

Groton Daily Independent

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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

Wednesday, March 25

Senior Menu: Chicken broccoli bake, mashed potatoes, fruit, biscuit.

School Breakfast: Omelets.

School Lunch: Cheese quesadilla, refried beans.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Soup Supper (Sunday School hosts), 6 p.m.; Lenten Service, 7 p.m.

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PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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



St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation, 3:45 p.m.; Lent Supper, 6 p.m.; Lent Service at St. John's, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Pickleball, 5:30 p.m. Elementary Gym

6th Grade Boys Basketball, 6 p.m., HS Gym

Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Thursday, March 26

Senior Menu: Roast beef, mashed potatoes, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Biscuits.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, corn.

Pickleball, 5:30 p.m., Elementary gym

4th Grade BBB, 6 p.m., Arena

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

Friday, March 27

Senior Menu: Calico casserole, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Doughnuts.

School Lunch: Cheese breadstick, marinara sauce, green beans.

FFA Little International at SDSU, Brookings

School Musical, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

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1440

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

LaGuardia Runway Crash

New York's LaGuardia Airport was closed for hours yesterday after an arriving Air Canada airplane carrying 76 people collided with a fire truck Sunday night. Two pilots were killed, and more than 40 people—including two people aboard the fire truck—were injured, some critically.

Audio from the crash suggests air traffic controllers may have been focused on a separate incident—assisting another aircraft's pilot who had made multiple attempts to take off—when the collision occurred around 11:40 pm ET. One controller can be heard clearing a Port Authority fire truck to cross the runway before yelling "stop, Truck 1, stop". The truck was responding to a smell reported on a United flight. The incident marks LaGuardia's first fatal crash since 1992.

Separately, ICE agents were deployed at airports nationwide yesterday to support TSA agents, as the partial government shutdown entered Week 5. The Senate, meanwhile, confirmed Markwayne Mullin to lead the Department of Homeland Security, which oversees the agencies.

Lyme Disease Vaccine

Pfizer is seeking regulatory approval for a Lyme disease vaccine that showed 73.2% efficacy in a late-stage clinical trial. If cleared, it would be the first human vaccine against the tick-borne disease approved in over two decades.

Lyme disease is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected deer tick, with symptoms ranging from a rash to fatigue and arthritis. Roughly 500,000 Americans are diagnosed with or treated for the bacterial infection annually, and most fully recover after a 10- to 14-day course of oral antibiotics. Some patients—including several celebrities—report persistent symptoms, though chronic Lyme disease is not recognized by conventional medicine. The last human Lyme disease vaccine was introduced in 1998 but withdrawn in 2002 after unproven side-effect concerns sank demand.

Pfizer's vaccine application may face scrutiny; too few trial participants contracted Lyme disease to prove the shot was effective in at least 20% of the worst cases—a key metric.

'Hannah Montana,' 20 Years Later

Today marks the 20th anniversary of "Hannah Montana," the Disney Channel series that turned a then-13-year-old Miley Cyrus into a global pop star and bonded a generation of viewers.

Cyrus, now 33, returns as her blond-haired alter ego for a one-hour special (3 am ET, Disney+ and Hulu), featuring an interview, unseen archival footage, and a new song. Over two decades, Cyrus underwent one of pop culture's most dramatic reinventions, evolving into a Grammy-winning artist behind hits like "Flowers," "Wrecking Ball," and "Party in the USA." Read reflections from Cyrus on getting sober; reuniting with her dad, Billy Ray Cyrus; and why she says she wasn't trying to kill Hannah Montana.

The 2006 "Hannah Montana" premiere drew 5.4 million viewers—then a Disney Channel record—while a 2007 episode remains the network's most-watched live-action broadcast, with 10.7 million viewers. Its Season 1 soundtrack was also the first TV soundtrack to debut at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

No. 10 Virginia upsets No. 2 Iowa to reach NCAA women's Sweet 16; games resume Friday (More, w/ full bracket) | NCAA men's tournament sees best TV start since 2011, averaging 9.8 million viewers in first three days.

WNBA players reach seven-year collective bargaining deal ahead of 2026 season.

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Bill Cosby found liable of drugging and raping waitress in 1972, ordered to pay \$19.25M in past and future damages and \$40M in punitive damages.

OnlyFans owner Leonid Radvinsky, under whom the adult content platform's revenue grew over \$1.3B in five years, dies of cancer at age 43.

"Superman" actress Valerie Perrine dies at age 82 after a battle with Parkinson's disease.

Science & Technology

Astronomers forge new field called "extragalactic archaeology," using changes in gas patterns to trace the evolution of a distant galaxy over 12 billion years of cosmic time.

Droughts may increase rate of antibiotic-resistant microorganisms in soil, causing hot, dry regions to face higher prevalence of antibiotic-resistant infections.

Honey bees "waggle dance," which directs hive mates to food, varies depending on the size and makeup of their audience.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +1.2%, Dow +1.4%, Nasdaq +1.4%), oil prices fall as President Donald Trump postpones strikes on Iran's energy infrastructure for five days.

The states hit hardest by fluctuating gas prices (More, w/map)

French food giant Danone, maker of Evian water and Activia yogurt, agrees to buy UK nutrition startup Huel (derived from "human" and "fuel") for roughly \$1.2B.

US Sens. Adam Schiff (D-CA), John Curtis (R-UT) introduce bipartisan bill banning prediction market contracts tied to sports events or casino-style games.

How prediction markets differ from sportsbooks.

Politics & World Affairs

US Supreme Court hears case on mail-in ballots, could limit states from counting mail-in ballots received after Election Day but postmarked day of or beforehand.

See map of 14 states that could be impacted.

Greece begins criminal trial against railway operators and transportation officials over February 2023 train collision that killed 57 people; the trial is expected to last two years.

Colombian military transport plane crashes shortly after takeoff with more than 100 soldiers on board; at least 80 people were reportedly rescued alive.

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Housing jumpstarts revitalization of Herreid, population 400

Bart Pfankuch

South Dakota News Watch

HERREID, S.D. – Dick Werner drives his pickup through the streets of this northern South Dakota town and can hardly go a block before stopping to point out new houses or apartments that have popped up in the past few years.

To be sure, the journey doesn't last long because the agricultural outpost of Herreid – located 7 miles south of the North Dakota border – only has about 400 residents and just a few streets that splinter off U.S. Highway 83, the main drag through town.

And yet, Werner's excitement is palpable as he shares the stories of how he and other local leaders have spurred a rebirth of the ranching and outdoor recreation town's population and economy by adding new housing, new municipal amenities and new businesses.

Werner, 68, is a retired banking executive who served in the state Legislature and on the Beadle County Commission before taking on a volunteer role as president of Herreid Area Housing Development (HAHD.)

He grew up in Herried but spent adulthood elsewhere, returning to his hometown in 2016 to find the local grocery store shuttered and the school population at 109, just above the threshold where state law requires dissolution of the school and assimilation into a larger nearby district.

"If you lose your school and your grocery store, your town is in trouble," Werner said.

Herreid's population peaked in 1960 at 767 people and has been on the decline since, falling to 416 in 2020, according to the U.S. Census. School enrollment followed suit as the population grew older and fewer families with children made Herreid their home.

Since returning, Werner has played a key role in finding the money and providing the expertise to begin rebuilding the housing stock in Herreid, a critical first step in attracting families and workers who form the backbone of the future for any small town in South Dakota.

"We were really hurting for homes because without places to live, there's no way people can move here to work or raise a family," he said.

Response: Grants and local donors drive growth

As with many small, remote South Dakota communities, Herreid is not a target for privately funded housing projects, largely because profit margins for developers are too narrow and it is difficult for them to get materials and skilled workers.

Instead, Herreid has turned to a unique funding model to find money for new homes and apartments.

Over the past decade, Werner has obtained \$2.2 million in grants to help pay for land, materials and construction for development of new housing, for rehabilitation of existing homes and businesses, and



Downtown Herreid, S.D, shown on Feb. 3, 2026, has become a thriving business district in recent years. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

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for municipal projects including a pool, playground and sports complex.

The list of funders is varied and includes among others the South Dakota Housing Authority, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, the Land, Water and Conservation Fund, Grow South Dakota, the South Dakota Community Foundation, Wellmark Foundation, WEB Water, CoBank, MDU Resources, Campbell County Bank, Federal Home Loan Banks, and Homes Are Possible Inc. in Aberdeen.

Meanwhile, the HAHD created another pool of about \$180,000 in available funds by soliciting loans from 30 local residents who were committed to supporting future growth. The group also raised more than \$250,000 from fundraising events, including \$200,000 from a Queen of Diamonds raffle program held in a local tavern.

"You just have to know where to get the money," Werner said. "You've got to have connections and partnerships, but it's important to know that there are resources across the state to help your community."

Evidence: New homes, apartments in Herreid

Successful projects have followed the funding.

HAHD has developed five speculative homes that were sold before completion and brought 25 new residents to town. It has helped new residents pay for single-family and twin homes through the state Governor's House program, in which houses are built by prison inmates.

HAHD has acquired 16 apartment units that are fully occupied. Its next proposed project is construction of a new three-unit apartment building for which Werner just landed \$700,000 in grants. The organization has also helped pay for improvements to 18 existing homes.

The HAHD is now trying to sell and support development of single-family homes on eight lots just north of downtown that are already served by sewer and water lines. The group is selling the full-size lots for only \$7,000 and can provide assistance to buyers to keep their construction and mortgage costs low, Werner said.

"We want to get people into homes, to own them and have pride of ownership," Werner said.

Insights: Economic growth follows housing

If housing is the platform that enables growth in a community, economic development is the resulting engine that can propel forward prosperity for individuals and families.

Through a team effort among town leaders, engaged local residents, the HAHD and the Herreid Economic Development Corp., the town has seen positive growth on several fronts in recent years.

Melinda Neeley, president of the development corporation, said expansion of housing in Herreid has set the stage for arrival of new businesses and residents that have stabilized the local economy.

Even with only 400 people, Herreid now boasts a thriving grocery store, medical clinic, pharmacy, bank, day care, livestock yard, diesel repair shop, and hardware and feed store.

Tax money, grants and local donations were used to help pay for a \$200,000 sports complex, a \$145,000 upgrade of a downtown playground, and a \$1.1 million municipal pool upgrade as well as a \$20,000 addition of local pickleball courts.

The local K-12 public school just completed a \$4 million addition and renovation project.

"I feel like we're on an upward trajectory," Neeley told News Watch. "It takes the help of people from all of these different groups to not just maintain what we have but to grow the services we have here."

Moreover, the slow but steady rebuilding of the local economy has attracted or strengthened employers that are providing good jobs — including the Pig Improvement Co., Agtegra Cooperative, and a host of



A sign welcomes people to Herreid, S.D., on Feb. 3, 2026. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

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Dick Werner of Herreid, S.D., shown on Feb. 3, 2026, looks at a plat map while driving around the city. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota News Watch)

area ranchers and farmers as well as agricultural supply and trucking companies, Neeley said.

The volunteer economic development group owns several land lots in town that it has made available for development at low cost, Neeley said. The group also owns a few buildings downtown that it is able to rent at reasonable rates, lowering the entry and ongoing costs of businesses that want to make a go of it.

Additionally, the group has taken steps to create succession plans for business owners who plan to retire or leave town, Neeley said. The organization tries to provide affordable rent and other assistance to increase viability of new businesses or for businesses with new ownership.

"If they had to purchase the building, the cost would be much greater," she said. "The loss of a single business could make a huge impact on our sales tax collection and the housing progress we've made."

Limitations: Positive signs but work to do

Kayla and Preston Huber moved to Herreid seven years ago, and even though Kayla is a nurse, she jumped headlong into entrepreneurship by opening a grocery store called Fresh Start Market.

When she arrived, Herreid did not have a grocery store, and food options were limited within a drivable distance.

She and her husband downsized into a double-wide trailer house that they renovated because housing options were almost non-existent when they arrived.

"We got lucky when we moved back because there weren't many options (for housing)," she said.

Huber said she has had great success and attributes some of that to efforts to generate new housing in town. "As a business owner, it's definitely great to see," she said.

And yet, she sees more opportunity for community growth if more housing can be developed.

"More people want to get out of cities and big-city life, and this is a great place to raise a family," she said. "We've had some younger couples move back, and I know a few more that would move back if there were more places to live."

Werner predicts that Herreid's population will show a jump in the 2030 census, which would be the first increase in 70 years. Werner has also done calculations that he said show enrollment in the Herreid school will rise to about 150 in the next four years.

Some of the population growth has come from about 40 Hispanic residents who are in South Dakota on three-year federal work visas, some of whom have purchased homes in Herreid. The town has also attracted several Hutterite families who have moved to town in recent years, Werner said.

"If you're in small, rural communities in South Dakota, and you're not willing to accept diversity, you're not going to grow because the Norwegians, Swedes, Germans and Polish are done coming here," he said.

Werner said there's no "special sauce" to generating growth in rural areas but that it does require an individual or a group to step up and get things started. But he cautions that it takes perseverance to keep the momentum and an ability to ignore the doubters.

"Housing development is a marathon, not a sprint, and you've got to have people who are committed," he said. "There's been all these naysayers out there on all these projects, but once they see the results, the naysayers all go away."

During the drive around Herreid in February, Werner said that all the time and effort he has put into pro-

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moting housing and economic growth in his hometown have been well worth it.

“Probably the toughest thing you can do is to develop a property,” he said. “I’ve run banks, groups of banks and managed dozens of employees, and this is the toughest thing I’ve ever done. But it’s also the most rewarding.”

South Dakota News Watch is an independent nonprofit. Read, donate and subscribe for free at sdnewswatch.org. Contact content director Bart Pfankuch: 605-937-9398/bart.pfankuch@sdnewswatch.org.



This “Dakotaplex” twin home, shown Feb. 3, 2026, is one of the homes from the state Governor’s House Program that have helped lure new families to Herreid, S.D. (Photo: Bart Pfankuch / South Dakota

News Watch)

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EARTHTALK

Dehorning Rhinos For The Sake Of The Species Survival by Saanvi Doshi

Dear EarthTalk: Why are wildlife conservation officers in Africa cutting the horns off wild rhinos -- Jim Seamans, Chicago, IL

In the protected habitats of rhinos, a surprising conservation technique is underway. Wildlife officers are cutting the horns off rhinos in a practice known as dehorning. Dehorning is a measure to protect rhinos from poaching. Rhino horns are considered to be highly valuable on the black market, with horns having been sold for up to \$400,000. Since the rhino poaching crisis began, over 10,000 rhinos have been killed. Rhino poaching has catastrophic effects on their whole environment because they are keystone species. This means they play a vital role in the well-being of other species in their environments.

The high value of rhino horns on the black market makes them a heavily targeted species.

Rhino horns are especially valuable in Asia, where it is believed they have medicinal properties and are a symbol of wealth. Smuggling networks are international, with many delivering horns to Asian countries like China and Vietnam. Rhino populations have declined due to poaching, with the peak number of rhinos poached in Africa hitting 1,349 in 2015.

That is where dehorning helps. Nina Fascione, executive director of the International Rhino Foundation, said, "A live rhino without a horn... is a lot better than a dead rhino without a horn." Dehorning is often done under sedation to minimize pain to the rhino. A study conducted in the Kruger area of South Africa confirmed that dehorning was indeed an effective practice. The results showed that dehorning more than 2,000 rhinos in the region led to a 78 percent decrease in poaching. Tim Kuiper, a biodiversity scientist at Nelson Mandela University, said, "having to remove [the horn] is kind of a necessary evil."

However, dehorning is still controversial. One reason is the potential long-term behavioral changes that can result. Another is that the horn is important for the rhino's defense mechanisms. Also, despite sedatives and anesthesia, dehorning can still cause a lot of distress for the animal both during and after. It is also costly, as it has to be done multiple times because the horn grows back. Furthermore, even though it is less likely, dehorned rhinos may still be poached since a bit of horn is always left behind.

Dehorning is an effective measure, but long-term conservation must go beyond that. Stricter regulations are needed, and the public should also support community-based conservation initiatives. Finally, there are multiple organizations that we can support, such as Save the Rhino International, the International Rhino Foundation, and the Rhino Recovery Fund. The urgency of this situation continues to grow, and while dehorning buys time, lasting change must come from addressing the root cause of poaching.



In the protected habitats of rhinos, a surprising conservation technique is underway. Wildlife officers are cutting the horns off rhinos in a practice known as dehorning. Credit: Pexels.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

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Prison rehabilitation, recidivism 'quickly forgotten' by lawmakers this session, legislator says

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

SIOUX FALLS — Last year, lawmakers coalesced around the need to improve rehabilitation programming and reduce recidivism rates as part of a broader investment in South Dakota's prison system. Those two issues were sticking points in an ultimately successful effort to approve construction of a men's prison.

Yet during the 2026 legislative session that wrapped up earlier this month, few bills were brought forward to address inmate rehabilitation needs, lawmakers on a Downtown Sioux Falls Rotary Club panel said on Monday.

One bill passed that makes it easier for people released from prison to return to their home area, rather than remaining in the area the prison is located. It requires the Department of Corrections to transport released people to their home county, the county where they were sentenced, or to a location equivalent in distance to the closer of those two options. Gov. Larry Rhoden signed the bill into law earlier this month.

Another bill would have awarded \$2.7 million to the state Department of Corrections to expand an existing rehabilitation program within the prison system, but failed late in the session.

Sioux Falls Republican Rep. Brian Mulder introduced the funding bill. He told attendees that the "prison population is overwhelming the state and how we operate."

"Although that was the number one priority last year, it was quickly forgotten for this year," Mulder said.

Half the people released from prison in South Dakota return within three years, according to the Department of Corrections' 2025 annual report — the highest recidivism rate in at least the last eight years. Lawmakers and prison reform advocates have pointed to a lack of rehabilitation programming as a cause, among other issues.

The drive to address rehabilitation needs this session was pushed aside by the desire to provide property tax relief across the state, Mulder told South Dakota Searchlight after the panel discussion. The result is "another year lost" in strengthening rehabilitation as a new Rapid City Women's Prison nears completion and the state begins construction on a men's prison in Sioux Falls that will replace the oldest parts of the penitentiary.

