not only the legal, but the strategic implications of the argument. For a nascent movement in search of intellectual tools to battle British imperialism and somehow strip England of its all- powerful sovereignty, Otis's radical contentions made him the man for the moment. Adams wrote, rather romantically, "then and there the child independence was born."

If not in a Boston courtroom in 1761, then perhaps the match was lit with the publication on January 9, 1776, of Thomas Paine's little pamphlet, "Common Sense," which wielded a stunning impact on the Continental Congress and the minds of colonists, up and down the eastern seaboard. When Adams returned to Congress a month later, the pamphlet was already in its third printing, having exceeded 100,000 copies, and having ignited a fever for independence. In Common Sense, Paine attacked the very concept of hereditary monarchy, burned its intellectual scaffolding to the ground, named King George III a "royal brute," and unleashed a call to arms and American Independence. Paine ripped away the mask from indecision and asked, "Why is it that we hesitate? The birthday of a new world is at hand." Paine sensed the universal appeal of American independence. "The cause of America," he wrote, "is in a great measure the cause of all mankind." Adams agreed. He wrote to his wife, Abigail, that he expected Common Sense to become the "common faith."

Adams's great revolutionary work, which would change the face of the nation, lay ahead. On May 10, in the confines of Congress, he introduced the bold recommendation that every colony should draft a new constitution to replace the existing British charters of governance. Five days later, he stepped forward to introduce a preface to his resolution. On May 15, Adams set forth a list of grievances, which documented King George III's failure to answer the colonists' petitions for reconciliation. In conclusion, it was the king who had effectively abandoned, that is, declared the independence of his former American subjects. Accordingly, he called upon the "Assemblies and Conventions of the United Colonies" in which no government sufficient to meet the exigencies had been established, "to adopt such Governments" to promote that happiness and safety of their constituents.

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With an author's pride, Adams immediately described to a friend that his resolution was "the most important Resolution that ever was taken in America." Until the end of his days, Adams did not waver from that belief. In his view, the call for the creation of state governments constituted the ultimate act of American independence. It was a completely natural and logical response to the fact that the King had repudiated the colonists.

In the annals of history, it is true that Thomas Jefferson's draft of the Declaration of Independence has worn the crown of achievement in the minds and imagination of Americans. It is also true that Jefferson's majestic writing rode the surging tides of voices—from Otis to Paine to Adams-- that demanded separation, independence and revolution. In a plea to the world, the "United Colonies" gave birth to a new idea, a republic, in which the people, not a king, would govern.

David Adler is president of The Alturas Institute, a non-profit organization created to promote the Constitution, gender equality and civic education. This column is made possible with the support of the South Dakota Humanities Council, South Dakota NewsMedia Association and this newspaper.

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Tigers Close Strong, Claim Seventh at State A

Rapid City, S.D. —The Groton Area Tigers closed out their season on a high note Saturday, pulling away early and never looking back in a 61-43 victory over Stanley County in the seventh-place game at the State A Boys Basketball Tournament.

Groton wasted no time setting the tone. Behind aggressive defense and transition offense, the Tigers jumped out to a quick 6-0 lead in the opening minutes. Karson Zak sparked the early surge, scoring twice in the paint off turnovers, while Keegen Tracy added a second-chance bucket and later a three-pointer.

By the midpoint of the first quarter, Groton had built an 11-4 advantage, fueled by relentless pressure that forced Stanley County into a string of miscues. The Tigers capitalized repeatedly, turning steals into points and controlling the tempo.

A late flurry pushed the lead even further.



Jayden Schwan dribbles the ball as teammate and brother Jordan Schwan awaits the pass. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Karson Zak flies past the defense for this basket. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Tracy scored inside and then knocked down a triple, while Zak continued to attack the rim. By the end of the first quarter, Groton held a commanding 22-8 lead.

Defense Sets the Tone

Groton's defense was the story early — and often.

The Tigers forced turnover after turnover in the opening half, disrupting Stanley County's rhythm and creating easy scoring chances. Ryder Johnson and Zak were especially active in the passing lanes, while Gage Sippel controlled the glass and protected the paint.

Stanley County tried to answer early in the second quarter with a three from Paxton Deal, but Groton responded immediately. Johnson buried a three of his own, and Sippel added inside buckets to keep the Tigers comfortably in front.

Despite a brief Stanley County run that trimmed the deficit to 11, Groton closed the half strong. Another Johnson three and steady interior play from Sippel helped the Tigers take a 33-20 lead into halftime.

Tigers Answer Every Push

Stanley County made its best push in the third quarter, hitting a pair of three-pointers to cut into the lead.

But each time the Buffaloes threatened, Groton had an answer. Tracy scored in the paint, Johnson added another basket, and Sippel dominated inside with multiple finishes and key free throws. Zak also continued his efficient night, attacking the rim and converting opportunities created by turnovers.

By the end of the third quarter, Groton had pushed the lead back out to 48-34, regaining full control.

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Finishing the Job

Groton put the game away early in the fourth.

Tracy opened the quarter with a bucket, and moments later converted another steal into points. Johnson added a second-chance basket, and Zak continued to finish inside as the Tigers stretched the lead past 15.

With the outcome well in hand, Coach Greg Kjellsen emptied the bench late, allowing multiple players to see meaningful minutes in the closing stages. The Tigers still added the final highlight, as Jayden Schwan knocked down a three-pointer in the closing seconds.

Balanced Effort Leads the Way

Groton placed four players in double figures, showcasing a balanced offensive attack:

Keegan Tracy – 15 points

Karson Zak – 15 points

Ryder Johnson – 15 points

Gage Sippel – 13 points

The Tigers also dominated the glass (34-24 rebounding edge) and forced consistent turnovers, key factors in building their early lead.

Coach Kjellsen Reflects

Following the win, Coach Greg Kjellsen emphasized both the result and the bigger picture.

“I kind of had two goals coming in — I wanted to make sure everybody got on the floor and that we got seventh, and we got both things done.”

Kjellsen praised his team’s character and resilience after a tough tournament path.

“These kids are a class act, every one of them. The Groton community can be very proud of what they’ve done — not just here, but all year.”

Despite graduating several seniors, Kjellsen remains optimistic about the program’s future.

“The cupboard’s not bare. It might be a little shorter, but there’s a lot coming.”

The Tigers finish the season 19-6.



Keegan Tracy zips past the defense for this basket. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Everyone stands and watches as Gage Sippel goes for the dunk.

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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Becker Bosma looks ahead to the next play. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Ryder Johnson gets past his defender to drive to the basket. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Logan Warrington tries for a shot under the basket. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Anthony Tracy squeezes between two Stanley County players. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Assistant Coach Ryan Tracy, Head Coach Greg Kjellsen and Assistant Coach Jordan Carson walk onto the court. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Gage Sippel and Stanley County's Teegyn Breitag go for the jump ball with Keegen Tracy and Brend Bothwell keeping an eye on the ball. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jodi Schwan gets closeups of the medals on the table. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Ethan Kroll attempts this shot close to the basket. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



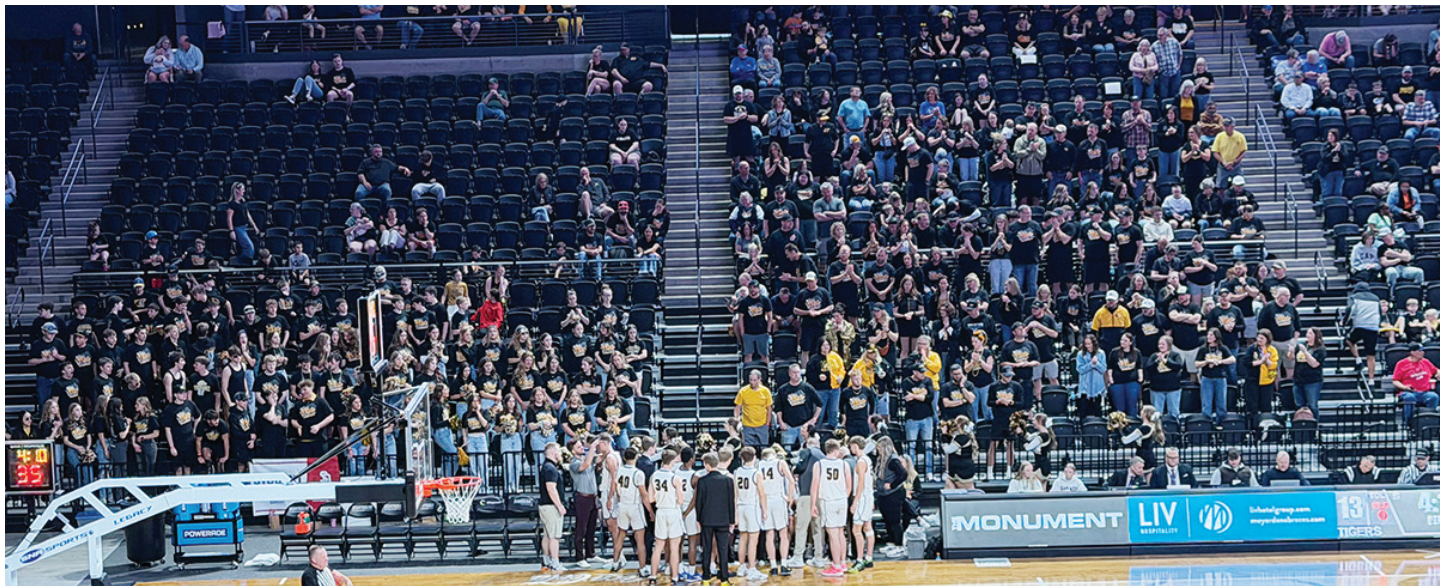
Jayden Schwan steals the ball away from Stanley County's Carson Bourne. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The Groton Area Tigers capture seventh place at state. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



The Groton Area crowd during the final game for the GHS Tigers. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



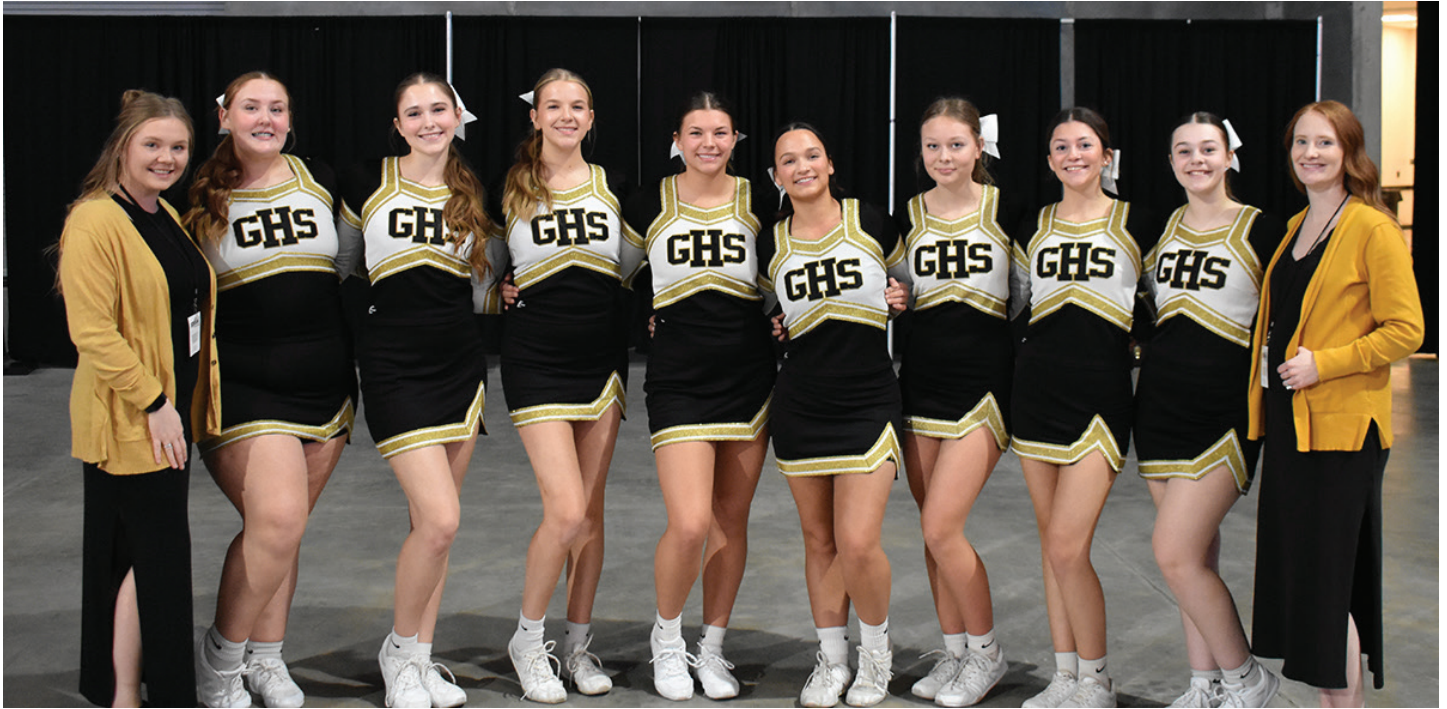
Jim Aberle received a bag of goodies from Groton Area cheerleaders Novalea and Natalia Warrington. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Welcome Home.

There will be no welcome home celebration. The team will be available for visitation at 6:30 p.m. Monday, prior to the Winter Sports Awards which is scheduled for 7 p.m. in the GHS Gym.

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The GHS Cheerleaders are: Advisor Madisen Bjerke, Mya Feser, Elizabeth Cole, Adison Hoeft, Breslyn Breske, Paisley Mitchell, Rylie Rose, Natalia Warrington and Novalea Warrington and Advisor Aubray Miller. This will be the last year that Bjerke and Miller will serve as cheerleader advisors. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Class A - State

Seed Points Averages (calculated Mar. 3)

#1 Sioux Falls Christian 46.737 - #2 West Central 46.700 - #3 Clark/Willow Lake 45.750 - #4 Hamlin 45.350 - #5 Groton Area 44.800 - #6 Stanley County 44.400 - #7 Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 43.850 - #8 St. Thomas More 43.500



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Groton Area Full Box Score

#	Player	PTS	FG	3FG	FT	OR	DR	REB	A	PF	TO	BL	ST	MIN
1*	TRACY, KEEGAN	15	7-11	1-4	0-0	0	1	1	2	1	3	0	2	28
3*	ZAK, KARSON	15	7-12	0-1	1-2	0	2	2	8	0	2	0	2	28
4*	JOHNSON, RYDER	15	5-13	3-6	2-2	2	4	6	1	0	1	0	3	29
5*	BOSMA, BECKER	0	0-2	0-1	0-0	0	5	5	3	2	0	0	1	17
30*	SIPPEL, GAGE	13	5-7	0-1	3-4	0	5	5	0	0	0	1	1	27
10	JOHNSON, JACE	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
11	SCHWAN, JAYDEN	3	1-1	1-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4
12	SCHELLE, RYDER	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
14	KROLL, ETHAN	0	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
20	JOHNSON, ASHER	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	2
22	WEBER, EASTON	0	0-2	0-2	0-0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	15
32	MULLER, JJ	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
34	SCHWAN, JORDAN	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
40	TRACY, ANTHONY	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3
50	WARRINGTON, LOG	0	0-2	0-0	0-0	1	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	2
TM	TEAM	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	3	4	7	0	0	4	0	0	
TOTALS		61	25-51	5-16	6-8	9	25	34	14	5	13	1	10	
GAME PCT			49.0	31.3	75.0									
THIS HALF		28	11-26	1-6	5-6	6	12	18	4	3	5	1	6	
HALF PCT			42.3	16.7	83.3									



Stanley County Full Box Score

#	Player	PTS	FG	3FG	FT	OR	DR	REB	A	PF	TO	BL	ST	MIN
4*	BOTHWELL, BREND	3	1-3	1-2	0-0	0	0	0	1	4	1	0	1	23
5*	DUFFY, EDDIE	7	3-16	1-7	0-0	0	2	2	3	0	2	1	3	26
11*	DEAL, PAXTON	16	6-15	4-12	0-0	0	1	1	0	1	4	1	2	30
24*	BREITAG, TEEGYN	6	3-6	0-1	0-0	2	3	5	0	2	0	0	2	21
40*	CALDWELL, TREVO	6	2-5	0-0	2-2	2	6	8	0	0	1	0	0	22
0	DEAL, JACK	2	1-2	0-1	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	5
1	PRINCE, WESTON	0	0-3	0-3	0-0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	1	16
12	FOSHEIM, JAMES	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
13	BOURNE, CARSON	2	1-1	0-0	0-0	1	1	2	0	2	0	0	0	8
23	HOFTIEZER, JAX	1	0-0	0-0	1-2	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	10
TM	TEAM	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	2	3	0	0	3	0	0	
TOTALS		43	17-51	6-26	3-4	8	16	24	5	10	13	2	9	
GAME PCT			33.3	23.1	75.0									
THIS HALF		23	9-26	4-15	1-2	6	7	13	4	6	7	1	3	

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State A Basketball Tournament Coverage Sponsored by

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2026 SDHSAA State Boys Basketball, Placement Recap

SDPB | By Nate Wek

The 2026 SDHSAA state boys basketball tournaments concluded on Saturday, March 21 from Rapid City (AA and A) and Aberdeen (B). Huron, West Central, and Freeman won state titles. Here's a recap of the championship and placement games.

Class AA

7/8 | #9 Tea Area 63 #6 O'Gorman 51

Tea Area defeated O'Gorman 63-51 to place seventh at the 'AA' tournament. Gavin Shawd led the way with 30 points for the Titans. On the other side, it was Kamden Cisse, who scored 20 points and had eight rebounds in the loss for the Knights.

5/6 | #5 Watertown 64 #7 Brandon Valley 60

Watertown defeated Brandon Valley 64-60 in the 'AA' consolation championship. It was Jack Mack who led the Arrows with 18 points and six defensive rebounds. Carter Buisker also had a 16 points performance in the win. The Lynx were led by Ayuel Deng, who finished with 28 points and seven rebounds.

3/4 | #2 Sioux Falls Roosevelt 76 #4 Harrisburg 72

Sioux Falls Roosevelt defeated Harrisburg 76-72 in the 'AA' third place game on Saturday night. Deondre Painter led the Rough Riders with 18 points in the contest. Justin Bilal also had a 16 points game in the win for Roosevelt. Cole Kooiker contributed 19 points for Harrisburg, while Crayton Jibben had 18 and Stellen Larson notched 15 as well.

Championship | #3 Huron 59 #1 Sioux Falls Lincoln 47

Huron defeated Sioux Falls Lincoln 59-47 to win their first state basketball championship since 2004. Blake Ellwein had a double-double performance in the win with 18 points and ten rebounds. Myles Ellwein added another 15 points to the Huron box score. Lincoln's top two scorers were Sam DeGroot and Brody Schafer – DeGroot had 20 points, while Schafer had 14.

Class A

7/8 | #5 Groton Area 61 #6 Stanley County 43

Groton Area defeated Stanley County in the seventh place game on Saturday in Rapid City. The Tigers were led by Keegan Tracy, Karson Zak, and Ryder Johnson, who each scored 15 points in the win. Gage Sippel also had a 13-point, five rebound performance for Groton Area. Stanley County was led by Paxton Deal, who finished with 16 points in the loss.

5/6 | #8 St. Thomas More 63 #7 Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 40

St. Thomas More took home the consolation championship in Class A following a 63-40 win over Cheyenne-Eagle Butte. The Cavaliers were led by a double-double performance from Wyatt Gylten – 17 points and 11 rebounds. Max Speed finished with nine points and 14 rebounds. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte's top performer was Levi Elk Nation. He had 11 points, five rebounds, and three assists.

3/4 | #4 Hamlin 61 #3 Clark/Willow Lake 43

Hamlin defeated Clark/Willow Lake in the third-place game for Class A, 61-43. Bodee Stevenson led the Chargers with 22 points on 66% from the field. Jackson Wadsworth also had a 17-point, eight rebound performance in the win. The Cyclones top scorer was Chris Bevers, who finished with 13 points.

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Championship | #2 West Central 66 #1 Sioux Falls Christian 56

West Central completed the undefeated season after defeating Sioux Falls Christian 65-56 in the 'A' state championship game. The Trojans top scorer was Connor Mebius, who finished with 20 points. Will Kuhl added an additional 15 points for West Central. Ryan Dieleman led Sioux Falls Christian with 16 points and six rebounds.

Class B

7/8 | #1 Viborg-Hurley 72 #7 Sully Buttes 53

Viborg-Hurley defeated Sully Buttes 72-53 on Saturday afternoon to earn seventh place. Jake Austin and Brady Schroedermeier each scored 25 points in the win for the Cougars, and they combined for 17 of the teams 41 rebounds as well. Easton Moore led the way for Sully Buttes scoring 23 points. Wesley Wittler also added 18 points and six boards for the Chargers.

5/6 | #3 De Smet 56 #4 Aberdeen Christian 45

De Smet defeated Aberdeen Christian 56-45 in the 'B' consolation championship. Slayten Wilkinson led the way with 18 points. He also had eight rebounds. Noah Leuthmers also had a nice game with 11 points and six rebounds. Aberdeen Christian was led by double-double performances from Jett Brooks and Luke Kaiser. Brooks had 19 points and 15 rebounds, while Kaiser had 18 points and 11 rebounds.

3/4 | #6 Wall 58 #8 Lyman 55

Wall defeated Lyman 58-55 to claim third place in Aberdeen. The Eagles were led by Emmet Dinger and Tellan Kjerstad, who each scored 16 points in the win. Lyman got a couple of strong performances in the game as well. One, from MJ Diehm, who finished with 22 points, and another from Dawsen Volmer, who had 20 points and seven rebounds.

Championship | #2 Freeman 61 #5 Castlewood 53

Freeman defeated Castlewood 61-53 in the championship game. It's the first state title for the Flyers since 1975. Freeman was led by David Walter, who had a double-double, which included 22 points and 12 rebounds. Luke Peters also had a 14-point game in the win. Kamden Keszler led Castlewood in the loss with 24 points.



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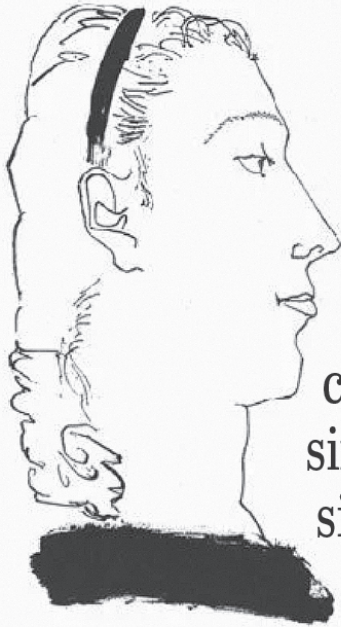
Same rates for several years!

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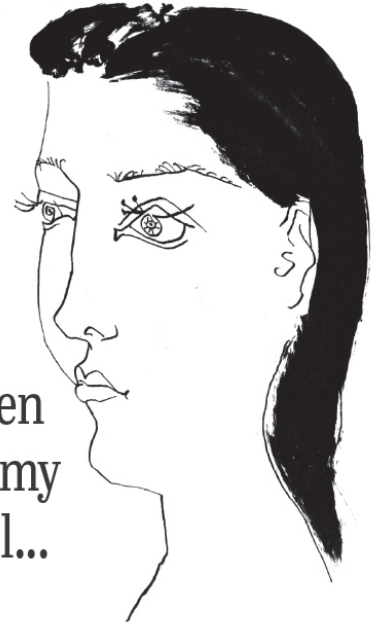
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE



I plead with Euodia
and I plead with Syntyche
to be of the same mind
in the Lord. Yes,
and I ask you, my true
companion, help these women
since they have contended at my
side in the cause of the gospel...

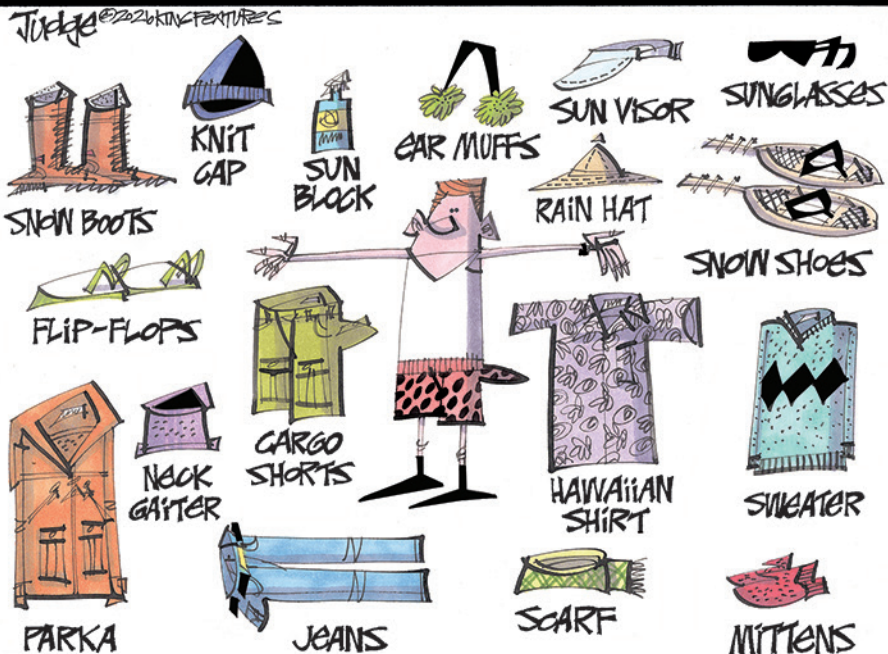


Philippians 4: 2,3

Details of portraits done by Pablo Picasso, from 1948-1969

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HOW TO DRESS FOR THIS WEEK'S WEATHER:



BIBLE

TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Rehoboam (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. From Genesis 4, what righteous man started the practice of herding sheep? *Adam, Cain, Abel, Job*

3. How many times is the word "Bible" mentioned in the biblical scripture? *Zero, 3, 49, Over 1,000*

4. According to Jesus, what was Satan from the beginning? *Deceiver, Evil, Thief, Murderer*

5. In biblical times, which was a large unit of money or weight? *Levy, Talent, Shekel, Sepulcher*

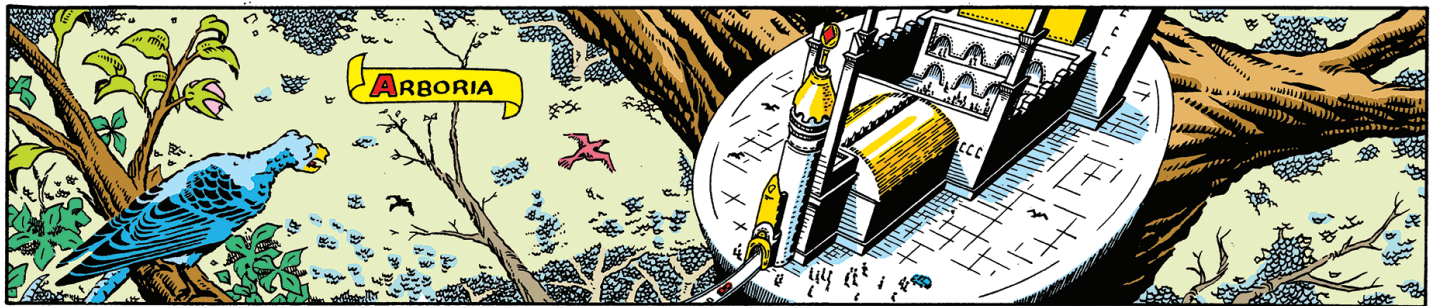
6. Of these, who wasn't a son of Noah? *Shem, Ham, Levi, Japheth*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Abel, 3) Zero, 4) Murderer, 5) Talent, 6) Levi

More than 1,200 brand-new trivia questions in Wilson Casey's latest book "Quest for Bible Knowledge" available in bookstores and online.

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FLASH GORDON

3-7 BY JIM KEEFE

A FUNERAL PROCESSION SLOWLY MAKES ITS WAY UP THE ROAD TO ARBORIA.

HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGES OF THE DECEASED LEAD THE GRIEF-STRIKEN.

WITH A HEAVY HEART, KING BARIN DELIVERS A EULOGY BEFORE THE CITY'S GATES.

WITH DREAMS OF MAKING THIS WORLD A SAFER PLACE, THESE MEN SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES IN HOPES OF CAPTURING MING THE MERCILESS.

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"THEY SHALL BE REMEMBERED FOR THEIR COURAGE AND BRAVERY ALWAYS..."

"...THEIR DREAM LIVES ON."

AS THE FUNERAL PYRE BILLOWS TOWARD THE HEAVENS, EARTHBOEN ADVENTURER FLASH GORDON MAKES A SOLEMN VOW TO THE FRIEND HE HAS LOST.

WHATEVER ROCK MING'S HIDING UNDER, THORNE, I'LL FIND HIM.

FIND HIM ... AND MAKE HIM PAY!