"When we're not releasing individuals to the best of their potential from our prison, it just puts a strain on our community overall," Mulder told Searchlight, adding, "it's just spinning our wheels, costing us more and more dollars."

He told members of the Rotary Club that lawmakers and state officials will "continue to have that conversation" through the state Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force. Gov. Larry Rhoden formed the group of lawmakers, government officials and nonprofit leaders last year while lawmakers considered approving the \$650 million men's prison.

The task force is focused on behavioral health, educational, faith-based and Native American-themed programs. Its next meeting will be in April, Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen confirmed on Monday.

Venhuizen told attendees he expects rehabilitation and recidivism legislation will be a "major topic" next winter as the task force provides recommendations. The inmate release bill from this session will put the responsibility on the task force to ensure post-release services are available across the state, he said, not just concentrated in Sioux Falls or Rapid City.

"So if they go back to Mitchell or Chamberlain, or wherever they wind up, that they have the services there to be successful, too," Venhuizen said, "because we don't want repeat customers in this business."

House Minority Leader Erin Healy, D-Sioux Falls, said she believes the task force and conversation around rehabilitation is a progressive move. Where South Dakota can improve, she said, is prevention and diversion.

That includes analyzing data and trauma-based care options to ensure South Dakotans "live a life where they thrive and don't necessarily go down the wrong pathway."

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.

Republican push to increase sales taxes falls hardest on lower-income residents

Several states are pushing higher sales taxes as a way to pay for other tax cuts

BY: KEVIN HARDY

There's no doubt that raising sales taxes in order to lower property taxes will shift more of South Dakota's tax burden to lower-income residents, Republican Senate Majority Leader Jim Mehlhaff said.

"It is regressive," he said. "There's no denying that."

But Mehlhaff said the state's modest sales tax increase will bring a much-needed reprieve from rising property taxes, under two bills Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden signed into law this month.

South Dakota is among several Republican-led states this year pushing higher sales taxes as a way to pay for other tax cuts. The moves will force lower- and middle-income residents, who spend a larger share of their earnings than the wealthy, to foot more of the bill for state services, advocates say.

"Rich families have the luxury of taking away their incomes into savings, but then low-income people, middle-income people, they spend all their income to make ends meet or to pay for necessities," said Aidan Davis, state policy director at the left-leaning Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. "And that's really the reason why these consumption taxes fall so much harder on everyday people."

In some states, including Georgia and Missouri, the efforts come as part of a yearslong push to reduce or eliminate state income taxes, which supporters say will make states more competitive for businesses and residents. In other places, including South Dakota, lawmakers see sales taxes as a way to help provide relief for climbing residential property taxes.

Under one of the new laws, South Dakota's sales tax rate will rise from 4.2% to 4.5% next year, collecting an estimated \$114 million in additional annual sales taxes. It ends a temporary sales tax cut lawmakers agreed to in 2023. A separate law passed this year allows counties for the first time to levy a half-cent sales tax to offset homeowner property taxes.

Last month, Bureau of Finance and Management Commissioner Jim Terwilliger estimated his family of four would spend an additional \$160 each year if his county implemented a new sales tax. But he projected the average property tax savings statewide would be about \$660 per owner-occupied home.

Mehlhaff said sales taxes can help some counties, such as those in the Black Hills, collect more from tourists rather than local homeowners.

"And it makes some sense," he said. "Because the people who come here are driving on our roads, they're using our water and sewer systems, and those are things that are supported by property taxes."

But he does worry that some counties could take advantage of the new provision, raising sales taxes even if homeowners don't need significant property tax relief.

"It depends on how you look at it," he said. "People who are coming here from Montana visiting Mount Rushmore, they might say, 'Hey, why are we paying your property taxes?'"

Lawmakers have been facing mounting complaints over homeowner property taxes, which have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, when a wave of migration and other factors drove up home values. As home prices soared, South Dakota home property tax collections surged from about \$482 million in 2016

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to about \$815 million last year, according to the state revenue department. Mehlhaff noted the state, which has no income tax, currently touts one of the lowest sales tax rates in the country.

While South Dakota is outright raising sales taxes, other Republican-led states are looking to broaden what categories of goods and services are taxed. But progressives worry that these moves could increase the burden on lower-income residents to fund schools, transportation and other state services.

Already, 40 states have tax structures tilted in favor of the wealthiest earners, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

With booming economies and an infusion of federal funds, Republican and Democratic states alike have repeatedly slashed taxes in recent years. But now, the federal government is cutting support to states and raising state costs for safety-net programs such as Medicaid and food assistance, Davis noted.

"So the conversations are more transparent and clear than in previous years," she said. "The result of tax cuts that are permanent is that ultimately we're going to make it up somewhere, and you're going to make it up either through cuts to programs that people care about or you're going to make it up by increasing consumption taxes."

She said more states — including Florida, Ohio and Oklahoma — may be forced to look at increased sales taxes as some lawmakers and advocates push measures to abolish property taxes, which would constrict state revenues.

Shifting the tax burden

This month, the Missouri House approved a ballot measure that would ask voters in November if they want to replace the income tax and give lawmakers broad authority to expand sales taxes.

While the state's income tax provides about 65% of Missouri's general revenue, Republicans have framed it as an unfair tax that undermines economic growth by taxing productivity and creativity.

Republican Gov. Mike Kehoe has said he wants to phase out the individual income tax to better compete with Florida, Texas and other states without income taxes. The proposed constitutional amendment, which passed the House on a nearly party-line vote, will now go to the Senate for consideration.

Lawmakers would have three years to expand the sales tax to currently untaxed services and end sales tax exemptions to raise enough revenue to replace the income tax without having to seek another state-wide vote.

Elias Tsapelas, director of state budget and fiscal policy at the Show-Me Institute, a Missouri free market think tank, said eliminating the income tax would help the state compete for residents and business, while also providing lawmakers an opportunity to scrutinize state spending. Missouri's budget has nearly doubled since 2019 — from about \$28 billion in fiscal year 2019 to about \$55 billion proposed for the upcoming fiscal year.

Tsapelas said Missouri loses hundreds of millions of tax dollars in annual sales tax exemptions. Among its dozens of exemptions, the state currently does not tax prescription drugs, agricultural supplies and digital goods such as e-books.

Expanding sales taxes to services could have a mix of effects: Taxing child care, for instance, would prove regressive, hitting working parents. But taxing financial services would likely affect those earning more.

"You can look at all the different things that are not taxed today in terms of goods or services, and they're not consumed evenly across the income distribution," he said. "So it really just depends on what all gets included."

Democratic lawmakers argued that eliminating the income tax would lead to massive cuts to services like public schools, while shifting the tax burden onto the working poor.

In opposing the bill on the floor, state Rep. Yolanda Young, a Democrat, said haircuts and plumbing services are among those likely to be taxed if the measure passes at the ballot box.

"If the income tax disappears, the burden will not disappear with it. The burden shifts to you," Young said.

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Framing the argument

In some states, lawmakers have been explicit about increasing sales taxes to pay for other cuts. In other states, opponents worry that cutting property or income taxes means lawmakers will have to raise sales taxes later to fund state services.

In Georgia, Republican Gov. Brian Kemp proposed cutting the personal and corporate income tax rate from 5.19% to 4.99%. If enacted, the change is expected to cost about \$750 million per year, funded with reserve state funds and an end to certain tax exemptions.

But tax cut proposals from other lawmakers could create billions in future state deficits, said Daniel Kanso, vice president of public policy at the Georgia Budget and Policy Institute, a left-leaning think tank in Atlanta.

"I think if they directly said, 'We want to replace income taxes with sales taxes,' it would be hugely unpopular, and that's why they basically just said, 'Trust us, we'll find a way to pay for this later,'" Kanso said.

Georgia Republicans have framed the tax cut push as a way to address growing affordability concerns.

Republican state Sen. Blake Tillery has proposed more aggressive tax cut legislation that would waive income taxes for all Georgians on the first \$50,000 a year for individuals and \$100,000 for married couples. He says that would eliminate state income taxes for nearly two-thirds of Georgians, as Republicans work to phase out the income tax altogether.

With no statewide property taxes, Tillery said income tax cuts are the state's best option to help families afford the rising costs of groceries, gas and other necessities.

Tillery said the tax cut wouldn't require a sales tax hike because it would be funded by eliminating special interest tax exemptions, including the controversial sales tax exemption for the state's booming data center industry. He said his bill, which passed the upper chamber last month, asks lawmakers to prioritize people over corporations.

"If you buy a laptop for your child to go to the University of Georgia, you pay sales tax," he said. "But if you buy \$15 million worth of computers because you're building a data center, you pay no sales tax at all. That's not helping anybody in Fulton County pay for child care."

State Sen. Harold Jones II, the chamber's Democratic leader, said he expects the governor's tax plan to find bipartisan support this year. But he said the legislative proposals cut too far into state revenues.

"You have to make that up through sales tax. You're not going to grow yourself out of that," he said. He said the state could provide more targeted relief to taxpayers through plans like a bipartisan legislative proposal to exempt feminine hygiene products, diapers and baby formula from sales taxes.

"We weren't able to even get a hearing on that," he said. "So when they start talking about actually trying to help the middle class, it's not really a serious argument."

Stateline reporter Kevin Hardy can be reached at khardy@stateline.org.

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

Kevin Hardy covers business, labor and rural issues for Stateline from the Midwest.

US Senate confirms Mullin to replace Noem at Homeland Security

South Dakota's Thune and Rounds both vote yes

BY: ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate voted Monday evening to confirm Markwayne Mullin to lead the Department of Homeland Security, which is responsible for carrying out President Donald Trump's mass deportation agenda.

The 54-45 vote means that Mullin, a Republican senator from Oklahoma, will take over the department in the midst of a five-week shutdown. He will replace outgoing Secretary Kristi Noem, whom the president reassigned to another role in the administration.

Mullin voted for himself. Democratic Sens. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania and Martin Heinrich of New

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Mexico were the only Democrats to back Mullin's confirmation.

Just before the Senate adjourned, Mullin submitted his resignation letter.

The department has been shut down since mid-February while Democrats have called for restraints on federal immigration agents after officers killed two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis. On Jan. 7, Renee Good was shot and killed by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement agent and on Jan. 24, Alex Pretti was pinned down and killed by Customs and Border Protection officers.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Republican of South Dakota, said on the Senate floor before the vote Monday that Mullin will be entering DHS at a difficult time.

"It's a tough assignment, made all the more challenging right now by Democrats having shut DHS down for five weeks," Thune said. "We all know that Markwayne isn't afraid of a challenge."

Speaking to reporters early Monday, Trump said that Mullin is "gonna be fantastic" as DHS secretary.

As an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation, Mullin will be the first Indigenous DHS secretary.

Shutdown effects

Though DHS is shuttered, ICE and CBP are still fully funded because the Republican-led Congress last year passed a separate funding stream of \$175 billion for immigration enforcement.

Trump over the weekend directed his administration to place ICE agents in several airports in an attempt to aid Transportation Security Administration agents, who are working without pay. ICE and TSA are both agencies within DHS.

Mullin does not have any experience on a committee that handles policy for Homeland Security and will be tasked with leading a department of 260,000 employees.

Some senators have raised concerns about Mullin's temperament, citing a 2023 incident in which he physically challenged a witness before Congress. Mullin also expressed sympathy toward a man who attacked Sen. Rand Paul, breaking six of the Kentucky Republican's ribs and damaging a lung.

Paul, who chairs the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, voted against advancing Mullin's nomination to the Senate floor. Paul also voted against Mullin's confirmation Monday night.

The Senate advanced Mullin's nomination in a 54-37 procedural vote Sunday. Two Democrats, Pennsylvania's John Fetterman and New Mexico's Martin Heinrich, joined all Republicans who voted Sunday. Paul did not vote on Sunday.

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

Airport chaos: TSA agents skip work, security lines expand, Trump sends in ICE to assist

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

Airport security workers missed work Monday at the highest rate since a partial government shutdown began in mid-February, the Department of Homeland Security said, and the Trump administration sent immigration officials to some airports in an attempt to keep lines moving.

Travelers reported hourslong security lines at major airports in Atlanta and Houston, while waits of 30 minutes or more were reported at several other hubs Monday.

Nearly 3,500 Transportation Security Administration agents, roughly 11.8% of the scheduled nationwide workforce, called out from work Monday. TSA officers have been working without pay since the department that oversees TSA began a funding lapse Feb. 14 due to a dispute in Congress over immigration enforcement.

Call out rates were over 20% at a handful of major airports, according to DHS. They were: 42.3% in New Orleans

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41.5% in Atlanta
39.1% in Houston
38.1% in Baltimore
37.4% at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport
24.7% in Pittsburgh
24.2% in Philadelphia
21.7% at New York's Laganardia Airport
20.3% in Phoenix
ICE to airports

More than 400 TSA workers have quit since the "pointless, reckless shutdown" began, DHS spokeswoman Lauren Bis said in an emailed statement.

Bis blamed the shutdown and related problems with air security staffing on Democrats in Congress, and confirmed DHS would send officers from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, another DHS agency, to assist TSA at airports.

TSA officers "are not able to afford gas, childcare, food, or rent," she said.

"While the Democrats continue to put the safety, dependability, and ease of our air travel at risk, President Trump is taking action to deploy hundreds of ICE officers, that are currently funded by Congress, to airports being adversely impacted. This will help bolster TSA efforts to keep our skies safe and minimize air travel disruptions."

President Donald Trump praised ICE in comments to reporters Monday morning and suggested he could also call upon National Guard troops to help at airports.

"They stepped in so, so strongly," he said of ICE officers. "They'll do great. And if that's not enough, I'll bring in the National Guard."

Tom Homan, the White House border czar who coordinates much of Trump's immigration enforcement agenda, said in a Sunday interview on CNN's "State of the Union" that ICE officers would primarily handle duties that did not require extensive training, such as making sure no one entered secure areas through exits.

"We're simply there to help TSA do their job in areas that don't need their specialized expertise," he said, rather than screening through the X-ray machines, he told CNN's Dana Bash. "But there are roles we can play to release TSA officers from the non-significant role, such as guarding an exit, so they can get back to the scanning machines and move people quicker."

DHS declined to provide a list of airports to which ICE would deploy, citing "operational security" concerns.

ICE officers were spotted at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the nation's busiest, where waits of four hours in security lines were reported on Monday.

Shutdown persists

Federal law requires TSA officers to work, even during a shutdown, though they will not be paid until funding is restored.

Despite being at the center of the shutdown debate, ICE has not been affected by the DHS funding lapse because Republicans provided the agency massive funding in the tax cuts and spending bill they passed along party lines last year.

Democrats have refused to fund a fiscal 2026 appropriations bill for the department without major changes to the administration's immigration enforcement, which reached a tipping point following the deaths of two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis in January.

"Because of the Democrat shutdown, President Trump is using every tool available to help American travelers who are facing hours long lines at airports across the country—especially during this spring break and holiday season that is very important for many American families," Bis said.

In a rare weekend session, the U.S. Senate again failed to advance a funding measure for DHS on Saturday.

Deadly LaGuardia crash

The pilot and co-pilot of an Air Canada plane died, and more than 40 people were injured, after the jet collided with a fire truck at LaGuardia airport late Sunday.

The incident was unrelated to problems with TSA, which is not responsible for safety on runways or elsewhere outside of airport terminals, but it further delayed and complicated travel in the New York City area.

Ashley Murray contributed to this report.

Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.

Trump claims 'good and productive' talks with Iran about war, but Iran denies negotiations

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Monday said his administration is in talks with Iran about resolving the war, a claim that significantly tamped down oil prices and spurred market increases in Europe and the United States — though Iran denied any progress in negotiations.

Writing on his social media platform, Truth Social, the president said the United States and Iran "HAVE HAD, OVER THE LAST TWO DAYS, VERY GOOD AND PRODUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS REGARDING A COMPLETE AND TOTAL RESOLUTION OF OUR HOSTILITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST."

Trump's 109-word, all-caps post brought the cost of Brent crude oil briefly below \$100 a barrel, after his threat Saturday to bomb Iran's major energy infrastructure spiked prices.

The historic shock to the global energy market has caused gasoline prices to soar across the U.S. to an average of \$3.95 per gallon on Monday, up from \$2.93 a month ago, according to AAA.

Trump said he had called off his 48-hour ultimatum for Iran, set to expire Monday evening, to conduct negotiations over "a five-day period," he told reporters.

"We'll see how that goes, and if it goes well, we're going to end up with settling this, otherwise we just keep bombing our little hearts out," he said during roughly 20 minutes of comments to the press at the steps of Air Force One prior to boarding a flight to Memphis, Tennessee, for an appearance.

Fourth week of hostilities

Trump claimed Iranian negotiators have agreed on a 15-point plan, as the U.S.-Israeli war in Iran enters its fourth week.

"Well, they're not going to have a nuclear weapon. That's number one. That's number one, two and three, they will never have a nuclear weapon. They've agreed to that," he said.

Trump also said the Strait of Hormuz, a major oil shipping passage that Iran has effectively closed to ships flagged under Western and Persian Gulf nations, "will be opened very soon if this works."

He suggested "maybe me and the ayatollah, whoever the ayatollah is" will share joint control of the strait, which handles a fifth of the world's petroleum products.

As for Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium, Trump said capturing and removing it will be "very easy."

"If we have a deal with them, we're going down, and we'll take it ourselves," he said.

Iran denial

Iran's Foreign Ministry has denied such talks were underway, according to a statement cited in media reports.

The speaker of Iran's parliament Mohammed-Bagher Ghalibaf also denied any negotiations in a post on X just before noon Eastern, saying "Our people demand the complete and humiliating punishment of the aggressors."

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"All officials stand firmly behind their Leader and people until this goal is achieved. No negotiations with America have taken place. Fake news is intended to manipulate financial and oil markets and to escape the quagmire in which America and Israel are trapped," Ghalibaf wrote.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a video statement Monday afternoon, Eastern time, confirming that he spoke with Trump, who he said "believes there is an opportunity to leverage the tremendous achievements we have reached alongside the U.S. military to realize the goals of the war through an agreement, an agreement that will safeguard our vital interests."

"At the same time, we are continuing to strike in both Iran and Lebanon. We are smashing the missile program and the nuclear program, and we continue to deal severe blows to Hezbollah. ... We will safeguard our vital interests under all circumstances," Netanyahu said, according to his office's English translation.

Trump's schedule Monday included the trip to Memphis to participate in a roundtable regarding public safety.

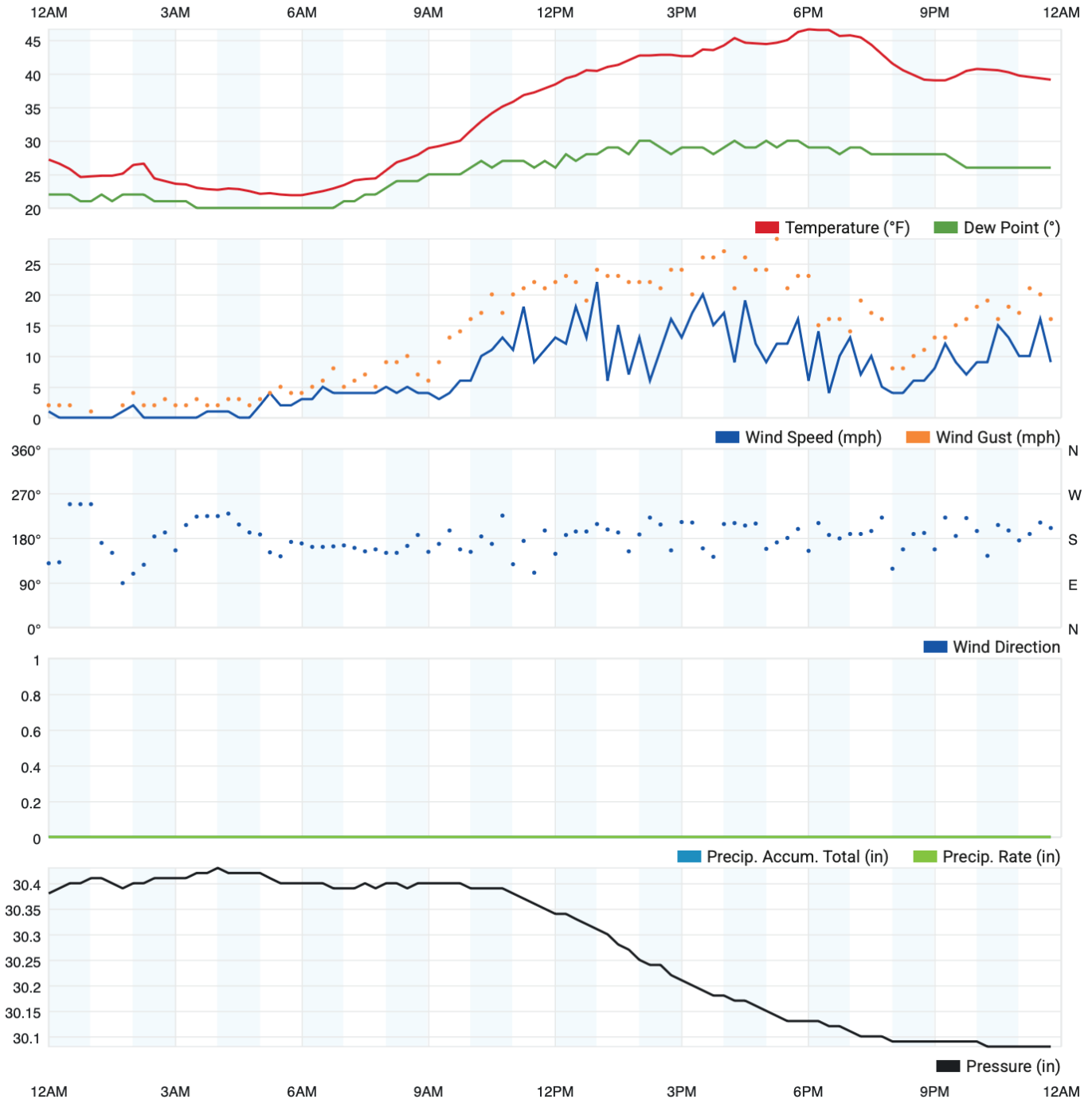
Ashley Murray covers the nation's capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

March 23, 2026



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Today



High: 53 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Tonight



Low: 34 °F

Partly Cloudy

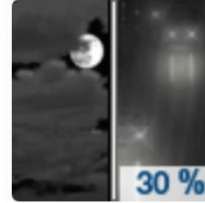
Wednesday



High: 71 °F

Partly Sunny

Wednesday
Night



Low: 35 °F

Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Rain

Thursday



High: 43 °F

Mostly Cloudy
and Breezy

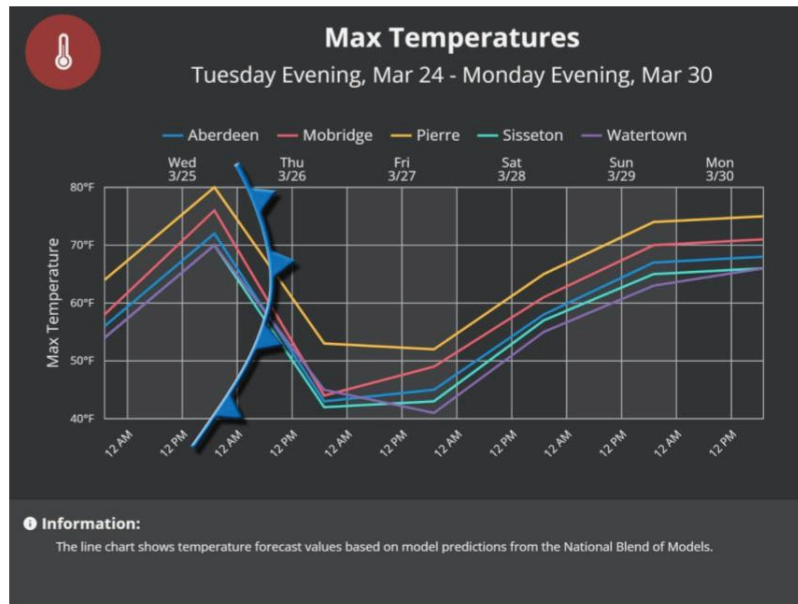


Warming Through Mid-Week

March 24, 2026
3:41 AM CDT

The Warm Up
Continues Through
Wednesday: Highs
50s and 60s Today
Warming Into The
60s and 70s
Wednesday

Strong Post-Frontal
Northerly Winds
Increase Fire
Danger Wednesday
Night And Thursday



Additional Details

- Strong Winds Increase Fire Danger**
 - Wednesday night and Thursday
- What To Do**
 - Relegate any burning activities either to today or wait until after Thursday to burn
- Much Above Normal Temperatures:**
 - Readings Above 60F degrees Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday

Valid: Tue 07 pm CDT - Mon 07 pm CDT
Issued: Tue, Mar 24, 2026, 3 am CDT



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Temperatures will gradually warm up through mid-week, as highs today in the 50s and 60s increase to the 60s and 70s on Wednesday. A strong cold front will turn winds northerly Wednesday night, with gusts of 45 mph or higher expected. This will affect the Grassland Fire Danger Index Wednesday night and Thursday. Cooler conditions will follow the frontal passage through the end of the work week.

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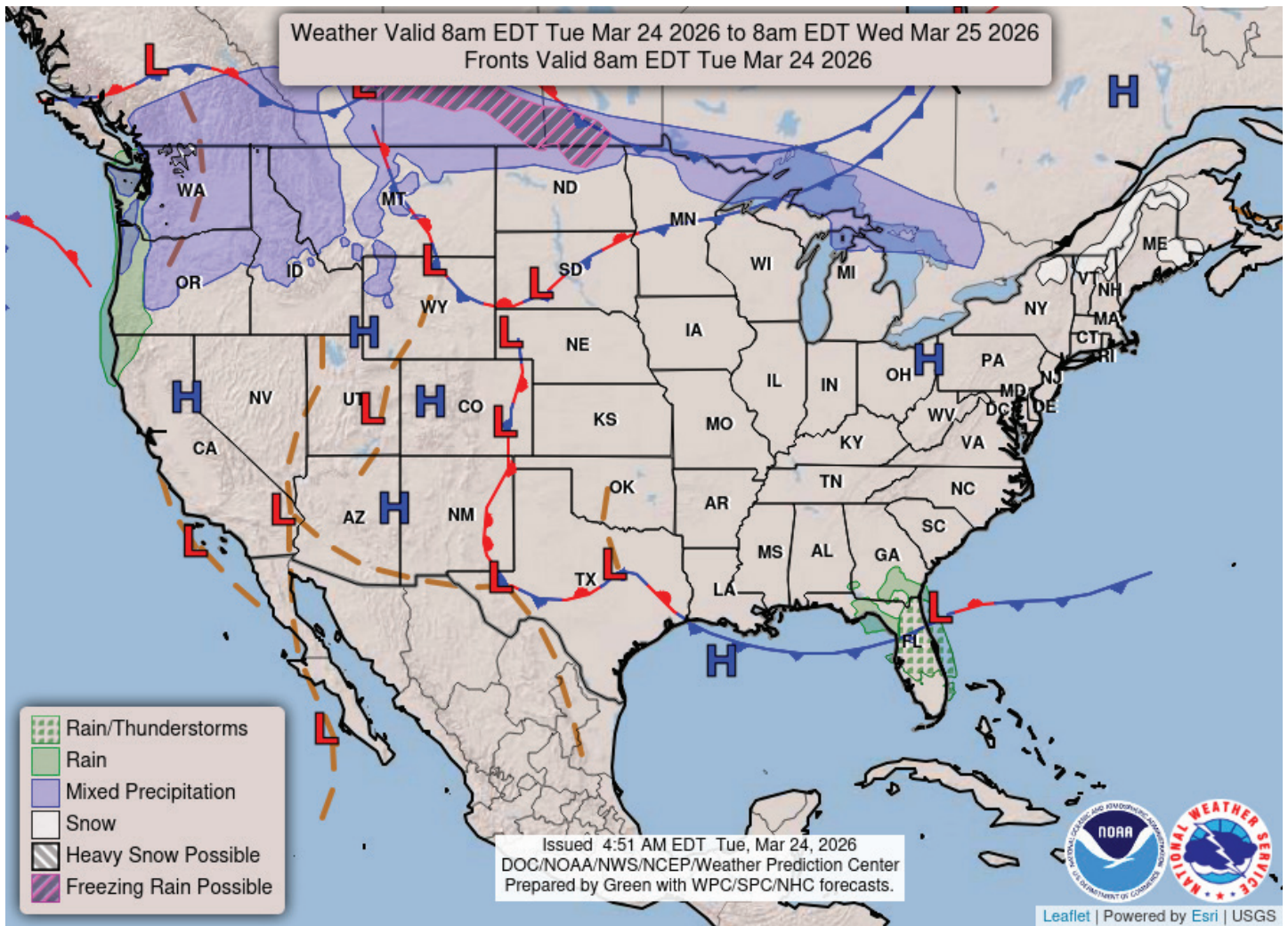
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 47 °F at 5:52 PM
Low Temp: 22 °F at 5:38 AM
Wind: 29 mph at 5:12 PM
Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 80 in 1939
Record Low: -10 in 1893
Average High: 46
Average Low: 23
Average Precip in Mar.: 0.64
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.29
Average Precip to date: 1.81
Precip Year to Date: 1.62
Sunset Tonight: 7.49 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:25 am



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Today in Weather History

March 24th, 1996: North winds of 30 to 40 mph, gusting to 55 mph, combined with the falling snow and the previous day's snowfall to create blizzard conditions. Travel became extremely difficult. Several cars went into ditches, and flights out of Aberdeen were canceled. Schools and activities were either delayed or canceled. Some of the more significant two-day snowfall amounts include 6 inches at Sisseton and Aberdeen, 7 inches at Sand Lake NWR, 8 inches near Veblen, 9 inches at Britton, and 10 inches near Victor.

March 24th, 2009: An area of low pressure moved out of the Rockies and into the Northern Plains, producing snow and widespread blizzard conditions across central and north-central South Dakota. Winds gusting to over 60 mph and several inches of snow caused hazardous travel conditions. Interstate 90 was closed across much of Jones and part of Lyman County. Power was also briefly out in parts of Pierre and Mobridge. Some snowfall amounts included 2 inches at Pierre, 5 inches in Hayes and Timber Lake, 6 inches in Murdo, McLaughlin, and 6 miles southeast of McIntosh; 7 inches 14 miles northeast of Isabel; 8 inches in Eagle Butte, and 12 inches 8 miles southwest of Keldron.

1912 — Residents of Kansas City began to dig out from a storm produced 25 inches of snow in 24 hours. The snowfall total was nearly twice that of any other storm of modern record in Kansas City before or since that time. A record 40 inches of snow fell during the month of March that year, and the total for the winter season of 67 inches was also a record. By late February of that year Kansas City had received just six inches of snow. Olathe KS received 37 inches of snow in the snowstorm, establishing a single storm record for the state of Kansas. (23rd-24th) (The Kansas City Weather Almanac) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A winter-like storm in the central U.S. produced blizzard conditions from South Dakota to western Kansas. Snowfall totals ranged up to 24 inches at Neligh NE, with 19 inches at Winner SD. Winds gusting to 60 mph created twelve foot snow drifts in Nebraska stranding thousands on the highways. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather from Minnesota to northeastern Texas. The thunderstorms spawned ten tornadoes, including one which injured five persons near Raymondville MO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Low pressure off the coast of Virginia brought heavy rain to the Middle Atlantic Coast States, and heavy snow to the Northern Appalachians. Cape Hatteras NC was soaked with 5.20 inches of rain in 24 hours, and snowfall totals in Vermont ranged up to 12 inches. Winds gusted to 52 mph at New York City. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — The storm system which produced heavy snow in the Lower Missouri Valley the previous day, spread heavy snow across parts of the Upper Ohio Valley and the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Snowfall totals of 2.2 inches at Philadelphia PA and 2.4 inches at Atlantic City NJ were records for the date. Up to six inches of snow blanketed southern Ohio. In the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, snow coated the blossoms of cherry trees which had bloomed in 80 degree weather the previous week. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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 In Touch Ministries

Daily Devotion

Serving Christ

Jesus came to serve others, and He calls us to do the same.

Matthew 25:34-40: 34 "Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

35 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in;

36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink?

38 'And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You?

39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

40 "The King will answer and say to them, 'Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.'

Stop for a moment and consider the purpose of your life. Are you living to pursue your own interests or success? Is your energy spent only on those things that bring you comfort or security? Perhaps your ambition is to change the world for the better.

All these aims—even the last one, which sounds so selfless—are futile and without lasting value unless the underlying goal is to serve Christ. As Jesus' followers, we should model our life after His. And Matthew 20:28 tells us that even the Lord "did not come to be served, but to serve."

Yet sometimes we can feel overwhelmed when we hear about great things other believers achieved when they responded to their calling. With God on his side, David led great armies into war. How could anything we do compare with that?

But God's call for each person is unique. He'll provide the situation, words, and ability so we can achieve what He wants done. Remember, He makes the difference—and we're blessed to be used by Him, even if our part looks small (John 6:9-12).

Are you demonstrating your love for the heavenly Father by serving others? As Christians, we should all live in such a way that every evening we can say to Him, "Lord, in the best way I knew how, I attempted to serve Your purpose today."

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

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The Groton Independent

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.23.26

1 14 19 29 35 3

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 36 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.20.26

11 20 51 55 63 4

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$60,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 21 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.23.26

3 6 10 32 34 9

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$19,710,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 36 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.21.26

3 14 18 25 33

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$31,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 51 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.23.26

1 2 7 30 64 19

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 20 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.23.26

12 18 47 56 63 1

Power Play: 10x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$147,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 20 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Abortion pills are gaining ground as a method for ending pregnancies, and opponents are responding

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

As states that already ban abortion look to further restrict access this year, much of the focus is on pills sent by out-of-state providers.

A survey released Tuesday helps explain the emphasis. It suggests that more women in states with bans obtained abortions last year using the pills prescribed via telehealth than by traveling to places where it's legal.

Most of the states with the political will to impose broad bans have already done so in the nearly four years since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade and opened the door to enforcing them. So far this year, just one state has a new one.

Here's a look at where things stand as many state legislatures are wrapping up or have completed their 2026 sessions.

States are taking steps to make abortion pills harder to get

South Dakota Gov. Larry Rhoden, a Republican, signed a bill last week that makes it a felony to advertise, distribute or sell abortion pills.

Similar measures have cleared both legislative chambers in Mississippi this year. There, the House and Senate would need to iron out differences between their versions before it can be sent to the Republican Gov. Tate Reeves.

A survey of state abortion policies from the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights, finds that at least three states — Florida, Oklahoma and Texas — already have laws that specifically ban providers from mailing the pills to patients. Louisiana has classified one of the drugs, mifepristone, as a controlled dangerous substance.

Bills intended to keep out the pills have cleared one chamber of the legislature in Arizona, Indiana and South Carolina this year. Republicans control the legislatures in all three states and the governor's office in two of them. But in Arizona, any restrictions that pass could be vetoed by Democratic Gov. Katie Hobbs.

Survey suggests abortion pills are a growing option in states with bans

A Guttmacher survey released Tuesday sheds light on why abortion opponents may be focusing on pills.

The report suggests that in 2025, for the first time, more women in the 13 states that ban abortion at all stages of pregnancy obtained pills through telehealth than traveled to other states for abortion.

The prescriptions come from providers in states with laws adopted since the fall of Roe that are intended to protect those who prescribe abortion pills to patients in states with bans.

The estimated increase in mailing pills comes as Guttmacher's estimates also suggest fewer women are traveling to states like Colorado, Illinois, Kansas and New Mexico for abortion.

Guttmacher's estimates are based on data from a monthly survey conducted among a random sample of U.S. abortion providers, combined with historical data from every provider in the U.S.

That follows a trend that's been documented in other surveys of abortion providers.

Court battles are also centered on pills

Multiple states have court challenges to the federal rules that allow the abortion pill mifepristone to be prescribed via telehealth.

If they could require in-person prescriptions, it would at least dent the ability of out-of-state providers to get pills into places with bans in place.