NEXT: OLD FRIENDS REMEMBERED!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

MOST "TOPPED" SHOTS ARE CAUSED BY SWINGING DOWN SO STEEPLY THAT THE CLUBHEAD NEVER GETS LOW ENOUGH TO CONTACT THE BACK OF THE BALL.

IMPROVING THE OVERALL SWING MECHANICS IS THE ONLY SURE CURE.

BETTER GOLFERS' "TOPS" ARE USUALLY THE RESULT OF THE LEGS AND BODY GETTING TOO FAR AHEAD AT IMPACT, RELATIVE TO THE HANDS AND CLUBHEAD. SIMPLY SWINGING LESS AGGRESSIVELY, PARTICULARLY WITH THE LOWER BODY, USUALLY FIXES THE PROBLEM.

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Case of Anaphylactic Shock Might Be Due To Methocarbamol

DEAR DR. ROACH: My question is about methocarbamol (Robaxin). My relative has been taking this for about two years for back pain. He then developed a sudden severe allergic reaction and went into anaphylaxis. He fought it all night, not knowing what was happening, and by morning, he had to go to the hospital. Could this be due to methocarbamol? If so, can this happen again?

He has no known allergies, and this had never happened before. The only other thing was maybe burning a lemon-scented candle in his bedroom, but he's burned candles before in his bedroom. He is 27 years old and in good health. -- B.G.

ANSWER: Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction to a foreign protein or carbohydrate (called an "allergen"). It is caused by a release of inflammatory chemicals from immune cells. It can be antibody-mediated (more common) or occur without antibodies (less common).

These chemicals can cause swelling of the airway and death through asphyxiation. They can also affect the heart and blood vessels, causing shock and circulatory collapse, which can also lead to death. The onset of symptoms is typically minutes to hours after exposure to the allergen.

In 95% of cases, the symptoms disappear, but there are cases of "biphasic anaphylaxis" where symptoms reappear usually within 12 hours. There are unusual cases of very delayed anaphylaxis, such as with alpha-gal syndrome -- a meat allergy that is acquired after tick exposure.

Medications are one of the most common causes of anaphylaxis, and I did find case reports of anaphylaxis with methocarbamol in a person who had been taking it previously. I found another case report of a person with prolonged anaphylaxis after methocarbamol. It is uncommon but not impossible to develop anaphylaxis to a medicine that you have been taking for years.

If your relative isn't taking any other medications and had no unusual foods on that day, I strongly suspect that methocarbamol was the cause and recommend never taking it again as it can absolutely happen again.

A candle smoke allergy is documented, and a variety of symptoms can be caused by candle smoke in sensitive individuals. I found a source saying that anaphylaxis from inhaling candle smoke is "rare" but could not find a well-documented case.

Finally, methocarbamol is a muscle relaxant and isn't always a good choice for long-term treatment. My experience is that in many people, the beneficial effects wear off as the body gets used to the medicine, which can happen within a week.

DEAR DR. ROACH: Are there health benefits to taking fish-oil capsules? If so, what's the proper dosage? I'm a fit, healthy 70-year-old male. -- C.S.

ANSWER: The benefit of fish oil is one topic in medicine where we seem to keep changing our mind due to studies that yielded some conflicting results.

What is clear is that fish oil reduces triglyceride levels. In people with high triglyceride levels, especially people who are at a relatively high risk due to other reasons (such as diabetes and low HDL cholesterol), then fish oil is a reasonable treatment. Most experts prefer the pharmaceutical-grade icosapent ethyl (Vascepa) or EPA/DHA (Lovaza), which are highly purified and aren't oxidized.

For people who are at a lower risk, the benefit is probably modest; however, fish oil is generally safe. There may be a small increase in the risk of atrial fibrillation with high doses.

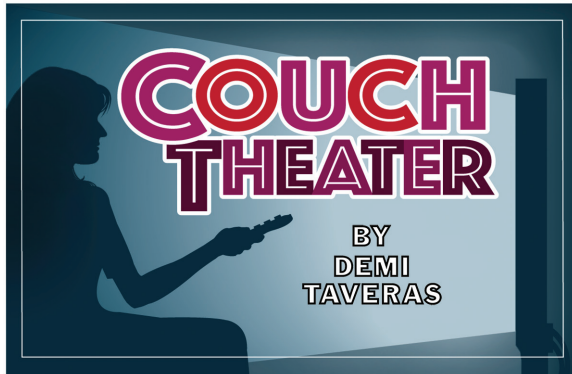
Dr. Roach regrets that he is unable to answer individual questions, but will incorporate them in the column whenever possible. Readers may email questions to ToYourGoodHealth@med.cornell.edu.

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From left, Avantika, Lana Condor, Maddie Ziegler, Millicent Simmonds and Iris Apatow star in "Pretty Lethal." (Courtesy of MovieStillsDB)

"Hannah Montana 20th Anniversary Special" (PG) -- Premiering on March 24, this TV special celebrates 20 years since Miley Cyrus' hit show "Hannah Montana" first aired on the Disney Channel. In 2006, a 13-year-old Cyrus became adored for donning a blonde wig, wearing sparkly outfits, and performing songs like "The Best of Both Worlds" and "Nobody's Perfect." Now, in this special, a beautifully matured Cyrus revisits her time on the show by filling fans in on behind-the-scenes moments. In addition, an in-depth interview with "Call Her Daddy's" Alex Cooper will be featured, as well as never-before-seen footage from the "Hannah" archives. (Disney+)

"Something Very Bad Is Going to Happen" (TV-MA) -- Camila Morrone ("Daisy Jones & the Six") and Adam DiMarco ("The White Lotus") lead this eight-episode horror miniseries premiering on March 26. Morrone and DiMarco, respectively, play Rachel and Nicky, an engaged couple who are set to be married within the week. However, as they gear up for the wedding, doubt starts to creep in at an abnormal pace, leaving Rachel to wonder whether her "soulmate" Nicky is the right person for her to be marrying in the first place. Not to mention Nicky's off-putting family, led by a beady-eyed performance from Jennifer Jason Leigh ("Fargo"). Fun fact: The Duffer Brothers (creators of "Stranger Things") serve as executive producers on the show. (Netflix)

"Rooster" (TV-MA) -- This slice-of-life comedy series stars none other than comedy legend Steve Carell ("The Four Seasons"). Carell plays a middle-aged novelist named Greg, who writes beach-read detective novels. When his daughter, Katie (Charly Clive), hits a rough patch in life due to marital issues with her estranged husband, Greg clears his super-busy schedule to pay a visit to her at the college where she teaches. While Greg's intentions seem to revolve around being a doting father, his motivations suddenly change when he's back in the atmosphere of a college campus, leading to shenanigans that undoubtedly could've been avoided. The first three episodes are out now, with subsequent episodes premiering every Sunday! (HBO Max)

"Pretty Lethal" (R) -- This action-thriller film takes ballet rehearsals to another level. Starring Iris Apatow ("Tell Me Lies"), Lana Condor ("Valiant One"), Avantika ("Mean Girls"), and Maddie Ziegler ("My Old Ass"), the film follows a ballet troupe whose bus breaks down on the way to a competition. The girls are forced to take shelter at a mysterious inn, where they encounter a former dancer named Devora (Uma Thurman). Upon meeting them, she is reminded of her dancing past and broken dreams. So, Devora nefariously decides to kidnap them, and the prima ballerinas must use whatever means necessary to escape from Devora's flock of gang members. Releases March 26. (Amazon Prime Video)

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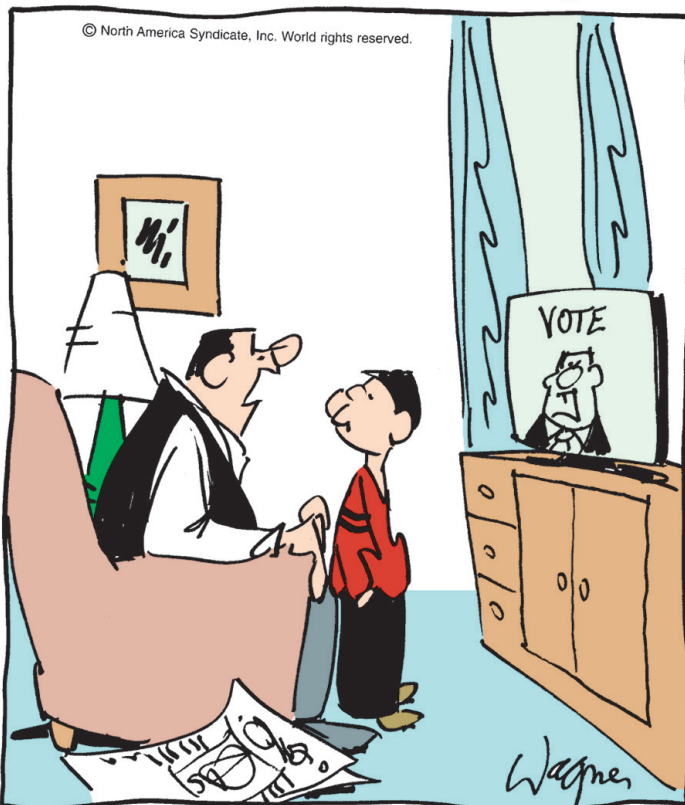
1. Who originally wrote and first recorded "Little Bitty Pretty One"?
2. Who released "I Had Too Much to Dream Last Night"?
3. Which artist originally wrote and released "Eli's Coming"?
4. Name the group that released "All Right Now."
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "I hear your voice, it's like an angel sighing, I have no choice, I hear your voice, feels like flying."

Answers:

1. Singer-songwriter Bobby Day, in 1957. Over the years, several others released covers of the song, including Clyde McPhatter, The Dave Clark 5, Huey Lewis and the News, and The Doobie Brothers. It was also used in Stephen King's "Christine" horror film in 1983.
2. The psychedelic rock band The Electric Prunes, in 1966. The group also released "Get Me to the World on Time."
3. Laura Nyro, in 1968. But it was Three Dog Night's 1969 cover that charted.
4. Free, in 1970.
5. "Like A Prayer," by Madonna in 1989. Madonna's hit topped the charts around the globe, in the U.S., Canada, Spain, the U.K., Australia and more. Rolling Stone added it to their list of "The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time," and Pepsi used the song in a commercial during the Grammy Awards in 1989.

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GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Wagner}



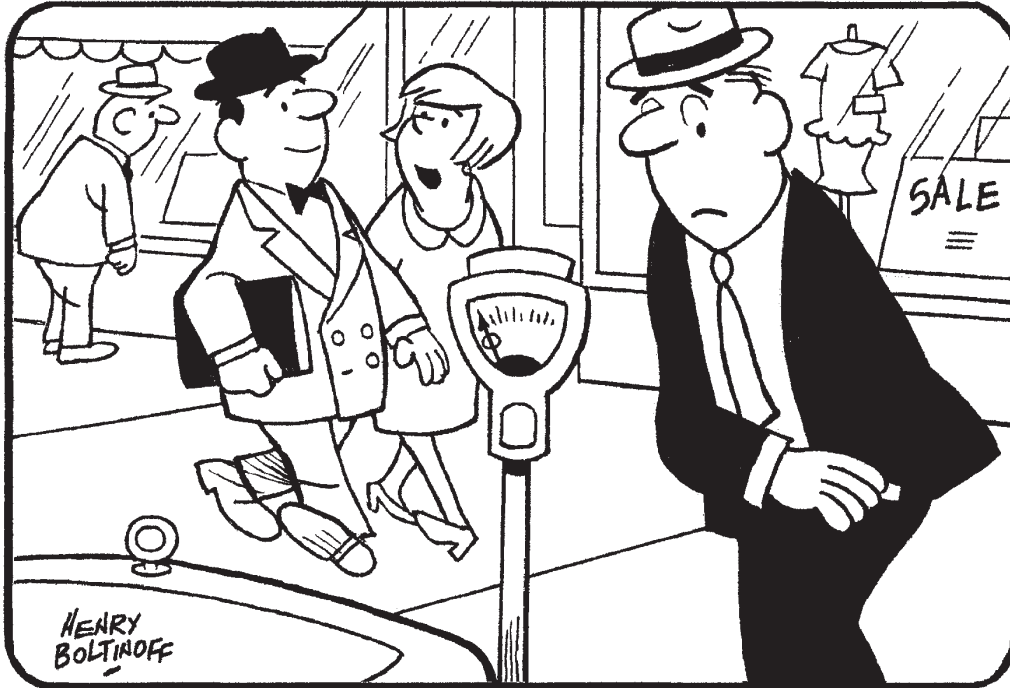
"We have April Fools' Day to tell lies. ...
The politicians have the rest of the year."

Just Like Cats & Dogs ^{by Dave T. Phipps}



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY
HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Meter is moved. 2. Tag on dress in window is missing. 3. Finger is moved. 4. Foot is moved. 5. Man is thinner. 6. Awning is not as wide.

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* A good non-slip bathmat is essential in the tub to prevent accidents. Grab an extra to drape over the edge of the tub for help when entering and exiting.

* "To remove residue left over from price tags, you can use hairspray. Remove as much paper as possible, then give a good squirt. Use a plastic scraper to lightly scrape off the adhesive." -- L.P. in Ohio

* Got bread ends? Store in a bag in the freezer until you need breadcrumbs for a recipe. Pulse frozen chunks in a chopper or blender for instantly usable crumbs.

* "Guacamole is a precious commodity at my house, but sometimes I want a snack, not a whole bowl. I have struggled with how to save the leftovers, because once it browns, it's

done. I learned a new trick, though. Simply put the leftovers in the smallest container possible and tamp down to press out all the air. Then carefully add a thin layer of water. Seal and refrigerate for up to three days. When you are ready to dip, pour off the water and stir!" -- C.D. in California

* "I have an old cedar chest from my grandmother. It had lost its smell, though. My husband removed all the contents and sanded it with superfine grit sandpaper. It is restored and smells wonderful now." -- J.K. in Iowa

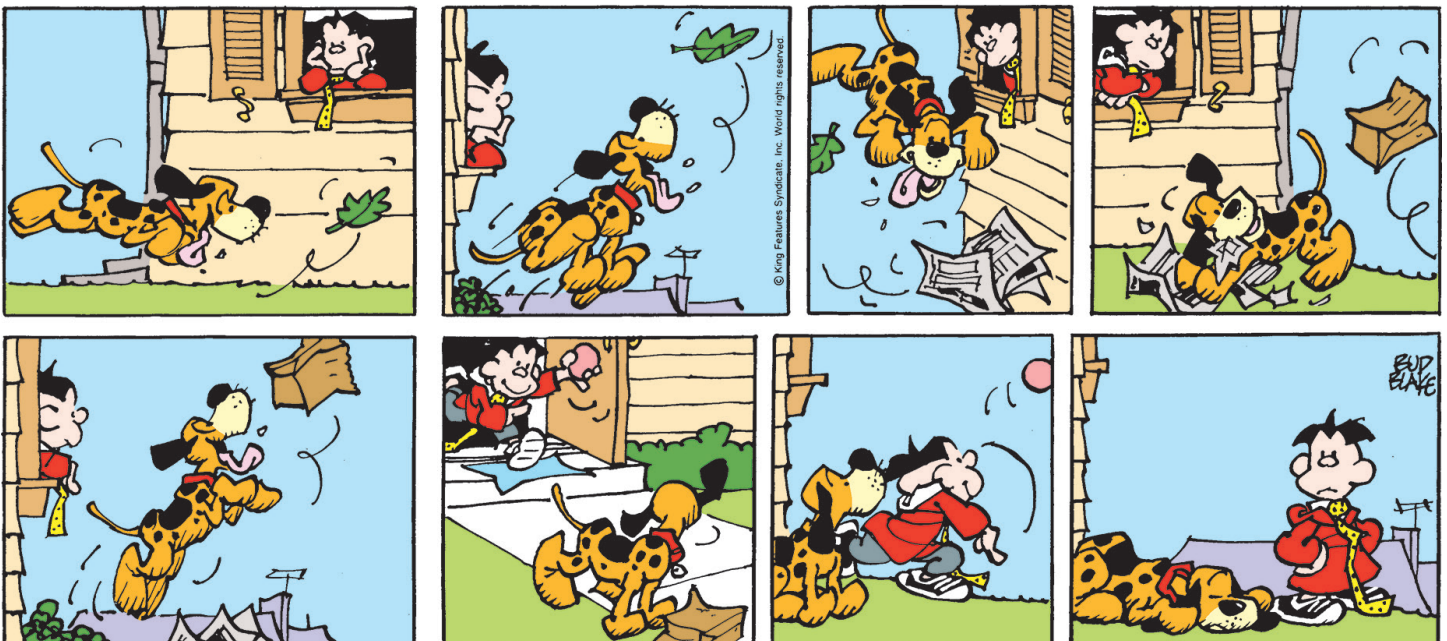
* Need a quick measure? A paper bill (U.S. currency) is exactly 6 inches long.

Send your tips to Now Here's a Tip, 1800 Pembroke Dr., Suite 300, Orlando, FL 32810.

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 **TIGER**

by **BUD BLAKE**



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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Sticks (out)
- 5 Govt. loan agcy.
- 8 Answer an invite
- 12 Canyon comeback
- 13 Chest muscle
- 14 Andy's boy
- 15 Israeli airline
- 16 Dumpster explorer
- 17 Spoken
- 18 Costa Rica neighbor
- 20 "Good as new," for one
- 22 Crow's greeting
- 23 French diarist Anais
- 24 Pedestal
- 27 Nevada gambling city
- 32 Recipe abbr.
- 33 "Sixth sense"
- 34 U.K. recording label
- 35 Document destroyer
- 38 Love god
- 39 Numerical prefix
- 40 Discoverer's call
- 42 Aid
- 45 More serene
- 49 La Scala melody

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19			20	21				
			22					23				
24	25	26			27	28	29				30	31
32					33					34		
35			36	37					38			
		39					40	41				
42	43				44		45			46	47	48
49					50	51			52			
53					54				55			
56					57				58			

- 50 Genesis vessel
- 52 "Othello" villain
- 53 Taxpayer IDs
- 54 Fish eggs
- 55 Streetcar
- 56 Wise one
- 57 Summer hrs. in D.C.
- 58 Robust
- 5 Really spread out
- 6 Actress Arthur
- 7 Performs
- 8 Rent sharer
- 9 Spaniel type
- 10 Test tube
- 11 Soccer legend
- 19 Bell or Barker
- 21 Bill of sale (Abbr.)
- 24 "Dynamite" band
- 25 Blond shade
- 26 Tidying (up)
- 28 Enzyme suffix
- 29 Toothed wheel
- 30 "I love," to Ovid
- 31 Bro's sib
- 36 Sheathe
- 37 God, to Galileo
- 38 Crude stone artifact
- 41 "That's a laugh!"
- 42 Lip
- 43 — Major
- 44 Exceptional
- 46 Kate of "The Martian"
- 47 Alike (Fr.)
- 48 Apple variety
- 51 Scepter

DOWN

- 1 Army transport
- 2 Golden State sch.
- 3 Compared to
- 4 Comfort

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King Crossword

Answers

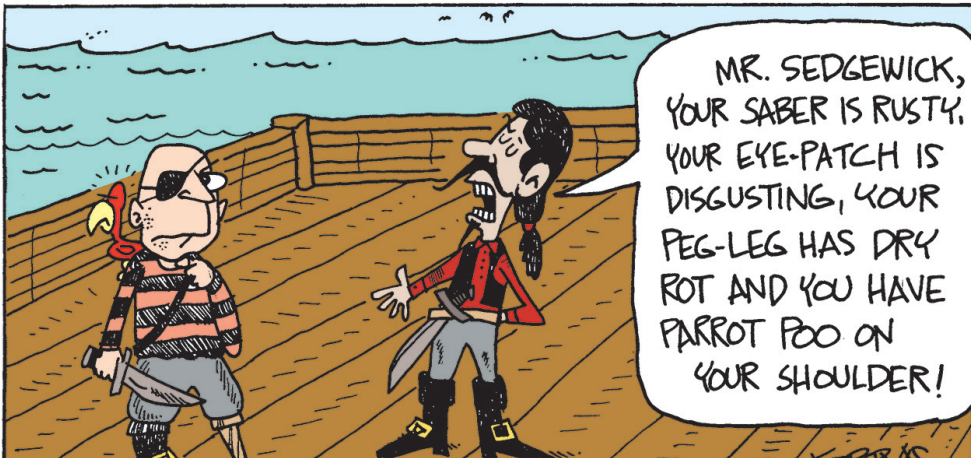
Solution time: 25 mins.

J	U	T	S		S	B	A		R	S	V	P
E	C	H	O		P	E	C		O	P	I	E
E	L	A	L		R	A	T		O	R	A	L
P	A	N	A	M	A		S	I	M	I	L	E
			C	A	W			N	I	N		
B	A	S	E		L	A	S	V	E	G	A	S
T	S	P			E	S	P		E	M	I	
S	H	R	E	D	D	E	R		E	R	O	S
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S	U	C	C	O	R		C	A	L	M	E	R
A	R	I	A		A	R	K		I	A	G	O
S	S	N	S		R	O	E		T	R	A	M
S	A	G	E		E	D	T		H	A	L	E

Olive



Out on a Limb



by Gary Kopervas



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THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
POPEYE
BY RANDY MILHOLLAND

AT LAST, MY EVIL MACHINATIONS ARE ABOUT TO COME TO FRUITION!

WHAT COULD BE BETTER?!

ACTUALLY USING YOUR POWER AS A RULER TO HELP YOUR SUBJECTS.

YOU REALLY? DRAIN THE FUN OUTTA UNCHECKED POWER, KNOW THAT?

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS
OYL BARRELS
PART 2

SEA HAG'S SISTER HAS DECIDED TO END POPEYE SO SHE CAN PROVE SHE'S THE GREATER VILLAIN... NOW SHE JUST NEEDS THE PERFECT BAIT FOR HER TRAP.

HOW DO YOU LIKE LIVING IN SWEETHAVEN SO FAR, QUEENIE?

IT'S OKAY, BUT EVERY TIME I THINK I'VE MADE A NEW FRIEND...

... THEY VANISH ON ME.

WHAT THE HECK? WHERE AM I?!

SLAM!

YOUR FINAL RESTING PLACE, MS. OYL!

IT'S NOTHING PERSONAL. I JUST HAVE TO END YOUR BOYFRIEND TO PROVE I'M MORE EVIL THAN MY SISTER! THANK YOU FOR BEING MY LORE. HA!

CLICK!

GAR! RETURN TO THE THRONE ROOM!

YOU CAN FIT THROUGH THE BARS?!

YOU CAN SEE ME THROUGH THAT THING! GOOD. MY RUDE HAND GESTURES WON'T GO TO WASTE!

BARNEY GOOGLE AND
Snuffy Smith

SO, WHATTA YOU FELLERS BEEN UP TO BESIDES NO GOOD ?

TRYIN' T'COME UP WIF A SNARKY ANSWER TO THAT VERY QUESTION-- WHICH YA ALWAYS ASK US !!

SO FAR WE GOT NUTHIN' !!

WHICH IS ALSO 'ZACTLY WHAT WE BEEN UP TO !!

HEY THAR, MORNIN', SNUFFY !!

MORNIN', PARSON !!

HOWDY, SHERIFF !!

SMIF !!

MORNIN', JEDGE POTTER !!

HULLO, SMIF !!

HMMM...I COULD EASILY IGNORE ONE REMINDER TO STAY ON TH' STRAIGHT AN' NARROW AN' JEST CONTINUE ON MY MERRY WAY !!

BUT THREE REMINDERS IS A BAD OMEN !!

BACK HOME I GO !!

WHOOSH!!

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HAL FOSTER'S **Prince Valiant** BY SCHULTZ AND YEATES

DRIVEN MAD WITH DESIRE BY THE SIRENS' SONG, STRAKONUS' PIRATES STAMPEDE INTO THE COURTYARD, SPEWING FOUL OVERTURES TO THE NOW VISIBLE WOMEN, BUT STRAKONUS HIMSELF REMAINS CANNY ENOUGH TO SENSE A POSSIBLE TRAP.

WHILE BELOW THE RUINS, THANAA STRAINS FUTILELY TO TURN THE GREAT WHEEL.. SHE LOOKS IMPLOINGLY TO VAL...

... AND, TRUSTING THAT THERE IS A METHOD TO HER MADNESS, HE JOINS HER. THE PRINCE OF THULE PUTS ALL HIS STRENGTH INTO LOOSING THE ANCIENT, FROZEN MACHINE ...

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... HIS THEWS BULGE, HIS BACK CRACKS— AND THE WHEEL BEGINS TO TURN! HE HEARS A SERIES OF GROANS AND CLANKINGS AS A VAST, HIDDEN MECHANISM IS ENGAGED...

... AND THE COURTYARD ABOVE BEGINS TO GROAN AND COLLAPSE BENEATH THE FEET OF THE CRAZED MERCHANTS OF HUMAN FLESH! STRAKONUS ALONE KEEPS HIS WITS, AND LEAPS TOWARD SAFETY.

NEXT:
Thanaa's vengeance

YEATES 1/25/15 4068

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

I ONCE CROSSED A CENTIPEDE WITH A PARROT

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WHAT DID YOU GET?

PICKERING

A WALKIE-TALKIE!!

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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Stopping Medicare fraud

Medicare fraud is one of the big scams that thieves love. Approximately \$60 billion per year is stolen from taxpayers through Medicare theft and fraud. Your job is to be the intermediary and foil their attempts.

Here's how:

Treat your Medicare number as though it's as valuable as a credit card or access to your checking account. Don't give the number to anyone but your doctor's office.

If anyone calls asking for your Medicare card number, hang up. If you receive a text message asking for the number, delete it.

When you get a Medicare summary statement, go over it line by line to be sure that you actually received every service.

It's true that now and then a service listed on your statement is genuine, even if it doesn't seem to be. It's possible that a coding error in the doctor's office was wrong. Get to the bottom of it by calling them and asking for the billing department to pull your file and determine whether the Medicare statement is correct or not. Ask specific questions about tests and lab work, as these are sometimes lumped together.

Sometimes, if the scammers do contact you, they'll try to get you to accept delivery of a medical device that you don't actually need in exchange for giving them your Medicare number. Don't do it.

Occasionally, too, you might be contacted with an offer to "review" your medical records to see if you need any additional services or devices or if you "need" genetic testing. Don't do it. What the scammers are looking for is your personal information and that Medicare number.

Remember: Medicare isn't going to call you or send text messages or show up at your door.

If you think someone is trying to commit Medicare fraud, report it. Call 800-MEDICARE (800-633-4227).

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15 N Main St. - Ste. 101
Downtown Groton

Call/Text Paul: 605-397-7460
Call/Text Tina: 605-397-7285



Living Heart Fitness Center

Senior Citizens 65+

Physical Therapy.

\$20 a month

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1. Name the Italian racecar manufacturer that became the sole chassis supplier for the IndyCar Series starting in 2007.

2. What team won the NCAA women's bowling championship six times from 2004 to 2021?

3. What Vancouver stadium was home to the BC Lions of the CFL from 1954 to 1982, hosted seven Grey Cup games from 1955 to 1974 and was demolished in 1993?

4. Name the Dallas Cowboys cornerback who set an NFL single-season record with his fifth interception returned for a touchdown in 2023.

5. He played college basketball for the Duke Blue Devils and was drafted by the Cleveland Cavaliers in 2002. He has fraternal twin sons who also play basketball at Duke. Who are they?

6. John Landy, the second person to run a mile in under four minutes (following Roger Bannister), served as a state governor in what country from 2001 to 2006?

7. How many times did Wayne Gretzky achieve the NHL's rare "50 goals in 50 games" feat - scoring 50 goals in his team's first 50 games of the season?



by Ryan A. Berenz

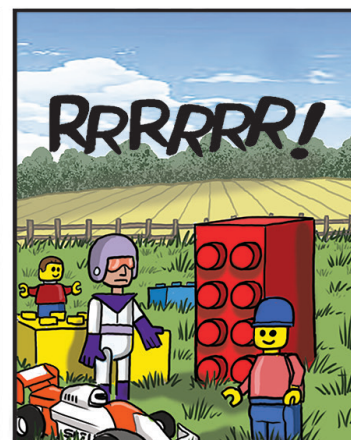
Answers

1. Dallara.
2. The University of Nebraska Cornhuskers.
3. Empire Stadium.
4. DaRon Bland.
5. Carlos Boozer and sons Cameron and Cayden.
6. Australia.
7. Three, in three straight seasons from 1981 to 1985.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps



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What to do if your pet is poisoned

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: My Labrador mix, "Saucy," likes to roam over the fields around our home during the day. Yesterday, he arrived on our back step looking terrible. He was panting rapidly and drooling. He was irritable and didn't want to be touched. I called the vet and was told to wrap him in a blanket and bring him straight in. Saucy vomited a few times on the way to the vet and became very lethargic.

The vet thinks he got into a local farmer's fertilizer or herbicide, and Saucy is now at their hospital receiving fluids and supportive care. He's pulled through the night and hopefully will recover. In the meantime, I'm fencing off part of our yard to keep him near the house in the future. -- James N. in upstate New York

DEAR JAMES: I'm glad you were able to get Saucy to the vet so quickly, and hope he recovers fully. Noticing the symptoms of poisoning in pets is so important to getting them help and appropriate care as fast as possible. Some poisons can cause progressive damage to the organs, so getting the veterinarian involved immediately is crucial.