Louisiana has such a lawsuit in federal court there; the attorneys general of Florida and Texas have one in Texas; those two states, along with Idaho, Kansas and Missouri, are making the same case in a Missouri court.

Meanwhile, Texas has filed civil cases and Louisiana criminal ones against providers accused of sending

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pills into their states.

The Food and Drug Administration last year approved a generic version of mifepristone, which frustrated abortion opponents.

One state imposed a ban, but its fate is uncertain

Wyoming is the only state this year that has imposed a new abortion ban.

Under a law signed in March by Republican Gov. Mark Gordon, it became the fifth state with a ban on abortion at about six weeks' gestational age — before many women realize they're pregnant. Like most of the others, Wyoming's ban is on abortions once cardiac activity can be detected.

Courts have rejected previous Wyoming efforts to limit abortion.

The Wyoming Supreme Court in January struck down a ban on abortion at all stages of pregnancy.

The idea of punishing women is not gaining ground

No state has adopted a measure intended to allow criminal prosecutions against women who have abortions.

Proposals to do so keep getting made but sputter early in the legislative process.

The farthest such a bill has made it was a hearing last year before a Senate subcommittee in South Carolina. One was scheduled for a subcommittee hearing in Tennessee this month, but didn't get one.

Pregnancy Justice, which advocates for the rights of pregnant people, says it's tracked new "abortion-as-homicide" measures introduced in six states in 2026 — down from 13 states last year.

The major established anti-abortion groups oppose the approach. "Women require compassion and support," said Ingrid Duran, the state legislative director for National Right to Life. "Not prosecution."

Melissa Murray, a professor at New York University School of Law, says that introducing bills with penalties against women can break down the idea that such policies are off-limits.

"You keep pushing the boundary, pushing the envelope, eventually you will get what you're seeking," Murray said. "It will no longer feel fanciful or shocking."

She also noted that women are already sometimes charged with crimes related to their pregnancies. This month, police in Georgia charged a woman with murder after allegedly using an abortion pill and the opioid painkiller oxycodone.

Abortion will be on ballots in November

Abortion questions will be before voters in at least three states in November.

Missouri lawmakers are asking voters to repeal the right to reproductive freedom that they put into the state constitution in 2024.

Elsewhere, voters are being asked to add constitutional amendments that largely mirror current state abortion laws.

In Nevada, a state constitutional amendment to allow abortion until fetal viability — generally considered to be sometime after 21 weeks of pregnancy — passed in 2024. But it needs voter approval a second time to take effect.

A Virginia measure on the ballot would guarantee the right to reproductive freedom, including access to contraception and making decisions on abortion care during the first two trimesters of pregnancy.

Iran targets Israel and Gulf Arab states even as Trump says US is in talks to end the war

By JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A missile slammed into a street in central Tel Aviv as Iran kept up its barrages targeting Israel and Gulf Arab states on Tuesday, even as U.S. President Donald Trump said the United States was in talks with the Islamic Republic to end the war.

Trump also delayed a deadline for Iran to open the strategic Strait of Hormuz for shipping or see its power stations targeted by airstrikes, briefly driving down oil prices and boosting stocks.

The delay offered a reprieve after the U.S. and Iran traded threats over the weekend of strikes that could have cut electricity to millions in Iran and around the Gulf and knocked out desalination plants that

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provide many desert nations with drinking water, while raising fears of possible catastrophe if nuclear plants were hit.

But any information on the talks described by Trump remains in dispute with Iran, which denied any talks had been held.

"No negotiations have been held with the US," Iranian parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf posted on X, adding that "fakenews is used to manipulate the financial and oil markets."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu also said Israel will continue to strike Iran and Lebanon even as the U.S. considers a ceasefire.

"There's more to come," he said.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has been talking about the war this week to his counterparts in Azerbaijan, Egypt, Oman, Pakistan, Russia, South Korea, Turkey and Turkmenistan, his office said.

Iran hits Israel and Gulf neighbors while Israel attacks Beirut

Iran fired multiple waves of missiles at Israel early on Tuesday, with reports of an impact in the country's north.

In Tel Aviv, a missile with a 100 kilogram (220 pound) warhead escaped Israeli defenses to slam into a street in the center of the city, blowing out windows of a neighboring apartment building and sending smoke billowing.

"We saw destruction, smoke, and chaos," rescue service worker Yoel Moshe told reporters of his arrival at the scene minutes after the missile struck. Four people suffered minor wounds, he said.

Emerging from the shelter, Amir Hasid said he expected the scene to be far worse. "It feels like you're a (sitting) duck, waiting for the missiles to hit you, or someone next to you," he said.

Earlier in the day, Israel pounded Beirut's southern suburbs saying that it was targeting infrastructure used by the Iran-linked Hezbollah militant group.

According to the Lebanese Health Ministry, at least eight people died. A strike on a residential apartment southeast of the Lebanese capital killed at least three, including a 3-year-old girl. Another two people were killed in the village of Salaa and three in the village of Srifa.

More than 1,000 people have been killed in Lebanon since the war between Israel and the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group, an Iranian ally, resumed on March 2 and more than 1 million people have been displaced.

In Kuwait, power lines were hit from air defense shrapnel, causing partial electricity outages in several hours. Missile alert sirens sounded in Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia's Defense Ministry said it had destroyed 19 Iranian drones targeting its oil-rich Eastern Province.

Oil prices briefly fell below \$100 a barrel after Trump claimed his government was in talks to end the war. But that respite was short lived, with the price of Brent crude, the international standard, back to \$104 a barrel in morning trading, up more than 40% since Israel and the U.S. started the war on Feb. 28.

Iran skeptical of Trump's motives in deadline extension

Trump initially set a deadline of late Monday, Washington time, for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face attacks on its power plants, but on Monday he gave Tehran five more days to comply.

Iran has allowed a small number of ships through the strait, which leads from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean, but has said it will continue to target vessels linked to the U.S., Israel or its allies.

Its leaders are wary of Washington's motives, in part because Tehran was in negotiations with the U.S. before the surprise attack that started the war. Iran were also in talks last year when the U.S. and Israel attacked its nuclear facilities, starting a 12-day war.

"Trump, Netanyahu and the like are inherently liars and their nature is to create division," Esmail Kowsari, a member of the Iranian parliament's national security and foreign policy committee, was quoted as saying by the semiofficial Fars news agency.

"We must think wisely. Their nature is to sow discord so that they can make people distrust officials and believe that such actions have taken place, whereas no such action has occurred."

Trump's extension of the deadline comes as a contingent of thousands of Marines is on the way to the

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area, raising speculation that the U.S. may try to seize Kharg Island, which is off of Iran's coast and vital to the country's oil network.

The U.S. bombed the island in the Persian Gulf more than a week ago, hitting its defenses but saying it had left oil infrastructure intact.

Iran has threatened if the U.S. appears to be on the verge of landing troops it could mine the Persian Gulf, which would complicate an amphibious assault and also imperil all shipping in the area.

The delay could be timed to coincide with the arrival of U.S. Marines in the region, expected Friday, wrote the New York-based think tank the Soufan Center in an analysis.

"As Trump has in the past, he could be moving military assets into place, in this case to prepare for an invasion and seizure of Kharg Island, while using negotiations as a cover until those assets are fully combat-ready."

However, the center also noted that "Trump could be actively seeking an offramp. Whether Iran reciprocates is yet to be seen."

Trump has said he has no plans to send ground forces into Iran but has not ruled it out. Israel has suggested its ground forces could take part in the war.

Iran's death toll has surpassed 1,500, its Health Ministry has said. In Israel, 15 people have been killed by Iranian strikes. At least 13 U.S. military members have been killed, along with more than a dozen civilians in the occupied West Bank and Gulf Arab states.

Iran's parliament speaker is floated as a possible US contact in talks as war rages

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Long before he became Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf went on a charm offensive for almost two decades, portraying himself as a hard-liner the West could do business with in the Islamic Republic.

"I would like the West to change its attitude to Iran and trust Iran, and rest assured that there's an attitude in Iran to advance issues through dialogue," he told The Times newspaper of London in 2008.

With the U.S. and Israel's war with Iran in its fourth week, the 64-year-old pilot and former Revolutionary Guard commander has denied there have been talks with the United States amid reports that he was floated as Washington's negotiating partner in talks.

Questions also remain as to what power Qalibaf has within Iran's theocracy, shattered after the Feb. 28 Israeli airstrike that killed 86-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Khamenei's son, Mojtaba, now Iran's new supreme leader, has backed Qalibaf through his repeated and failed presidential campaigns. Still, multiple centers of power within Iran's theocracy now likely vie for control of the Islamic Republic — and uncertainties remain over Mojtaba Khamenei's status as he has yet to be seen after reportedly being wounded.

Meanwhile, Qalibaf has been tied to the crackdown against protesters calling for change within Iran's government and has seen corruption allegations swirl around him during his time in office.

U.S. President Donald Trump may just be looking for an Iranian version of Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodríguez, who took over as the U.S. military seized former Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro in January.

"Many Iranians despise Ghalibaf; diplomats see him as pragmatic," wrote analyst Michael Rubin, using a different transliteration for the politician's last name. "Those diplomats confuse pragmatism with opportunism. Ghalibaf is a survivor. He sees in Trump someone who can help him achieve what late Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei denied him: the presidency or some equivalent interim leadership role."

Iran's semiofficial Tasnim news agency, believed close to the Guard, on Tuesday described reports in Western media as a "political bomb" meant to put the country's leaders in disarray.

"Qalibaf was introduced as a negotiating party in order to present a contradictory and non-unified image of Iran," Tasnim said. "The mention of Qalibaf's name was clearly intended to create internal divisions

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within Iran and to provoke conflict among political forces.”

Qalibaf's rise within Iran's theocracy

Qalibaf was born in the city of Torqabeh in Iran's northeastern Razavi Khorasan province to a father who was a shopkeeper — not a member of the Shiite clergy that seized power in the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Like many young men of his generation, he joined the paramilitary Guard during the country's bloody 1980s war with Iraq, quickly rising through the ranks. After the conflict, he served as the head of the Guard's construction arm, Khatam al-Anbia, for several years leading efforts to rebuild.

Trained as a pilot, he then served as the head of the Guard's air force. In 1999, he co-signed a letter to reformist President Mohammad Khatami amid student protests in Tehran over the government closing a reformist newspaper and a subsequent security force crackdown. The letter warned Khatami the Guard would take action unilaterally unless he agreed to putting down the demonstrations.

Violence around the protests, the first in a string of widening demonstrations over the last decades, saw several people killed, hundreds wounded and thousands arrested.

Qalibaf then became the head of Iran's police, modernizing the force and implementing the country's 110 emergency phone number. However, a leaked recording of a later meeting between Qalibaf and members of the Guard's volunteer Basij force, had him claiming that he ordered gunfire be used against demonstrators in 2003 and praising the violence used in Iran's 2009 Green Movement protests.

Iran's then-President Hassan Rouhani hinted at the the 2003 incident when the two sparred in a 2017 presidential election debate.

“There was an argument that you were saying that the students should come then we can pincer attack to them and finish the job,” Rouhani said at the time.

Qalibaf offered himself as alternative to Ahmadinejad

As Tehran's mayor from 2005 to 2017, Qalibaf faced corruption allegations, including over some \$3.5 million being donated to a foundation run by his wife.

However, he also used his prominence to travel to the World Economic Forum and even praised New York City in an interview with The Financial Times, undoubtedly raising eyebrows among other hard-liners. His opponents claimed Qalibaf was like Reza Pahlavi, a hard-charging soldier who became shah in 1925 and rapidly pushed to Westernize Persia and rename it Iran before handing power to his son Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Qalibaf didn't outright reject the comparison.

“If authoritarianism means when collective sense reaches a plan and decision, I'm very determined and firm in carrying it out,” Qalibaf told The Financial Times in 2008, casting himself as an alternative to the hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. “When the expediency of the society is in carrying a project, then I'm very firm and show little flexibility and don't let that collective sense be marred or disarranged.”

Qalibaf ran in presidential elections in 2005, 2013, 2017 and 2024 but despite the failures of those campaigns, U.S. diplomats suggested he enjoyed the support of Mojtaba Khamenei, according to diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks.

“Mojtaba reportedly has long maintained a very close relationship with Tehran Mayor and presidential hopeful Mohammad Baqr Qalibaf; Mojtaba was reportedly the 'backbone' of Qalibaf's past and continuing election campaigns,” an August 2008 cable read. “Mojtaba is said to help Qalibaf as an advisor, financier, and provider of senior-level political support. His support for and closeness to Qalibaf reportedly remains undiminished.”

With Khamenei now Iran's new supreme leader, Qalibaf's position may be significantly boosted.

Qalibaf's name floated as a possible negotiator

Trump pulled back from a 48-hour deadline for Iran to open the Strait of Hormuz, media reports suggested Qalibaf may be a possible Iranian contact for the U.S. government. Qalibaf himself has denied any talks are ongoing.

“No negotiations have been held with the US, and fakenews is used to manipulate the financial and oil markets and escape the quagmire in which the US and Israel are trapped,” he wrote Monday on X.

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Surprisingly, unlike many officials within Iran's government, Qalibaf's name is not on any U.S. bounty. It remains unclear whether the Israelis view Qalibaf as a target. As parliament speaker, Qalibaf praised the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, saying that it showed the "Zionist regime will never have peace until the day it is annihilated."

Trump as well apparently appeared concerned Monday that his unnamed negotiating partner could jeopardize the safety of any talks.

Asked why he wouldn't name the Iranian negotiator, Trump told journalists: "Because I don't want them to be killed, OK? I don't want them to be killed."

Denmark votes in an early election that follows a crisis over US designs on Greenland

By KOSTYA MANENKOV and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Danish voters went to the polls Tuesday in a general election, with Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen seeking a third term at the helm of the Scandinavian country after a standoff with U.S. President Donald Trump over the future of the kingdom's semiautonomous territory of Greenland.

More than 4.3 million people are eligible to have their say in the vote for the new Folketing, or parliament, in Copenhagen, which is elected for a four-year term.

Frederiksen called the election in February, several months before she had to in apparent hopes that her resolute image in the crisis over Greenland would help her with voters in the European Union and NATO member country.

In her second term, her support had waned as the cost of living rose — something that, along with pensions and a potential wealth tax, has been a prominent campaign issue.

The 48-year-old center-left Social Democrat is known for strong support of Ukraine in its defense against Russia's invasion and for a restrictive approach to migration — continuing a tradition in Danish politics that now goes back two decades.

Seeking to counter pressure from the right and pointing to a possible surge in migration because of the Iran war, Frederiksen announced proposals this month that include a potential "emergency brake" on asylum and tighter controls on criminals who lack legal residence. Her government had already unveiled a plan to allow the deportation of foreigners who have been sentenced to at least one year in prison for serious crimes.

Two center-right challengers hope to oust Frederiksen as prime minister. One is in her current government — Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen of the Liberal, or Venstre, party, which headed several recent administrations.

The other is Alex Vanopslagh, 34, of the opposition Liberal Alliance, which calls for lower taxes and less bureaucracy, and for Denmark to abandon its refusal to use nuclear power. But a recent admission from Vanopslagh to taking cocaine earlier in his time as party leader may have dented his chances.

Further to the right, the anti-immigration Danish People's Party looks well-placed to bounce back from a very weak showing at the last election in 2022.

No single party is expected to come anywhere near winning a majority. Denmark's system of proportional representation typically produces coalition governments, traditionally made up of several parties from either the "red bloc" on the left or the "blue bloc" on the right, after weeks of negotiations.

Frederiksen's outgoing three-party administration was the first in decades to straddle the political divide. It remains to be seen whether this election will result in a repeat, with the centrist Moderate party of Foreign Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen possibly acting as the kingmaker.

Greenland, which took up much of the government's energy in recent months, hasn't been a significant issue in the campaign because there is broad agreement on its place in the kingdom.

Frederiksen warned in January that an American takeover of Greenland would amount to the end of NATO. But the crisis has simmered down, at least for now.

After Trump backed down on threats to impose tariffs on Denmark and other European countries that

opposed the U.S. taking control of the vast Arctic island, the U.S., Denmark and Greenland started technical talks on an Arctic security deal.

Peter Mortensen, a lawyer, speaking just after he had voted, told The Associated Press that, "I would like some politicians who have a vision for our country."

"What are we supposed to do in this world with war and our neighbors and perhaps our allies are threatening us instead of being allies?" he added. "I don't have the answers, but the politicians don't have it either."

Denmark's single-chamber parliament has 179 seats. Of those, 175 go to lawmakers from Denmark itself and two each for representatives from thinly populated Greenland and the kingdom's other semiautonomous territory, the Faroe Islands.

Global shares mostly rebound after Trump hints at a possible end to the Iran war

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global benchmarks mostly rebounded Tuesday, in a mood of cautious relief after President Donald Trump said the United States has talked with Iran about a possible end to their war.

France's CAC 40 gained 0.4% in early trading to 7,759.97, while the German DAX edged up 0.2% to 22,695.54. Britain's FTSE 100 inched up less than 0.1% to 9,899.12. U.S. shares were set to be little changed, with Dow futures up less than 0.1% at 46,536.00. S&P 500 futures were also virtually unchanged, declining less than 0.1% to 6,634.50.

In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 1.4% to finish at 52,252.28, recovering some of the losses it suffered the previous day.

Toyota Motor Corp.'s stock price gained 0.6% after it announced overnight that it was investing \$1 billion in its Kentucky and Indiana auto plants. That's part of a plan to invest up to \$10 billion in the U.S. over the next five years that the Japanese automaker announced in November. Japanese manufacturers have been eager to show their contribution to American jobs and economic growth.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 0.2% to 8,379.40. South Korea's Kospi edged up 2.7% to 5,553.92. Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 2.8% to 25,063.71, while the Shanghai Composite added 1.8% to 3,881.28.

Global markets have been on a roller-coaster ride over worries about the war in Iran, which began in late February, especially nations in Asia, which are severely affected by any lack of access to the Strait of Hormuz, crucial for energy shipments from the Middle East.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude gained \$1.34 to \$89.47 a barrel. Brent crude the international standard, added \$1.00 to \$100.94 a barrel, reversing course after easing overnight on Wall Street. That came after Trump said the U.S. and Iran held productive talks "regarding a complete and total resolution of our hostilities in the Middle East" over the last two days.

Iran denied such talks took place and Iranian parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said that "fakenews is used to manipulate the financial and oil markets" in a post on X.

"Still, while there's clearly a long way to go until some sort of ceasefire is agreed, and peace restored, we do at least seem to have taken the first step towards those ends," said Michael Brown, senior research strategist at Pepperstone.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 158.55 Japanese yen from 158.35 yen. The euro cost \$1.15941, down from \$1.1610.

Large oil refinery explosion near Texas coast forces residents to shelter in place

By HALLIE GOLDEN Associated Press

A large explosion at an oil refinery near the Texas coast on Monday shot plumes of smoke into the air and forced nearby residents to shelter in place, officials said.

No one was injured in the explosion at the Valero refinery in Port Arthur, about 90 miles (145 kilometers)

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east of Houston, Mayor Charlotte M. Moses said. She urged residents in parts of the west side of the city to stay put, saying firefighters had arrived.

"There's been an explosion, yes, but we're OK; everybody's OK," she said. "They're trying to put the fire out as quickly as possible."

The explosion comes amid a spike in gas prices driven by uncertainty over the global oil supply because of the Iran war.

The refinery has about 770 employees and can process about 435,000 barrels of oil per day, according to Valero's website. The plant refines heavy sour crude oil into gasoline, diesel and jet fuel.

Images and video posted online show a large plume of smoke and flames billowing out from the refinery. Some residents reported hearing a loud boom and seeing their windows shake.

"For your safety please remain in place until the 'All Clear' is given by emergency personnel," the City of Port Arthur said in a post on its Facebook page.

Valero did not respond to an email or call from The Associated Press seeking comment.

Texas state Rep. Christian Manuel said in a post on social media that the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality had arrived at the refinery with air monitoring equipment and was working with local and state partners.

He told nearby residents to stay inside.

"Please limit outdoor activity, keep windows and doors closed, and follow guidance from local officials," he said.

Senators consider deal to fund Homeland Security but not ICE enforcement as airport lines snarl

By LISA MASCARO and JOEY CAPPELLETTI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators are discussing a proposal to end the Homeland Security budget stalemate by funding much of the department, including the Transportation Security Administration airport workers going without pay, but excluding ICE's enforcement and removal operations that have been core to the dispute.

The potential breakthrough came after a group of Republican senators headed to the White House late Monday to meet with President Donald Trump. Senators said they expected the negotiators to work through the night hammering out the details and present written proposals for both parties to discuss Tuesday at their weekly caucus lunches.

"All I can say is that the discussions have been very positive and productive, and hopefully headed in the right direction," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters late in the evening: "Both sides are working in a serious way."

The sudden shift in the monthlong standoff comes as U.S. airports are jammed with long lines after routine Homeland Security funding was halted, leaving TSA understaffed during the spring travel season. Democrats are refusing to fund Homeland Security without restraints on Trump's immigration enforcement and mass deportation operations after the deaths of two U.S. citizens during ICE protests in Minneapolis.

Trump took the extraordinary step over the weekend of ordering Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers to provide airport security, drawing alarm from some lawmakers that it could escalate tensions.

The contours of the deal under consideration would fund most of Homeland Security, but exclude funding for one main part of ICE — the enforcement and removal operations that are core to Trump's deportation agenda.

Under the package being floated, ICE's Homeland Security Investigations would be funded as well as Customs and Border Protection, but with new guardrails to position officers from those divisions in their traditional roles, rather than as they have been used more recently in immigration roundups in cities. It would also include a number of changes in immigration operations that Democrats have demanded, including mandating that officers wear body cameras and identification.

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Since so much of ICE is already funded through Trump's big tax breaks bill, and immigration officers are still receiving paychecks during the partial government shutdown, senators said the new restraints would also be imposed on operations that rely on that funding source, as well.

"I'm going to be working through the night," said Republican Sen. Katie Britt of Alabama, a chief negotiator who returned from the White House meeting hopeful they had a solution to "land this plane."

"We're going to be working diligently," she said.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who was not part of the group at the White House, said his understanding was that there was a "sense of urgency" coming from the talks.

Coons described various choices before the senators at this point — from no money at all for ICE but also no restraints on the agency operations, to fully funding ICE but with more of the restraints Democrats have demanded, to a middle option of funding most of DHS excluding ICE's enforcement and removal operations. That middle option is what he and other senators understood was broadly on the table after the White House talks.

"First step is to get the proposal in writing," said Sen. Angus King, the Independent from Maine. "I want to see exactly what that means."

Senators late Monday also confirmed Markwayne Mullin as Homeland Security secretary. He takes over for Kristi Noem, who led the department's immigration enforcement operations that erupted with the public outcry and the funding standoff.

Mullin provides a potentially new face for the immigration operation. During his confirmation hearing last week, Mullin touched on another key demand Democrats want — ensuring a judge has signed off on warrants that immigration officers use to search people's homes, rather than simply relying on administrative warrants issued by the department.

"This is significant," Sen. Peter Welch, D-Vt., said about the progress toward changes. "Noem is gone. That's a big deal."

Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., said he was hopeful senators could work things out. "Look, there's a lot of different variables in the equations," he said. "I'm hopeful we'll get there."

Record-smashing heat spreads: 'Basically the entire US is going to be hot'

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

After smashing March heat records in 14 states and the U.S. as a whole, the gigantic heat dome that's baked the Southwest is creeping eastward and may end up being one of the most expansive heat waves in American history, meteorologists and weather historians said.

And it's not going away for awhile, maybe not till the middle of the next week as April starts, said meteorologist Gregg Gallina of the National Weather Service's Weather Prediction Center.

"Basically the entire U.S. is going to be hot," Gallina said Monday. "The area of record temperatures is extremely large. That's the thing that's really bizarre."

This heat dome — in which high pressure is acting like a pot lid trapping hot air over a region — will leave Flagstaff, Arizona, with 11 or 12 straight days of temperatures higher than the city's previous March record, said meteorologist Jeff Masters of Yale Climate Connections.

Gallina said the dome's eastward movement will mean temperatures in the 90s Fahrenheit (mid-30s Celsius) by Wednesday over the southern and central Plains. From one-quarter to one-third of the 48 continental states will be flirting with records for March, Gallina said.

The physical area of this heat wave likely dwarfs two other historic heat waves — one in 2012 in the Upper Midwest and Northeast and another in 2021 in the Pacific Northwest — according to weather historian Chris Burt, author of the book "Extreme Weather." It may not be as large as the Dust Bowl heat waves of 1936, but that was a series of heat waves over two months during summer, not a single big event like now, Burt said.

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Both the Dust Bowl and the 2021 heat wave were more intense, with higher temperatures that hurt people more because they fell in June and July, Gallina said.

Another saving grace for people in this heat wave is that it's not as humid as it would be if the temperatures rose in the summer, Gallina said.

On Friday, four places in Arizona and California hit 112 degrees (44.4 degrees Celsius), according to the Weather Service. Not only did that smash the record for the hottest March day in the continental United States by 4 degrees (2 degrees Celsius), but it was only 1 degree shy of the hottest day recorded in the Lower 48 in April.

Climatologist and weather historian Maximiliano Herrera, who tracks global weather records, compiled a list of 14 states that have notched their hottest March day on record since this heat dome started: California, Arizona, Nevada, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Utah, South Dakota, Missouri, Iowa, Colorado, Wyoming, Minnesota and Idaho.

"In Mexico, even May records were trashed with March records broken by as much as 14 (degrees Fahrenheit), far more than July 1936, March 1907 or June 2021," Herrera wrote in an email.

The National Center for Environmental Information registered at least 479 weather stations breaking records for March from Wednesday through Saturday, based on its network of stations. Herrera, who analyzed a broader set of data, said the true number is likely higher. Another 1,472 daily records — which are easier to break — were shattered at the same time, the center said.

What's happening is the jet stream — which moves weather systems from west to east — is pretty much stuck as far westward as the storms dousing Hawaii, where people are seeing torrential rains and flooding, Masters and Gallina said.

On Friday, a group of international climate scientists called World Weather Attribution determined that the record heat was "virtually impossible" and 800 times more likely because of climate change from the burning of coal, oil and natural gas. The result of those activities added at least 4.7 degrees (2.6 degrees Celsius) to the heat, said report co-author Clair Barnes, an Imperial College of London scientist with the group.

The heat dome will move on by late next week, Masters said: "We just have to give it time."

At least 66 killed in military plane crash in Colombia, head of armed forces says

By MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — A military transport plane with 128 people on board, mostly soldiers, crashed shortly after taking off Monday in Puerto Leguizamo, Colombia, killing at least 66 people and leaving dozens injured, the head of Colombia's armed forces said.

General Hugo Alejandro López Barreto said that four military personnel were still missing.

"Sadly, as a consequence of this tragic accident, 66 of our military elements died," he said.

"At the moment, we have no information, or indications, that it was an attack by an illegal armed group," Barreto added.

In a video posted on social media, Deputy Mayor Carlos Claros said that the bodies of the victims were taken to the small town's morgue, and that the only two clinics in town treated the injured before they were flown to larger cities. Puerto Leguizamo is located in Putumayo, an Amazonian province that borders Ecuador and Peru.

"I want to thank the people of Puerto Leguizamo who came out to help the victims of this accident," Claros told Colombian television station RCN.

Defense Minister Pedro Sánchez said on X that the plane that crashed Monday was transporting troops to another city in Putumayo.

Images shared online by Colombian media outlets showed a black cloud of smoke rising from a field where the plane crashed and a truck with soldiers rushing to the site.

The airplane had 128 people on board, including 115 were from the Army, 11 crew members and 2 from

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the National Police. Baretto said 57 people were evacuated.

Media outlets shared videos of soldiers being rushed from the site on motorcycles driven by local residents, while another group of residents tried to put out the fire that the plane crash had created in a field surrounded by dense foliage.

Carlos Fernando Silva, the commander of Colombia's air force, said details of the crash were not yet known, "except that the plane had a problem and went down about two kilometers from the airport."

The air force commander added that two planes, with 74 beds, were sent to the area to fly the injured back to hospitals in the capital, Bogota, and elsewhere.

Petro seized on the accident to promote what he called his longtime campaign to modernize planes and other equipment used by his country's military, saying those efforts have been blocked by "bureaucratic difficulties" and suggesting that some officials should be held accountable.

"If civilian or military administrative officials are not up to the challenge, they must be removed," Petro said.

Critics of the president pointed out that military aircraft have been given less flight hours under the Petro administration due to budget cuts, which leads to less experienced crews.

Erich Saumeth, a Colombian aviation expert and military analyst, said that the Hercules C-130 that crashed Monday had been donated by the United States to Colombia in 2020. Three years later, it went through a detailed revision known as an overhaul, in which its engines were inspected and key components were replaced.

"I don't think this plane crashed because of a lack of good parts," Saumeth said. He said that investigations will have to determine why the engines of the Hercules, which has four propellers, failed so quickly after take off.

In a message on X Monday, Defense Minister Sánchez said that so far there were no signs indicating that the plane was attacked by rebel groups that operate near Puerto Leguizamo.

Sánchez wrote that the accident was "profoundly painful for the country," adding that: "We hope that our prayers can help to relieve some of the pain."

Some state officials say shifting mail ballot deadline will complicate plans for November elections

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

As he left the chambers of the U.S. Supreme Court, where justices had just heard arguments Monday over whether to prevent states from counting mail ballots that arrive after Election Day, Nevada Secretary of State Cisco Aguilar texted his staff 3,000 miles away.

His directive: Get ready to plan how to run November's midterm elections if the high court changes the rules when it issues its decision in June.

"The challenge is educating voters shortly before the election how the election is going to work," Aguilar, a Democrat, said. "That doesn't happen overnight. The election planning happens long before."

Election officials in Nevada and 13 other states that allow regular mail ballots sent by Election Day but arrive some period of days afterward to be counted had their attention trained on Monday's arguments, where conservative justices appeared skeptical of such grace periods. Fifteen other states have grace periods specifically for military and overseas voters.

Mail ballots, also called absentee ballots, have been the source of conspiracy theories from President Donald Trump, who groundlessly blames them for his loss in the 2020 election. The Republican National Committee and Libertarian Party sued to overturn Mississippi's law permitting the counting of mail ballots postmarked by Election Day that arrive up to five days later, the case the high court is now considering.

During the nearly two-hour-long arguments, Justice Brett Kavanaugh, one of the court's supermajority of six conservatives, asked RNC attorney Paul Clement if a ruling during the court's typical time in June would run afoul of a court principle to avoid handing down decisions that can disrupt upcoming elections.

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"June would give them plenty of time," Clement said of election administrators overseeing November's voting.

Tammy Patrick, a former Arizona election official who is chief programs officer at the National Association of Elections Officials' Election Center, said that's not the case. Most election offices have already printed flyers, signs and even ballot envelopes with the current election deadlines for use in November. They would have to scramble to reprint that material, usually done months or years in advance to save money.

"Nobody has put in their budget to reprint all of their educational material for the midterms," Patrick said. "That's the hard spot election administrators are in."

Monday's case revolves around just a fraction of the ballots counted during an election year.

In Nevada, for example, 98% of all mail ballots arrive before Election Day. Of those that arrive later, 95% land the next day. In Illinois, another state that allows late-arriving ballots, 106,000 ballots arrived within the state's 14-day grace period in 2024, just under 2% of the 5.5 million votes cast in that election.

The biggest challenge if the mail ballot deadline were to change would be informing voters that they faced a tighter deadline, said Matt Dietrich, spokesperson for the Illinois State Board of Elections. He said the board would work local election offices to spread the word.

In Alaska, with its enormous distances and isolated population centers sometimes linked only by air, the state's 10-day grace period is a civic lifeline to some communities.

"The thought that the outcome of *Watson v. RNC* could reshape elections as soon as June is horrifying to me, and for thousands of Alaskans who will have to rethink the way they approach voting by Election Day," said Michelle Sparck of the group Get Out the Native Vote.

Massachusetts holds its primary Sept. 1, so cannot send out its general election ballots earlier than that, said Debra O'Malley, a spokesperson for the secretary of state's office.

"You can't turn these things around on a dime," O'Malley said, worrying that there's no give in that schedule for the itinerary the high court might prefer.

Patrick, of the national association, said election administrators have increasingly struggled to adjust to sudden swings in voting laws that have followed Trump's attacks on voting. In Texas last year, 3,000 pieces of legislation related to elections were introduced in the state legislature, Patrick said, and election officials have to prepare for any changes months in advance.

That's why the high court formulated what it calls the "Purcell principle," a name based on a previous case out of Arizona. In 2006, the court reversed a decision that had struck down a state voter ID law shortly before the election, ruling that judges shouldn't change procedures too close to voting.

Patrick worked in the elections office of Maricopa County, Arizona's most populous county, at the time.

"When the rules of engagement change too close to the election, you don't have sufficient time to notify the electorate and make clear that policy change," she said.

She worries such a last-minute pivot could happen if the court changes late-arriving mail ballot rules, noting that rural voters whose mail is delivered slower stand to run the greatest risk of disenfranchisement.

Aguilar said he expects his office and local election officials in Nevada will roll with the punches, but he is concerned about a disruptive ruling.

"To change the rules of the game in the middle of the competition does not do anyone any good," he said.

Workers' job market gloom has increased dramatically over the past few years, Gallup survey finds

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans' outlook on the job market has turned increasingly pessimistic, a surprisingly negative shift given the low unemployment rate but one that likely reflects an ongoing hiring drought.

Just 28% of workers in a quarterly Gallup survey conducted late last year said now is a "good time" to find a quality job, with 72% saying it is a bad time. Those figures are a sharp reversal from just a few years ago, in mid-2022, when 70% said it was a good time.

Americans have quickly gotten more pessimistic: As recently as late 2024, just under half of workers

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still said it was a good time to search for a job. The current survey was conducted during the final three months of 2025, long before the Iran war that has sent oil and gas prices soaring and threatens to slow the economy as Americans redirect more of their dollars to filling gas tanks and away from other spending.

The figures help explain other surveys that show Americans have a largely bleak view of the economy, even as many headline measures suggest it has been growing and job losses are low.

College graduates are especially gloomy

Job pessimism is especially pronounced among college graduates. The shift is likely because hiring in many white-collar professions has been unusually weak for the past two years, in areas such as software, customer service and advertising.

The survey found a split based on education levels, with just 19% of workers with a college degree thinking that now is a good time to find a quality job, while 35% of workers without a college degree are optimistic.

A separate Gallup survey of U.S. adults overall found that college graduates' optimism about the job market is the lowest it's been since 2013. Meanwhile, the gap in job market sentiment between Americans with and without a college degree was at its widest in that survey since Gallup started asking the question in 2001.

Signs of broad discontent among young workers

Just about 2 in 10 workers ages 18-34 think now is a good time to find a job, compared to about 4 in 10 workers ages 65 and older who say the same.

Gallup's survey is consistent with what economists call the "low-hire, low-fire" job market: Businesses are largely holding onto their workers and measures of layoffs remain quite low. As a result, older workers are largely secure in their jobs. But hiring is also quite sluggish, making it harder for younger workers to break in and find permanent work.

It also found that younger workers are much likelier than older workers to say they're actively looking for a new job or watching for opportunities. Most Gen Z and Millennial workers say they're at least watching for opportunities, while about three-quarters of baby boomers say they're not looking at all.

Other surveys signal negative economic views

The Gallup results come as government data shows that overall hiring is at its weakest level in more than a decade. The Labor Department tracks a "hiring rate," or the proportion of people who are hired each month as a percent of those with jobs. The hiring rate dropped to 3.2% last November, around when Gallup conducted its survey, the lowest since March 2013. It was 3.9% before the pandemic.

A hiring rate at that 3.2% is quite low: When it was last reached in March 2013, the unemployment rate was 7.5%, as millions of Americans were still struggling to find work after the 2008-2009 Great Recession. It suggests it is much harder to find a job now than the unemployment rate would indicate.