Food, cleaning supplies, certain plants and many medications can make pets very ill if ingested. Pets can get into things without us knowing, despite our best efforts. That's why it's important to pay attention if you notice any unusual symptoms in your dog or cat.

Some symptoms are easy to spot, like excessive drooling, vomiting or diarrhea, trembling or lethargy. Others are more subtle, like a loss of appetite or a change in the color of their gums. If you notice any of these symptoms, or your pet seems off somehow, contact the veterinarian.

Send your tips, comments or questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

* The Beast from “Beauty and the Beast” is a combination of several different animals, with a lion’s mane, buffalo’s head and beard, gorilla’s brow, tusks of a wild boar, bear’s body, legs and tail of a wolf ... and eyes of a human.

* Sweden is so efficient at waste disposal that only 1% of its garbage goes to landfills.

* Viking burials included board games.

* When making badminton shuttlecocks, the most prized feathers are said to come from a goose’s left wing.

* The 1967 Outer Space Treaty prohibits any nation from trying to own the moon.

* A young man from Arizona saved a woman’s life by using CPR he’d learned from watching an episode of “The Office.”

* The German version of the term “average Joe” is Otto Normalverbraucher, or “Otto normal consumer.”

* In parts of Europe, folks believe that if you light a cigarette from a candle, a sailor will die.

* Spiders recycle webs by eating them.

* The term mortician was invented as part of a public relations campaign by the funeral industry, which considered it more customer friendly than undertaker.

* Beethoven was notably particular about his coffee, ensuring that his morning brew was made with precisely 60 beans per cup.

* A study has shown that dunking an Oreo in milk for three seconds renders the optimal balance between sogginess and structural integrity.

* Sloths may be the only animals that don’t fart.

* “Family Feud” host Richard Dawson met his second wife, Gretchen Johnson, when she was a contestant on the show -- and yes, he kissed her.

* Polar ice cap temperatures can plunge to a bone-chilling -189.67 degrees Fahrenheit.

Thought for the Day: “If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.” -- John F. Kennedy

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The Garden Bug

Early spring tasks

Start your spring clean-up with the largest tasks first, such as clearing off the roof, cleaning gutters and clearing away any tree branch problems. Spruce up the front door, porchlights, kickplates and other entryway items, and inspect your windows for maintenance needs. Gently remove matted leaves to uncover emerging spring bulbs, but wait until *after* several 50-degree-Fahrenheit spring days to clean up all leaf litter. Some beneficial insects spend the winter in such dead material and need a few warmer days to get moving. – Brenda Weaver

Sources: awaytogarden.com
budmatthews.com/



by Freddy Groves

Protecting your benefits

On a recent National Slam the Scam Day for 2026, the VA stepped up, along with other federal agencies, with an array of information to keep veterans safe from scams and fraud. Thieves don't just work one day per year, however. We need to stay vigilant all year long to protect our benefits and personal information from getting to the scammers.

Why do they want us? Because we have income and benefits.

How do they approach us? Phone calls, emails, text messages, social media, phishing, impersonation, fake charities -- you name it, the crooks have thought of it as a way to get to us.

If you're approached, whether on the phone or in email, the more urgent the problem, the more likely it's a scam. A scammer might pretend to be from the VA and try to claim there's something wrong with your benefits -- and that you need to hand over your personal information so they can "fix" the problem. They might want your bank account access info or password, your Social Security number, your date of birth. The answer is no.

Don't do a direct deposit into another person's account -- even if it's a relative! If you need a fiduciary situation (where someone helps you with finances), have that person go through the accreditation process and be authorized to assist you. You're protected that way.

If you're told you need to hand over a fee to get claims assistance from the VA or to apply for increased benefits, it's fraud.

Invest in a shredder and use it to cut up not only VA documents with personal information on them, but any documents that can go astray, even when you put out the trash.

If someone calls and claims to be from the VA and asks you to pay for something with a gift card or bitcoin, feel free to laugh as you hang up the phone. It's an impostor. Report it to the VA at 800-827-1000.

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Wishing Well®



2	3	8	7	6	4	8	5	3	8	6	4	6
W	A	D	S	A	S	E	L	C	P	S	U	U
3	8	2	6	8	6	3	6	7	3	8	4	5
H	E	A	N	N	N	A	Y	U	N	D	C	O
3	4	3	6	2	4	8	3	2	8	6	3	6
G	C	E	O	N	E	O	I	T	N	U	N	T
8	4	6	8	5	7	5	8	3	5	7	5	8
O	S	L	T	V	C	E	H	S	O	C	F	E
7	4	3	7	3	5	6	8	3	5	2	3	2
E	S	T	S	A	L	O	R	T	U	N	U	O
5	8	6	5	3	2	6	7	5	7	5	4	7
X	S	O	U	S	M	K	S	R	C	Y	U	L
2	7	4	7	4	7	2	7	4	7	2	4	4
O	O	P	S	H	E	R	B	E	Y	E	L	D

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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1. GEOGRAPHY: Which Canadian province lies to the north of Washington state?
2. MOVIES: In the "Star Wars" movies, which character wields a purple lightsaber?
3. GAMES: In Monopoly, how much money do players get when they pass "Go"?
4. FOOD & DRINK: Which fast-food chain's 1970s jingle began, "Hold the pickles, hold the lettuce, special orders don't upset us"?
5. TELEVISION: What holiday did George's dad invent in the sitcom "Seinfeld"?
6. ANATOMY: How many skin cells does the average human being shed in a minute?
7. U.S. PRESIDENTS: How many presidents have won the Nobel Peace Prize?
8. ASTRONOMY: How many moons does Mars have?
9. LITERATURE: What is the name of Harry Potter's pet owl in the novel series?
10. SCIENCE: What is the boiling point of water in Celsius?

Answers

1. British Columbia.
2. Mace Windu.
3. \$200.
4. Burger King.
5. Festivus.
6. 30,000 to 40,000.
7. Four: Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Jimmy Carter and Barack Obama.
8. Two: Phobos and Deimos.
9. Hedwig.
10. 100 degrees C.

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South Dakota Governor



Larry Rhoden



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Delivering Results for South Dakota

Just last week, we wrapped up another legislative session – and what a session it was.

At the beginning of the year, I outlined my Opportunity Agenda, focused on keeping South Dakota strong, safe, and free. I called on the Legislature to take action on several key priorities. When all was said and done, we accomplished everything we set out to do. Every single one of those priorities made it across the finish line.

That kind of success doesn't happen everywhere – but it does here in South Dakota.

Our lawmakers spend fewer than 40 days in Pierre each year. Then they go home, live with the laws they passed, and hear directly from their neighbors about what's working and what isn't. If something needs fixing, they come back the next year and get it right. It's a system built on accountability, and it serves our state well.

This year, we delivered real results for the people of South Dakota.

We passed a balanced budget for the 137th consecutive year. We made historic investments to expand our airports in Sioux Falls and Rapid City. We protected our Second Amendment rights, defended religious freedom, and took further steps to strengthen our pro-life laws.

We also made meaningful investments in rural health care through the Rural Health Transformation Fund – ensuring that folks in every corner of our state have access to quality care close to home.

Above all else, we passed the largest property tax cut in South Dakota history.

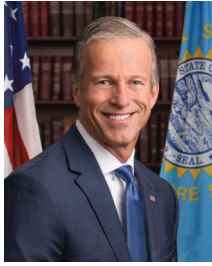
Senate Bill 96 empowers local communities by giving counties the option to reduce property taxes through a half-cent local option sales tax. Whether it's adopted by a county commission, referred to a public vote, or initiated by the people themselves, it puts the decision in the hands of the folks who know their communities best.

In many of our fastest-growing counties – where property taxes have risen the most – tourism plays a major role in the local economy. That means visitors will help shoulder the burden and help provide real relief for homeowners.

In addition, we worked with legislative leaders to pass Senate Bill 245, which dedicates an upcoming sales tax adjustment to property tax relief statewide. This measure will reduce the statewide mill levy and deliver savings to homeowners across South Dakota, and relief will begin as early as taxes paid in 2027.

Together, these two bills provide both targeted and broad-based relief. They represent a historic step forward in addressing property taxes.

This session was about results. It was about listening to the people and taking action to strengthen our state. That always has been, and always will be, my focus. That is how we keep South Dakota strong, safe, and free.



JOHN THUNE
U.S. SENATOR FOR SOUTH DAKOTA

The SAVE America Act Is Just Common Sense

If you've tuned into the United States Senate lately, you may have seen senators engaged in a robust debate over an important piece of legislation: the SAVE America Act. This bill is about as common sense as they come. It would require proof of citizenship and a photo ID to vote and protect young people from the impacts of radical gender ideology. The majority of Americans agree with these commonsense policies. But while Republicans fight for this bill, Democrats have resorted to fearmongering in their inexplicable opposition to it.

If there's anything essential to the integrity of elections, it's ensuring that every voter is eligible to cast a ballot and that voters are who they say they are. The way to do that is by requiring Americans to show proof of citizenship when they register to vote and to show a photo ID when they go to a polling place. But under current federal law, there is no requirement for voters to prove citizenship, and ID requirements vary from state to state. The SAVE America Act would apply a uniform standard on these two points so all Americans can have confidence in the integrity of federal elections.

Requiring proof of citizenship and a photo ID to vote are just common sense, and they are consistent with other aspects of daily life. Americans are required to prove they're eligible to join the military, to receive government benefits, and eligible to work before they can start a job in this country. They have to show a photo ID at a doctor's office, before getting on a plane, and to get a library card. Is it really too much to ask the same before they cast a ballot? I don't think so.

In addition to protecting our elections, the SAVE America Act is also about protecting young Americans from the effects of the left's radical gender ideology. It does that in two ways: keeping biological men out of women's sports and banning gender transition procedures for minors. In recent years, we've seen biological men take roster spots – and opportunities to win titles and medals – from female athletes. And we've seen increasing numbers of children being subjected to gender transition procedures – and the many serious side effects that can result. We've also seen tragic cases of children who were subjected to these surgeries and medications who are now living with the consequences of a gender transition procedure that they have come to regret. The SAVE America Act would put a stop to this madness.

These policies are just intuitively obvious for most Americans. But throughout the ongoing debate on this bill, our Democrat colleagues have proved that common sense is not all that common on their side of the aisle. Polls show that these policies have support from the majority of the American people, yet the Democrat leader has called the SAVE America Act "radical," which only proves how out of touch Democrats are on these issues.

This bill should be an easy "yes" vote for every member of Congress, and that's the case Republicans have made throughout this debate. But our arguments seem to fall on deaf ears among Democrats who have parted ways with common sense.

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March 8 – 14, 2026



Welcome back to another edition of the Weekly Round[s] Up. This past week was an exciting week as the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act passed the Senate. Our office helped author nearly 25% of this legislation which modernizes rural housing programs and cuts unne-

cessary red tape that has been slowing housing development. This is the first major update to the Rural Housing Service in over a decade and it is now on its way to the House of Representatives for final passage. Additionally, I hosted many South Dakotans in the office for meetings, attended hearings, briefings, speaking engagements and more. More on this and the rest of my week in the Weekly Round[s] Up:

South Dakota groups I visited with: South Dakota School Nutrition Association; South Dakotans with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; David Reiss, Executive Director of Central South Dakota Enhancement District and Lynne Keller Forbes, Executive Director of Southeast Council of Governments; South Dakota Bankers Association; South Dakota Soybean; Matthew Brakke, Agent at Great Plains General Office with New York Life Insurance Company; South Dakota TRIO Educators; South Dakotans with Afterschool Alliance; and Jose Marie-Griffiths, President of Dakota State University.

I also attended a Senate Youth Program Reception and met Chloe from Pierre!

Met with South Dakotans from: Brookings, Lake Preston, Madison, Mellette, Miller, Mitchell, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Spearfish, Sturgis, Valley Springs, Vermillion and Yankton.

Other meetings: Tom Schultz, Chief of the USDA Forest Service; General Randall Reed, Commander of the USTRANSCOM; General Grynkewich, Commander of the United States European Command; Katie Sutton, Assistant Secretary of War for Cyber Policy; and Ambassador Ahlin of Sweden.

I also met with Kevin Warsh, Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Chairman nominee. Kevin brings deep experience, strong economic judgement and a clear commitment to Fed independence. He will help keep the central bank accountable and focused on its statutory mission. I look forward to supporting his nomination. Once confirmed, I look forward to working with Kevin to protect our economy so American families can thrive.

Additionally, I attended the American Bankers Association 2026 Washington Summit and participated in a moderated discussion with Kirsten Sutton, Executive Vice President of Congressional Relations and Legislative Affairs at American Bankers Association. I also went to the SCSP AI + Education Summit, and did a panel discussion with Yll Bajaktari, CEO of SCSP, and Chris Malachowsky, who is Co-Founder of Nvidia.

I also attended our weekly Senate Prayer Breakfast. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) was our speaker this week.

Hearings: This week I attended a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing.

Briefings: I attended three classified briefings: two with the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the third with the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Votes taken: 6 – This week I voted to confirm General Joshua Ridd as head of the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command. I look forward to working with General Ridd in his new role through my work as the Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Subcommittee on Cybersecurity.

I also voted for the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, which passed the Senate 89-10. I helped author nearly 25% of this bipartisan piece of legislation, which is the first major update to the Rural Housing Service in more than a decade. [Click here to read the press release](#), and [click here to watch my floor speech on the bill](#).

My Staff in South Dakota visited: Mitchell and Sioux Falls.

Steps taken: 62,325 steps or 30.43 miles.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries

PO Box 831313 - Ocala, FL 34483

1-352-216-3025

Just One More NAP!

Bouncing back from weeks of being sick is not as easy as it used to be when I was younger. I guess that's the cost of getting old.

Over the last six weeks, I've had this bug thingamajig going around. I had it for two weeks, and then it gradually went away.

Then, it came back to me for another two weeks, just as painful as before. A couple of weeks later, it gradually went away.

Then, for the third time, this bug thingamajig hit me again.

What is it about me that is so attractive to them? If I knew what that was, I would get rid of it today.

The only bug I like is The Love Bug, and in August of this year, I will celebrate 55 years of that bug. I sure don't want that to go away.

During this bug time, I spent a lot of time napping. I was so exhausted when I got up in the morning that I had to take a nap right after breakfast. There is just no way to hide this from The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage.

"What," she asked me one afternoon, "are you taking another nap?"

I could have lied to her at that time, but I was actually taking a nap. Why I was taking a nap is a difficult question for which I have no answer. I need to take this nap. I can take some medication for the bug thingamajig, but I really need to take a nap. That seems to be my best medication.

Getting over this has been a rather difficult thing for me. I don't know why I want to take a nap every couple of hours.

Right after lunch the other day, I was going to work on a project I had started a couple of days ago. But as I sat in my easy chair drinking some hot coffee, I said to myself, "Just one more nap and I'll be ready to go."

Have you ever had a time when you believed exactly what you said? Good luck on that one.

This week The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I had to go to the doctor's for a checkup on this bug thingamajig.

After meeting with the doctor and getting new prescriptions for my medication, we headed back home. As we got in the door, I said to The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, "I got some work I want to do

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but I think I need to take a nap before I get back to my office.”

I need to sit down with my body and have a very serious conversation about all this napping that I’ve been doing. Is there something else I can do instead of taking a nap?

After a long chat with my body, I got no response. My body was napping at the time. The word nap means, Not Always Present. That’s what it seems like to me.

Whatever has come of this bug thingamajig, I have reached perfection in napping. Never in my life have I been able to nap quite as perfectly as I have lately.

All I have to do is sit back in my easy chair, close my eyes for a moment, and instantly I am in Lala land. I was convinced that everything in life was as easy as taking a nap. I can’t imagine all the stuff I could accomplish if things were that easy.

Right after getting awake from my nap, The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage came and said, “So, how was your nap? Are you now ready to do something?”

I looked at her through dazed eyes and said, “Just one more nap.”

That has been my motto for the last several months. Why can’t I have some bug thingamajig that gives me energy instead of a nap?

I reached the last stage of this bug thingamajig, and I’m hoping to get as far away from it as possible. I’m hoping my day isn’t filled with naps. After all, what can you accomplish while taking a nap?

The strange thing is that after napping all day, I can go to bed at night and sleep through the night without waking up. How in the world does that happen?

When I watched television the other day, I saw a commercial on sleep deprivation, and they were trying to sell some medicine to help you sleep at night. The only medicine I had to help me sleep at night was taking naps all through the day. I wish I could patent my napping and sell it on TV. I could make a lot of money on that.

I’m looking forward to the time when I slowly get out of this napping stage and get back to my normal life. Of course, I don’t know what normal is with me. But I want the chance to find out really what it is.

I thought of some scripture in this area.

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

I’m going to focus on God’s rest each day and allow Him to get the glory.

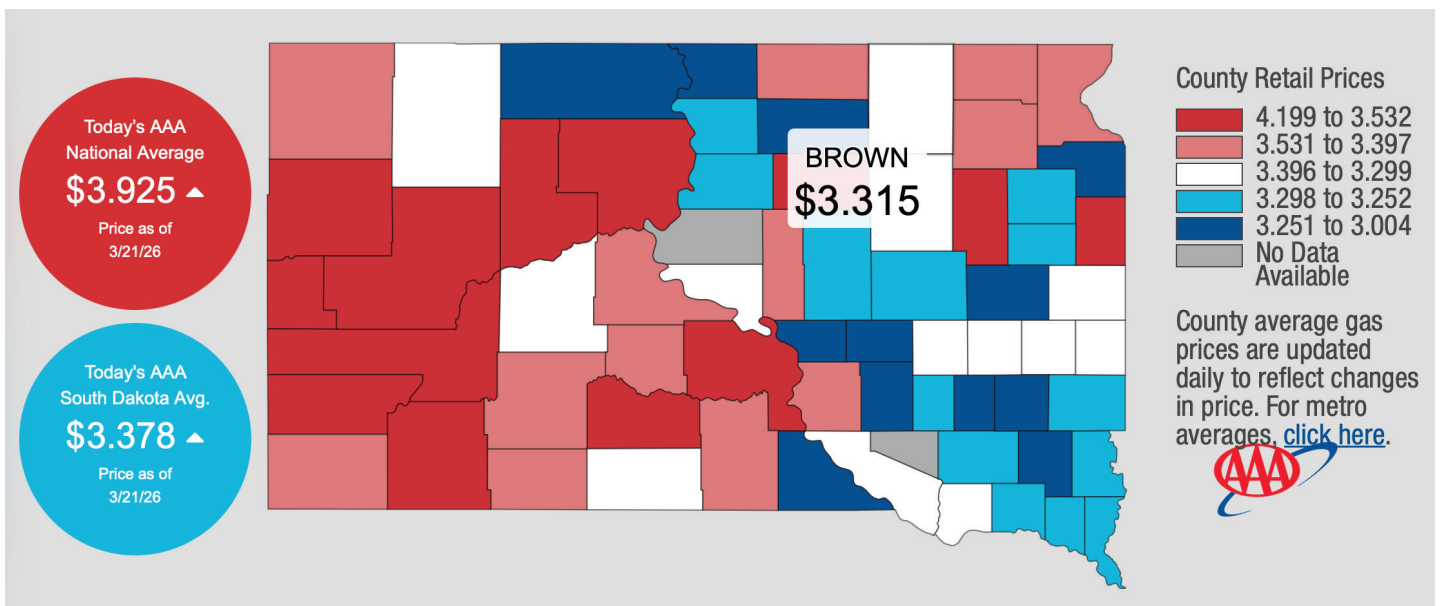
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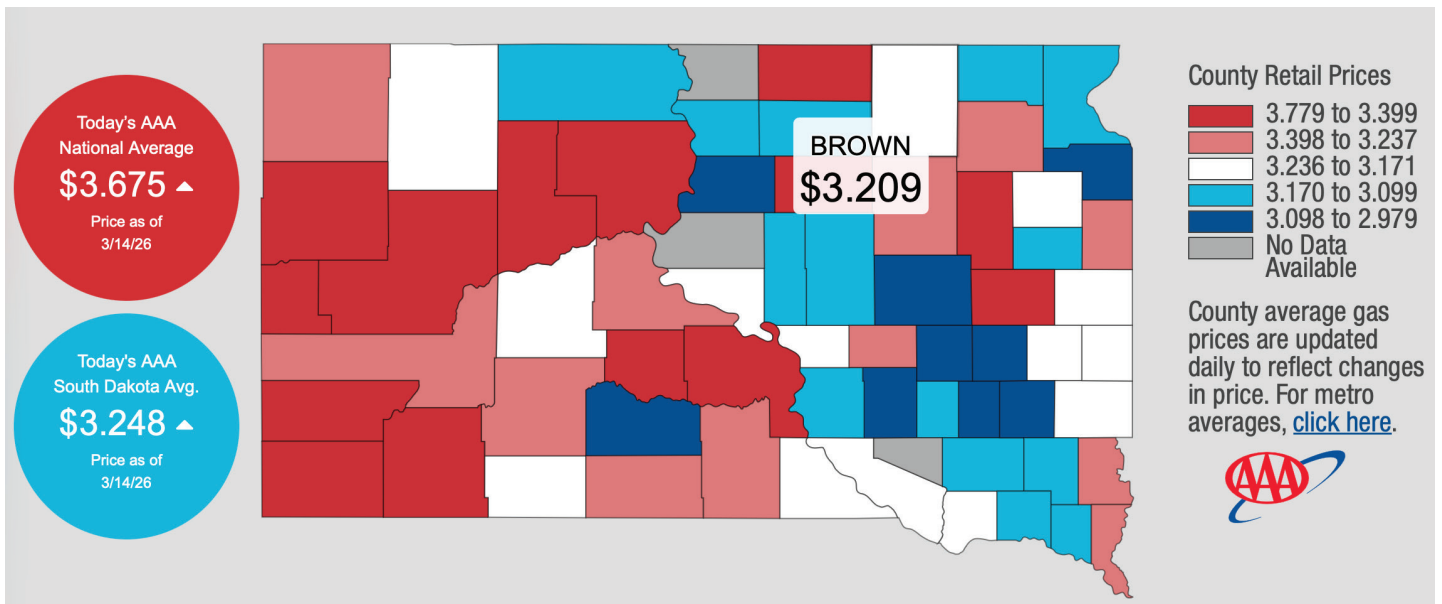
South Dakota Average Gas Prices

	Regular	Mid-Grade	Premium	Diesel
Current Avg.	\$3.378	\$3.546	\$4.040	\$4.511
Yesterday Avg.	\$3.369	\$3.535	\$4.035	\$4.465
Week Ago Avg.	\$3.248	\$3.395	\$3.902	\$4.228
Month Ago Avg.	\$2.639	\$2.801	\$3.271	\$3.418
Year Ago Avg.	\$3.048	\$3.223	\$3.662	\$3.287

This Week



Last Week



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Drought Classification

None

D0 (Abnormally Dry)

D1 (Moderate Drought)

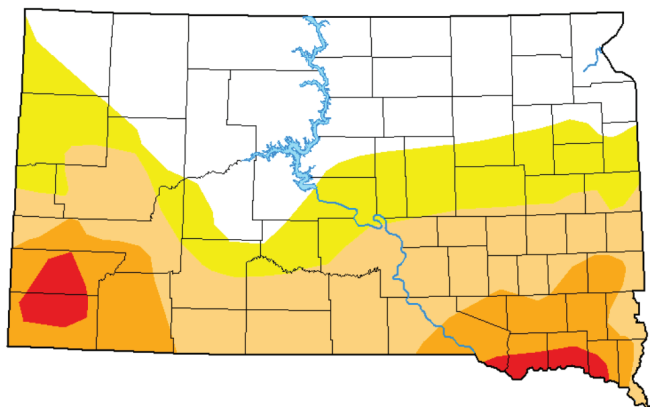
D2 (Severe Drought)

D3 (Extreme Drought)

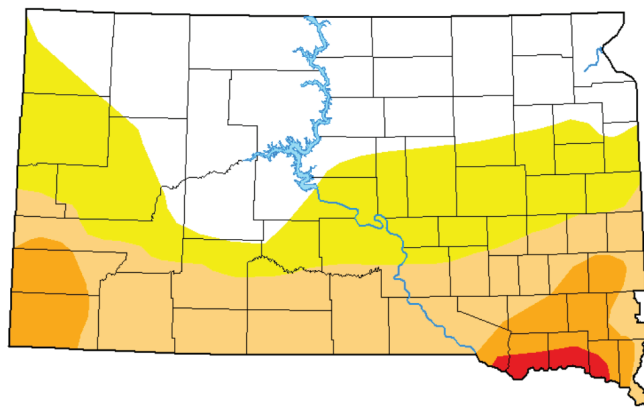
D4 (Exceptional Drought)

No Data

Drought Monitor



March 17



March 10

In the southern half of the High Plains region, warmer-than-normal weather continued this week amid mainly dry and frequently windy conditions. Degradation in drought conditions was widespread across Nebraska and southern parts of South Dakota. A deadly wildfire in western Nebraska, the Morrill Fire, has burned a record amount of land for Nebraska wildfires. This fire, and others across Nebraska, occurred amid weather conditions favorable for fire growth and a background of worsening drought conditions. The Great Plains of southwest Kansas and southeast Colorado also saw worsening drought and abnormal dryness this week, as precipitation deficits continued to mount along with warmer-than-normal temperatures this winter and early spring. Large precipitation deficits and above-normal evaporative demand over the last several months led to extreme drought development in parts of the Black Hills in southwest South Dakota. Colder temperatures and some precipitation kept conditions unchanged (and mostly free of drought or abnormal dryness) in North Dakota and northern South Dakota.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

State opens applications for 40 more slots in teacher apprenticeship program

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

Another 40 paraprofessionals could be accepted into South Dakota's teacher apprenticeship program, which is meant to reduce the teaching shortage across the state.

The program, started in 2023, allows full-time paraprofessionals — sometimes called teacher's aides — to pursue a teaching degree online through Dakota State University in elementary or special education, or through Northern State University in secondary education, at a steep discount while retaining their position.

Gov. Larry Rhoden said in a news release that the program is a "strong partnership" between the state and its universities to address a statewide issue.

"When paraprofessionals can earn a degree right in their home community, it strengthens our workforce and helps our rural communities thrive," Rhoden said.

Applications will be accepted through April 15, according to the state Department of Education. The program will start in July.

As of December, 72 paraprofessionals had graduated from the program, and 240 had participated. Of the graduates, 59 signed teaching contracts — all at South Dakota public and private schools. Five graduates earned degrees in secondary education, 17 in special education, 17 in elementary and special education, and 33 in elementary education.

Stacie Becker graduated from the program's first cohort.

"This experience showed me that I have the skills, perseverance and passion to become an effective educator," Becker said in a news release, "and that with commitment, I can achieve my goals."

Statewide, 144 teaching positions were unfilled as of July last year, weeks before the school year started, according to the Associated School Boards of South Dakota. That's the lowest number in recent years: There were 202 unfilled positions in July 2024, 256 in 2023, 225 in 2022 and 174 in 2021.

The Department of Education started the program, but it is currently funded through the state Department of Labor and Regulation with a combination of state and federal grants to reimburse universities for the discounted portion of tuition and other programming.

School districts pay \$1,000 a year per apprentice. Apprentices are responsible for up to \$1,000 a year in tuition, books and state assessments.