Government data also shows that there are more unemployed people — 7.4 million — than available jobs, at 6.9 million. That is a reversal from the first few years after the pandemic, when vacancies outnumbered those out of work.

Gallup's survey also found that workers have a dimmer view of their current life and future prospects than at any point since 2009, when the firm began measuring the workforce's life evaluations.

Other surveys echo Americans' generally dark view of the economy. The Conference Board's consumer confidence survey was just 91.2 in February, not far from its pandemic-era lows and down from nearly 130 before the pandemic.

More people believe jobs are "easy to get" than "hard to find," the Conference Board's survey finds, but the gap has narrowed steadily in recent years.

Stories of survival emerge from deadly New York airport collision as officials investigate its cause

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ, JENNIFER PELTZ and ROB GILLIES Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Moments after an Air Canada jet collided at high speed with a fire truck at New York's LaGuardia Airport, killing the pilots and hurling a flight attendant from the aircraft, the passengers took their escape into their own hands.

With the smell of fuel in the air and debris dangling from the obliterated cockpit, passengers tore open emergency exit doors, jumped off the plane's wings and then turned around to catch others coming up behind them, some bleeding or with head wounds.

"Strangely enough, I wasn't scared or panicked. On the contrary, I think most of us were pretty aware of what happened," said passenger Clément Lelièvre. "So we all went outside; we got other people out."

About 40 passengers and crew members on the regional jet from Montreal, and two people from the fire truck, were taken to hospitals. Some suffered serious injuries, but by Monday morning, most had been released, and others walked away without needing treatment.

As investigators continued delving Tuesday into what caused the catastrophic wreck, stories of survival also emerged — including that of the flight attendant, found injured but alive outside the aircraft.

Lelièvre credited the pilots' "incredible reflexes" with saving lives. The pilots braked extremely hard just as the plane touched down, he said.

The collision late Sunday came after the fire truck was given permission to check on another plane that had aborted its takeoff after reporting an odor on board and started crossing the tarmac. An air traffic controller can be heard on airport communications frantically telling the fire truck to stop.

Roughly 20 minutes later, the controller appears to blame himself. "We were dealing with an emergency earlier," the controller said. "I messed up."

A key for investigators will be examining coordination of the airport's air traffic and ground traffic at the time of the crash, said Mary Schiavo, a former Department of Transportation Inspector General.

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said LaGuardia is "well-staffed" but faces a shortage of controllers.

The runway where the crash happened is likely to be closed for "days" during the investigation, Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, which is leading the investigation, said at a news conference Monday. Investigators need to sift through a lot of debris, she said.

Authorities recovered the plane's cockpit and flight data recorders by cutting a hole in the aircraft's roof and then drove them to the NTSB lab in Washington for analysis, Homendy said.

It was too early in the investigation to answer many questions about the accident, but more information was expected to be released Tuesday, she said.

The crash shut down LaGuardia — the New York region's third busiest hub — during what was already a messy time at U.S. airports because of a partial government shutdown.

Flights resumed Monday afternoon on one runway and with lengthy delays. The shutdown caused some disruptions at other airports, too, especially for Delta, which has a major presence at LaGuardia.

There were 72 passengers and four crew members aboard the Jazz Aviation flight operating on behalf of Air Canada, according to the airline. The flight originated at Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport. Canada has also sent a team of investigators.

The pilot and copilot who died in the first fatal crash at LaGuardia in 34 years were both based out of Canada, said Kathryn Garcia, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport.

Jeannette Gagnier, the great aunt of one of the pilots, identified him as Antoine Forest, and said he always wanted to be a pilot.

Air traffic controllers are not impacted by the partial government shutdown that has caused long delays at airport security checkpoints in recent days. They have been affected by past shutdowns.

The FAA has been chronically short on air traffic controllers for years.

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LaGuardia is one of 35 major U.S. airports with an advanced surface surveillance system designed to help keep track of planes and vehicles crossing the airport.

An alarm heard in the background of the air traffic control audio was likely from the system and would have alerted the tower to the potential collision, Former FAA air traffic control chief Mike McCormick said. FAA statistics show there were 1,636 runway incursions last year.

Senate confirms Markwayne Mullin to lead Homeland Security as TSA standoff deepens

By REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate confirmed Markwayne Mullin as homeland security secretary late Monday, approving President Donald Trump's nominee to take over the embattled department after the firing of Kristi Noem during a public backlash over the administration's immigration enforcement and mass deportation operations.

Mullin, a Republican senator from Oklahoma known for his close friendship with Trump, has tried to present himself as a steady hand, saying his goal as secretary would be to get the department off the front page of the news. He takes over at a difficult time as Trump has ordered ICE agents to bolster airport security during a budget standoff in Congress. And he tangled with the Republican chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, who questioned Mullin's character and temperament during last week's combative confirmation hearing.

Senators confirmed him on a largely party-line vote, 54-45.

Routine funding for the Department of Homeland Security has lapsed since Feb. 14, leading to long waits at U.S. airports as Transportation Security Administration agents call out rather than work without pay. Democrats are demanding the Trump administration make changes in immigration enforcement operations following the deaths of two U.S. citizens during protests this year in Minneapolis. Trump has refused the latest proposal, and talks have stalled.

MMA fighter takes on Homeland Security

While the senator comes to the position after more than a dozen years in Congress, and with the management experience of running an expanding family plumbing business in Oklahoma, he has not been seen as a key force in immigration issues.

A former mixed martial arts fighter and collegiate wrestler who has led early-morning workout sessions in the members-only House gym, he became close with members of both parties and is often seen as a negotiator in partisan Washington.

It is his loyalty to Trump that landed him the job, and he's not expected to sway from the president's approach. Mullin was a strong supporter of Trump's immigration agenda and ICE officers before being tapped for the DHS job.

"I can have different opinions with everybody in this room, but as secretary of homeland I'll be protecting everybody," Mullin said during his confirmation hearing.

Immigration enforcement at center of funding stalemate

Mullin's first challenge will be to restore routine funding to the department that has been blocked since mid-February as Democrats demand tighter restraints. They want immigration officers to identify themselves and not wear masks; refrain from enforcement operations around schools, churches, hospitals and other sensitive locations; wear body cameras; and obtain a judge's approval on warrants before entering people's homes or private spaces.

At his confirmation hearing last week, Mullin sought to portray himself as a steady hand at a pivotal time for the agency — an image that was challenged by the committee chairman, Republican Sen. Rand Paul, in a heated exchange. Democrats are also skeptical, seeing him as a loyal executor of Trump's agenda.

Paul voted against Mullin during the committee vote, and again Monday. Democratic Sens. John Fetterman of Pennsylvania and Martin Heinrich of New Mexico joined the other Republicans in voting to confirm the nominee.

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"Markwayne Mullin is ready to lead," said Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming, the No. 2 ranking Republican. He said Mullin will "serve with seriousness and character. He will be a leader who makes our country safer."

Mullin comes into office at a time when public support for the president's immigration agenda has fallen after a year of high-profile operations in multiple American cities. Under Noem's leadership, officers were accused of using force to arrest immigrants, detaining them in squalid conditions and bypassing due process to rapidly deport immigrants.

Mullin did walk back some of his comments during his confirmation hearing, saying he was wrong to malign protester Alex Pretti after he was shot and killed by an ICE officer. He said that as secretary he would refrain from making judgments before an investigation is carried out.

He shed light on other ways he might influence policy when it comes to immigration. For example, he said officers would be required to use a warrant signed by a judge — not the administrative warrants now used by ICE officers — to enter a house except in rare circumstances.

He acknowledged the concerns some communities have over building massive ICE detention facilities in their neighborhoods and said cutting off federal funds to so-called sanctuary jurisdictions that don't work with ICE would be a last resort.

But ultimately, it is the White House that sets the agenda when it comes to how Trump's vision for immigration enforcement is carried out, and Mullin is expected to follow its lead. Trump faces a strong lobby within the GOP pushing him to make good on his promise to deport 1 million people a year.

FEMA and federal disaster aid in flux

Mullin will also have his hands full charting a new course at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which has come under scrutiny as it delivers disaster aid to parts of the country hard-hit by hurricanes and other natural disasters.

A growing number of critics, even fellow Republicans, said Noem's policy of personally approving contracts over \$100,000 slowed disaster response, and the department still doesn't have a full-time administrator.

Mullin presented a fresh approach on federal emergency management during his Senate confirmation hearing, rejecting the idea of eliminating FEMA and saying he would revoke Noem's contract approval rule.

Trump says Iran is eager for a deal to end the war as he extends deadline to allow for diplomacy

By JON GAMBRELL, ELENA BECATOROS and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday the U.S. was talking with an Iranian leader and claimed the Islamic Republic was eager for a deal to end the war. He also extended a deadline for Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz or face attacks on its power plants, saying it has an additional five days.

Trump's turnaround, which held out the possibility of resolving the war now in its fourth week, served to drive down oil prices and jolt stocks. It offered a reprieve after the U.S. and Iran traded threats over the weekend that could have cut electricity to millions in Iran and around the Gulf, and knocked out desalination plants providing many desert nations with drinking water.

Trump told reporters Iran wants "to make a deal," and he claimed U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner had held talks Sunday with an Iranian leader. He did not say who that was, but said the U.S. has not talked to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei.

Iran denied talks had been held. "No negotiations have been held with the US," Iranian parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf posted on X, adding that "fakenews is used to manipulate the financial and oil markets."

Trump says Iran would give up its enriched uranium

Trump said if a deal is reached, the U.S. would move to take Iran's enriched uranium, which is critical to its disputed nuclear program. Iran has adamantly refused such demands in the past, insisting it has the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes.

Iran has already performed 99% of the centrifuge work required to produce weapons-grade uranium

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for nine nuclear weapons, said Robert Goldston, a Princeton University professor who researches arms control and fusion energy. As of June 2025, the International Atomic Energy Agency estimated that Iran had 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of highly enriched uranium.

Turkey and Egypt, meanwhile, said they had spoken to the warring parties, the first sign of coordinated mediation from regional heavyweights.

The war launched by the United States and Israel has killed more than 2,000 people, shaken the global economy, sent oil prices surging and endangered some of the world's busiest air corridors.

Trump threatened over the weekend to "obliterate" Iran's power plants unless the country releases its stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of all traded oil passed before the war, within 48 hours. That deadline would have expired late Monday Washington time.

The five-day extension was "subject to the success of the ongoing meetings and discussions," Trump said.

Speaking later in Tennessee, Trump said his administration has been negotiating "for a long time" with Iran.

"They want peace," Trump said. "They've agreed they will not have a nuclear weapon, you know, etc., etc. but we'll see." He said there's a "very good chance" a deal will be reached this week, crediting his threat to blow up Iranian power plants.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer indicated he was aware of talks between Iran and the U.S.

"We, the U.K., were aware that was happening," he said Monday, without giving details.

Possible international mediation

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said he spoke by phone with his Turkish counterpart, Hakan Fidan. Turkey has been an intermediary in past talks between Tehran and Washington.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry declined to comment Monday on whether the country had relayed messages between Iran and the U.S. On Sunday, Turkish officials said Fidan had also spoken to his counterparts from Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt and the European Union, as well as with U.S. officials as part of efforts to end the war.

Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said Cairo has delivered "clear messages" to Iran focusing on de-escalating the conflict, according to his office. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said it was making "constant efforts and communications" with all parties.

An Egyptian official said the U.S. and Iran exchanged messages through Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan over the weekend aimed at averting strikes on energy infrastructure. The official was not authorized to speak to the media and so spoke on condition of anonymity.

A Gulf diplomat also said that Egypt and Turkey were leading the de-escalation efforts.

"For now, it appears they managed to avert an energy catastrophe" that would result if Trump attacked Iran's energy facilities and Iran responded, said the diplomat, who was not authorized to speak with journalists and also spoke on condition of anonymity.

Iran says Trump backed down

In the wake of Trump's turnaround, Iran's semiofficial Fars and Tasnim news agencies portrayed the American president as backing down.

"Since the start of the war, messages have been sent to Tehran by some mediators, but Iran's clear response has been that it will continue its defense until the required level of deterrence is achieved," Tasnim said. "With this kind of psychological warfare, neither the Strait of Hormuz will return to prewar conditions nor will calm return to energy markets."

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard had promised retaliation if Trump carried out his threat, saying Iran would hit power plants supplying electricity to American bases, "as well as the economic, industrial and energy infrastructures in which Americans have shares."

Qalibaf, the parliament speaker, said earlier that Iran would consider vital infrastructure across the region to be legitimate targets, including desalination facilities critical for drinking water in Gulf nations.

The Fars news agency, which is close to the Revolutionary Guard, published a list of such facilities, including the United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant. Over the weekend, Iran launched missiles targeting

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the city of Dimona in Israel, near a facility key to its long-suspected atomic weapons program. The facility wasn't damaged.

With the U.S. deploying more amphibious assault ships and additional Marines to the Middle East, Iran's Defense Council warned against any ground attack, saying it would "lead to the mining of all access routes."

Trump has said he has no plans to send ground forces into Iran but has not ruled it out. Israel has suggested its ground forces could take part in the war.

Israel strikes Tehran and Lebanon

Israel launched new attacks Monday on Tehran, saying it was targeting infrastructure. Explosions were heard in multiple locations. It wasn't immediately clear what had been hit.

Israel is also battling the Iran-linked Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, which has fired hundreds of rockets into Israel. In recent days, Israel has hit apartment buildings in Beirut and bombed bridges over the Litani River in Lebanon's south.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun called the targeting of bridges "a prelude to a ground invasion."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel will continue to strike Iran and Lebanon, even as the U.S. considers a ceasefire.

"There's more to come," he said.

Authorities say Israeli strikes have killed more than 1,000 people in Lebanon and displaced more than 1 million.

Iran's death toll has surpassed 1,500, its Health Ministry has said. In Israel, 15 people have been killed by Iranian strikes. At least 13 U.S. military members have been killed, along with more than a dozen civilians in the occupied West Bank and Gulf Arab states.

Jury finds that Bill Cosby sexually assaulted woman in 1972 and awards her nearly \$60 million

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A civil jury in California found Monday that Bill Cosby was liable for drugging and sexually assaulting a woman in 1972 and awarded her \$59.25 million.

After a nearly two-week trial in Santa Monica, jurors found Cosby, 88, liable for the sexual battery and assault of Donna Motsinger. They awarded her \$17.5 million in past damages and \$1.75 million for future damages, including "mental suffering, loss of enjoyment of life, inconvenience, grief, anxiety, humiliation, and emotional distress."

Then in a second phase of the trial Monday afternoon, they awarded an additional \$40 million in punitive damages.

Cosby's attorney, Jennifer Bonjean, said in an email after the initial award earlier Monday that they are disappointed and fully intend to appeal the verdict. She did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the punitive damages.

Deliberations lasted about two days.

The decision came nearly five years after Cosby was freed from prison in Pennsylvania when the state Supreme Court threw out a criminal conviction based on similar allegations. He has settled some similar lawsuits and has been ordered to pay in others, but Monday's award is likely the most he has had to pay in a case.

"This verdict is not just about me – it's about finally being heard and holding Mr. Cosby accountable," Motsinger said in a statement. "I have carried the weight of what happened to me for more than 50 years. It never goes away. Today, a jury saw the truth and held him accountable. That means everything. I hope this gives strength to other survivors who are still waiting for their moment to be heard."

Motsinger had been a server at a restaurant in Sausalito near San Francisco who said in her lawsuit, filed in 2023, that Cosby had invited her to his stand-up comedy show at a theater in nearby San Carlos. Both were in their 30s at the time. She said Cosby gave her wine and two pills that she believed were aspirin, and that she was going in and out of consciousness as two men put her in a limousine.

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"She woke up in her house with all her clothes off, except her underwear on – no top, no bra, and no pants," the lawsuit said. "She knew she had been drugged and raped by Bill Cosby."

In court filings, Cosby's lawyers argued that the allegations rested almost entirely on speculation and assumption, saying Motsinger "freely admits that she has no idea what happened."

Motsinger's lawsuit moved with surprising quickness through the California courts, taking just 2 1/2 years from filing until verdict while other lawsuits against him stalled.

"We are grateful to the jury for their careful attention to the evidence and to Ms. Motsinger for the extraordinary courage it took to come forward," said Jesse Creed, one of her attorneys from the Panish Shea Ravipudi law firm that represented her.

Cosby did not testify at the trial, whose witnesses included Andrea Constand, the Temple University sports administrator he was convicted of sexually assaulting in a Pennsylvania criminal court in 2018. The state's Supreme Court threw out the verdict and Cosby was freed from prison after serving nearly three years of a three- to 10-year sentence.

Motsinger first made her allegations anonymously in a 2005 lawsuit filed by Constand.

The Associated Press does not typically name people who say they have been sexually abused unless they come forward publicly and consent to be named, as Constand and Motsinger have.

In 2022, a jury in Santa Monica awarded \$500,000 to a woman who said Cosby sexually assaulted her at the Playboy Mansion when she was a teenager in 1975.

Motsinger's lawsuit echoed allegations of rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment made by at least 60 women against Cosby, all of which he has denied.

The former stand-up comedy and television superstar once widely known as "America's Dad" became the first celebrity tried and convicted in the #MeToo era before his conviction was permanently thrown out when appeals court found he gave incriminating testimony in a deposition only after believing he had immunity from prosecution.

Pentagon will remove media offices after judge reinstates New York Times press credentials

By JONATHAN J. COOPER Associated Press

The U.S. Defense Department will remove media offices from the Pentagon after a federal judge sided with The New York Times in a lawsuit challenging limits on reporters' access to the building, a department official announced Monday.

An area of the Pentagon known as "Correspondents' Corridor" that reporters have used for decades to cover the U.S. military will close immediately, department spokesperson Sean Parnell said. Journalists will eventually be able to work from an "annex" outside the building, which he said "will be available when ready." He offered no detail about how long that will take.

The Pentagon Press Association said the announcement "is a clear violation of the letter and spirit of last week's ruling."

"At such a critical time, we ask why the Pentagon is choosing to restrict vital press freedoms that help inform all Americans," the association said.

The new policy is the latest dispute over press access to President Donald Trump's administration, which has limited legacy media while boosting conservative and pro-Trump outlets.

The Times sued the Pentagon and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth in December, claiming the agency's new credentialing policy violated journalists' constitutional rights to free speech and due process. Dozens of reporters had walked out of the building rather than agree to government-imposed restrictions on their work.

U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman in Washington, D.C., last week sided with the newspaper. He ordered the Pentagon to reinstate the press credentials of seven Times journalists and struck down some of the agency's restrictions on news reporting.

Friedman said the "undisputed evidence" shows that the policy is designed to weed out "disfavored

journalists" and replace them with those who are "on board and willing to serve" the government, a clear instance of illegal viewpoint discrimination.

Parnell said the Defense Department disagrees with the ruling and is pursuing an appeal. He said security concerns prompted restrictions on press access, a claim that journalists have rejected.

Under the latest Pentagon rules announced Monday, journalists will still have access to the Pentagon for press conferences and interviews arranged through the department's public affairs team, but they will have to be escorted, Parnell wrote on social media.

The current Pentagon press corps is comprised mostly of conservative outlets that agreed to the policy. Reporters from outlets that refused to consent to the new rules, including from The Associated Press, have continued reporting on the military.

The AP, meanwhile, is awaiting a decision by a three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court of Appeals on its separate lawsuit against President Donald Trump's administration. The AP contends that Trump's White House team punished it by reducing its access to presidential events because the outlet hasn't followed his lead in renaming the Gulf of Mexico.

Jury begins deliberations in landmark New Mexico trial over children's safety risks on Meta

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A jury began deliberations Monday in a landmark trial in New Mexico where social media conglomerate Meta is accused of misleading its users about how safe its platforms are for children.

Meta's attorneys dispute the claims and say the company provides built-in protections for teenagers and weeds out harmful content but that some potentially harmful gets past its safety nets for some users.

Jurors heard closing arguments after six weeks of testimony from scores of witnesses that included local teachers, psychiatric experts, state investigators, top Meta officials and whistleblowers who left the company.

The case in New Mexico state court is among the first to reach trial in a wave of litigation involving social media platforms and their impacts on children.

New Mexico prosecutors have accused Meta — which owns Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp — of prioritizing profits over safety in violation of state consumer protection laws. They have raised concerns about the safety of complex algorithms, and a variety of messaging features and settings.

"It's clear that young people are spending too much time on Meta's products, they've lost control," prosecution attorney Linda Singer told the jury in closing statements. "Meta knew that and it didn't disclose it."

Prosecutor says trial evidence shows Meta failed to enforce its minimum user age

Singer said testimony and evidence at trial showed Meta's algorithms had been recommending sensational and harmful content to teenagers, while alleging that the company failed to truly enforce its minimum user age of 13.

"The safety issues that you've heard about in this case, weren't mistakes. They were a product of a corporate philosophy that chose growth and engagement over children's safety," Singer said. "And young people in this state and around the country have borne the cost."

Meta attorney Kevin Huff on Monday highlighted witness testimony about Meta's investments in the safety on its platforms, describing automated features and roles dedicated to safety.

"Meta has built innovative, automated tools to protect people," he said. "Meta has 40,000 people working to make its apps as safe as possible."

But he added that Meta's systems aren't perfect: "No one can, with billions of pieces of content every day, even the best system, cannot catch all of it."

He said the company's enforcement of minimum age limits are hamstrung by U.S. government restrictions on collecting young children's data.

Meta attorney insists the company has disclosed risks of its platforms

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Huff told the jury that the company “disclosed to the world that its safeguards are not perfect, and that some bad content and bad actors get onto its service.”

“Common sense also says that parents and teens know that there is bad content on the internet, and on Facebook and Instagram specifically,” he added. But Huff noted the social media company has disclosed risks of its platforms in its user agreements, website, ads and on television.

“Wherever it could get its message out, Meta was disclosing risk to the public,” Huff said.

Singer urged jurors to impose a civil penalty that could exceed \$2 billion against Meta, based on the maximum \$5,000 penalty per violation on two counts of consumer protection violations, and an estimated 208,700 monthly users of Meta platforms under the age of 18 in New Mexico. The violations include “un-conscionable” trade practices.

“Over the course of a decade Meta has failed over and over again to act honestly and transparently, failed to act to protect young people in this state,” Singer said. “It is up to you to finish this job.”

Huff called the state’s request for penalties “a shocking number” and said prosecutors failed to provide any examples of teenagers who chose to use Instagram because of a false understanding of its risks.

“Even though teens are aware of the risks, they continue to use Instagram because they enjoy Instagram,” Huff said.

A second phase of the trial will follow with a judge deciding whether Meta created a public nuisance and should be on the hook financially to fund programs to address alleged harms to children.

Company’s attorneys say the state has cherry-picked evidence to support its case

Attorney General Raúl Torrez filed suit in 2023, accusing Meta of creating a marketplace and “breeding ground” for predators who target children for sexual exploitation and failing to disclose what it knew about those harmful effects. State investigators created social media accounts posing as children to document online sexual solicitations and the response from Meta.

Meta attorneys accuse prosecutors of cherry-picking evidence and conducting a shoddy investigation.

Meta executives emphasized at trial that the company continuously improves safety and addresses compulsive social media use without infringing on free speech or censoring users.

But the prosecution on Monday said that public assurances about safety disclosures from Meta executives including founder Mark Zuckerberg and Instagram head Adam Mosseri often didn’t square with internal studies and communications at the company.

“It was included in Meta’s internal research -- again this was research that didn’t get disclosed by Meta -- one-in-three teens experienced problematic use,” Singer said. “They knew these kids were struggling with problematic use — again, addiction.”

The jury is assembled from residents of Santa Fe County, including the politically progressive state capital city.

Limits on liability for tech companies

Tech companies have been protected from liability for material posted on their social media platforms under Section 230, a 30-year-old provision of the U.S. Communications Decency Act, as well as a First Amendment shield.

Prosecutors say New Mexico is not seeking to hold Meta accountable for content on its platforms, but rather its role in pushing out that content through complex algorithms that proliferate material that can be addictive and harmful to children.

In California, a jury already is sequestered in deliberations on whether Meta and YouTube should be liable for harms caused to children using their platforms. The bellwether case could impact how thousands of similar lawsuits against social media companies are likely to play out.

2 pilots killed when jet collides with fire truck at New York's LaGuardia Airport

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — An Air Canada jet carrying more than 70 passengers collided with a fire truck while landing at New York's LaGuardia Airport late Sunday, killing the pilot and copilot and injuring several others, officials said.

The impact severed the cockpit, and hurled a flight attendant — still secured to her seat — far from the crash site, her daughter told a Canadian TV station. The flight attendant survived.

The fire truck was crossing the tarmac just before midnight after being given permission to check on another plane that had aborted its takeoff. Before the collision, an air traffic controller can be heard on airport communications frantically telling the fire truck to stop.

Roughly 20 minutes later, the controller appears to blame himself. "We were dealing with an emergency earlier," the controller said. "I messed up."

About 40 passengers and crew members on the regional jet from Montreal, and two people from the fire truck, were taken to hospitals, some with serious injuries. Most were released by Monday morning, authorities said.

A key for investigators will be examining coordination of the airport's air traffic and ground traffic at the time of the crash, said Mary Schiavo, a former Department of Transportation Inspector General. "This has been happening for years and sadly some of the most horrific air crashes in history happen on the ground at the airport."

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said LaGuardia is "well-staffed" but faces a shortage of controllers. He said there are 33 certified controllers but the goal is to have 37. More than one controller was on duty at the time of the accident, he said.

"I can't give specifics on what went wrong," Duffy said, deferring to the National Transportation Safety Board, which is leading the investigation. Canada also sent a team of investigators.

The runway where the crash happened is likely to be closed for "days" during the investigation, NTSB chair Jennifer Homendy said at a Monday evening news conference. She said there was a "tremendous amount of debris" that investigators have to sift through.

Homendy said authorities recovered the plane's cockpit and flight data recorders and drove them to the agency's lab in Washington for analysis. Officials had to cut a hole in the aircraft's roof to get to the recorders, because its tail was on the ground, she said, adding that the cockpit voice recorder was not damaged.

Homendy said it was too early in the investigation to answer many questions about the accident, and more information was expected to be released Tuesday.

The crash shut down LaGuardia — the New York region's third busiest hub — during what was already a messy time at U.S. airports because of a partial government shutdown.

Flights resumed Monday afternoon on one runway and with lengthy delays. The shutdown caused some disruptions at other airports, too, especially for Delta, which has a major presence at LaGuardia.

Passenger says they helped each other escape the plane

Airport security camera video shows a convoy of emergency vehicles traveling across the tarmac with their lights flashing in the moments before the plane lands, according to a recording of the video shared online.

While most of the vehicles appear to stop at the edge of the runway, the lead vehicle keeps going, directly into the path of the aircraft.

A person familiar with the investigation confirmed the authenticity of the video. The person requested anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss details of an ongoing investigation.

The collision left cables and debris dangling from the mangled cockpit. Images show the fire truck flipped onto its side, with most of the damage to its back half.

Flight attendant Solange Tremblay suffered multiple fractures to one leg and will need surgery after be-

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ing thrown from the plane, daughter Sarah Lépine told Canadian news station TVA Nouvelles.

Her survival is "a total miracle," Lépine said. "I'm still trying to understand how all this happened, but she definitely has a guardian angel watching over her."

Passenger Rebecca Liquori said the plane hit turbulence while descending, and she then felt it brake hard and heard a loud boom.

"Everybody just jolted out of their seats. People hit their heads. People were bleeding," Liquori told News12 Long Island, a station where she once worked.

Liquori said passengers helped each other slide down a wing.

"I'm just happy to be alive," said Liquori, who had gone to Montreal for a cousin's baby shower. "I would have never pictured a one-hour flight that I've done countless times ... ending like this."

Passenger Clément Lelièvre credited the pilots' "incredible reflexes" with saving his life and others'. The pilots braked extremely hard just as the plane touched down, he said.

US and Canada sending investigators to New York

The pilot and copilot who died were both based out of Canada, said Kathryn Garcia, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the airport.

Jeannette Gagnier, the great aunt of one of the pilots, identified him as Antoine Forest. Forest looked at her as a grandmother figure and always wanted to be a pilot, she said. His LinkedIn page showed he had worked for two airlines the past five years.

President Donald Trump called it a "terrible" situation. Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a statement the accident was "deeply saddening."

The Port Authority identified the two people in the fire truck as Sgt. Michael Orsillo and Officer Adrian Baez. They suffered injuries not believed to be life-threatening, Garcia said. One was expected to be released Monday while the other will stay in the hospital for observation, she said.

The fire truck was traveling across the runway to respond to a United Airlines flight, whose pilot had reported "an issue with odor," said Garcia.

It was the first fatal crash at LaGuardia in 34 years, Garcia said.

There were 72 passengers and four crew members aboard the Jazz Aviation flight operating on behalf of Air Canada, according to the airline. The flight originated at Montreal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport.

Hours after the crash, the plane remained on the runway with its crumpled nose tilted upward.

LaGuardia has a system to spot runway encounters

The air traffic controller tried to warn the fire truck.

"Stop, stop, stop, Truck 1. Stop, stop, stop," the transmission says. "Stop, Truck 1." The controller can then be heard frantically diverting an incoming aircraft from landing.

Air traffic controllers are not impacted by the partial government shutdown that has caused long delays at airport security checkpoints in recent days. They have been affected by past shutdowns.

The FAA has been chronically short on air traffic controllers for years. Former FAA air traffic control chief Mike McCormick said LaGuardia has not had perennial staffing problems, but the tower would have been lightly staffed during the overnight shift at the time of the crash.

LaGuardia is one of 35 major U.S. airports with an advanced surface surveillance system designed to help keep track of planes and vehicles crossing the airport.

An alarm heard in the background of the air traffic control audio was likely from the system and would have alerted the tower to the potential collision, McCormick said.

"It's an aid in a situation like this," he said, but the system doesn't know if someone has given clearance for a vehicle to cross a runway.

FAA statistics show there were 1,636 runway incursions last year.

ICE officers go to TSA checkpoints at Trump's direction, while long wait times at airports persist

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Armed federal immigration officers in tactical gear moved through terminals at some of the busiest U.S. airports Monday, standing near security lines and checkpoints after President Donald Trump ordered their deployment during a partial government shutdown that has disrupted air travel nationwide.

The Trump administration said they would supplement Transportation Security Administration staffing at certain airports but provided few details about exactly what they would be doing. Still, after intensified immigration enforcement and protests in cities across the country over the past year, their presence has unsettled some travelers and raised new questions.

On Monday, Associated Press journalists observed Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and agents patrolling terminals and lingering near long lines of passengers at Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International, John F. Kennedy International in New York, Newark Liberty International in New Jersey, George Bush Intercontinental in Houston and Louis Armstrong International outside New Orleans. A handful of other airports — including Phoenix's Sky Harbor International — also confirmed ICE would be on-site. Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson said his office was monitoring the deployment of federal officers at O'Hare International.

Federal law enforcement officers are a routine presence at international airports. Customs and Border Protection officers screen arriving passengers, and Homeland Security Investigations agents conduct criminal inquiries tied to cross-border activity. But immigration agents are rarely visible at TSA checkpoints, the front line of domestic air travel.

ICE deployments arrive amid ongoing Washington impasse

Monday's deployments came as hundreds of thousands of Homeland Security workers, including from the TSA, have worked without pay since Congress failed to renew DHS funding last month.

Funding for the department lapsed Feb. 14, when Democrats refused to fund ICE as well as Customs and Border Protection without changes to their operations after federal officers shot and killed Alex Pretti and Renee Good in Minneapolis. But, while routine funding used to pay TSA agents has lapsed, ICE and other immigration enforcement personnel are still receiving paychecks amid the shutdown — a result of Trump's big tax cuts bill that became law last year.

Meanwhile, the budget stalemate impacting TSA only deepened as Trump rejected the latest offer, this one from his own Republican Party, after a weekend of negotiations.

White House staff pitched Trump on the idea of funding DHS, except for immigration operations that have been central to the dispute, according to a person familiar with the situation who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private talks. Still, Trump rejected that plan and later escalated his demands that senators also approve the so-called SAVE America Act, a strict proof-of-citizenship voting bill that has essentially no chance in the Congress.

"TSA is grateful to our DHS brothers and sisters at ICE for stepping up to support our officers, but there's only one guaranteed way to end the chaos at America's airports: Democrats must come back to the table and fully fund DHS," TSA said in a statement posted to social media Monday.

On Monday, the White House also turned down a request from top Democratic negotiator, Sen. Patty Murray of Washington, to meet and continue talks, according to another person granted anonymity to discuss the private conversations.

Democrats are continuing to demand major changes to federal immigration operations — including policy changes that would require ICE officers to get a warrant from a judge before forcefully entering homes, to no longer allow officers to wear masks and to require that they provide clear identifying information on uniforms.

Unlike many recent immigration operations in U.S. cities, where federal agents have often worn face coverings, ICE officers at airports appeared to be largely not masked Monday, following an earlier direc-

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tion by Trump.

Fears that the deployments will heighten tension

Some fear that positioning federal immigration officers at security checkpoints will only escalate tensions. Union leaders representing aviation workers stressed that ICE officers don't have the same training and expertise as TSA workers.

Everett Kelley, national president of the American Federation of Government Employees — which represents TSA officers — said in a statement that his members "deserve to be paid, not replaced by untrained, armed agents who have shown how dangerous they can be."

Whether ICE will have a more sweeping role beyond watching long lines and patrolling terminals has yet to be seen. On Sunday, Trump said federal immigration officers could guard exit lanes or check passenger IDs. The president has since suggested he could deploy the National Guard at airports too.

ICE and TSA have been "working together so far very well," Trump said at Monday in Memphis. Still, he said he would "bring out the National Guard" if more personnel is needed.

Long wait times persisted at some major hubs Monday.

Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson, for example, is still urging passengers to allow at least four hours for both domestic and international screenings. The check-in line for departing passengers was so long Monday that it snaked from the TSA screening area to the atrium, through the baggage claim and out the entrance doors with people in back of the line waiting outside. ICE officers were patrolling the terminal area, but not seen checking IDs or otherwise interacting with passengers.

Donna Troupe, who was flying from Atlanta to Miami, said she didn't take issue with ICE's presence at the airport — but also wasn't sure how much they were needed. "When I've seen them, they've just been standing around talking," she said.

Meanwhile, Daniela Dominguez, another traveler in Atlanta who was headed to Miami, said she was concerned that for some seeing ICE would be unnerving.

"I bet a lot of people have a lot of anxiety coming to the airport," Dominguez said.

In New Orleans, John Hoffman arrived to the airport five hours before his flight to Spokane, Washington, after missing his trip the day before. He said security lines seemed to be moving quicker Monday as federal officers monitored lines — still, he questioned whether it was worth the travel and lodging expenses to deploy ICE officers to various airports.

Beyond TSA operations, many travelers on the East Coast faced additional disruptions after a Sunday night collision that killed two people and injured dozens of others on the runway of New York's LaGuardia Airport. LaGuardia was temporarily shut down as air traffic was diverted.

TSA workers have been going without pay

After weeks of missed paychecks, many TSA agents have called in sick — or even quit their jobs — as financial strains pile up. The staffing shortages have forced some airports to close checkpoints at times, with wait times swinging dramatically for travelers.

TSA call-out rates climbed over the weekend. Nationwide on Sunday, 11.8% of TSA agents missed work — the highest rate of the shutdown so far — with over 3,450 officers calling out, according to DHS. More than 400 officers have quit during the shutdown, the department said.

Some have accused the government of using TSA workers as pawns in the ongoing budget fight. And aviation unions have raised additional safety concerns in light of the Trump administration's deployment of ICE officers.

UK police probe possible Iran link after Jewish charity ambulances set on fire

By KRUTIKA PATHI and KWIYEON HA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Four ambulances belonging to a Jewish charity were set on fire early Monday in London in what British police are investigating as an antisemitic hate crime. Detectives are working to determine whether a claim of responsibility from a group with alleged links to Iran is authentic.

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Though it has not been classified as a terrorist incident, counterterror officers have been put in charge of the investigation. No one was injured in the nighttime attack, which shattered windows in nearby homes and left the vehicles charred shells.