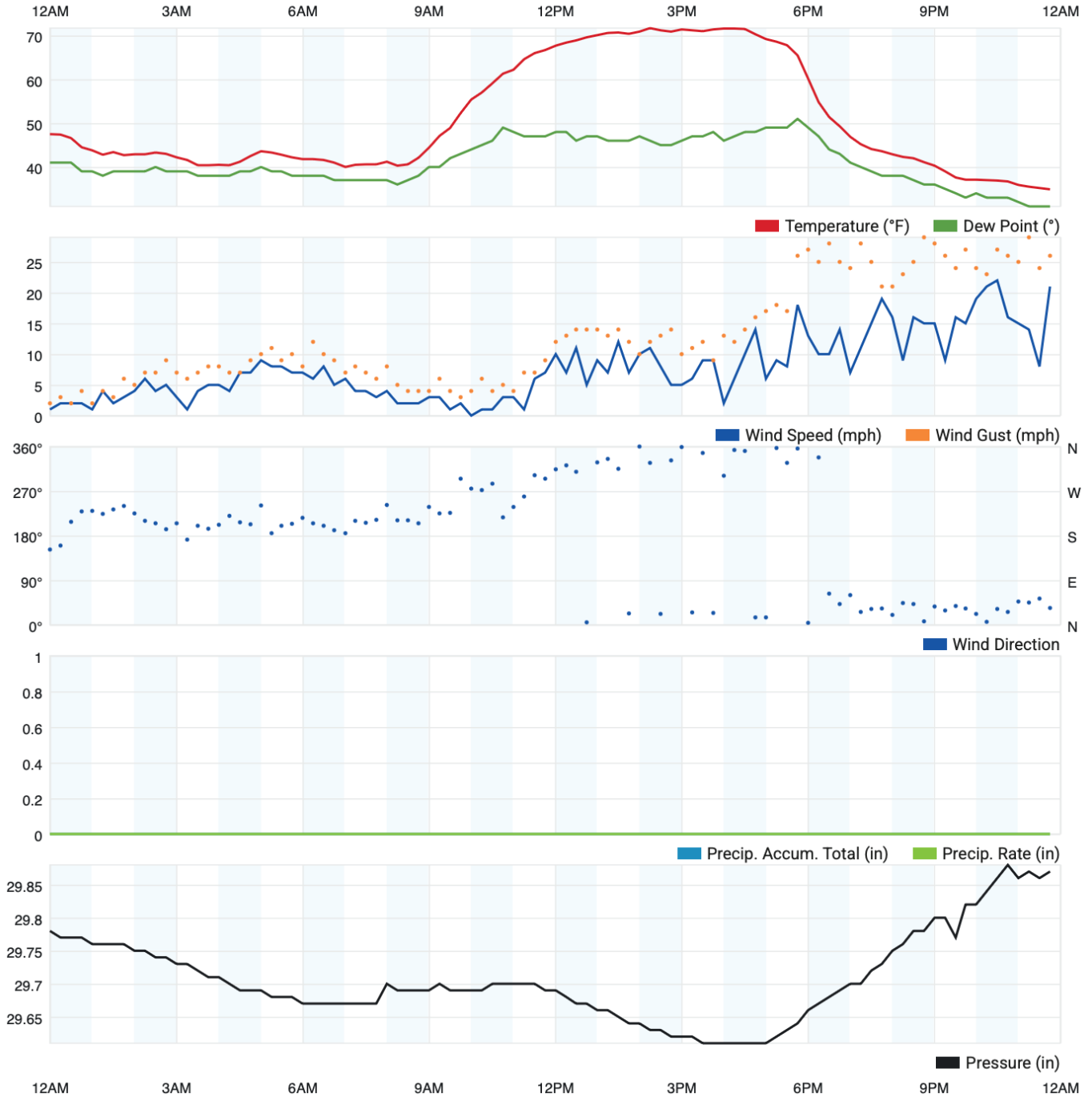
Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a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

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

March 21, 2026



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Today



High: 45 °F

Decreasing
Clouds

Tonight



Low: 27 °F

Partly Cloudy

Monday



High: 54 °F

Chance
Sprinkles

Monday Night



Low: 31 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tuesday



High: 53 °F

Mostly Cloudy



Not As Warm Today

March 22, 2026
2:23 AM CDT



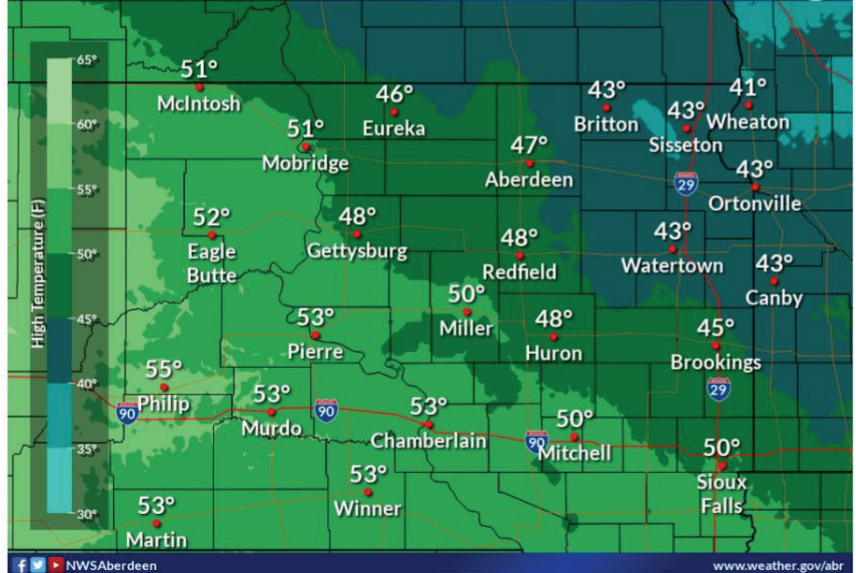
Today: Cooler, with
Highs in the 40s & 50s

Monday: Elevated Fire
Weather Concerns Return, As
Southerly Winds Gust To 30-35
MPH

Much Cooler Today

Only 2-5 Degrees From Normal (Instead Of 25-35 Degrees From Normal)

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen/Rapid City/Sioux Falls, SD
Issued Mar 22, 2026 2:02 AM CDT



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Cooler air is in place now, and high temperatures will only warm into the 40s and 50s across much of the region. This is closer to normal for this time of year. Light winds today will be replaced by strengthening south winds on Monday, including gusts over 30 mph. This will elevate the Grassland Fire Danger index to High across the area, Very High across portions of south central South Dakota.

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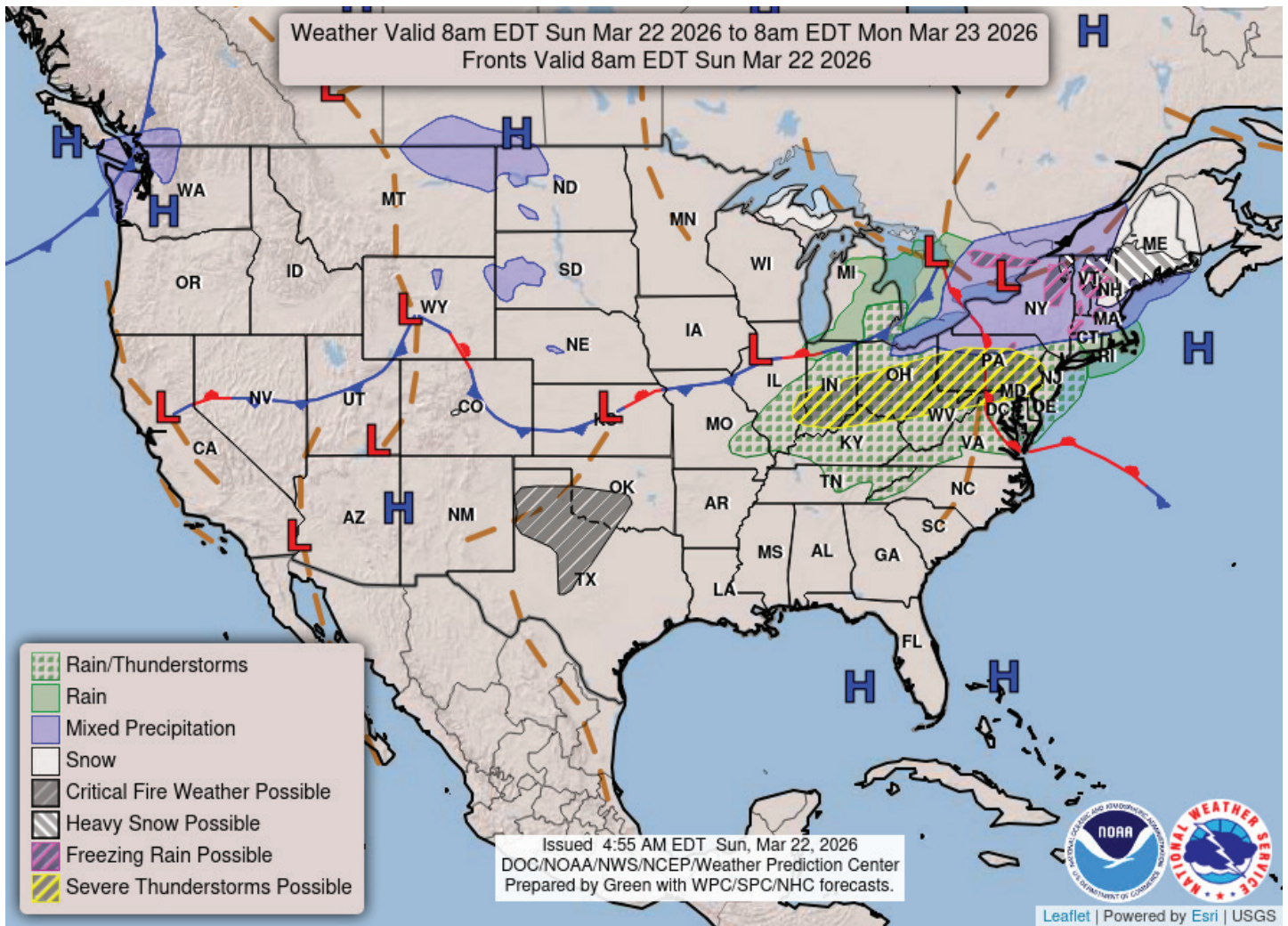
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 72 °F at 2:14 PM
Low Temp: 35 °F at 11:29 PM
Wind: 31 mph at 10:31 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 79 in 1907
Record Low: -16 in 1899
Average High: 45
Average Low: 22
Average Precip in Mar.: 0.58
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.29
Average Precip to date: 1.75
Precip Year to Date: 1.62
Sunset Tonight: 7:46 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:29 am



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Today in Weather History

March 22nd, 1966: The blizzard began on the 22nd in the west, moving southeastward into Nebraska and northeastward across the southeastern part of South Dakota. Winds up to 50 mph caused blowing snow, which reduced visibility to near zero. Seven to 8 inches of snow fell on the plains of South Dakota, with up to 2 feet in the Black Hills. Traffic was paralyzed due to snow-blocked roads. Schools and many businesses were closed. One death was attributed to the storm from exposure and exhaustion. A heart attack indirectly caused one death in Sioux Falls.

March 22nd, 1987: Snowmelt and rainfall raised some rivers and small streams to very high levels in central South Dakota. Lowland flooding around the basins submerged some minor roads and streets. Also, high water levels and ice damaged some railroad bridges between Wakpala and Mahto in Corson County.

March 14-31st, 2009: A stretch of warmer weather occurred from March 14th to 17th, which resulted in high temperatures in the 40s and low 50s. The snow depth in Fargo on the 14th was 15 inches, with a melted water equivalent of 3.10 inches. By the 17th, the snow depth in Fargo had dropped to 6 inches. The snow was followed by a couple of colder days, temporarily slowing down any additional snowmelt. The second period of warmer weather began on March 20th and continued through the 24th. High temperatures again climbed into the 40s and low 50s during this period. Most of the remaining snow in Fargo melted during this stretch of warm weather, with the Fargo snow depth falling from 2 inches to 0.

Conditions were about the same in Grand Forks, with the snow depth dropping to 0 by the 24th. These two warm-ups resulted in a quick response in river levels, especially across the southern Red River Valley and west-central Minnesota. The Red River also rosed, especially in the southern part of the Red River Valley. With all the runoff moving into the river systems, water covered many roads and resulted in numerous road closures. The water covered entire sections of land as well and threatened many homes. A winter storm event on March 24th and 25th brought more snow to the region and a turn to colder temperatures. This resulted in the first crest for many rivers in the southern Red River Valley and west-central Minnesota. However, river levels at most points along the Red River continued to stay high. Another winter storm hit much of the area from March 30th to 31st, dropping up to 2 feet of snow in the southern Red River Valley. This new snow had a lot of moisture, with snow-to-liquid ratios of less than 10 to 1. This set the stage for continued flooding into April and early May. The North Dakota Governor issued a statewide disaster declaration on March 13 in anticipation of spring flooding. Most counties in eastern North Dakota later received a Presidential Disaster Declaration.

1920 — A spectacular display of the Northern Lights was visible as far south as Bradenton FL, El Paso TX, and Fresno CA. At Detroit MI, the display was described so brilliant as to blot out all stars below first magnitude. (22nd-23rd) (The Weather Channel)

1936 — A great flood crested on rivers from Ohio to Maine. The flood claimed 107 lives and caused 270 million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1954 — Six to ten inch rains caused the Chicago River to overflow its banks. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — An intense storm produced heavy snow in the southern and central Rockies, and high winds from southern California to West Texas. Wolf Creek Pass CO received 24 inches of snow, and winds gusted to 69 mph at Ruidoso NM. Blizzard conditions were reported in eastern Colorado. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Rain and high winds battered the Northern Pacific Coast Region, with wind gusts to 78 mph at Ocean Shores WA. The high winds uprooted trees and down power lines. Ten cities in the northeastern U.S. reported new record low temperatures for the date. Eight cities in the central U.S. reported record highs. Southerly winds gusting to 60 mph helped push the mercury at Ottumwa IA to a record warm reading of 83 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Six cities in the Great Lakes Region, and three in southern Texas, reported new record low temperatures for the date, including Alpena MI with a reading of 9 above zero, and Brownsville TX with a reading of 38 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — A surge of arctic air kept temperatures in the teens and 20s during the day in the north central U.S., and heavy snow fell over parts of Montana. Record warmth was reported in the western U.S., and in Alaska. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 94 degrees, and the town of Barrow, located along the arctic coast of Alaska, reported a record high of 20 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

Inadequacy as a Blessing

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to accomplish God's will.

2 Corinthians 3:1-6: 1 Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you?

2 You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all men;

3 being manifested that you are a letter of Christ, cared for by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

4 Such confidence we have through Christ toward God.

5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

6 who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Inadequacy can be a roadblock to doing God's will, deterring us from stepping out in faith. It's not sin to feel insufficient, but we can miss the mark by complacently accepting that attitude.

Even Paul felt inadequate, but he didn't allow his feelings to prevent his sharing the gospel. (See 1 Timothy 1:15-16.) Instead, he allowed his limitations to drive him closer to God. For believers, the correct reaction is prayer and biblical meditation so that our ability to rely on the Lord is strengthened.

God's Spirit enables us to achieve whatever He calls us to do. The disciples followed Jesus for years, but His final instructions left no doubt concerning their need for divine help: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses" (Acts 1:8). Our inadequacy, like that of the disciples, showcases God's ability to do great things with so little. Remember, Moses and David were shepherds and Gideon was least among Israel's men (Judges 6:15), yet the Lord accomplished amazing feats through all three of them.

Our inadequacy can turn out to be a blessing by driving us to greater dependence upon God. Like Paul, we are able to say, "I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

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

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.21.26

18 44 54 55 58 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 13 Hrs 26 Mins 50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.20.26

11 20 51 55 63 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$60,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.21.26

3 11 13 27 52 9

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$19,470,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.21.26

3 14 18 25 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$31,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.21.26

9 29 34 48 58 4

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.21.26

12 28 36 41 59 2

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$133,000,000

NEXT DRAW:

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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News from the **AP** Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

SDHSAA State Tournament
Champion

Class AA=Huron 59, Sioux Falls Lincoln 47

Class A=West Central 66, Sioux Falls Christian 56

Class B=Freeman 61, Castlewood 53

Third Place

Class AA=Sioux Falls Roosevelt 76, Harrisburg 72

Class A=Hamlin 61, Clark-Willow Lake 43

Class B=Wall 58, Lyman 55

Consolation Champion

Class AA=Watertown 64, Brandon Valley 60

Class A=St Thomas More 63, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 40

Class B=De Smet 56, Aberdeen Christian 45

Seventh Place

Class A=Groton 61, Stanley County 43

Class AA=Tea 63, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 51

Class B=Viborg-Hurley 72, Sully Buttes 53

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

US and Iran trade threats of expanding war after strikes near sites tied to nuclear sites

By ALON BERNSTEIN, SAM METZ and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

ARAD, Israel (AP) — Iran and its ally, the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, stepped up their attacks on Israel on Sunday, launching strikes across the country after the United States and Iran threatened to widen their targets in the war in the Middle East, now in its fourth week.

As Israel came under renewed fire, top Israeli leaders traveled to the southern town of Arad, one of two communities near a secretive nuclear research site struck by Iranian missiles late Saturday, wounding scores of people.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu toured the destruction in Arad and said it was a “miracle” no one was killed there. He claimed Israel and the U.S. were well on their way to achieving the war’s goals and implored the international community for more support.

Earlier, President Donald Trump warned the United States will destroy Iran’s power plants if Tehran fails to fully open the Strait of Hormuz, setting a 48-hour deadline on Saturday. Iran’s parliament speaker said if the U.S. follows through on its threat, Tehran will retaliate against American and Israeli energy and wider infrastructure in the region.

The developments signaled the Iran war, which the U.S. and Israel launched on Feb. 28, was moving in a dangerous new direction, despite Trump’s mention last week he was considering “winding down” operations. It has killed hundreds of people, rattled the global economy and sent oil prices surging.

Hezbollah claimed responsibility for an airstrike Sunday that killed a man in northern Israel while Gulf Arab states — including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — said they were intercepting fresh barrages of new Iranian strikes.

Iran responds to Trump’s threat over its Strait of Hormuz closure

Iran has practically closed the Strait of Hormuz, a chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to the rest of

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the world through which roughly one-fifth of the world's supply passes. Attacks on ships and threats of further strikes have stopped nearly all tankers from navigating the strait, compelling some of the world's largest oil producers to make cuts because their crude has nowhere to go.

The blockade is a liability for both the U.S. and its allies in Europe and Asia, who rely heavily on the Persian Gulf supply to meet energy demand and power factories, vehicles and homes. The U.S. lifted some sanctions on Iranian oil at sea to relieve pressure on energy prices.

Trump said if Iran didn't open the strait, the U.S. would destroy its "various POWER PLANTS, STARTING WITH THE BIGGEST ONE FIRST!"

The Iranian parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, responded Sunday on X that if Iran's power plants and infrastructure are targeted, then vital infrastructure across the region — including energy and desalination facilities — would be considered legitimate targets and "irreversibly destroyed."

Separately, Iranian officials on Sunday said they would keep providing safe passage through the strait to vessels from countries other than its enemies.

Nuclear concerns as the war rages

Iran said its strikes in the Negev Desert were in retaliation to an earlier attack on Iran's main nuclear enrichment site in Natanz, according to state-run media.

Tehran hailed the attack as show of strength, even as Israel's military asserts that Iranian missile launches have gradually decreased in frequency since the start of the war.

"If the Israeli regime is unable to intercept missiles in the heavily protected Dimona area, it is, operationally, a sign of entering a new phase of the battle," said Qalibaf, the Iranian parliament speaker.

Dimona is about 20 kilometers (12 miles) west of the nuclear research center, and Arad around 35 kilometers (22 miles) to the north.

Soroka Medical Center, southern Israel's main hospital, received at least 175 wounded from Arad and Dimona, the hospital's deputy director Roy Kessous told The Associated Press.

Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons, though it doesn't confirm or deny their existence. The U.N. nuclear watchdog said on X it had not received reports of damage to the Israeli center or abnormal radiation levels.

Israel denied responsibility for hitting Natanz on Saturday while the Iranian judiciary's official news agency, Mizan, said there was no leakage. The Pentagon declined to comment on the strike at Natanz, which was also hit in the first week of the ongoing war and in the 12-day war last June.

The U.N. watchdog — the International Atomic Energy Agency — has said the bulk of Iran's estimated 972 pounds (441 kilograms) of enriched uranium is elsewhere, beneath the rubble at its Isfahan facility.

Iran says strikes also hit hospital

Iran said that, in addition to Natanz, strikes also hit a hospital in Andimeshk. The Health Ministry reported patients and doctors were evacuated to another city.

Iran's death toll in the war surpassed 1,500 on Saturday, state media reported, citing the ministry. In Israel, 15 people have been killed by Iranian strikes. More than a dozen civilians in the occupied West Bank and Gulf Arab states have been killed in strikes.

The war has also seen noncombat-related accidents, including a U.S. refueling plane crash in Iraq that killed six U.S. service members and a Qatari military helicopter crash on Saturday blamed on a technical malfunction. All seven aboard were killed, Qatari authorities said Sunday.

Hezbollah strike on northern Israel claims first fatality there

The Israeli civilian was killed in the northern town of Misgav Am in what Israel's military said "seemed to be" a rocket attack. Israeli medics said they found the man in his car and released a video showing two vehicles ablaze.

Hezbollah, an ally of Iran, launched strikes on Israel soon after the war erupted, saying it was in retaliation for the killing of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Israel struck back, bombarding Lebanon and targeting Hezbollah in deadly airstrikes, expanding its presence in southern Lebanon and amassing more troops near the border.

Fighting in southern Lebanese towns have intensified in recent days as Israel continues its ground op-

erations. Israel on Sunday expanded its list of targets to include all bridges over the Litani River, which Defense Minister Israel Katz said Hezbollah is using to move fighters and weapons into southern Lebanon. It later struck the Qasmiyeh bridge near Tyre.

Katz also ordered the military to accelerate its destruction of Lebanese homes near Israel's northern border as part of a strategy he described as aligned with Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza.

After Hezbollah fired rockets into Israel on March 2, the Israeli military launched an offensive that Lebanese authorities say have killed over 1,000 people and displaced over 1 million. Hezbollah has fired hundreds of rockets into Israel.

Israeli military spokesperson Avichay Adraee issued a warning an hour before the Qasmiyeh bridge near the coastal city of Tyre was struck.

Lebanese authorities say Israel's strikes have killed more than 1,000 people and displaced more than 1 million.

Democrats sharpen criticism of Vance as they look past Trump to the 2028 presidential campaign

By JULIE CARR SMYTH and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

FAIRFIELD, Ohio (AP) — Although President Donald Trump is the top Democratic nemesis, some of the party's most ambitious leaders are increasingly looking past him and at Vice President JD Vance.

In the latest example, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear traveled to Vance's home county in Ohio, where on Saturday night he said the vice president had abandoned the communities that he wrote about in the memoir that made him famous.

Beshear said "Hillbilly Elegy," which detailed Vance's hardscrabble upbringing, had "trafficked in tired stereotypes."

"His book 'Hillbilly Elegy' was really hillbilly hate," the governor said at a Democratic fundraiser in Butler County. "It is poverty tourism, because he ain't from Appalachia."

The broadside was not only a sign of Beshear's own potential presidential aspirations, but a reflection of Vance's status as the Republican heir apparent to the coalition that twice elected Trump to the White House.

"With every day that passes, we get closer to a day when Donald Trump is no longer president. And we need to prepare for that day," said Lis Smith, a Democratic strategist. "Right now, JD Vance is a clear front-runner for the 2028 nomination. And so we should begin defining him — not in 2027, not in 2028 — but today."

Vance spokesperson Taylor Van Kirk brushed off Beshear's criticism.

"Every time Andy Beshear attacks the vice president to try to get himself publicity, he ends up humiliating himself in the process, but maybe that's something he's into?" she said.

An early foil for Democratic contenders

U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna of California was among the first Democrats to begin focusing on Vance last year. Khanna stopped at the City Club of Cleveland and Yale University, where he and Vance studied law, and gave speeches that attempted to cast Vance as more extreme than Trump.

Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, another potential presidential contender in 2028, singled out Vance in November while making the argument that the Trump administration did not care about working people.

"At least with Donald Trump, he's transparent about that," Shapiro said. "JD Vance is a total phony."

Some Democrats have coalesced around California Gov. Gavin Newsom as a strong candidate because of his aggressive strategy in going after Republicans.

He coined the nickname "JD 'Just Dance' Vance" on social media, and he has mocked the vice president's appearance, saying Vance "grew a beard and lost his spine."

Smith, the strategist who led Pete Buttigieg's 2020 presidential campaign and still works with the former Biden administration transportation secretary, said every line of criticism of Vance is an audition.

"There's definitely value in taking on Vance to show Democrats, hey, this could be me on the debate stage against him," said Smith.

Vance often invokes his working-class roots

The vice president was born and raised in Butler County's Middletown, and he rose to prominence with the publication of "Hillbilly Elegy" in 2016. The book earned Vance a reputation as someone who could help explain Trump's appeal in middle America, especially among the working class, rural white voters who helped Trump win the presidency.

Vance carried that reputation to the U.S. Senate, winning election in 2022, and later to the vice presidency. That same background is likely to be central to any future presidential run — and it is precisely what Democrats are now working to undercut.

At Saturday's Democratic fundraiser, the mere mention of Vance's name drew a chorus of boos from the audience.

"I don't think he's got the magic that everybody looks at with Trump," said Theresa Vacheresse, a retired physician and business owner who attended the event. "I think when Trump is gone, the Democrats might have a chance. My god, I hope so."

The focus on Vance is not unusual for a vice president widely seen as a potential future nominee, particularly one as young as 41. Republicans went after Kamala Harris early in her tenure under President Joe Biden to undermine her political future.

Jamal Simmons, Harris' communications director in 2022 and 2023, said vice presidents can be vulnerable.

"The party is built to defend the president more than it is the vice president," he said. "The vice president's kind of out there on their own, to defend themselves, and find friends where they can."

Republicans, including Vance, frequently tied Harris to some of the Democratic administration's most politically difficult issues, such as immigration and border security.

"Being vice president is a very mixed blessing," said David Axelrod, who was a top adviser to Democratic President Barack Obama. "You often don't have the assets of the president, but you inherit all of the president's record. The good, the bad, and the ugly."

Beshear has had success in Trump country

Beshear is the rare Democrat to lead a red state, and he is positioning himself as someone who can reach voters who have tuned out his party.

He said Democrats can "actually go and win back those voters that JD Vance is so condescending to" if they stay focused on Americans' basic needs such as affordable health care and public safety.

"We've gotta start talking to people and not at them," he said. "That's how I won counties in eastern Kentucky that normally vote for Republicans by large margins — including Breathitt County. That's the county JD Vance pretends to be from. Donald Trump won it by 59 points. I won it by 22 points the year earlier."

The audience appeared delighted with Beshear's message.

"I think he's first-rate," said Mark Kaplan, who lives in Butler County. "What he's got is compassion, empathy, charisma and intellect, but he's also down-to-earth."

Goggia wins to lock up World Cup super-G title. Aicher further closes gap on overall leader Shiffrin

KVITFJELL, Norway (AP) — Sofia Goggia put the crystal globe on the ground, lay down and kissed the snow.

Earlier, the Italian star was in tears when she finished her winning run.

Goggia celebrated an emotional victory Sunday, winning her third super-G of the season at the World Cup finals to secure the discipline title.

"I had a really good, consistent season in super-G, so I think this globe is super well-deserved," said the Italian, adding that the super-G title made her a "more complete skier" after previously winning four season titles and the 2018 Olympic gold medal in downhill.

It was Goggia's 10th win in a super-G and 29th overall.

Sunday's race also saw Emma Aicher further close the gap to overall leader Mikaela Shiffrin.

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Aicher, the only skier other than Goggia with multiple super-G wins this season, started the race 95 points behind the American following her fifth place in Saturday's downhill, which Shiffrin sat out.

Aicher had a solid run to place fourth and gain 50 points.

"It doesn't help me when I start thinking about those points. I have to ski well, sometimes I do, sometimes I don't," said the German, who still regards Shiffrin the strong favorite for the overall title.

"I have done so much right this year already that the rest will only be a bonus," said the 22-year-old Aicher, who was 15th in the overall standings last year.

Racing in only her third super-G this season, Shiffrin was among the late starters and came in 2.78 off the pace in 22nd and didn't add to her tally because only the top 15 finishers get points in a race at the finals.

The American star now carries a 45-point lead into the last two races of the season – a slalom on Tuesday and a GS the following day – in her chase for a record-equaling sixth overall title. A race win is worth 100 points.

Shiffrin was joined for the pre-race course inspection by her fiancé, former overall champion Aleksander Aamodt Kilde.

The Norwegian ended his season before the Olympics to further recover from a shoulder injury, but attended the finals as one of the forerunners, who test a course shortly before a race starts.

Shiffrin won five super-Gs in her career and the World Cup and world titles in that discipline in 2019, but has been hardly competing in speed events and mainly focusing on slalom and GS following two crashes in 2024.

On Sunday, Goggia confirmed her dominance in super-G this season.

A sixth place would have been enough for the Italian, who started the race with a commanding lead in the standings over her only remaining challenger, New Zealand's Alice Robinson.

But Goggia didn't hold back and used a trademark gutsy run down the Olympiabakken.

"When you have pressure, you have to handle it. I'm happy for the outcome," she said.

Robinson later had a wild run with costly mistakes and never threatened Goggia's lead, finishing 2.41 seconds off the pace.

Robinson, who won the super-G season opener in December and had two more podium results, trailed Goggia by 163 points in the final discipline standings.

Former world champion Corinne Suter of Switzerland was 0.32 seconds behind in second and Aicher's German teammate Kira Weidle-Winkelmann trailed by 0.60 in third.

Goggia's win marked the third Italian victory from three races at the finals this weekend, after Laura Pirovano won the downhill and secured that discipline title on Saturday and Dominik Paris won the men's downhill.

Ilka Štuhec, the 2017 and 2019 world downhill champion, finished 2.56 behind Goggia in the Slovenian's last race of her career.

Štuhec won 11 World Cup races between 2016 and 2023.

Women farmworkers who built their own fight against sexual assault cope with Chavez allegations

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, DORANY PINEDA and CLAIRE SAVAGE undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Almost two decades ago, legendary labor rights activist Dolores Huerta joined Mónica Ramírez at a Chicago event to promote the Bandana Project, a campaign Ramírez had launched to raise awareness about sexual violence against women farmworkers.

Huerta spoke there about the need to educate women farmworkers about their rights and empower them to speak out about sexual exploitation that is both widespread and underreported among agricultural field workers. Little did anyone know at the time that Huerta herself had been sexually abused at the hands of icon César Chavez, who in 1962 co-founded the organization now known the United Farm Workers with Huerta.

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The allegations against Chavez by Huerta and other women and girls show that the culture of fear and intimidation that enables sexual abuse in agricultural fields had also for many years existed within top ranks of the male-dominated labor movement that fought for farmworker rights.

At the same time, advocates like Ramírez say the decision by Huerta and other women to speak out — first revealing their allegations to the New York Times — is a powerful sign that things have changed since Chavez's time. In the three decades since Chavez died in 1993, the network of grassroots organizations led by women farmworkers has grown, pushing for federal and state investigations into sexual abuse on farms and laws mandating sexual harassment training, as well as securing commitments from growers and produce buyers to adopt policies for women, among other gains.

To Ramírez, Chavez's alleged abuse feels like a betrayal because she and other advocates admired him and credited him with inspiring the movement that galvanized their own organizing efforts. But his shattered legacy does not erase the gains women farmworkers and advocates have made on their own.

"It feels a little bit bewildering because so many of us have grown up looking up to César Chavez," said Ramírez, founder and president of the advocacy group Justice for Migrant Women whose own parents were migrant farmworkers in Ohio. "But we have to remind each other that this is a long-standing movement that is made of many, many people, including women leaders."

Stepped-up enforcement

Some 25% of the country's more than 1 million hired farm workers are women, according to government figures, although estimates on the population of agricultural workers vary. The prevalence of sexual harassment and abuse is difficult to quantify because it often goes unreported, but in field surveys conducted by groups Human Rights Watch, the Southern Poverty Law Center and the University of California-Santa Cruz, some 80% or more of women crop workers have reported some form of sexual harassment.

A watershed moment in building awareness came in 1999 when the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the federal agency that enforces anti-discrimination laws in the workplace, won a \$1.85 million settlement against a major U.S. lettuce grower on behalf a California worker who was subjected to sexual advances by her managers and fired when she complained.

That case grew out of years of outreach efforts by EEOC investigator Bill Tamayo to farmworker labor groups, including Líderes Campesinas, a women-led group that had been organizing for years. Women described sexual abuse so prevalent that they often spoke of "fields of panties" because of what they had to do to get and keep their jobs.

Tamayo, who discussed his work in the 2013 PBS documentary "Rape in the Fields" that helped draw attention to the issue, said Líderes Campesinas and other grassroots groups became the EEOC's "eyes and ears" in the efforts to educate workers about their rights and file complaints. Since then, the EEOC has secured millions more in compensation from farmworkers who have reported sexual harassment or abuse.

Líderes Campesinas, which grew out of a Coachella Valley group that once advocated for a local elementary school to be named after Chavez, said its members are "heartbroken" for the survivors of abuse but that "the pursuit of social justice never was, nor ever will be attributed to one individual."

Gains won — and some lost

It's hard to say how much sexual violence against women farmworkers has eased as a result of government enforcement and growing outreach and educational efforts. Fear, isolation in the fields, language barriers, and immigration status continue to make farmworkers particularly vulnerable to exploitation. More than 40% of agricultural workers had no work authorization between 2020 and 2022, according to government estimates, and many are in the country on H2-A visas that are tied to their employment, increasing their fear of dismissal and deportation if they speak out.

Darlene Tenes, executive director of Farmworker Caravan, an advocacy group in California, said that during meetings, majorities of women still report being victims of sexual abuse, and that the Trump administration's immigration crackdown has forced them to cancel education conferences and try to visit communities directly to quietly provide resources.

Still, in regions where the most robust legal protections and protective programs have been put into place, women farmworkers say things have started to improve.

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Nelly Rodriguez said sexual abuse was “bread and butter” when she worked the fields decades ago, but she didn’t fully understand her rights until she joined the Florida-based Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which runs the Fair Food Program, a partnership with major produce buyers including Walmart and McDonald’s that pledge to source food from growers who have entered into a legally binding agreement to abide by a code of conduct.

That code of conduct includes sexual harassment training and a system for investigating complaints and holding perpetrators accountable. It also requires erecting moveable bathrooms near fields — a game changer for women who often are forced to accept rides from managers to faraway bathrooms and assaulted on the way, Rodriguez said.

Breaking the taboo

For many women advocates, the biggest difference has been breaking the taboo in farm worker communities about even speaking about sexual abuse.

Maria Ines Catalan, who worked packing broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce in Monterey, California from 1988 to 1994, said it was a time of significant improvements for farmworkers who gained regulatory guarantees such as water and bathroom breaks. But nothing was ever said about the sexual abuse Catalan said was routine and that she herself endured, remembering how foremen in packing machines would pass by women in small spaces, touch them and call it an accident.

“You had to stay quiet,” she said.

That has changed.

“That is precisely what nonprofit organizations are currently doing: providing information, making farmworkers aware of their rights, and offering referrals — letting them know that they can now speak out,” Catalan said.

In her statement saying that Chavez raped her in the 1960s, Huerta, now 96 years old, said she kept her secret for so long because she feared that “exposing the truth would hurt the farmworker movement” but today, she understands that she is a “survivor — of violence, of sexual abuse, of domineering men who saw me, and other women, as property, or things to control.”

Patricia Campos-Medina, executive director of the Worker Institute at Cornell University, said the allegations against Chavez are a reminder that the labor movement “is not immune” to abuses of power and for her, it was especially painful that Huerta “had to keep that secret for that long so that she could keep her respectability within the movement.”

“You cannot expect the victim to be the one that holds the person accountable, because it takes a lot of personal courage,” Campos-Medina said. “I can imagine when she was trying to co-create this union with him, how much it would have cost her to speak up.”

Momentum grows after #MeToo

When Ramírez first started her legal advocacy work in Florida in 2003, she said both men and women in the movement dismissed allegations of sexual abuse as “gossip” or insisted that with limited resources, they need to focus on bigger issues that affected the majority of workers.

But by the time the #MeToo movement erupted globally in 2017, farmworker women had been speaking out for years, albeit with much less notice. Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, a national organization that Ramírez co-led at the time, wrote an open letter of solidarity with Hollywood women that went viral and further thrust the plight of farmworker women into the national spotlight.

The “Dear Sisters” letter, as it is known, and the longstanding efforts by women-led farmworker groups, were a key driver behind the TIME’S UP Legal Defense Fund, which provides legal aid to low-income women who are victims of sexual harassment and abuse, said Jennifer Mondino, the director of the fund, run by the National Women’s Law Center.

Mily Treviño-Sauceda, a former farmworker and executive director of the Alianza Nacional de Campesinas, said she was angry when she heard about the allegations against Chavez. It made her think about her own experiences with sexual harassment and the countless stories she’s heard from other women the last three decades working on this issue and the backlash she and other advocates have received.

"We've been accused of so many different things and that has not stopped us," she said. Ramírez said she believes the #MeToo movement helped give victims, including Huerta, the language to be able to speak about abuse.

"Do I think it's still a widespread problem? Yes. Do I think that there are many survivors who do not feel like they can come forward? Yes," she said. "But farmworker women have exerted their power and shown their leadership on this issue, and I don't want that to get lost."

France holds the final round of municipal elections ahead of 2027 presidential race

By THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French voters returned to the polls Sunday for the second and final round of municipal elections in over 1,500 communes.

The vote is a test of the balance of power on France's local political map before the 2027 presidential race begins to take shape. It is also a measure of whether the far right can convert national momentum into control of major cities, where it has often struggled to break through.

The most closely watched contests are concentrated in major cities after a first round that left France's traditional left and right competitive, the far right strongly placed in several urban races, and President Emmanuel Macron's Renaissance movement keeping a low profile in many of the most closely watched races.

After days of mergers, withdrawals and tactical deals between lists, three-way races remain common in the runoff.

Paris is one of the biggest prizes. Emmanuel Grégoire, heading a united left and green list, finished first in the opening round with 37.98% of the vote, ahead of conservative Rachida Dati on 25.46%, while La France Insoumise candidate Sophia Chikirou stayed in the race, setting up a volatile contest.

At a polling station in Paris, some voters said turnout itself could prove decisive. "When things are a bit tense between two candidates, it's abstention that can make the difference," said Loïc Février, 51, a Paris resident. "If we ever lose this right to vote, it will be very, very hard to get it back."

Marseille is another marquee battle, where incumbent left-wing Mayor Benoît Payan led with 36.70%, only narrowly ahead of far-right candidate Franck Allisio on 35.02%, with Martine Vassal of the right also still in play.

In Lyon, the runoff is shaping up as a direct duel after ecologist incumbent Grégory Doucet took 37.36% in the first round, just ahead of centrist challenger Jean-Michel Aulas on 36.78%.

Toulouse will test the appeal of LFI in a large city after François Piquemal joined forces with the broader left to try to unseat conservative Mayor Jean-Luc Moudenc, who led the first round with 37.23%.

Other large-city contests will also be watched closely.

In Nice, Eric Ciotti led the first round with 43.43%, ahead of Christian Estrosi on 30.92%, highlighting a split on the right between Estrosi's more mainstream conservative camp and Ciotti, who is aligned with the far right.

In Nantes, Socialist Mayor Johanna Rolland starts the runoff ahead of her right-wing challenger, while Bordeaux remains open after incumbent Pierre Hurmic topped a fragmented field.

The mood around the vote in Paris mixed familiarity with unease. "I've never seen very quiet elections," said Valérie Pollet, 64. "Verbal violence, we are used to it ... but when I look at what happens in the U.S., I think here it's quiet in comparison."

Others linked Sunday's vote to a darker international backdrop and to the presidential race looming next year. "We have war in Ukraine, war in Gaza, war in the Middle East," said Elena Van Langhenhoven, 81. "And France, will it see a major shift next year, in the presidential elections? It's horrendous."

Cast a ballot and wait for the plane.

In Alaska, a grace period for ballots is seen as a necessity

By BECKY BOHRER Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — The tiny Alaska Native village of Beaver is about 40 minutes — by plane — from the nearest city. Its roughly 50 residents rely on weekday flights for mail and many of their basic supplies, from groceries to Amazon deliveries of everyday household items.

Air service plays an outsize role in the nation's most expansive state, where most communities rely on flights for year-round access. Planes also play a critical role in elections, getting voting materials and ballots to and from rural precincts such as Beaver and in delivering ballots for thousands of Alaskans who vote by mail — some in places where in-person voting is not available.

The vast distances and relative isolation of so many communities make Alaska unique and are why its residents have a significant interest in arguments taking place Monday before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Many here worry that a case from Mississippi challenging whether ballots received after Election Day can be counted in federal elections could end Alaska's practice of accepting late-arriving ballots. Alaska counts ballots if they are postmarked by Election Day and received within 10 days, or 15 days for overseas voters in general elections.

"These processes have been in place for a long time just to ensure that our ballots are counted," said Rhonda Pitka, a poll worker and first chief in Beaver, which sits along the Yukon River 110 miles (177 kilometers) north of Fairbanks.

If the court decides ballots in all states must be received by Election Day, she said, "They'll be disenfranchising thousands of people — thousands of people in these rural communities. It's just basically saying that their votes don't count, and that's a real shame."

Some ballots already arrive late

Alaska is one of 14 states that allow all mailed ballots postmarked by Election Day to arrive days or weeks later and be counted, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Voting Rights Lab. An additional 15 provide grace periods for military and overseas ballots.

But Alaska's geography, weather and great distances between communities — Alaska is more than twice the size of Texas, the nation's second-largest state — raise the stakes for voters. The unusual way the state counts its votes also makes a grace period important, advocates say.

Under Alaska's ranked-choice system for general elections, voters in small rural precincts call in voters' first choices to a regional election office. All ballots, however, ultimately are flown to the state Division of Elections in the capital, Juneau. There, the races not won outright are tabulated to determine a winner.

Even with Alaska's current 10-day grace period, ballots from some villages in 2022 were not fully counted because of mail delays. They arrived too late for tabulations in Juneau, 15 days after Election Day.

If the Supreme Court rules that ballots cannot be counted if they arrive at election offices after Election Day, scores of Alaska voters could be affected. About 50,000 Alaskans voted by mail in the 2024 presidential election.

"I think there's probably no other state where this ruling could have a more detrimental impact than ours," Alaska's senior U.S. senator, Republican Lisa Murkowski said in an interview.

Murkowski sees the case — a challenge by the Republican National Committee and others to Mississippi's allowance of late-arriving ballots — as an effort to end voting by mail nationwide.

'Seeing a level of voter intimidation'

The RNC argues such grace periods improperly extend elections for federal office, but Mississippi responded that no voting occurs after Election Day — only the delivery and counting of already completed ballots.

The Supreme Court will hear arguments as the U.S. Senate is debating legislation being pushed by President Donald Trump that would require people to show proof-of-citizenship to register to vote and a photo ID to cast a ballot.

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Taken together, Murkowski said such efforts could discourage people from voting.

"I think we're seeing a level of voter intimidation, I'll just say it," she said. "I feel very, very strongly that the effort that we should be making at the federal level is to do all that we can to make our elections accessible, fair and transparent for every lawful voter out there."

Alaska's other congressional members, Rep. Nick Begich and Sen. Dan Sullivan, both Republican allies of Trump who are seeking reelection this year, support the SAVE America Act now before the Senate. But they also said they want to ensure that ballots properly cast on or before Election Day get counted.

"We'll see what the courts choose to do on that issue, but I do think that we need to allow for time for ballots to come in from the rural parts of our state," Begich said during a recent visit to Juneau.

Alaska officials highlight challenges to the court

A court filing in the Mississippi case by Alaska Attorney General Stephen Cox and Solicitor General Jenna Lorence did not take sides but outlined geographic and logistical challenges to holding elections in Alaska.

In Atkasuk, on Alaska's North Slope, poll workers counted votes on election night in 2024, tallies they would normally relay by phone to election division officials. But the filing said they could not get through and "chose what they saw as the next best solution — they placed the ballots and tally sheets into a secure package and mailed them to the Division, who did not receive them until nine days later."

The filing seeks clarity from the Supreme Court, particularly around what it means for ballots to be received by Election Day.

While it is clear when a ballot is cast, "when certain ballots are actually 'received' is open to different interpretations, especially given the connectivity challenges for Alaska's far-flung boroughs," Cox and Lorence wrote.

Effect on Native voters

Lawyers with the Native American Rights Fund and Great Lakes Indigenous Law Center said in filings with the court that limited postal service in rural areas means that some ballots might not be postmarked until they reach Anchorage or Juneau, which can take days.

In the 2022 general election, between 55% and 78% of absentee ballots from the state House districts spanning from the Aleutian Islands up the western coast to the vast North Slope arrived at an election office after Election Day, they wrote. Statewide, about 20% of all absentee ballots in that election were received after Election Day.

Requiring ballots to be received by Election Day, they warned, would "disproportionately disenfranchise" Alaska Native voters. The lawyers represent the National Congress of American Indians, Native Vote Washington and the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Michelle Sparck, director of Get Out the Native Vote, a nonpartisan voting rights advocacy group affiliated with the Alaska Federation of Natives, worries about creating confusion and fear among voters.

She sees the case before the Supreme Court and the Republican SAVE Act as "a multipronged attempt to take control or wrest control of elections away from states." Alaska, she said, already has enough inherent barriers for many voters.

"There is a minute record of election fraud — not at the rate that requires this heavy-handed response through the legislature and the Supreme Court," she said.

Welcome to allergy season. Here's how to protect yourself

By KENYA HUNTER AP Health Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Allergy season can be miserable for tens of millions of Americans when trees, grass, and other pollens cause runny noses, itchy eyes, coughing and sneezing.

Where you live, what you're allergic to and your lifestyle can make a big difference when it comes to the severity of your allergies. Experts say climate change is leading to longer and more intense allergy seasons, but also point out that treatments for seasonal allergies have become more effective over the last decade.

Here are some tips from experts to keep allergy symptoms at bay — maybe even enough to allow you to enjoy the outdoors.

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New cities top the list of 'allergy capitals'

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America issues an annual ranking of the most challenging cities to live in if you have allergies, based on over-the-counter medicine use, pollen counts and the number of available allergy specialists.

This year, the top five cities are: Boise, Idaho; San Diego; Tulsa, Oklahoma; Provo, Utah; and Rochester, New York.

Pollen helps plants reproduce — and makes us miserable

Pollen is the powdery substance made by seed-producing plants and trees that is part of their reproductive process. Earlier in the spring, tree pollen is the main culprit. After that grasses pollinate, followed by weeds in the late summer and early fall.

Some of the most common tree pollens that cause allergies include birch, cedar, cottonwood, maple, elm, oak and walnut, according to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. Grasses that cause symptoms include Bermuda, Johnson, rye and Kentucky bluegrass.

Here's how to track pollen levels

Pollen trackers can help you decide when to go outside. The American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology tracks levels through a network of counting stations across the U.S. Counts are available at its website and via email.

The first step is to try to avoid pollen altogether

The best and first step to controlling allergies is avoiding exposure. Keep the windows in your car and your home closed, even when it's nice outside.

If you go outside, wearing long sleeves can keep pollen off your skin to help ward off allergic reactions, said Dr. James Baker, an allergist at the University of Michigan. It also provides some sun protection, he added.

When you get home, change your clothes and shower daily to ensure all the pollen is off of you — including your hair. If you can't wash your hair every day, try covering it when you go outside with a hat or scarf. Don't get in the bed with your outside clothes on, because the pollen will follow.

It's also useful to rinse your eyes and nose with saline to remove any pollen, experts said. And the same masks that got us through the pandemic can protect you from allergies — though they won't help with eye symptoms.

How to relieve allergy symptoms

Over-the-counter nasal sprays are among the most effective treatments for seasonal allergies, experts said.

But patients often use them incorrectly, irritating parts of the nose, said Dr. Kathleen May, an allergist at Augusta University in Georgia. She suggested angling the nozzle outward toward your ear rather than sticking it straight up your nose.

Over-the-counter allergy pills like Claritin, Allegra and Zyrtec are helpful, but may not be as effective as quickly since they're taken by mouth, experts said.

If your allergy symptoms are impacting your quality of life, like causing you to lose sleep or lose focus at work or school, it might be time to consider making an appointment with an allergist. There are medications that can train your immune system not to overreact to allergens.

Some remedies for allergy relief that have been circulating on social media or suggested by celebrities — like incorporating local honey into your diet to expose yourself to pollen — have been debunked.

Dr. Shyam Joshi, an allergist at Oregon Health and Science University, said that's because the flowers that bees pollinate typically don't contain the airborne pollen that causes allergy symptoms.

Is allergy season changing?

Winters are milder and growing seasons are longer as the climate is changing, meaning there's more opportunity for pollen to stay in the air, resulting in longer and more severe allergy seasons.

Last year was one of the most intense allergy seasons on record, particularly in the Southeast U.S.

Trump touted bigger tax refunds this year, but Americans will likely spend them on gas

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy was supposed to start the year with a bang, fueled by an unusually large jump in tax refunds from President Donald Trump's tax cut legislation. Yet spiking gas prices are on track to eat up those refunds, leaving most Americans with little extra to spend.

"Next spring is projected to be the largest tax refund season of all time," Trump said in a prime-time speech in December that was intended to address voters' concerns about the economy and stubbornly high prices.

But that was before the Iran war, which began Feb. 28. Oil and gas prices have soared since then, with the nationwide average price of gas reaching \$3.94 Sunday, up more than a dollar from just a month earlier.

Gas prices are likely to remain elevated for some time, even if the war ends soon, because shipping and production have been disrupted and will take time to recover. Economists now expect slower growth this spring and for the year as a whole, as dollars that are spent on gas are less likely to be used for restaurant meals, new clothes, or entertainment.

Lower and middle-income households are likely to be hit particularly hard, because they receive lower refunds, while spending a greater proportion of their earnings on gas.

"The energy shock is to going to hit those who have the least cushion," said Alex Jacquez, chief of policy at the left-leaning Groundwork Collaborative and a former economist in the Biden White House. "And it doesn't look like those tax refunds are going to be here to save them."

Neale Mahoney, director of the Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, calculates that gas prices could peak in May at \$4.36 a gallon, based on oil price forecasts by Goldman Sachs, followed by slow declines for the rest of the year. The notion that gas prices decline much more slowly than they rise is so ingrained among economists that they refer to it as the "rocket and feathers" phenomenon.

In that scenario, the average household would pay \$740 more in gas this year, nearly equal to the \$748 increase in refunds that the Tax Foundation has estimated the average household will receive.

Through March 6, refunds have risen by much less than that, according to IRS data: They have averaged \$3,676, up \$352 from \$3,324 in 2025. Still, average refunds could rise as more complex returns are filed.

Other estimates show similar impacts. Economists at Oxford Economics, a consulting firm, estimate that if gas prices average \$3.70 a gallon all year, it will cost consumers about \$70 billion — more than the \$60 billion in increased tax refunds.

The gas price spike comes with many consumers already in a precarious position, particularly compared to 2022, when gas prices also soared because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At that time, many households still had fattened bank accounts from pandemic-era stimulus payments and companies were hiring rapidly and sharply lifting pay to attract workers.

Now, hiring is nearly at a standstill and Americans' saving rate has steadily fallen in the past few years as many households borrow more to sustain their spending.

"When you start looking across the perspective from a consumer side, you're seeing people who have maxed out their credit cards, are using 'buy now, pay later' to purchase their groceries," said Julie Margetta Morgan, president of The Century Foundation, a think tank. "They're making it work for now, but that can fall apart quite quickly."

The impact will likely worsen the "K-shaped" narrative around the U.S. economy, analysts said, in which higher income households have fared better than lower-income households. The bottom 10% of earners spend nearly 4% of their incomes on gasoline, Pantheon Macroeconomics estimates, while the top 10% spend just 1.5%.

For now, most analysts still expect the U.S. economy to expand this year, even if more slowly, given the gas price shock. Higher gas prices will likely worsen inflation in the short run, but over time weaker spending will also slow growth.

American consumers and businesses have repeatedly shaken off shocks since the pandemic — soaring

inflation, rising interest rates, tariffs — and continued to spend, defying concerns that the economy would tip into recession. Many economists note that the proportion of their incomes that Americans spend on gas and other energy has fallen significantly compared with a decade ago.

Data from the Bank of America Institute, released Friday, showed that spending on gas on the bank's credit and debit cards shot 14.4% higher in the week ended March 14 compared with a year ago. Before the war, such spending was running 5% below the previous year, a benefit to consumers.

Spending on discretionary items — restaurant meals, electronics, and travel — is still growing, the institute said, evidence of consumer resilience. But there is little sign it is accelerating, as many economists had hoped.

"The longer these gasoline prices persist, the more that will gradually sap consumer discretionary spending," said David Tinsley, senior economist at the institute.

Other analysts expect growth will slow because of the war. Bernard Yaros and Michael Pearce, economists at Oxford Economics, forecast that the U.S. economy will grow just 1.9% this year, down from an earlier estimate of 2.5%.

"We had anticipated a lift in spending from a bumper tax refund season," they wrote, "but the rise in gasoline prices, if sustained, would more than offset that boost."

What to know about Diego Garcia after Iran targets the remote island's key US military base

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Iran has launched missiles at Diego Garcia, an Indian Ocean island that is home to a strategic U.K.-U.S. military base.

Britain condemned "Iran's reckless attacks" after the unsuccessful attempt to hit the base. It's unclear how close the missiles came to the island, which is about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) from Iran.

Here is what to know about the remote but strategic base.

Hub for US operations

The United States has described the Diego Garcia base as "an all but indispensable platform" for security operations in the Middle East, South Asia and East Africa.

Home to about 2,500 mostly American personnel, it has supported U.S. military operations from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2008, the U.S. acknowledged that it also had been used for clandestine rendition flights of terror suspects.

The U.S. deployed several nuclear-capable B-2 Spirit bombers to Diego Garcia last year amid an intense airstrike campaign targeting Yemen's Houthi rebels.

Britain initially refused to let the base be used for U.S-Israeli attacks on Iran, but after Iran lashed out at its neighbors, the United Kingdom said American bombers could use Diego Garcia and another British base to attack Iran's missile sites. On Friday, the U.K. government said that includes sites being used to attack ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

The U.K. says that the British bases can only be used for "specific and limited defensive operations."

But Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on X that U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer "is putting British lives in danger by allowing UK bases to be used for aggression against Iran."

Iran previously has put a self-imposed limit on its ballistic missile program, limiting their range to 1,240 miles (2,000 kilometers). Diego Garcia is well outside that range. However, U.S. officials long have alleged Iran's space program could allow it to build intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Justin Bronk, a senior research fellow at defense think tank the Royal United Services Institute, said that the attempt to hit Diego Garcia may have involved improvised use of Iran's Simorgh space launch rocket, "which could offer greater range as a ballistic missile," though at the cost of reduced accuracy.

A contested island chain

Diego Garcia is part of the Chagos Archipelago, a chain of more than 60 islands in the middle of the

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Indian Ocean off the tip of India. The islands have been under British control since 1814, when they were ceded by France.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Britain evicted as many as 2,000 people from Diego Garcia, so the U.S. military could build the base there.

In recent years, criticism has mounted 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 urged the U.K. to end its "colonial administration" of the islands and transfer sovereignty to Mauritius.

Trump criticism

After long negotiations, the U.K. government struck a deal last year with Mauritius to hand over sovereignty of the islands. Britain would then lease back the Diego Garcia base for at least 99 years.

The U.K. government says that will safeguard the future of the base, which is vulnerable to legal challenges. But the agreement has been criticized by many British opposition politicians, who say giving up the islands puts them at risk of interference by China and Russia.

Some of the displaced Chagos islanders and their descendants also have challenged the deal, saying they weren't consulted and it leaves them unclear on whether they will ever be allowed to return to their homeland.

The U.S. administration initially welcomed the deal, but U.S. President Donald Trump changed his mind in January, calling it "an act of GREAT STUPIDITY" on his social media platform Truth Social.

Starmer's initial refusal to let the U.S. attack Iran from Diego Garcia further angered Trump, who said earlier this month that "the U.K. has been very, very uncooperative with that stupid island that they have."

Passage of the U.K.-Mauritius deal through Parliament has been put on hold until U.S. support can be regained.

Slovenia's governing liberals face right-wing populists in a tight parliamentary election

By ALI ZERDIN Associated Press

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (AP) — Voters in Slovenia headed to the polls on Sunday in a highly contested parliamentary election that pits the governing liberals against right-wing populists in a vote that will decide whether the small European Union nation stays on its liberal course or sways toward the right.

The race is expected to be tight and follows a campaign rocked by allegations of foreign interference that stunned the traditionally moderate EU country.

The vote comes down to two main players: Prime Minister Robert Golob's Freedom Movement and the right-wing Slovenian Democratic Party, or SDS, led by three-time premier Janez Jansa, a populist-style politician and an admirer of U.S. President Donald Trump.

Who wins will resonate wider in the 27-member EU bloc.

Golob's government has been a strong liberal voice in the bloc while a victory of Jansa — also a close ally of nationalist Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán — would strengthen Europe's surging populist groups.

"Although Slovenia is a small Balkan country, the elections taking place there could be seen as another sign of the rise of illiberal tendencies in Europe," Helen Levy, a researcher at the Robert Schuman Foundation, wrote in an analysis last month.

Slovenian sociologist Samo Uhan told The Associated Press that "the biggest differences between the government and the opposition are reflected in their understanding of global developments."

Slovenia's top two parties have been running neck and neck in recent polls and analysts predict that no party would have a clear majority in the 90-member parliament, which would turn smaller parties into kingmakers.

The outcome "is completely uncertain, which is nothing unusual for Slovenia as the electorate has always been polarized," Uhan said.

Further whipping up the divisions have been claims, first made by a group of activists and journalists, that

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a string of secret video recordings showing alleged, government-tied corruption, aimed to sway the voters.

The allegations further claimed Jansa's party and a private, foreign agency were linked to the recordings, based on gathered intelligence. Jansa has acknowledged having contacts with a Black Cube adviser, but denied the allegations of election interference.

An investigation by authorities so far has said that representatives of the private Black Cube intelligence agency visited Slovenia four times in the past several months, including a street in the capital, Ljubljana, that hosts Jansa's party headquarters.

Speaking to reporters at an EU summit in Brussels on Thursday, Golob urged an EU investigation.

"It is so important not to act now on behalf of Slovenia, but to act now to protect every other state that will come into election process in the next months," Golob said. "I am absolutely confident that Slovenian voters will be able to recognize that foreign interference is something that shall never be allowed."

Black Cube didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

The company, run by two former Israeli intelligence agents, has been involved in a number of controversies over the years, including an undercover operation on behalf of the film mogul Harvey Weinstein to discredit his accusers. It has said that all of its activities are legal and ethical.

Jansa has faced accusations of clamping down on media freedoms and undermining the rule of law in Slovenia during his latest term in office in 2020-22. He has lashed out at Golob's government as a "crime syndicate" and pledged to "take back" a captured state.

A former energy company manager, 59-year-old Golob and his party were seen back in 2022 as a new hope for disillusioned voters. The government, however, has since been shaken by a series of reshuffles, problems with health care reform and frequent changes in tax policy that reflected an air of inconsistency.

Internationally, Golob's government has taken a strongly pro-Palestinian stance, recognizing a Palestinian state in 2024 and banning top Israeli officials from entry. Jansa, on the other hand, is pro-Israel and has strongly criticized Palestinian recognition.

Slovenia routinely has switched between the two blocks since it broke away from the former, Communist-run Yugoslavia in 1991. The Alpine nation of 2 million people became a member of NATO and the EU in 2004.

A strike on a hospital in Sudan killed at least 64 people, WHO says

By FAY ABUELGASIM Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — At least 64 people were killed, including at least 13 children, in a strike on a hospital in Sudan's western Darfur region last week, the World Health Organization said Saturday.

The strike on the Al Daein Teaching Hospital in East Darfur on Friday also injured at least 89 people and rendered the hospital non-functional, Tedros Ghebreyesus, the head of the WHO, said on X.

Sudan slid into chaos in April 2023 when a power struggle between the military and the rival paramilitary Rapid Support Forces exploded into war throughout the country.

The RSF has blamed the military for the strike on the hospital.

The army has denied the attack, but two military officials said the strike was targeting a nearby police station. They spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not allowed to discuss the matter openly.

The devastating war has killed more than 40,000 people, according to U.N. figures, but aid groups say that is an undercount and the true number could be many times higher.

The WHO has said that over 2,000 people have been killed in attacks on medical facilities since the start of the war.

"Enough blood has been spilled. Enough suffering has been inflicted. The time has come to de-escalate the conflict in Sudan," said Ghebreyesus.

Nonprofits, unions and airports rally to feed TSA officers as shutdown drags

By GABRIELA AOUN ANGUEIRA, THALIA BEATY and JAMES POLLARD Associated Press

Across the country, collections are popping up to help Transportation Security Administration officers who have been without full pay for more than a month due to the partial government shutdown affecting the Department of Homeland Security.

The charity World Central Kitchen, more accustomed to feeding those in war zones and disaster areas, started providing meals to Washington, D.C.-area airports after many TSA officers missed their first full paycheck. On Thursday, Feeding San Diego began distributing 400 boxes with pasta, beans and peanut butter as well as fresh produce like strawberries and potatoes to affected agents near the airport after a request from TSA and the San Diego County Regional Airport Authority.

Nonprofits are stepping in to help and coordinating closely with airports and local TSA offices because ethics rules around giving gifts to federal employees make it difficult for those affected by the shutdown to receive help directly.

Carissa Casares from Feeding San Diego said communicating with the airport means they can better tailor their resources and response to TSA workers' needs.

"We need to work directly with the people who have direct access to these employees and get this food to them at a time and location that is most convenient to them," Casares said.

Saturday marks the 36th day that the Department of Homeland Security has been shut down after Democrats refused to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection without changes to their operations after the killings of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis.

More than 120,000 DHS employees are working without pay, including roughly 50,000 Transportation Security Administration officers as negotiations between lawmakers and the White House on limits to immigration enforcement drag on.

The funding lapse comes just months after a 43-day government shutdown, the longest in the nation's history, which drove long lines at food banks across the U.S. as over 700,000 federal workers worked without pay.

Rules limit what help TSA officers can accept

For those wanting to help, it's not as simple as going to the airport and giving cash or gift cards directly to TSA officers, who are prohibited from accepting gifts at screening locations, according to a DHS spokesperson.

But Aaron Barker, president of the AFGE Local 554 in Georgia, said TSA officer unions don't have the same restrictions and can accept donations to distribute to their members. Barker recommends those who want to donate look up their local union district on the AFGE website, or give through their local labor council.

"For some people it can be life or death," said Barker. "It's just sad and terrible that this is happening."

Union members have told Barker they're unable to cover utility bills or pay for their children's medical procedures. They've received eviction notices or had cars repossessed. They're having trouble affording routine items, too.

"People don't think about the things they just naturally have in their home, like toothpaste, bathroom tissue, milk, detergent, dish liquid," he said. "I'm sure those things are a necessity for every TSA officer."

Nonetheless, no donation can be as effective as an end to the shutdown. "The first thing they want is their paycheck," said Barker. "The money is the most immediate need."

Coordination between nonprofits and TSA

Operation Food Search is working closely with TSA to safely deliver food and set up a temporary pantry at St. Louis Lambert International Airport.

The Missouri hunger relief nonprofit's CEO said it is the first time they've distributed directly to TSA employees where they work.

"It removes their need to make an extra trip and drive here," Kristen Wild said. "So we're really excited that the airport allowed us to directly serve right there."

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They gave away just over half their 400 prepared food bags during a 2-hour period earlier this week, according to Wild. Each bag contained just under \$20 worth of nonperishables such as apple sauce, pasta, rice and beans. Rules prohibit federal employees from soliciting or accepting gifts or items of monetary value greater than \$20 if the gift is related to their government position.

Wild said she thought the \$20 limit might be waived since they were distributing food through airport-approved channels.

"We didn't know for sure," Wild said. "But to play it safe we just kept it right under the \$20 per bag amount so there would be no challenge to it."

Airport communities band together

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport officials were fielding PETA donations and local food banks' pallets on Friday afternoon as they stocked their private pantry for off-shift TSA staff.

But they've also seen dining vendors, usually tasked with feeding hungry travelers, step up. Airport tenants have offered discounts and donated through TSA to cover entire shifts' meals, according to airport spokesperson Perry Cooper.

"You know a lot of these people," Cooper said. "You see faces and that throughout the day as you're wandering through. And then to realize that some of these folks are here and they're not getting paid, you know, really tugs at your heart to think what's a way that we can help."

The airport community's support adds to the roughly \$6,000 they've received in cash and gift cards plus another \$10,000 worth of food and household products, Cooper said. That includes donations from the labor union for air traffic controllers, whose jobs are unimpacted by this partial shutdown but who understand the strain of working without pay from full government closures.

More than 460 people picked up fresh produce when local nonprofit Food Lifeline brought a truckload last Friday, according to Cooper. Most of the attendees were TSA staff, Cooper said, though some people might have been homeless. Boxes including pineapples and broccoli lined folding tables along the airport's main drive.

Regular travelers like Musie Hidad said he thinks about the TSA agents working unpaid every time he enters through security.

"The work they are doing is serious and they aren't getting paid for it," said Hidad, an Amarillo, Texas, resident, who was traveling to Columbus, Ohio, for work. "My heart goes out to them."

How Ukraine's front line became a laboratory for drone innovation

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KHARKIV, Ukraine (AP) — The night air in eastern Ukraine is crisp, and a myriad of stars scatter above a small crew of soldiers watching for Iranian-designed Shahed drones that Russia launches in waves.

Such teams are deployed across the country as part of a constantly evolving effort to counter the low-cost loitering munitions that have become a deadly weapon of modern warfare, from Ukraine to the Middle East.

While waiting, the crew from the 127th Brigade tests and fine-tunes their self-made interceptor drones, searching for flaws that could undermine performance once the buzzing threat appears. When Shahed drones first appeared in autumn 2022, Ukraine had few ways to stop them. Today, drone crews intercept them in flight with continually adapting technology.

In recent years, Ukraine's domestic drone interceptor market has burgeoned, producing some key players who tout their products at international arms shows. But it's on the front line where small teams have become laboratories of rapid military innovation — grassroots technology born of battlefield necessity that now draw international interest.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says U.S. allies in the Middle East have approached Ukraine for help in defending against Iranian drones, the same type that Russia has fired by the tens of thousands in the 4-year-old war.

Iran has also used the same drones in retaliation for joint U.S.-Israeli strikes, at times overwhelming far more sophisticated Western-made air defenses and highlighting the need for cheaper and more flexible

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countermeasures.

"It's not like we sat down one day and decided to fight with drones," said a pilot with Ukraine's 127th Brigade, sitting at his monitor after completing a preflight check. "We did it because we had nothing else."

How the drone war began

Moments earlier, the pilot carefully landed his interceptor drone to avoid damaging it. He spoke on condition of anonymity because military rules did not allow him to be quoted by name.

Though designed to be disposable, limited resources mean Ukrainian crews try to preserve every tool they have, often reusing even single-use drones to study their weaknesses and improve them.

"Just imagine — a Patriot missile costs about \$2 million, and here you have a small aircraft worth about \$2,200," the pilot said. "And if it doesn't hit the target, I can land it, fix it a bit and send it back into the air. The difference is huge. And the effect? Not any worse."

Ukraine's 127th Brigade is building an air defense unit centered on interceptor drone crews — a model increasingly adopted across the military.

Leading the brigade's effort is a 27-year-old captain, who previously served in another formation where he had already helped organize a similar system. He also spoke on condition of anonymity because military rules did not allow him to be quoted by name.

He clearly remembers the moment about two years ago when everything changed. He said he was assigned to lead a group of soldiers ordered to intercept Russian reconnaissance drones using shoulder-fired air-defense missiles.

The approach quickly proved ineffective. Agile drones equipped with cameras could easily maneuver away from the slower, less-flexible weapons, he said.

Determined to find a better solution, the young officer began searching for alternatives, asking fellow soldiers and volunteers supporting the front.

The answer turned out to be simple: another drone.

The captain still remembers the day a Russian Orlan reconnaissance drone hung above a Ukrainian position, transmitting coordinates to guide Russian artillery. A pilot from his unit downed it by using another drone, he added.

"That's when I realized — this is a drone war. It had begun," he said. "We had been moving toward it for some time, but that was the moment I saw it with my own eyes."

They never found the wreckage of the Orlan, which burned as it fell to the ground.

Downing Shaheds

Another challenge soon emerged: how to intercept the hundreds of fast, durable Shahed drones flying far beyond the front line.

The young captain's search for a solution led him to the 127th Brigade in Kharkiv and to cooperation with a local defense company. Their joint efforts resulted in aircraft-style interceptor drones capable of matching the speed of the Shaheds.

Kharkiv is not only where they work — it's where their families live, a city that regularly comes under Shahed attacks.

Working with the company allows soldiers to test interceptor drones in real conditions and quickly refine the technology through direct feedback.

The company's Skystriker drone differs from more widely known interceptor systems such as Sting or P1-Sun, which are based on modified first-person view, or FPV, drones. Instead, it resembles a small aircraft with wings, allowing it to stay aloft longer.

"Yes, this is a joint effort," said the director of the company, who spoke on condition he not disclose the name of the firm or his own identity for security reasons.

"It's not enough just to build it. It has to work — and work properly — and perform real combat tasks," he said. "That's why communication with the military is so important. They give us feedback and help us improve it every time."

Nonprofits and volunteers

In Ukraine, cooperation often goes beyond the military and manufacturers. Volunteers frequently act as

intermediaries between the two, sometimes even helping them find one another.

The Come Back Alive Foundation, a nonprofit think tank and charity that raises money to equip Ukraine's forces, launched a project called "Dronopad," loosely translated as "Dronefall," in summer 2024.

The idea grew from battlefield reports that FPV drone pilots were occasionally able to track and intercept aerial targets — early cases that helped shape efforts to counter the Shaheds.

"At that moment it wasn't clear whether this was even a scalable solution or just isolated incidents," said Taras Tymochko, who leads the project. "Our goal was to turn it into a system — to help units that already had their first successful cases build the capability and scale what they had achieved."

The foundation worked with drone manufacturers to better understand what systems soldiers needed. As the project developed, the capabilities of interceptor drones evolved.

"At some point they were able to reach speeds of more than 200 kilometers per hour (124 mph), which made it possible to intercept targets like Shaheds in the air," Tymochko said.

The team closely monitored the rapidly growing drone market. A key factor, he said, was ensuring close cooperation between manufacturers and the military so that engineers could receive feedback quickly from battlefield tests.

"It's always action and counteraction," Tymochko said, noting both sides develop ways to counter enemy drones and improve their technology to neutralize each other's responses. "That cycle is what drives the evolution of drone warfare."

The technology itself, he said, is not especially difficult to copy. The real value lies in how it is used — and in the experience of the pilots who have learned to operate it effectively.

"People were very skeptical about the technology," Tymochko said of the early days of interceptor drones. "Some thought it wouldn't work, that within a month the Russians would come up with countermeasures and the drones would become useless."

Nearly two years later, the results suggest otherwise.

"Many people called it air defense for the poor," he said. "But it turns out that air defense for the poor can sometimes be more effective than air defense for the rich."

Hawaii's worst flooding in 20 years threatens dam, prompts evacuations, as more rain looms

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and AUDREY McAVOY Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Hawaii officials urged people in hard-hit areas to evacuate Saturday due to the state's worst flooding in more than 20 years, after heavy rains fell on soil already saturated by downpours from a winter storm a week ago with still more expected over the weekend.

Muddy floodwaters smothered vast stretches of Oahu's North Shore, a community world-renowned for its big-wave surfing. Raging waters lifted homes and cars and prompted evacuation orders for 5,500 people north of Honolulu, though they were later lifted. Authorities cautioned that a 120-year-old dam could fail.

On the island of Maui, authorities upgraded an evacuation advisory to a warning for some parts of Lahaina, which is still reeling from a deadly 2023 wildfire, because of retention basins nearing capacity.

North Shore Oahu residents who did not evacuate were heartened in the morning by receding waters and moments of blue skies, but more rain was on the way.

"Don't let your guard down just yet," said Tina Stall, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Honolulu, "there's still potential for more flooding impacts."

Racquel Achiu, a Waiialua farmer who stayed to care for her livestock, found her goats in knee-high water Thursday night, and an hour later, her family's seven dogs were in danger of drowning in an elevated kennel. Her nephew and son-in-law rushed out into chest-high water to save them.

"My dogs' heads were literally just sticking out of the water," Achiu recalled.

"There was so much water, I cannot even express."

Gov. Josh Green said the cost of the storm could top \$1 billion, including damage to airports, schools, roads, homes and a Maui hospital in Kula.

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"This is going to have a very serious consequence for us as a state," Green said at a news conference. He also said his chief of staff spoke to the White House and received assurances of federal support.

Worst flooding in over 2 decades

Green said the flooding was the state's most serious since 2004, when homes and a University of Hawaii library were swamped.

Dozens and perhaps hundreds of homes have been damaged, but officials have yet to fully assess the destruction.

Officials blamed some of the devastation on the sheer amount of rain that fell in a short amount of time on saturated land. Parts of Oahu received 8 to 12 inches (20 to 30 cm), the National Weather Service said.

More than 200 people were rescued from the rising waters, authorities said, but no deaths were reported and no one was unaccounted for. Crews searched by air and by water for stranded people.

The National Guard and Honolulu Fire Department airlifted 72 children and adults from a spring break youth camp at a retreat on Oahu's west coast called Our Lady of Kea'au, city officials said. The camp is on high ground, but authorities did not want to leave them there, the mayor said.

Winter storm systems known as "Kona lows," which feature southerly or southwesterly winds that bring in moisture-laden air, have been responsible for the deluges in the past two weeks. The intensity and frequency of heavy rains in Hawaii have increased amid human-caused global warming, experts say.

Eyes on an aging dam

Officials have been closely watching the Wahiawa dam, which has been vulnerable for decades, saying it was "at risk of imminent failure."

Water levels in the dam about 17 miles (28 kilometers) northwest of Honolulu, on the island of Oahu, receded by late Friday and then went up again with overnight rain.

However the dam appeared to be less of a concern the following morning than the "breadth of hazardous conditions" across the island, said Molly Pierce, a spokesperson for Oahu's Department of Emergency Management.

She noted substantial flooding including in residential parts of Honolulu.

"We're seeing the waters receding in a lot of places, but again with that saturation, just the smallest amount of water can bring those raging back up," Pierce said. "So even if it's blue skies where you are, I think we all know in Hawaii that if rain is falling on the mountain, it's coming to you soon enough."

Kathleen Pahinui evacuated her Waiialua home early Friday because of the dam danger.

"Hopefully if we make it through today, then tomorrow will dawn bright and sunny," she said Saturday. "And then everyone can start moving slowly back in, and we can start to resume normal and start cleaning up and helping our neighbors."

The Wahiawa dam, an earthen structure, was built in 1906 to increase sugar production for the Waiialua Agricultural Company, which eventually became a subsidiary of Dole Food Company. It was reconstructed following a collapse in 1921.

The state has said Wahiawa dam has "high hazard potential" and a failure "will result in probable loss of human life."

It has sent Dole four notices of deficiency about the dam since 2009, and five years ago it fined the company \$20,000 for failing to address safety deficiencies on time, according to records.

Afterward, Dole proposed to donate the dam, reservoir and ditch system to the state in exchange for an agreement to repair the spillway to meet and maintain dam safety standards.

"The dam continues to operate as designed with no indications of damage," Dole said in a statement.

Cuba's power grid collapses leaving it without electricity for the 3rd time this month

By ANDREA RODRÍGUEZ Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Cuba's power grid collapsed Saturday leaving the country without electricity for a third time in March as the communist government battles with a decaying infrastructure and a U.S.-imposed oil blockade.

The Cuban Electric Union, which reports to the Ministry of Energy and Mines, announced a total blackout across the island without initially giving a cause for the outage.

The union later said the blackout was caused by an unexpected failure of a generating unit at the Nuevitas thermoelectric plant in Camagüey province.

"From that moment, a cascading effect occurred in the machines that were online," said a report from the Ministry of Energy and Mines, which activated "micro-islands" of generating units to provide power to vital centers, hospitals and water systems.

Authorities said they were working to restore power.

Power outages, whether nationwide or regional, have become relatively common in the last two years due to breakdowns in the aging infrastructure. The breakdowns are compounded by daily blackouts of up to 12 hours caused by fuel shortages, which also destabilize the system.

The last nationwide blackout occurred on Monday. Saturday's outage was the second in the past week and the third in March.

The blackouts have a significant impact on the population, whose lives are disrupted by reduced work hours, lack of electricity for cooking and food spoilage when refrigerators stop working, among many other consequences. In some cases, hospitals have canceled surgeries.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel has said the island has not received oil from foreign suppliers for three months. Cuba produces barely 40% of the fuel it needs to power its economy.

Cuba's aging grid has drastically eroded in recent years. But the government has also blamed the outages on a U.S. energy blockade after U.S. President Donald Trump in January warned of tariffs on any country that sells or provides oil to Cuba. The Trump administration is demanding that Cuba release political prisoners and move toward political and economic liberalization in return for a lifting of sanctions. Trump also has raised the possibility of a "friendly takeover of Cuba."

Another reason Cuba has been struggling with dwindling oil is the removal of Venezuela's leader, which halted critical petroleum shipments from the nation that had been a steadfast ally to Havana.

Trump has for months suggested Cuba's government is on the verge of collapse. After a previous time Cuba's electric grid collapsed, Trump told reporters he believed he'd soon have "the honor of taking Cuba."

Iran strikes near Israeli nuclear research center as Trump threatens attacks on Iranian power plants

By SAMY MAGDY, MELANIE LIDMAN and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Iranian missiles struck two communities in southern Israel late Saturday, leaving buildings shattered and dozens injured in dual attacks not far from Israel's main nuclear research center, while President Donald Trump warned the U.S. will "obliterate" Iranian power plants if it doesn't fully open the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours.

The developments signaled the war was moving in a dangerous new direction at the start of its fourth week.

Trump — who is facing increasing pressure at home to secure the strait as oil prices soar — issued the ultimatum in a social media post while he spent the weekend at his Florida home.

Trump said he's giving Iran 48 hours to open the vital waterway or face a new round of attacks. He said the U.S. would destroy "various POWER PLANTS, STARTING WITH THE BIGGEST ONE FIRST!"

Iran warned early Sunday that any strike on its energy facilities would prompt attacks on U.S. and Israeli

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energy and infrastructure assets in the region, according to a statement carried by Iran's state media and semi-official outlets, citing an Iranian military spokesperson.

The Strait of Hormuz, which connects the Persian Gulf to the rest of the globe's oceans, is a critical pathway for the world's flow of oil. Attacks on commercial ships and threats of further strikes have stopped nearly all tankers from carrying oil, gas and other goods through the passage. That's also led to cuts in output from some of the world's largest producers, because their crude has nowhere to go.

The Iranian strikes in Israel came after Tehran's main nuclear enrichment site at Natanz was hit earlier in the day.

Israel's military said it was not able to intercept missiles that hit the southern cities of Dimona and Arad, the largest near the center in Israel's sparsely populated Negev desert. It was the first time Iranian missiles penetrated Israel's air defense systems in the area around the nuclear site.

"If the Israeli regime is unable to intercept missiles in the heavily protected Dimona area, it is, operationally, a sign of entering a new phase of the battle," Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf said on X before word of the Arad strike spread.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said more emergency crews were being sent to the scene.

"This is a very difficult evening," he said.

Rescue workers said the direct hit in Arad caused widespread damage across at least 10 apartment buildings, three of them badly damaged and in danger of collapsing. At least 64 people were taken to hospitals.

Dimona is about 20 kilometers (12 miles) west of the nuclear research center and Arad around 35 kilometers (22 miles) north.

Israel is believed to be the only Middle East nation with nuclear weapons, though its leaders refuse to confirm or deny their existence. The U.N. nuclear watchdog said on X it had not received reports of damage to the Israeli center or abnormal radiation levels.

A dangerous new direction in the war

"The war is not close to ending," Israel's army chief, Gen. Eyal Zamir, said earlier in the day.

Iran also targeted the joint U.K.-U.S. Diego Garcia military base in the Indian Ocean about 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers) away, suggesting that Tehran has missiles that can go farther than previously acknowledged — or that it had used its space program for an improvised launch.

The U.S. and Israel have offered shifting rationales for the war, from hoping to foment an uprising that topples Iran's leadership to eliminating its nuclear and missile programs and its support for armed proxies. There have been no signs of an uprising, while internet restrictions limit information from Iran.

The war's effects are felt far beyond the Middle East, raising food and fuel prices.

It is not clear how much damage Iran has sustained in the U.S. and Israeli strikes that began Feb. 28 — or even who is truly in charge. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei has not been seen in public since being named to the role.

Israel had denied responsibility for attack on Natanz

Israel earlier Saturday denied responsibility for the strike on the Natanz nuclear facility, nearly 220 kilometers (135 miles) southeast of Tehran. The Iranian judiciary's official news agency, Mizan, said there was no leakage.

The International Atomic Energy Agency has said the bulk of Iran's estimated 970 pounds (440 kilograms) of enriched uranium is elsewhere, beneath the rubble at its Isfahan facility. It said on X it was looking into the strike.

The Pentagon declined to comment on the strike on Natanz, which was also hit in the first week of the war and in the 12-day war last June. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said such strikes posed a "real risk of catastrophic disaster throughout the Middle East."

Iran retaliated hours later.

US can use Diego Garcia base to protect Strait of Hormuz

U.K. officials did not give details of the strike that targeted the Diego Garcia base Friday, which was unsuccessful. Britain's Ministry of Defense described Iran as "lashing out across the region."

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It's unclear how close the missiles came to the island. Iran previously asserted that it has limited its missile range to below 2,000 kilometers (over 1,200 miles).

But military experts said Iran may have used its space launch vehicle for an improvised firing. "If you've got a space program, you've got a ballistic missile program," said Steve Prest, a retired Royal Navy commodore.

Israel's army chief, however, said Iran had fired "a two-stage intercontinental ballistic missile." There was no statement from Iran.

Britain has not participated in U.S.-Israeli attacks but has allowed U.S. bombers to use its bases to attack Iran's missile sites. On Friday, the U.K. government said bombers could use Diego Garcia to attack sites used to target ships in the Strait of Hormuz.

Global pressure increases to get shipping back on track

As Iran threatens shipping on the Strait of Hormuz, the United Arab Emirates joined 21 other countries including the U.K., Germany, France and Japan in expressing "readiness to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage."

The Trump administration announced it was temporarily lifting sanctions on Iranian oil that was already loaded on ships as of Friday, but that does not increase oil production, a central factor in surging prices. The oil ministry of Iran, which has evaded sanctions for years, replied that it "essentially has no crude oil left in floating storage."

The head of U.S. Central Command, Adm. Brad Cooper, asserted that Iran's ability to attack vessels on the strait had been "degraded." He said 5,000-pound (2,270-kilogram) bombs were dropped earlier in the week on an underground facility along Iran's coast used to store anti-ship cruise missiles and mobile missile launchers.

The U.S. is deploying three more amphibious assault ships and roughly 2,500 additional Marines to the Middle East, an official told The Associated Press. Two other U.S. officials confirmed that ships were deploying, without saying where they were headed. All three spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the operations.

Gulf countries reported more attacks. A missile alert sounded Saturday night in Dubai. Saudi Arabia said it downed 20 drones in its east, home to major oil installations.

Iran's death toll in the war has surpassed 1,500, the state broadcaster reported, citing the health ministry. In Israel, 15 people have been killed by Iranian missiles and four others have died in the occupied West Bank. At least 13 U.S. military members have been killed, along with well over a dozen civilians in Gulf nations.

Israeli troops and Hezbollah militants clash in Lebanon

Israel's military said it was conducting a "targeted ground operation" in southern Lebanon and at least four militants were killed. Hezbollah said its fighters clashed with troops in the southern village of Khiam.

Israeli strikes targeting Hezbollah have killed more than 1,000 people and displaced more than 1 million, according to the Lebanese government. Hezbollah's civilian assets also have been targeted.

Trump's mixed messages on Iran: 'Winding down' the war and easing sanctions but adding more troops

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

President Donald Trump frequently contradicts himself, sometimes in the same speech, social media post or even sentence. Within the space of a few hours Friday, he sent a torrent of mixed signals about the Iran war that raise more questions about the direction of the conflict and his administration's strategy.

During this time, Trump said he was considering winding down the war, his administration confirmed it was sending more troops to the Middle East and, in an effort to lessen the economic impact on global energy markets, the United States lifted sanctions on some Iranian oil for the first time in decades — relieving some of the pressure that Washington traditionally has used as leverage.

The confusing combination of actions deepens a sense among Trump's critics that there is no clear, long-

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term strategy for the war the U.S. and Israel launched against Iran. Now in its fourth week, the war remains on an unpredictable path and a credible endgame is unclear even as the global economy is being roiled.

Just 24 hours after saying the U.S. was thinking of walking away from the conflict, Trump issued another contradictory statement Saturday evening, threatening to escalate the conflict by targeting Iran's power plants unless the country lets oil shipments pass through the Persian Gulf.

'Winding down' the war

After another rough day in the financial markets, Trump said Friday afternoon on his social media network: "We are getting very close to meeting our objectives as we consider winding down our great Military efforts in the Middle East."

Trump contended the U.S. has adequately degraded Iranian naval, missile and industrial capacity and prevented Tehran from acquiring a nuclear weapon.

The Republican president then suggested the U.S. could pull out of the conflict without stabilizing the Strait of Hormuz, the channel through which about one-fifth of the world's oil supply travels. The strait has been ravaged by Iranian missile, drone and mine attacks during the war.

"The Hormuz Strait will have to be guarded and policed, as necessary, by other Nations who use it — The United States does not!" Trump wrote. But, in another contradiction, he said the U.S. would help if asked, "but it shouldn't be necessary once Iran's threat is eradicated."

While oil that traverses the strait is usually bound for Asia and other places rather than North America, the chaos still affects the United States. Oil is bought and sold globally, so a shortage in oil for Asian countries leads to bidding up prices on oil sold to companies in America, too.

That fact, coupled with an Israeli strike on Iran's gas fields and an Iranian retaliation that crippled a major terminal to ship liquefied natural gas from Qatar, helped tank U.S. equity markets Friday, with the S&P 500 dropping 1.5%. There also was a sharp increase in U.S. fuel prices.

Trump's concern about the persistent blockage of the strait erupted Saturday night when the president posted on social media that he'd "hit and obliterate" Iran's power plants unless the country opens the strait within 48 hours. The threat against Iran's civilian infrastructure was yet another escalation.

More US military might to the Middle East

Even as Trump said the U.S. was close to winding down the war, the administration announced it was sending three more warships to the Middle East with about 2,500 additional Marines. It was the second time in the week that the administration said it was deploying more forces to the conflict. The military says some 50,000 are supporting the war effort.

Trump has been coy about sending in ground troops, while his administration has hinted at a possible deployment of special forces or similar units.

The Marines being sent to the region are an expeditionary unit designed for quick amphibious landings, but their deployment does not mean a ground invasion is certain. Analysts have suggested it may require the presence of U.S. forces on the ground to ultimately secure the strait.

The surge in troops came just a day after news emerged that the Pentagon was seeking an additional \$200 billion from Congress to fund the war. That extraordinarily high number does not suggest that the war was being wound down.

Sanctions on Iranian oil sales

The administration said it would lift sanctions on the sale of Iranian oil, provided it was already at sea as of Friday. The move was an attempt to help lower skyrocketing energy prices by allowing freer sale of oil that Iran has let pass through the strait. It also extends a financial lifeline to the Iranian government that Trump is targeting.

His administration has tried other methods to lower oil prices. It has tapped the U.S. strategic petroleum reserve and lifted sanctions on some Russian oil. Yet Brent crude remained at \$112 per barrel Friday, and analysts say oil prices are likely to remain high for months regardless of the next steps in the war.

The Iranian oil eventually would have reached another country, but now the United States and its allies can bid on it as well, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent wrote on X.

"At present, sanctioned Iranian oil is being hoarded by China on the cheap," Bessent wrote. "By temporarily unlocking this existing supply for the world, the United States will quickly bring approximately 140 million barrels of oil to global markets, expanding the amount of worldwide energy and helping to relieve the temporary pressures on supply caused by Iran."

While 140 million barrels may seem like a lot, that is only a couple of days worth of oil on the global market.

Patrick De Haan, the head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, a U.S. fuel-tracking service, said he does not expect the temporary suspension to have a major impact on gas prices. The de facto closure of the strait has a much greater effect, he said. "Prices will likely still continue to rise so long as the Strait remains silent," De Haan said.

And the contradictions in the position were obvious in Bessent's post announcing the move, which labeled Iran "the head of the snake for global terrorism." He said the administration would take steps to prevent Tehran from cashing in on the sales, but it was unclear how that would be done.

Even among some Republicans, the contradictions triggered rare public skepticism.

"Bombing Iran with one hand and buying Iran oil with the other," Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina posted on X Saturday.

Detained immigrant children still face concerning conditions at Texas facility, lawyers say

By GARANCE BURKE Associated Press

Nearly 600 immigrant children were held in a Texas family detention center in recent months without enough food, medical care or mental health services, as their time inside stretched beyond court-mandated limits, according to court documents filed Friday.

Children and families held in the Dilley detention facility where 5-year-old Liam Conejo Ramos and his father were sent earlier this year also faced virus outbreaks and lasting lockdowns in December and January, although the total number of children held at Dilley has fallen in recent weeks, according to the attorney's reports and site visits.

The case of Ramos, a preschooler who was wearing a blue bunny hat when he was picked up in Minnesota by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, stirred protest over the Trump administration's immigration crackdown, including among detainees who gathered and held up signs in the yard inside Dilley's chain-link fences.

Last week about 85 children remained detained at Dilley, but concerning conditions continued, said Mishan Wroe, directing attorney at the National Center for Youth Law, who visited in mid-March. In early February, a legal advocate for the children observed about 280 children.

The filings cited numerous poignant cases, including that of a 13-year-old girl held at Dilley who tried to take her own life after staff withheld prescribed antidepressants and denied her request to join her mother, as reported by The Associated Press. The government reported there had been "no placements on suicide watch," according to the filing. The AP obtained Dilley discharge documents that described a "suicide attempt by cutting of wrist" and "self-harm."

The filings were submitted in a lawsuit launched in 1985 that led to the creation in 1997 of court-ordered supervision of standards and eventually established a 20-day limit in custody. The Trump administration seeks to end the Flores settlement.

"For years, the Flores consent decree has been a tool of the left that is antithetical to the law and wastes valuable U.S. taxpayer funded resources," the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement. "Being in detention is a choice."

Attorneys for detainees highlighted the government's data showing longer custody times for immigrant children, and also cited worms in food, and poor access to medical care or sufficient legal counsel as reported by families and monitors at federal facilities.

"Dilley remains a hellhole," said Leecia Welch, the chief legal director at Children's Rights, who visits Dilley

regularly to ensure compliance. "Although the number of children has decreased, the suffering remains the same."

Dilley is retrofitted for families, who receive basic necessities including adequate food and water while in detention, and the Trump administration is working to quickly deport detainees, the DHS spokesperson added.

A report from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement showed that about 595 immigrant children were held in custody for more than the 20-day limit in December and January, with some stretching into months, per the filing.

"Approximately 265 of these children were detained for more than 50 days and a shocking 55 children were detained more than 100 days," the filing stated.

That is up from a previous government disclosure late last year that showed from August to September, 400 children had been held at Dilley beyond the 20-day limit. DHS did not respond to questions seeking comment on the data.

Chief U.S. District Judge Dolly Gee of the Central District of California is scheduled to have a hearing on the case later this month.

Former FBI Director Robert Mueller, who investigated Russia-Trump campaign ties, dies

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Robert S. Mueller III, the FBI director who transformed the nation's premier law enforcement agency into a terrorism-fighting force after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and who later became special counsel in charge of investigating ties between Russia and Donald Trump's presidential campaign, has died. He was 81.

"With deep sadness, we are sharing the news that Bob passed away" on Friday night, his family said in a statement Saturday. "His family asks that their privacy be respected."

At the FBI, Mueller set about almost immediately overhauling the bureau's mission to meet the law enforcement needs of the 21st century, beginning his 12-year tenure just one week before the Sept. 11 attacks and serving across presidents of both political parties. The cataclysmic event instantaneously switched the bureau's top priority from solving domestic crime to preventing terrorism, a shift that imposed an almost impossibly difficult standard on Mueller and the rest of the federal government: preventing 99 out of 100 terrorist plots wasn't good enough.

Later, he was special counsel in the Justice Department's investigation into whether the Trump campaign illegally coordinated with Russia to sway the outcome of the 2016 presidential race. His investigation concluded that Russia interfered in the election on Trump's behalf and that the Trump campaign welcomed the help, but Mueller and his team ultimately found insufficient evidence of a criminal conspiracy and did not make a prosecutorial decision about whether Trump had obstructed justice.

Mueller was maligned throughout the two-year investigation by Trump, who regularly derided it as a "witch hunt." But the patrician Princeton graduate and Vietnam veteran who walked away from a lucrative midcareer job to stay in public service remained silent throughout the criticism, exhibiting an old-school, buttoned-down style that made him an anachronism during a social media-saturated era.

Trump posted on social media after the announcement of Mueller's death: "Robert Mueller just died. Good, I'm glad he's dead." The Republican president added, "He can no longer hurt innocent people!"

Republican President George W. Bush, who nominated Mueller, said in a statement that he was "deeply saddened" by Mueller's death and praised him for having "dedicated his life to public service" and for overhauling the FBI's mission. Democratic President Barack Obama, who kept Mueller on even after his 10-year term had expired, called him "one of the finest directors in the history of the FBI" who saved "countless lives" after transforming the bureau.

"But it was his relentless commitment to the rule of law and his unwavering belief in our bedrock values that made him one of the most respected public servants of our time," Obama added.

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The FBI did not respond to a request seeking comment and current Director Kash Patel, a Trump loyalist, did not immediately note the death on social media. The FBI Agents Association cited Mueller's "commitment to public service and to the FBI's mission."

A second act as an investigator of a sitting president

The second-longest-serving director in FBI history, behind only J. Edgar Hoover, Mueller held the job until 2013 after agreeing to Obama's request to remain on the job after the conclusion of his term.

After several years in private practice, Mueller was asked by Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein to return to public service as special counsel in the Trump-Russia inquiry.

Mueller's stern visage and taciturn demeanor matched the seriousness of the mission, as his team spent nearly two years quietly conducting one of the most consequential, yet divisive, investigations in Justice Department history. He held no news conferences and made no public appearances during the investigation, remaining quiet despite attacks from Trump and his supporters and creating an aura of mystery around his work.

All told, Mueller brought criminal charges against six of the president's associates, including his campaign chairman and first national security adviser.

His 448-page report released in April 2019 identified substantial contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia but did not allege a criminal conspiracy. Mueller laid out damaging details about Trump's efforts to seize control of the investigation, and even shut it down, though he declined to decide whether Trump had broken the law, in part because of department policy barring the indictment of a sitting president.

But, in perhaps the most memorable language of the report, Mueller pointedly noted: "If we had confidence after a thorough investigation of the facts that the president clearly did not commit obstruction of justice, we would so state. Based on the facts and the applicable legal standards, however, we are unable to reach that judgment."

The nebulous conclusion did not deliver the knockout punch to the administration that some Trump opponents had hoped for, nor did it trigger a sustained push by House Democrats to impeach the president -- though he was later tried and acquitted on separate allegations related to Ukraine.

The outcome also left room for Attorney General William Barr to insert his own views. He and his team made their own determination that Trump did not obstruct justice, and he and Mueller privately tangled over a four-page summary letter from Barr that Mueller felt did not adequately capture his report's conclusions.

Mueller deflated Democrats during a highly anticipated congressional hearing on his report when he offered terse, one-word answers and appeared uncertain in his testimony. Frequently, he seemed to waver on details of his investigation. It was hardly the commanding performance many had expected from Mueller, who had a towering reputation in Washington.

Over the next months, Barr made clear his own disagreements with the foundations of the Russia investigation, moving to dismiss a false-statements prosecution that Mueller had brought against former national security adviser Michael Flynn, even though that investigation ended in a guilty plea.

Mueller's tenure as special counsel was the capstone of a career spent in government.

FBI transformed into a national security agency

At his 2001 confirmation hearing, Mueller spoke emphatically about the FBI's role in combating everything from health care fraud to crimes against children and described the agency he would soon lead as "vital to the preservation of our civil order and our civil rights."

"One could hardly overstate the significance of the FBI in the life of every American," he said.

It quickly became clear that his time as FBI director would be defined by the Sept. 11 attacks and its aftermath as an FBI granted broad new surveillance and national security powers scrambled to confront an ascendant al-Qaida and interrupt plots and take terrorists off the street before they could act.

It was a new model of policing for an FBI that had long been accustomed to investigating crimes that had already occurred.

When he became FBI director, "I had expected to focus on areas familiar to me as a prosecutor: drug cases, white-collar criminal cases and violent crime," Mueller told a group of lawyers in October 2012.

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Instead, "we had to focus on long-term, strategic change. We had to enhance our intelligence capabilities and upgrade our technology. We had to build upon strong partnerships and forge new friendships, both here at home and abroad."

In response, the FBI shifted 2,000 of the total 5,000 agents in the bureau's criminal programs to national security.

In hindsight, the transformation was a success. At the time, there were problems, and Mueller said as much. In a speech near the end of his tenure, Mueller recalled "those days when we were under attack by the media and being clobbered by Congress; when the attorney general was not at all happy with me."

Among the issues: The Justice Department's inspector general found that the FBI circumvented the law to obtain thousands of phone call records for terrorism investigations.

Mueller decided that the FBI would not take part in abusive interrogation techniques of suspected terrorists, but the policy was not effectively communicated down the line for nearly two years. In an effort to move the FBI into a paperless environment, the bureau spent over \$600 million on two computer systems -- one that was 2½ years overdue and a predecessor that was only partially completed and had to be scrapped after consultants declared it obsolete and riddled with problems.

For the nation's top law enforcement agency, it was a rocky trip through rough terrain.

But there were many successes as well, including thwarted terror plots and headline-making criminal cases like the one against fraudster Bernie Madoff. The Republican also cultivated an apolitical reputation on the job, nearly quitting in a clash with the Bush administration over a surveillance program that he and his successor, James Comey, considered unlawful.

He famously stood alongside Comey, then deputy attorney general, during a dramatic 2004 hospital standoff over federal wiretapping rules. The two men planted themselves at the bedside of the ailing Attorney General John Ashcroft to block Bush administration officials from making an end run to get Ashcroft's permission to reauthorize a secret no-warrant wiretapping program.

In an extraordinary vote of confidence, Congress, at the Obama administration's request, approved a two-year extension for Mueller to remain at his post.

"A great American died today, one I was lucky enough to learn from and stand beside," Comey said in an Instagram post.

Another former FBI director, Christopher Wray, who was appointed during Trump's first term and then served under President Joe Biden, said in a separate statement that Mueller was the "consummate straight shooter."

"As everyone at the FBI who worked for, or with him, is well aware, Bob Mueller embodied the virtue of prioritizing service to the country over self, and he always put the mission first," Wray said.

A Marine who served in Vietnam before becoming a prosecutor

Mueller was born in New York City and grew up in a well-to-do suburb of Philadelphia.

He received a bachelor's degree from Princeton and a master's degree in international relations from New York University. He then joined the Marines, serving for three years as an officer during the Vietnam War. He led a rifle platoon and was awarded a Bronze Star, Purple Heart and two Navy Commendation Medals. Following his military service, Mueller earned a law degree from the University of Virginia.

Mueller became a federal prosecutor and relished the work of handling criminal cases. He rose quickly through the ranks in U.S. attorneys' offices in San Francisco and Boston from 1976 to 1988. Later, as head of the Justice Department's criminal division in Washington, he oversaw a range of high-profile prosecutions that chalked up victories against targets as varied as Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega and New York crime boss John Gotti.

In a mid-career switch that shocked colleagues, Mueller left a job at a prestigious law firm to join the homicide division of the U.S. attorney's office in the nation's capital. There, he immersed himself as a senior litigator in a bulging caseload of unsolved drug-related murders in a city rife with violence.

Mueller was driven by a career-long passion for the painstaking work of building successful criminal cases. Even as head of the FBI, he would dig into the details of investigations, some of them major cases but others less so, sometimes surprising agents who suddenly found themselves on the phone with the director.

"The management books will tell you that as the head of an organization, you should focus on the vision," Mueller once said. But "for me there were and are today those areas where one needs to be substantially personally involved," especially in regard to "the terrorist threat and the need to know and understand that threat to its roots."

Two terrorist attacks occurred toward the end of Mueller's watch: the Boston Marathon bombing and the Fort Hood shootings in Texas. Both weighed heavily on him, he acknowledged in an interview two weeks before his departure.

"You sit down with victims' families, you see the pain they go through and you always wonder whether there isn't something more" that could have been done, he said.

ICE officers soon will help with airport security unless Democrats end shutdown, Trump says

By COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday he will order federal immigration officers to take a role in airport security starting Monday unless Democrats agree on a bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

In a series of social media posts, Trump said he was making plans to put officers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in airports if the congressional standoff continues. After the Senate failed to find a resolution at a rare weekend session, Trump appeared resolute in his plan: "ICE is ready to go on Monday," he said.

He made the announcement as a partial shutdown contributes to long lines to pass through screening at some of the nation's largest airports.

The Republican president said ICE agents would bring the administration's immigration crackdown into the nation's airports, promising to arrest "all Illegal Immigrants."

"I look forward to moving ICE in on Monday, and have already told them to, 'GET READY.' NO MORE WAITING, NO MORE GAMES!" Trump wrote while spending the weekend in Florida.

The move appears to be a pointed effort to expand the type of immigration enforcement that has become a sticking point in Congress. Democrats pledged to oppose funding for DHS unless changes were made in the wake of a crackdown in Minnesota that led to the fatal shootings of two protesters. Democrats are asking for better identification for federal law enforcement officers, a new code of conduct for those agencies and more use of judicial warrants, among other measures.

The Minnesota operation was tied in part to allegations of fraud involving Somali residents. On Saturday, Trump said ICE officers sent to airports would focus on arresting immigrants from Somalia who are in the United States illegally. Repeating his criticism on Somalis, he said they "totally destroyed" Minnesota.

"If the Democrats do not allow for Just and Proper Security at our Airports, and elsewhere throughout our Country, ICE will do the job far better than ever done before," Trump said.

Trump's posts did not offer detail on how ICE would take a role in airport security and what it meant for the Transportation Security Administration, which screens passengers and luggage for hazardous items.

The vast majority of TSA employees are considered essential and continue to work during the funding lapse, but they are doing so without pay. Call-out rates have started to increase at some airports, and DHS said at least 376 have quit since the partial shutdown began Feb. 14.

On Saturday, the Senate rejected a motion by Democrats to take up legislation to reopen TSA and pay workers who are now going without paychecks. Republicans argue that they need to fund all parts of the DHS, not just certain ones. A bill to fund the Cabinet department failed to advance in the Senate on Friday.

There were signs of progress, though, with the restarting in recent days of stalled talks between Democrats and the White House. On Saturday, Republican and Democratic senators were set to meet for a third consecutive day with White House officials behind closed doors as Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York spoke of "productive conversations."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., urged the bipartisan group to act quickly. He has said re-

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peatedly that Democrats and the White House need to find compromise as lines at airports have grown. "If that group that's meeting can't come up with a solution really quickly, things are going to get worse and worse," Thune said Saturday.

For airline travelers, the shutdown answer is simple: Pay TSA officers

By JEFF AMY Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Regardless of politics or destination, American air travelers were unified by one desire Saturday: It's time to pay Transportation Security Administration employees.

"Everybody got bills they have to pay, and it's horrible," said Patrice Clark, whose trip to Las Vegas began Saturday with a nearly four-hour wait in a security line at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. "Times are hard for everybody at this point. Working and not getting paid and gas prices are extremely high — like everybody needs their money. They need to pay them."

TSA officers haven't gotten a paycheck since the U.S. Department of Homeland Security partly shut down on Feb. 14. Democrats balked at funding the agency, while other departments are unaffected, demanding changes to immigration enforcement by federal agents following the shooting deaths of Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis.

Some travelers arrive 4 hours early

Christian Childress is a private flight attendant, so when he is working, he doesn't wait in TSA lines. But the Redwood City, California, resident frequently goes through a checkpoint when flying commercial to get to his job.

Childress said shutdown effects have been "hit or miss" thus far. He came to the Atlanta airport nearly three hours before his 1:30 p.m. Saturday flight to Nashville, Tennessee, for a leisure trip. Some passengers have been arriving even earlier in Atlanta — one of the world's busiest airports — spooked about missing flights because of delays.

"Issue No. 1 should be paying the people who need to get paid and keeping our air travel system secure," Childress said. "Then they can debate whatever they want to debate about homeland security."

Some passengers said it is time for Democrats to give up on the shutdown.

"I don't want to go between the Democrats and the Republicans, but I think the Democrats are holding everything up because they can't get their way," said Tyrone Williams, a retiree from the Atlanta suburb of Ellenwood. He was queued up for screening before his flight to Philadelphia on Saturday.

Atlanta's checkpoint wait time spiked as high as 90 minutes on Saturday morning before melting away to nothing in the afternoon on what is typically one of the slowest days of the week for air travel. Staffing shortages have forced some airports to close checkpoints at times, with wait times swinging dramatically.

Trump says he will send ICE to airports

Concerns about long airport lines are increasingly capturing attention.

President Donald Trump said Saturday he will order federal immigration officers to take a role in airport security starting Monday unless Democrats agree to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

The president said U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents would bring the administration's immigration crackdown into the nation's airports, arresting "all Illegal Immigrants" with a focus on those from Somalia.

"I look forward to moving ICE in on Monday, and have already told them to, "GET READY." NO MORE WAITING, NO MORE GAMES!" Trump wrote.

Funding for the whole department failed to advance in the Senate on Friday after Democrats declined to support a bill. On Saturday, in a rare weekend session, the Senate rejected a motion by Democrats to take up legislation to fund TSA. Republicans argue that they need to fund all of the department, not just parts.

Travelers 'grateful' for unpaid TSA workers

The vast majority of employees at TSA are considered essential, and roughly 50,000 continue to work without pay during the funding lapse. Nationwide on Thursday, about 10% of TSA officers missed work,

the department reported. Absentee rates were two or three times higher in places.

Merissa Thomas arrived in Las Vegas on Saturday after a quick trip through a checkpoint at Reagan National Airport near Washington, D.C.

"I'm so grateful for people who are willing to sacrifice a lot to make sure we're safe," Thomas said.

Union leaders and federal officials say TSA officers are under financial pressure. Airport screeners have spent nearly half of the past 171 days with paychecks delayed by politics — 43 days last fall during the longest government shutdown in history, four days earlier this year during a brief funding lapse, and now 36 days and counting during the current shutdown.

At least 376 officers have quit since this shutdown began, according to officials, exacerbating turnover at an agency that historically has had some of the U.S. government's highest attrition and lowest employee morale.

"From now on I would drive wherever I have to go until they get this figured out," said Clark, the delayed traveler. "It was horrible."

Senate blocks amendment on transgender athletes during weekend session on voting bill

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Saturday blocked an amendment that would ban transgender athletes from playing in women's sports, rejecting one of President Donald Trump's priorities as he pressures Congress to act on a broad voting bill.

Senators were holding a rare weekend session to debate the voting legislation, which would put in place strict new requirements for voter registration and require photo IDs at the polls in an effort to prevent people in the country illegally from casting ballots.

The House passed the bill earlier this year, but the Republican president has since said he wants additional priorities added to the legislation, including the sports ban for transgender athletes and a ban on all mail-in voting.

Democrats are expected to eventually block the broader legislation, arguing that it would make voting more difficult for large groups of people. Despite Trump's pressure, Republican senators have said repeatedly that they do not have enough support to jettison the legislative filibuster, which triggers a 60-vote threshold in the 100-member Senate, or find another workaround to pass the bill. Republicans hold 53 seats.

Still, Republicans put the legislation — the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act, also known as the SAVE America Act or the SAVE Act — on the Senate floor this week for a lengthy debate as Trump has said he will not sign other bills until they pass the voting measure. Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said Saturday morning that Republicans "haven't made any final decisions about how to conclude this."

"What we are trying to do is ensure that we are having a fulsome debate," Thune said, and put everyone on the record "one way or the other."

Senate rejects Trump priorities

The amendment that was blocked by a 49-41 vote would penalize educational institutions that receive federal funding if they permitted individuals assigned male at birth to participate "in an athletic program or activity that is designated for women or girls."

Trump also wants Congress to block sex reassignment surgeries on some minors as part of the debate on the voting bill. It is unclear whether the Senate will hold a vote on that.

In addition, Trump has said he wants the House-passed bill to include a ban on most mail-in balloting. Trump has criticized mail in ballots for years and used it as a centerpiece of his efforts to overturn his defeat to Democrat Joe Biden in the 2020 presidential election. A ban on mail ballots would likely face strong pushback from lawmakers.

Republicans focus on voter ID

Thune said the Senate will soon vote on an amendment that would force all states to require photo identification at the polls. Democrats blocked a similar bill on the floor last week, but Republicans say they

want to put them on the record on that issue with a roll call vote.

"There are no good excuses" not to require photo identification, said Republican Sen. John Husted, a former Secretary of State in Ohio. "This works. It's being implemented all over the country."

Illegal voting by noncitizens is rare. Still, a poll by the Pew Research Center in August 2025 found that about 8 in 10 US adults said they favor requiring all voters to show government-issued photo identification to vote.

Thirty-six states require some form of identification at the polls, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures, and 23 states require photo identification. The SAVE America Act would require photo identification and could override many forms of ID allowed in states across the country — including fishing and hunting licenses or college IDs. It would also require that people voting by mail include a photocopy of their ID with their ballot.

Democrats say they support some voter ID laws, but argue that the proposed ID requirements in the bill, along with strict new requirements for voter registration, would prevent many people from voting. The bill would also allow the Homeland Security Department to review state voter rolls, which Democrats say could lead to voters being purged.

The new rules would be "a bureaucratic nightmare," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "They want to end vote by mail, end registering online, end registering on college campuses and in churches, and even end registering at the DMV, where of course you have to show ID," Schumer said.

Timing ahead is unclear

Trump, backed by an enthusiastic online campaign of his supporters, has made the voting legislation his top congressional priority. He has said it is necessary for Republicans to win the midterm elections - even after Republicans won the White House and Congress without it in 2024.

"THERE IS NOTHING THAT IS MORE IMPORTANT FOR THE U.S.A.," Trump posted on social media on Friday.

He has pressured Thune to scrap the filibuster, but Thune has stood firm in saying that there isn't enough Republican support to do that. He is expected to eventually end the floor debate and call for a vote to move forward on the legislation, and Democrats would then block the bill.

But it's not clear when that will happen — or if Trump will be satisfied enough with days or weeks of debate to lift his promised blockade on other legislation.

Thune would only say on Saturday that "at some point that's a that's a possibility" that Republicans will start the process of ending the debate. The Senate is scheduled to leave town at the end of next week for a two-week spring recess.

Republican senators have largely backed Thune's efforts. But they say the end point is uncertain, for now. "I don't know," when it will end, Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana said. "I don't think anybody does."

K-pop sensation BTS returns with a comeback concert in Seoul after a 4-year hiatus

By JUWON PARK, KIM TONG-HYUNG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — After a four-year break, K-pop supergroup BTS returned Saturday with a massive, free comeback concert in Seoul, where thousands of police locked down a central boulevard for the Netflix-exclusive spectacle that drew tens of thousands of fans.

"Annyeonghaseyo! We're back," RM, the band's leader, told the crowd, using the Korean word for "hello," as they opened with "Body to Body," setting off delirious screams from fans waving purple-and-red light sticks and thrusting smartphones into the air.

All seven members of the band — RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V and Jung Kook — recently completed South Korea's mandatory military service, and hope to reclaim their status as one of the world's biggest pop acts.

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The performance at Gwanghwamun Square launches a global tour spanning dozens of shows across the United States, Europe and Asia, which analysts say could generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue per quarter.

The hourlong concert came after the group on Friday released its fifth album, "ARIRANG," which sold nearly 4 million copies in its first day, said the band's management company, HYBE. The company also said RM had injured his ankle during a rehearsal, but he still performed with modified choreography.

The BTS concert, which began at 8 p.m., drew several tens of thousands to the Gwanghwamun area, including 22,000 fans who secured free seats in the designated viewing zone and others who watched on screens nearby. The show was streamed live on Netflix.

"It will be amazing because it's been so long that BTS (was) not with us," Dallila Di Tullio, a 32-year-old fan from Italy, said before the concert, calling it a once-in-a-century event.

BTS debuted in 2013 and has a legion of global supporters who call themselves the "Army." It became the first K-pop act to top Billboard's Hot 100 chart in 2020 with their first all-English song "Dynamite."

Jung Dukhyun, a pop culture commentator, said that the impact of BTS' return as a full-group would be tremendous at a time when global fandom for K-pop has grown much stronger, as shown by the success of Netflix's animated sensation "KPop Demon Hunters."

Stringent crowd controls

The dark streets blazed with light as waves of fans sang and cheered from cordoned sections, a jubilant scene that unfolded under an unusually heavy police presence managing the crowds.

"I still vividly remember how, at our last Busan concert a few years ago, we asked you to wait for us. Thank you so much for coming here like this," Jin said.

The group performed songs from their new album, including "SWIM," alongside hits like "Dynamite" and "Butter." Some members appeared to tear up while thanking fans who braved the chilly night, before holding hands and bowing to the crowd to close the show.

Police and city officials closed nearby streets and roads, halted the area's subway and bus services, and sealed off dozens of surrounding buildings, in what amounted to a full-day shutdown of the district.

Thousands of police officers maintained a tight perimeter around the performance venue, channeling the crowds with a maze of fences and buses. Concertgoers began queuing by midday to secure spots along nearby roads, passing through security checks and metal detectors at designated entry points. The restrictions forced nearby shops to close and police to use their buses to shuttle wedding guests to a nearby venue.

"I was hoping to (see) if we can go through some holes or be around. Apparently we cannot because they will be asking people to move," said Bernice Sanchez, a 52-year-old fan from Switzerland, as she looked for a place to wait.

While South Korean officials have taken crowd safety more seriously since a 2022 Halloween surge that killed nearly 160 people, critics say the controls went too far and undermined the symbolism of performing in Gwanghwamun, seen as Seoul's spiritual heart and most prominent gathering space.

Hundreds of thousands have gathered in Gwanghwamun in recent years to mourn, protest and celebrate as the country weathered tragedy and political upheaval. The BTS concert came about a year after waves of demonstrators filled the area, calling for the ouster of then-President Yoon Suk Yeol over his brief imposition of martial law in December 2024. Those monthslong rallies were marked by a festive atmosphere and a striking blend of politics and pop culture, with protesters singing and waving colorful K-pop light sticks, and ended without major safety accidents.

Drawing on culture and heritage

The new BTS album, "ARIRANG," takes its name from a centuries-old folk song, regarded as an unofficial anthem in both Koreas, whose themes of separation, longing and quiet resilience have echoed across generations.

Gwanghwamun and nearby Gyeongbok Palace provided a sweeping historic backdrop to Saturday's show, which was highlighted by lighting effects that bathed the palace gate and walls in purple, red and blue.

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Suga told the crowd that the album's title and the decision to perform in Gwanghwamun reflected the group's focus on identity. RM said the band focused on making music that felt true to themselves as they reconvened to work on the new album.

"We wanted to show who we are and how we can come together," he told the crowd.

South Korean officials, including current President Lee Jae Myung, expressed hope that the event would promote the country's culture and soft power.

Group's comeback coincides with K-pop's global rise

The group's comeback follows a nearly four-year hiatus driven by South Korea's mandatory military service, which requires most able-bodied men to serve 18 to 21 months under a conscription system aimed at deterring aggression from North Korea. BTS members began serving in 2022, with Suga the last to complete his service in June 2025.

Some analysts say the group's "ARIRANG" world tour could become the biggest K-pop tour ever by scale and revenue, with 82 shows planned globally in stadiums of around 50,000 seats. Ha Jae-keun, a cultural critic, said BTS was likely to have a "second heyday," as they maintained a highly powerful fandom and would benefit from the broader international ascent of K-pop.

"We will do our best to give everything we got," J-Hope said. ____

Associated Press video journalists Yong Jun Chang and Yong-ho Kim contributed to this report.

Newly discovered photos show astronaut Neil Armstrong after the Gemini 8 emergency

By ADITHI RAMAKRISHNAN AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sixty years after Neil Armstrong barely survived an emergency in orbit around Earth on Gemini 8, never-before-seen photos of his heroic return have been donated to the Ohio museum that bears his name.

Quick thinking saved Armstrong and fellow astronaut David Scott, who ended the mission early with a splashdown off Okinawa, Japan.

Previously unreleased photos taken by Ron McQueeney, an Army veteran and professional photographer who escorted Armstrong and Scott, show new angles of the pair.

Since the splashdown was unplanned, few members of the media were on site, though NASA and military photographers were there. People who were unexpectedly called to help with recovery operations, like McQueeney, played a key role in capturing the aftermath.

"Sometimes, an incredible event can actually be documented by some of the most ordinary means," said Dante Centuori, executive director of the Armstrong Air and Space Museum in Wapakoneta, Armstrong's western Ohio hometown.

McQueeney's widow donated the photos, which show Armstrong and Scott on the deck of a U.S. Navy vessel and waving to service members on land. One shows the Gemini 8 capsule being lifted into the air for transport.

One of the mission's goals was to complete the first docking in space. Minutes after accomplishing this, both spacecraft started tumbling uncontrollably. The astronauts separated from the other spacecraft but the spinning got worse.

Armstrong made a calculated decision, deploying the craft's thrusters to stop the spinning. In doing so, he ate into some of the vital fuel needed to get home. For safety's sake, they had to end the mission early.

The duo splashed down about 10 hours after the March 16, 1966 launch. They were picked up by a recovery ship and brought to the Naha Air Base in Japan.

Centuori said one element of the photos that sticks out is the smiles on the astronauts' faces, which he suggested shows their professionalism and ability to remain at ease even after a life-threatening mission.

Science historian Robert Poole said the grins point to something else.

"The obvious thing that sticks out to me is that they are very happy to be alive," said Poole, of the University of Lancashire.

Armstrong's ability to stay cool in a crisis was key to his getting picked as commander of Apollo 11, Poole said.

More than a half-century after the last Apollo mission, NASA is preparing to return to the moon with a lunar fly-around by Artemis astronauts in April.

Past missions are a reminder of the effort and preparation it takes to get to space and adapt when plans change.

"Seeing people launch to space frequently can suggest that it's easy, but it's very hard. And it requires a lot of resources and attention," said Emily Margolis, a curator at the National Air and Space Museum.

The new images will help the Armstrong Museum fill in gaps when telling the story of the mission to visitors. The Gemini 8 capsule is already on display at the museum.

It's not just vaccines — parents are refusing other routine preventive care for newborns

By LAURA UNGAR AP Medical Writer

One day at an Idaho hospital, half the newborns Dr. Tom Patterson saw didn't get the vitamin K shots that have been given to babies for decades to prevent potentially deadly bleeding. On another recent day, more than a quarter didn't get the shot. Their parents wouldn't allow it.

"When you look at a child who's innocent and vulnerable — and a simple intervention that's been done since 1961 is refused — knowing that baby's going out into the world is super worrisome to me," said Patterson, who's been a pediatrician for nearly three decades.

Doctors across the nation are alarmed that skepticism fueled by rising anti-science sentiment and medical mistrust is increasingly reaching beyond vaccines to other proven, routine, preventive care for babies.

A recent study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, which analyzed more than 5 million births nationwide, found that refusals of vitamin K shots nearly doubled between 2017 and 2024, from 2.9% to 5.2%. Other research suggests that parents who decline vitamin K shots are much more likely to refuse getting their newborns the hepatitis B vaccine and an eye ointment to prevent potentially blinding infections. Rates for that vaccination at birth dropped in recent years, and doctors confirm that more parents are refusing the eye medication.

"I do think these families care deeply about their infants," said Dr. Kelly Wade, a Philadelphia neonatologist. "But I hear from families that it's hard to make decisions right now because they're hearing conflicting information."

Innumerable social media posts question doctors' advice on safe and effective measures like vitamin K and eye ointment. And the Trump administration has repeatedly undermined established science. A federal advisory committee whose members were appointed by Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. — a leading anti-vaccine activist before joining the administration — voted to end the longstanding recommendation to immunize all babies against hepatitis B right after birth. On Monday a federal judge temporarily blocked all decisions made by the reconfigured committee.

One common thread that ties together anti-vaccine views and growing sentiments against other protective measures for newborns is the fallacy that natural is always better than artificial, said Dr. David Hill, a Seattle pediatrician and researcher.

"Nature will allow 1 in 5 human infants to die in the first year of life," Hill said, "which is why generations of scientists and doctors have worked to bring that number way, way down."

Vitamin K and other measures prevent serious problems

Babies are born with low levels of vitamin K, leaving them vulnerable because their intestines can't produce enough until they start eating solid foods at around 6 months old.

"Vitamin K is important for helping the blood clot and preventing dangerous bleeding in babies, like bleeding into the brain," said Dr. Kristan Scott of the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, lead author of the JAMA study.

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Before injections became routine, up to about 1 in 60 babies suffered vitamin K deficiency bleeding, which can also affect the gastrointestinal tract. Today the condition is rare, but research shows that newborns who don't get a vitamin K shot are 81 times more likely to develop severe bleeding than those who do.

Hill has seen what can happen.

"I cared for a toddler whose parents had chosen that risk," the Seattle doctor said. The child essentially had a stroke as a newborn and wound up with severe developmental delays and ongoing seizures.

At a February meeting of the Idaho chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, doctors said they knew of eight deaths from vitamin K deficiency bleeding in the state over the preceding 13 months, said Patterson, who is president of the chapter.

Infections prevented by other newborn measures can also have grave consequences. Erythromycin eye ointment protects against gonorrhea that can be contracted during birth and potentially cause blindness if untreated. The hepatitis B vaccine prevents a disease that can lead to liver failure, liver cancer or cirrhosis.

Even if a pregnant woman is tested for gonorrhea and hepatitis B, no test is perfect, and she may get infected after testing, said Dr. Susan Sirota, a pediatrician in Highland Park, Illinois. Either way, she risks passing the infection to her child.

Why are parents refusing routine care?

Parents give many reasons for turning down preventive measures, like fearing they might cause problems and not wanting newborns to feel pain.

"Some will just say they want more of a natural birth philosophy," said Dr. Steven Abelowitz, founder of Ocean Pediatrics in Orange County, California. "Then there's a ton of misinformation. ... There are outside influences, friends, celebrities, nonprofessionals and political agendas."

Abelowitz practices in an area with about an equal mix of Republicans and Democrats.

"There's more mistrust from the conservative side, but there's plenty on the more liberal side as well," he said, "It's across-the-board mistrust."

Social media provides ample fuel, spreading myths and pushing unregulated vitamin K drops that doctors warn babies can't absorb well.

Doctors in numerous states say parents refusing vitamin K shots often also decline other measures. Sirota, in Illinois, encountered a family that refused a heel stick to monitor glucose for a baby at high risk for having potentially life-threatening low blood sugar.

Care refusals aren't a new phenomenon. Wade, in Philadelphia, said she's seen them for 20 years. But until recently, they were rare.

Twelve years ago, Dana Morrison, now a Minnesota doula, declined the vitamin K shot for her newborn son, giving him oral drops instead.

"It came from a space of really wanting to protect the bonding time with my baby," she said. "I was trying to eliminate more pokes."

Her daughter's birth a couple of years later was less straightforward, leaving the infant with a bruised leg. Morrison got the vitamin K shot for her.

Knowing what she does now, she said, she would have gotten it for her son, too.

Doctors and parents want 'the best for their children'

Doctors hope to change minds, one parent at a time. And that begins with respect.

"If I walk into the room with judgment, we are going to have a really useless conversation," Hill said. "Every parent I serve wants the best for their children."

When parents question the need for the vitamin K shot, Dr. Heather Felton tries to address their specific concerns. She explains why it's given and the risks of not getting it. Most families decide to get it, said Felton, who has seen no uptick in refusals.

"It really helps that you can take that time and really listen and be able to provide some education," said Felton, a pediatrician at Norton Children's in Louisville, Kentucky.

In Idaho, Patterson sometimes finds himself clearing up misconceptions. Some parents will agree to a vitamin K shot when they find out it's not a vaccine, for example.

These conversations can take time, especially since the parents doctors see in hospitals usually aren't

people they know through their practices.

But doctors are happy to invest that time if it might save babies.

"I end every discussion with parents with this: 'Please understand at the end of the day, I'm passionate about this because I have the best interest of children in my mind and heart,'" Patterson said. "I understand this is a hot topic, and I don't want to disrespect anybody. But at the same time, I'm desperately saddened that we're losing babies for no reason."

Russia thwarts protests over the blocking of a popular messaging app, but frustration persists

By DASHA LITVINOVA Associated Press

In one Russian city, officials blocked a rally due to a "tree inspection." Elsewhere, they blamed snow removal problems or still-existing COVID-19 restrictions. And in one location, administrators argued that the reason for the protest didn't exist.

Authorities in nearly a dozen Russian regions in recent weeks cited various excuses to prevent demonstrations against internet censorship and the blocking of the popular messaging app Telegram.

In most cases, they succeeded. Mindful of a crackdown on dissent since the 4-year-old invasion of Ukraine, activists decided not to risk holding unauthorized rallies, even if they weren't about the war. Some went to court to challenge government refusals to authorize pickets, while others scaled them back to smaller indoor gatherings.

But the disapproval persists across the political spectrum over moves against Russia's second-most popular messaging app, adding to frustrations over a growing list of various issues that plague the country.

"Clearly the situation has changed, the laws have become stricter, but the protest hasn't gone anywhere," said Alexander Sustov, a legislator in Russia's far eastern Primorye region where a pro-Telegram rally was blocked last month.

"Discontent remains. And any ban only fuels that discontent," he said.

Online control

Restricting Telegram is Russia's latest move to put the internet under government control. Thousands of websites and platforms are blocked, as are multiple virtual private networks that allow users to circumvent censorship. Widespread cellphone internet shutdowns leave only a handful of government-approved websites available.

Telegram trails only WhatsApp — also severely restricted — in popularity among Russians, and is widely used by government agencies for their official social media presence, as well as by pro-Kremlin commentators and military bloggers with hundreds of thousands of followers.

Authorities encourage users to switch to MAX, a government-backed messaging app that critics say is a state surveillance tool.

Military bloggers criticize the moves against Telegram, arguing it is an indispensable communications tool for Russian troops in Ukraine and for activists running crowdfunding campaigns to help Moscow's forces.

The government initially promised not to restrict Telegram on the battlefield, but a different signal later came from the Kremlin.

At a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin for International Women's Day, a servicewoman called Telegram "an adversarial communications tool" and agreed with him when he said that "the use of communications systems that are not ours, not under our control, poses a danger to personnel" in battle.

Unconfirmed media reports predict the coming weeks will see a complete blocking of the app, which in December 2025 had 93.6 million monthly users in Russia, or 76% of the population, according to monitoring group Mediascope.

Protests stifled from Moscow to Siberia

Blocking Telegram prompted various political forces — including those who support the war or the Kremlin in general — to act.

Widespread dismay and the lack of a black-and-white narrative to justify the restrictions made "people

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feel like they can afford to protest here," said political analyst Abbas Gallyamov.

Last month, members of Other Russia, an ultranationalist, pro-war group, blocked the entrance to the Moscow office of state media and internet regulator Roskomnadzor with a bicycle cable and displayed a banner saying: "Give us an internet without supervision, (and) Russia without Roskom-disgrace."

In December, the group hung a banner at the agency's St. Petersburg office, saying, "Roskomnadzor, ban this banner."

All were arrested, with the Moscow activists facing criminal charges.

Regional branches of the Communist Party, which generally supports the Kremlin, tried to organize rallies in several places. In Siberia's Altai region, they were turned down after local officials said claims of an internet clampdown were "at odds with reality." In southern Krasnodar, a rally for later in March has been authorized on the outskirts of the city.

In the northern cities of Naryan-Mar and Syktyvkar, Communist Party activists managed to hold pickets, with placards saying, "It is not up to officials to decide what we read," and "The internet is not a prison."

But those were exceptions, with authorities elsewhere refusing to allow rallies or blocking them at the last minute.

Organizers in the Ural Mountains city of Perm secured a permit for a March 15 demonstration, but two hours before its start, activists were told of a "potential emergency situation" at the rally site that made it unsuitable for a gathering.

Some still showed up. Viktor Gilin, 80, unfurled a banner that read, "Vladimir Putin! I demand that you bring back freedom of thought and speech — the internet!" He was swiftly detained and fined.

In the Siberian city of Novosibirsk, 16 people were detained this month at the site of a planned pro-Telegram rally. Although authorization for the protest at that square wasn't needed, participants arrived to find the site marked off with tape for a purported "tree inspection," said activist Roman Malozyomov.

Malozyomov and other activists, journalists and some passersby were detained but let go after a few hours. He went straight to the Lenin Square for a one-man picket with a sign proclaiming he wanted to "stay connected," with the Roskomnadzor logo crossed out.

This week, activists in several regions filed for authorization of more rallies on March 29. Some were swiftly rejected.

Protesting other issues — cautiously

Rallies have been rare since anti-war protests were brutally suppressed in 2022, with political prosecutions skyrocketing and laws restricting dissent multiplying.

Smaller demonstrations persisted in spots, including unauthorized ones. Wives of soldiers picketed at the Kremlin and the Defense Ministry in 2024, and over 1,000 people gathered that same year in the Bashkortostan region to protest the jailing of a local activist, resulting in mass arrests.

Farmers in Siberia protested this month over cattle culling they deem unwarranted. In northern Komi, workers at a woodworking plant rallied to demand back pay.

Hundreds joined an authorized rally in October in Vladivostok to protest increased car registration fees, one of the largest gatherings in the Pacific coast city in years.

In Siberia's Tomsk, activist Anton Isakov recently managed to organize an authorized demonstration against the blocking of popular online game platform Roblox and another against animal cruelty.

If authorities allow protests, there are ready participants because of the many issues "that people want to speak out about," he said. His attempts to get a permit for a pro-Telegram rally have been refused so far.

Malozyomov, the Novosibirsk activist, said small, authorized rallies on issues such as high utility costs are often allowed there because "the authorities are trying to give people an opportunity to vent, so that the tension doesn't build up."

Some are trying measures other than rallies.

Konstantin Larionov in Kaluga, southwest of Moscow, and 41 others filed a lawsuit against Roskomnadzor and other government officials last year, arguing that restrictions on Telegram and WhatsApp violate their free speech and privacy rights.

Larionov urged others to join by petitioning the court via email, and the number of plaintiffs swelled to

105. He said it was encouraging to see people "from different parts of the country" willing to take part. The court sided with the authorities. Larionov appealed and lost but plans to go all the way up to the Supreme Court.

He admits the ability to protest in Russia has shrunk but believes it's important to keep trying.

"We are, maybe, retreating a little bit, but we're not giving up," he said.

Analyst Gallyamov says the Telegram protests are more about signaling popular discontent than "fighting the regime."

But "it is another crack in the foundation" of Putin's rule, he said.

As Netanyahu prepares for elections, his foes in Iran and Lebanon could get a vote

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will soon have to decide when to hold Israel's next elections. But with war raging on multiple fronts and no end in sight, Israel's enemies in Iran and Lebanon may help make that decision for him.

The stakes could hardly be higher: A victory will add to his legacy as Israel's longest-ruling leader and fend off, if not quash altogether, calls for a reckoning over the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks that triggered 2 ½ years of war across the region. A defeat risks turning him into the highest-profile political casualty of that attack — the deadliest in Israel's history — which still casts a long shadow over the country's psyche and already has led to a string of high-profile resignations and firings.

Here is a closer look at what's at stake for Netanyahu, and how the wars with Iran and Hezbollah could help determine his fate.

He faces an October deadline

Netanyahu's government is in the final months of its four-year term and is required to hold elections by the end of October. But Netanyahu has the ability to dissolve the governing coalition before then and call early elections. Israeli governments rarely last their full terms.

With this deadline looming, Netanyahu can choose a date when he thinks he and his religious and nationalist partners have the best chance to win.

Since elections are scheduled three months ahead of time, he could move now to schedule a vote in late June, just before the summer vacation season, or wait until the fall.

A decisive victory in war could bring early elections

A quick campaign and decisive victory over Iran could boost Netanyahu's public standing and give him the confidence to call an early election. He could boast of Israel's military power and the close ties with U.S. President Donald Trump that made this war possible, while claiming to have reshaped the region to Israel's advantage after the Oct. 7 attack.

But three weeks into the war, that scenario looks increasingly unlikely.

Iran continues to fire missiles at Israel each day, disrupting the lives of millions of anxious and exhausted voters. Israel's war with Hezbollah militants in Lebanon is intensifying, and with Iran disrupting the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf and upending the global economy, Trump has given no indication when the war may end. Members of the "America First" wing of the Republican Party have begun to accuse Israel of dragging the U.S. into a needless war.

Recent opinion polls in Israel indicate that while Israelis overwhelmingly support the war, Netanyahu and his political coalition don't appear to be benefiting.

In this environment, there is little incentive for Netanyahu to push up the election date, said Yohanan Plesner, president of the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank.

"It doesn't seem like there's any remarkable change in Israeli public opinion," he said. "He'd rather buy more time and exhaust the full term that is available to him."

Netanyahu appears to be leaning toward a fall election

Netanyahu still has a few weeks to make a decision. But for now, he appears to be leaning toward a

fall election. At a news conference last week, Netanyahu said he hopes elections will be in "September or October."

That would give Netanyahu, the ultimate political survivor, a few more months to rebuild his popularity.

A prolonged war could make this more difficult, raising the risk of additional Israeli casualties and demoralizing and further exhausting the public. Northern Israel has come under especially heavy fire from Hezbollah in recent days, and residents, including people in traditional Netanyahu strongholds, have voiced anger over Israel's failure to halt the attacks.

On the global stage, a drawn-out conflict could raise the likelihood of disagreements with Trump. It also could further tarnish Israel's international standing after the heavily criticized war in Gaza, for which Netanyahu has been indicted for war crimes by the International Criminal Court, allegations he denies.

Plesner says that a narrow window in early September, just before the monthlong holiday season, looks like the best time for Netanyahu to hold the vote.

Otherwise, the election will take place close to the Oct. 7 anniversary, when Israelis are again reminded of that tragic day.

Surprise, embarrassment, unease in Japan after Trump uses Pearl Harbor to defend Iran war

By FOSTER KLUG and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Senior U.S. and Japanese officials tend to shy away from anything but very careful public comments about Japan's 1941 sneak attack on U.S. forces at Pearl Harbor. So there was embarrassment, confusion and unease on Saturday in Japan after President Donald Trump casually used the World War II attack to justify his secrecy before launching the war against Iran.

The Japanese discomfort was compounded by the fact that Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was sitting awkwardly at Trump's side as he spoke.

Partly, the reaction is linked to the crucial security and economic role that the U.S. plays for Japan, its top ally in the region. Put simply, Japan needs to make sure the U.S. relationship thrives. That's why Takaichi was in Washington.

But it's also a reflection of just how fresh the political debate about Japan's role in World War II remains here, even 80 years after its end.

Senior leaders, including Takaichi, have argued that Japan has apologized enough for what happened in the war. Takaichi herself has recently hinted at visiting Tokyo's controversial Yasukuni Shrine, where Japanese war criminals are honored among the 2.5 million war dead.

It is, however, somewhat startling for Japan to see these history questions spill over into a White House summit.

On Thursday, when asked by a Japanese reporter why he didn't tell allies in Europe and Asia ahead of the U.S. attack on Iran, Trump cited Pearl Harbor to defend his decision, saying, "Who knows better about surprise than Japan? Why didn't you tell me about Pearl Harbor, OK?"

The liberal leaning Asahi newspaper said in an editorial Saturday that Trump's comments "should not be overlooked."

"Making such a remark to justify a sneak attack and boast about its outcome is a piece of nonsense that ignores lessons from history," Asahi said.

Claims of rudeness

Social media reaction has ranged from accusations of ignorance and rudeness by the U.S. president to claims that he didn't see Japan as an equal partner. There were calls for Japan to protest what Trump said.

Tsuneo Watanabe, a senior fellow at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, said in an online opinion piece published in the Nikkei newspaper Saturday that the comment signaled that Trump was "not bound by existing American common sense."

"I get the impression that the comment was intended to bring the Japanese reporter (who asked the question) or Ms. Takaichi into complicity in order to justify his 'sneak attack' on Iran during diplomatic

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negotiations and without telling allied countries," Watanabe said.

There's also a feeling that an unspoken understanding exists between U.S. and Japanese leaders to tread carefully on the subject. Both sides need each other, with Washington relying on Japan to host 50,000 troops and an array of powerful hi-tech weapons, and Japan relying on the U.S. nuclear umbrella to deter hostile, nuclear-armed neighbors.

Japan's post-World War II constitution bans the use of force except for its self-defense, but Takaichi and other officials are now seeking to expand the military's role.

When it comes to U.S.-Japan reconciliation, many here look to the example of former leaders Barack Obama and Shinzo Abe, who in 2016 paid tribute together at the Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor and at the Hiroshima Peace Park.

Mixed reaction for Japan's leader

Takaichi, a hard-line conservative, was praised for not reacting to the comments by Trump, letting them pass with a roll of her eyes and a glance at her ministers seated nearby.

After all, the goal of her summit was to deepen ties with her most important ally, not debate World War II. She arrived shortly after Trump suggested that Japan was among the nations that did not quickly join his call to help protect the Strait of Hormuz.

Some, however, criticized Takaichi for not speaking up.

Hitoshi Tanaka, a former diplomat and a special adviser at the Japan Research Institute think tank, wrote on X that he felt embarrassed to see Takaichi flattering Trump.

"As national leaders, they are equals. ... To make an equal relationship is not to flatter," he said. "Just doing what pleases Trump and calling it a success if you are not hurt is too sad."

Reporter criticized

There was initial blame on social media of the Japanese reporter who asked the question that prompted Trump's Pearl Harbor comment.

The reporter, Morio Chijiwa with TV Asahi, later said on a talk show that he asked the question to represent the feelings of Japanese who are not happy about Trump's one-sided attack on Iran, and because other countries, including Japan, are being asked to help out.

"So that's why I asked the question. I was meaning to say, Why didn't you tell us, why are you troubling us?" he said. "Then President Trump hit back with the Pearl Harbor attack. ... I found it extremely awkward for him to change the subject."

Junji Miyako, 53, said Takaichi flattering Trump felt more condescending to him than the President's Pearl Harbor remark.

"I was so frustrated to see Takaichi didn't even say anything to Trump to stop the war," he said. "I think Trump's Pearl Harbor comment was stupid, but to me the war he started is a much bigger problem."

Congress looks for Trump's exit plan as the Iran war drags on

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump took the United States to war without a vote of support from Congress, but lawmakers are increasingly questioning when, how and at what cost the war with Iran will come to an end.

Three weeks into the conflict, the toll is becoming apparent. At least 13 U.S. military personnel have died, and more than 230 have been wounded. A \$200 billion request from the Pentagon for war funds is pending at the White House. Allies are under attack, oil prices are spiking and thousands of U.S. troops are deploying to the Middle East with no endgame in sight.

"The real question is: What ultimately are we trying to accomplish?" Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., told The Associated Press.

"I generally support anything that takes out the mullahs," he said. "But at the end of the day, there has to be a kind of strategic articulation of the strategy, what our objectives are."

Trump said late Friday that he was considering "winding down" the military operations even as he outlined new objectives and goals.

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Congress stands still

The Republican president's decision to launch the U.S.-Israel-led war with Iran is testing the resolve of the Congress, which is controlled by his party. Republicans have largely stood by the commander in chief, but will soon be faced with more consequential wartime choices.

Under the War Powers Act, the president can conduct military operations for 60 days without approval from Congress. So far, Republicans have easily voted down several resolutions from Democrats designed to halt the military campaign.

But the administration will need to show a more comprehensive strategy ahead or risk blowback from Congress, lawmakers said, especially as they are simultaneously being asked to approve billions in new spending.

Trump's quip the war will end "when I feel it in my bones" has drawn alarm.

"When he feels it in his bones? That's crazy," said Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee.

House speaker says mission is 'all but done'

The president's party appears unlikely to directly challenge him, even as the conflict drags on. House Speaker Mike Johnson has said the military operation will be over quickly.

"I do think the original mission is virtually accomplished now," Johnson, R-La., told the AP and others at the Capitol this week.

"We were trying to take out the ballistic missiles, and their means of production, and neuter the navy, and those objectives have been met," he said.

Johnson acknowledged that Iran's ability to threaten ships in the Strait of Hormuz is "dragging it out a little bit," especially as U.S. allies have largely rebuffed the president's request for help.

"As soon as we bring some calm to the situation, I think it's all but done," Johnson said.

But the administration's stated goals — of ending Iran's ability to obtain a nuclear weapon and degrading its ballistic missile supplies, among others — have perplexed lawmakers as shifting and elusive.

"Regime change? Not likely. Get rid of the enriched uranium? Not without boots on the ground," Warner said.

"If I'm advising the president, I would have said: Before you take on a war of choice, make the case clear to the American people what our goals are," he said.

Congress retains the power of the purse

The Pentagon has told the White House it is seeking an additional \$200 billion for the war effort, an extraordinary amount that is unlikely to win support. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York called the amount "preposterous."

The Defense Department's approved appropriations from Congress this year are more than \$800 billion, and Trump's tax breaks bill gave the Pentagon an additional \$150 billion over the next several years for various upgrades and projects.

Sen. Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, said the country has other priorities.

"How about not taking away funding for Medicaid, which will impact millions of people. How about making sure SNAP is funded," she said, referring to the health care and food assistance programs that were cut as part of last year's Republican tax reductions.

"These are things that we should be doing for the American people," she said.

Many lawmakers have recalled the decision by President George W. Bush in the aftermath of the Sep. 11, 2001, attacks to come to Congress to seek an authorization for the use of military force — a vote to support his proposed military actions in Afghanistan and later, Iraq.

Tillis said Trump has latitude under the War Powers Act to conduct the military campaign, but that will soon shift.

"When you get into the 45-day mark, you've got to start articulating one of two things — an authorization for the use of military force to sustain it beyond that or a very clear path on exit," he said.

"Those are really the options the administration needs to be thinking about."

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Today in History: March 22, The Beatles release their first album

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Sunday, March 22, the 81st day of 2026. There are 284 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 22, 1963, The Beatles' debut album, "Please Please Me," was released in the United Kingdom on the Parlophone record label.

Also on this date:

In 1765, the British Parliament passed the Stamp Act to raise money from the American colonies, which fiercely resisted the tax. (The Stamp Act was repealed a year later.)

In 1894, ice hockey's first Stanley Cup championship game was played, in which the Montreal Hockey Club defeated the Ottawa Hockey Club, 3-1.

In 1933, during the Prohibition Era, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Cullen-Harrison Act, which allowed the sale of beer and wine with an alcohol content of 3.2%. (Prohibition would be fully repealed nine months later with the ratification of the 21st Amendment.)

In 1941, the Grand Coulee hydroelectric dam in Washington state officially went into operation; it remains the largest capacity hydropower station in the United States.

In 1945, the Arab League was formed with the adoption of a charter in Cairo, Egypt.

In 1972, in the Eisenstadt v. Baird decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that unmarried people had the same right to possess and use contraception as did married people.

In 1978, Karl Wallenda, the 73-year-old patriarch of "The Flying Wallendas" high-wire act, fell to his death while attempting to walk a cable strung between two hotel towers in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

In 1993, Intel Corp. unveiled the original Pentium computer chip.

In 2019, former President Jimmy Carter became the longest-living chief executive in American history; at 94 years and 172 days, he exceeded the life span of the late former President George H.W. Bush. (Carter would die at age 100 in December 2024.)

In 2021, 10 people were killed in a mass shooting at a King Soopers supermarket in Boulder, Colorado. (The shooter, Ahmad Alissa, was sentenced to life in prison without parole in September 2024.)

In 2024, men firing automatic weapons attacked a crowd gathered for a concert at the Crocus City Hall auditorium in a Moscow suburb, leaving at least 137 people dead and more than 180 wounded. An affiliate of the Islamic State group claimed responsibility for what was the deadliest terror attack on Russian soil in years.

Today's Birthdays: Artist Yayoi Kusama is 97. Actor William Shatner is 95. Former U.S. poet laureate Billy Collins is 85. Musician George Benson is 83. Writer James Patterson is 79. Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber is 78. Actor Lena Olin is 71. Singer-actor Stephanie Mills is 69. Actor Matthew Modine is 67. Football Hall of Famer Jim Covert is 66. Actor-comedian Keegan-Michael Key is 55. Democratic Sen. Alex Padilla of California is 53. Actor Reese Witherspoon is 50. Actor Constance Wu is 44. Actor Noah LaLonde is 28. Dancer Vitoria Bueno is 21.