"We are pursuing all lines of inquiry, including an online claim of responsibility by an Islamist group who have claimed other attacks across Europe and have potential Iranian state links," said Mark Rowley, chief of London's Metropolitan Police.

Religious and political leaders condemned what Prime Minister Keir Starmer called a "horrific" attack.

"Antisemitism has no place in our society and it's really important that we all stand together at a moment like this," said Starmer, who met Jewish community leaders at 10 Downing St. on Monday to discuss the response to the attack.

Officers were called to Golders Green, a north London neighborhood with a large Jewish population, after receiving reports of a fire, the Metropolitan Police force said. Four ambulances belonging to Hatzola Northwest, a volunteer organization that provides emergency medical response, were damaged, according to the London Fire Brigade.

Oxygen cylinders on the vehicles exploded, breaking windows in an adjacent apartment block. Nearby homes were evacuated as a precaution.

What appeared to be footage from a security camera showed three figures in black wearing hoods carrying a canister toward one of the ambulance before flames erupted around the vehicle. Police said they are looking for three suspects but no arrests have been made yet.

Police try to authenticate claim of responsibility

A video posted on Telegram, allegedly by an Islamist group called Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamia, showed a map of the location where the ambulances were kept and footage of them on fire. A group of the same name, which translates as the Islamic Movement of the Companions of the Right, previously claimed responsibility for synagogue attacks in Belgium and the Netherlands.

Israel's government has called it a recently founded group with suspected links to pro-Iran networks.

"The rapid growth in recent years of Iranian state threats is grave," Rowley told the annual dinner of the Community Security Trust, which works to provide safety for the Jewish community organization. But he said "it is too early for me to attribute last night's attack in Golders Green to the Iranian state."

The attack spread fear and alarm through Britain's approximately 300,000-strong Jewish community, which feels increasingly vulnerable.

Mark Reisner, who lives in the neighborhood, heard loud explosions and arrived at the scene "just as the third ambulance was blowing up," he told Sky News.

"A very loud explosion, you sort of felt it go through your guts," he said, adding, "it's just left us all reeling with confusion and shock."

Previous attacks on UK Jewish community

The number of antisemitic incidents reported across the U.K. has soared since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel and Israel's ensuing war against Hamas in Gaza, according to the Community Security Trust, which works to protect the Jewish community. The group recorded 3,700 incidents in 2025, up from 1,662 in 2022.

In October 2025, an attacker drove his car into people gathered outside a Manchester synagogue to celebrate the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur and stabbed one person to death. Another person died during the attack after being inadvertently shot by police.

Last week two men in London were charged with carrying out "hostile" surveillance last year of the U.K.'s Jewish community on behalf of Iran.

Rowley, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, said the force would increase security for Jewish schools, synagogues and community centers ahead of Passover next month,

Some members of the community criticize Starmer's Labour Party government for failing to prevent pro-Palestinian demonstrations from tipping into anti-Jewish speech and acts.

Peter Zinkin, a Conservative politician who represents Golders Green on the local council, said the community felt "distress and anger."

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"Burning ambulances in the middle of the night is a disgrace," he said. "And you have to ask yourself, why did it happen? And the reason I'm afraid that it happened is that the government and the media, particularly certain parts of the media, have validated antisemitism on a nationwide scale."

Archbishop of Canterbury Sarah Mullally, the head of the Anglican Church, said "such acts of violence, hatred and intimidation have no place in our society."

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis called it a "sickening assault."

"At a time when Jewish communities around the world are facing a growing pattern of these violent attacks, we will meet this moment with shared resolve and stand together against hatred and intimidation," he wrote on X.

Supreme Court sounds skeptical of late-arriving ballots, a Trump target

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court's conservative majority on Monday sounded skeptical of state laws that allow the counting of late-arriving mail ballots, a persistent target of President Donald Trump.

A ruling, likely to come by late June, that bars counting ballots arriving after Election Day would send officials scrambling in 14 states and the District of Columbia, just a few months before the 2026 midterm congressional elections to change their ballot rules.

An additional 15 states that have more forgiving deadlines for ballots from military and overseas voters also could be affected.

The legal challenge is part of Trump's broader attack on most mail balloting, which he has said breeds fraud despite strong evidence to the contrary and years of experience in numerous states. Trump has repeatedly claimed that his loss to Joe Biden in 2020 resulted from fraud even though more than 60 court decisions and his own attorney general said that argument had no merit.

The court heard arguments in a case from Mississippi pitting the state against Trump's Republican administration and the Republican and Libertarian parties. At issue is whether federal law sets a single Election Day that requires ballots to be both cast by voters and received by state officials.

While there was no explicit reference to the 2020 election, several conservative justices gave voice to some of Trump's complaints. Justice Samuel Alito wondered about the appearance of fraud in situations where "a big stash of ballots" that arrive late "radically flipped" an election.

Defending the state law, Mississippi Solicitor General Scott Stewart pointed out that the Trump administration and its allies in the case have yet to submit a single case of fraud due to late-arriving mail ballots.

The court's liberal justices indicated they would uphold state laws with post-Election Day deadlines.

"The people who should decide this issue are not the courts, but Congress, the states and Congress," Justice Sonia Sotomayor said.

Forcing states to change their practices just a few months before the election risks "confusion and disenfranchisement," especially in places that have had relaxed deadlines for years, state and big-city election officials told the court in a written filing.

California, Texas, New York and Illinois are among the states with post-Election Day deadlines. Alaska, with its vast distances and often unpredictable weather, also counts late-arriving ballots.

Alaska elections officials said Monday they are preparing for the fall elections under existing law. "If a ruling requires operational changes, we will work through those in coordination with the appropriate state entities to ensure compliance and to provide clear information to voters," the Alaska Division of Elections said in a statement.

Lawyers for the Republican and Libertarian parties, as well as Trump's administration, are asking the justices to affirm an appellate ruling that struck down a Mississippi law allowing ballots to be counted if they arrive within five business days of the election and are postmarked by Election Day.

Paul Clement, representing the political parties, played on fears of fraud by invoking Democrat-dominated Chicago, infamous for election shenanigans. Voting ends at 8 p.m. in Chicago, Clement said, but state law

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allows ballots postmarked by Election Day to be received later.

A voter paying close attention to the election returns could in theory try to swing the election by submitting a mailed ballot to the post office after the polls were closed, he said.

"I am not here to say there could ever be voting fraud in Chicago," Clement said to laughter in the courtroom.

Sotomayor had earlier needed Clement that under the ruling he sought, the Bush v. Gore decision that decided the 2000 election in favor of Republican George W. Bush would have come out differently because military ballots that broke heavily for Bush in his 537-vote win wouldn't have been counted. Clement disputed the point.

The justices seem more concerned about the cascading problems that could arise no matter who wins the case.

Ballots could be received until the start of the next Congress, two months after the election, if a state wanted, Justice Neil Gorsuch suggested.

On the other side, Justice Elena Kagan said the logic of the challenge to late-arriving ballots also would be used to rule out early voting and absentee ballots.

Limits on early-voting also seemed to bother Chief Justice John Roberts, who seemed the conservative member of the court most likely to side with Mississippi, along with Justice Amy Coney Barrett.

The court also grappled with whether state laws allowing for late-arriving ballots from military and overseas ballots could survive.

Last year, Trump signed an executive order on elections that aims to require votes to be "cast and received" by Election Day. The order has been blocked in pending court challenges.

At the same time, four Republican-dominated states — Ohio, Kansas, North Dakota and Utah — eliminated grace periods last year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures and Voting Rights Lab.

In striking down Mississippi's grace period, Judge Andrew Oldham of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals wrote that the state law allowing the late-arriving ballots to be counted violated federal law.

Oldham and the other two judges who joined the unanimous ruling, James Ho and Stuart Kyle Duncan, all were appointed by Trump during his first term.

Stocks rally and oil sinks after Trump hints at a possible end to war, even as Iran denies talks

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A cautious relief swept through financial markets Monday after President Donald Trump said the United States has talked with Iran about a possible end to their war. Oil prices eased, and stock prices rose on Wall Street following severe losses taken elsewhere in the world before Trump's announcement.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude fell 10.9% to settle at \$99.94, down from nearly \$120 at one point last week, after Trump said the United States and Iran held productive talks the last two days "regarding a complete and total resolution of our hostilities in the Middle East." The S&P 500 climbed 1.1% for its best day since the war began.

The market's moves were tentative, though, after Iran denied such talks took place and Iranian parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf said that "fakenews is used to manipulate the financial and oil markets" in a posting on X. The Dow Jones Industrial Average went from a surge of nearly 1,135 points during the morning to a more modest gain of 540 before accelerating to finish with a climb of 631.

Over the weekend, Trump had threatened to "obliterate" Iran's power plants if it doesn't open up the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours. The narrow waterway off Iran's coast has become a sore point for Trump and the economy because a sharp slowdown in traffic is preventing oil tankers from leaving the Persian Gulf to supply customers around the world.

Trump said Monday that he is postponing attacks on Iranian power plants for five days to allow talks to continue. Quickly afterward, though, came the denials from Iran about talks, while Iran's semiofficial Fars

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and Tasnim news agencies portrayed the American president as backing down.

Turkey and Egypt, meanwhile, said they had spoken to the warring parties, the first sign of coordinated mediation, which could be an encouraging signal.

Amid all the developments, the price of Brent crude fell as low as \$96 immediately after Trump announced the postponement but quickly recovered a chunk of that loss. Benchmark U.S. crude had a similar reaction, immediately dropping toward \$84 per barrel before yo-yoing back above \$92 and then settling at \$88.13, down 10.3% from Friday.

Financial markets have had vicious swings, both up and down, since the war began because of uncertainty about how long it may last. The fear is that a long-term disruption could keep so much oil and natural gas off global markets that it creates a punishing wave of inflation for the global economy.

The swings of the past few weeks are similar to, but not as dramatic as, those that hit last year when Trump shocked the global economy on "Liberation Day." Many of his worldwide tariffs ended up being milder than he initially threatened, and the back-and-forth in negotiations led to historic moves up and down.

Monday's overriding reaction in financial markets was nevertheless one of relief. The S&P 500 rose 74.52 points to 6,581.00. The Dow climbed 631.00, or 1.4%, to 46,208.47, and the Nasdaq composite jumped 299.15, or 1.4%, to 21,946.76.

In Europe, stock indexes immediately flipped from losses to gains following Trump's announcement. France's CAC 40 rose 0.8%, and Germany's DAX returned 1.2%.

That compares with sharp drops for Asian stock markets, which finished trading before Trump made his announcement. South Korea's Kospi careened 6.5% lower, Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 3.5% and Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 3.5%.

Treasury yields also eased in the bond market following Trump's announcement. High Treasury yields and disruption in the bond market were factors that Trump named a year ago when he backed off his initial threats for global tariffs. The moves caused critics to allege Trump always chickens out, or "TACO," if financial markets show enough pain.

Like oil prices, Treasury yields still remain well above where they were before the war began, even after Monday's drop. The worry is that high oil prices could keep the Federal Reserve and other central banks from cutting interest rates, which would give the global economy and prices for investments a boost.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.35% from 4.39% late Friday. But it remains solidly above its 3.97% level from just before the war.

On Wall Street, companies with big fuel bills that will benefit from any easing of oil prices led the market. Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings surged 6.2%, while United Airlines climbed 4.5%, and American Airlines rose 3.6%. All, though, are still down for the year so far.

Stocks of smaller companies were also particularly strong, and the Russell 2000 index of smaller stocks jumped a market-leading 2.3%. It had dropped last week to 10% below its record, a sharp enough fall that professional investors have a name for it: a "correction."

The S&P 500, which is the main measure of the U.S. stock market's strength, pulled back within 5.7% of its own all-time high set early this year.

A media-rating company says a Trump agency is threatening its livelihood

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

As media organizations go, NewsGuard cuts a low public profile as it follows its mission of issuing credibility ratings about news outlets. The Trump administration knows about it, though, and the company has joined a lengthening list of journalism organizations to face the White House's wrath.

A dispute between President Donald Trump's regulators and the news monitoring service has spilled into court, with NewsGuard Technologies suing the Federal Trade Commission and its chairman, Andrew Ferguson, to shut down an investigation. The FTC accuses the company of trying to suppress conservative speech. NewsGuard says it is being forced to kneel before vindictive power.

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Since Trump returned to office in January 2025, the Republican administration has fought The Associated Press in court over the outlet's claim it is being punished for not adopting his preferred name for the Gulf of Mexico; settled with CBS News' corporate parent in a dispute over "60 Minutes" editing; sued The Wall Street Journal for its reporting on Trump and Jeffrey Epstein; and is in a legal fight with The New York Times over Pentagon reporting restrictions.

NewsGuard's lawsuit, filed last month in U.S. District Court in the District of Columbia, accuses Trump's FTC of "brazenly using its power not for any issue concerning trade or commerce but rather to censor speech simply because it disagreed with NewsGuard's judgments about the reliability of news sources."

The FTC calls NewsGuard's accusations "untethered from both law and fact."

The FTC, normally low-key, is busier under Trump

Like the Federal Communications Commission under Brendan Carr, Ferguson's FTC is a normally sleepy federal agency that has sprung to life to address issues of importance to Trump and his supporters, particularly involving the media. The FCC has launched investigations of media companies and this weekend Carr, responding to a Trump complaint about negative coverage of the Iran war, warned broadcasters "running hoaxes and news distortions" to correct course or see their licenses threatened.

Ferguson has made no secret about where he takes his cues. He said in an interview in July that "I am a law enforcer, and I will follow the law. But the policy priorities are set by the man the people chose to run this government."

The liberal lobbying group Media Matters for America was one of his targets. A federal judge last summer halted an FTC investigation over efforts to promote advertising boycotts of companies the group opposes, saying the inquiry violated MMA's free speech rights.

While NewsGuard may not be a big name, money is at stake for news outlets friendly to the president. The company began in 2018, started by Court TV founder Steven Brill and Gordon Crovitz, a former Journal publisher. NewsGuard uses journalists to examine thousands of news outlets and websites, giving them ratings based on the credibility and reliability of their journalism.

A monthly subscription costs \$4.95. Much of its business comes from companies that advise advertisers where to hawk their products, showing them which news sites may be toxic to their brands, and artificial intelligence companies looking to see where they would be more likely to find information they could trust.

Making a powerful enemy in Newsmax

NewsGuard made an enemy of the Trump-friendly television network Newsmax, giving its website a 20 on a scale where 100 is the best score. NewsGuard says "this website is unreliable because it severely violates basic journalism standards." Newsmax has since repeatedly urged Republican lawmakers or regulators to do what they can to silence NewsGuard, the company said in its lawsuit.

"NewsGuard was started by Steve Brill to target conservative media and get ad agencies to deny them advertising revenue as a means of censorship," Newsmax spokesman Bill Daddi said. "Brill is a Democratic Party activist and donor over many decades with a long history of advocating for liberal causes. He is not a respected journalist and in no way should be running a ratings service used by major ad agencies."

Brill said his only political activity was working for Republican John Lindsay, New York City's mayor in the late 1960s and early 1970s, while a college and law school student. "I have been a journalist ever since," Brill said. Federal records show Brill donated to more than a dozen political campaigns in the 1990s and 2000s, primarily Democrats but including some Republicans.

NewsGuard says its ratings are based on clearly defined criteria, such as whether or not an outlet publishes false or misleading material, whether it distorts arguments and uses multiple sources, whether it distinguishes between news and opinion and regularly corrects errors. To counter charges that it unfairly boosted liberals, the company noted times where Fox News scored higher in its ratings than the former MSNBC.

Yet the conservative Media Research Center has published studies contending that NewsGuard is more likely to give higher ratings to outlets with a liberal bent. In court papers, the FTC said it began investigating NewsGuard because congressional investigators connected the company's services to "coordinated actions to demonize disfavored media entities."

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The agency has asked the company to produce reams of internal documents, emails, financial reports and subscriber lists dated to its founding. Not only does NewsGuard consider that task unduly expensive and burdensome, it worries that regulators will use that information to target its subscribers.

The FTC, as a condition to approving a merger of two of the world's biggest media buying firms, Omnicom and IPG, prohibited the new company from using a service that reviews and rates news sites. That is designed to eliminate the company's ability to deny advertising based on politics, the agency said.

It has already cost NewsGuard business, the company asserts.

"The whole idea that any speaker has to justify to the government that it's not biased is a really troubling thought," Brill said in an interview. "We have a constitutional right to be biased. It just so happens that we started the company on the core principle that we were going to be totally apolitical."

Continuing until NewsGuard 'knuckles under'

The FTC's press department did not return a message seeking comment. But in court papers, the agency said it was conducting a broad investigation into whether advertiser boycotts violated antitrust laws and that it has issued more than a dozen orders for information similar to the one given to NewsGuard. The company's charges are "completely meritless," the agency said.

If its order was so demanding, the FTC wondered why it took NewsGuard eight months after it was issued to sue.

"We tried to cooperate in the belief that the more that we told them what we do, the more likely it would be that they would decide that they didn't have any case," Brill said. "We soon realized that they weren't worried about the merits."

The company argues that the FTC actions "will continue until NewsGuard knuckles under." Asked if he thought the government agency's goal was to put his company out of business, Brill declined to comment.

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

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, DORANY PINEDA and CLAIRE SAVAGE Associated Press

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.

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 move-

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ment 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.

Nely 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 guar-

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antees 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 95 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."

Rubio to testify in trial of former roommate accused of secretly lobbying for Venezuela

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The federal trial of a former Miami congressman accused of secretly lobbying for Venezuela's government during the first Trump administration began Monday with Secretary of State Marco Rubio set to testify over his interactions with his old friend.

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Prosecutors allege David Rivera was a hired gun for former President Nicolás Maduro, leveraging Republican connections from his time in Congress to push the White House to abandon its hard line on Venezuela's socialist government.

Rivera, who at one time had been Rubio's roommate in Florida, allegedly persuaded then Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez — now Venezuela's acting president — to award him a \$50 million lobbying contract to be paid by state oil company PDVSA. As part of the alleged foreign influence campaign, prosecutors say Rivera was aided by Texas Republican Rep. Pete Sessions and a convicted Cali cartel associate as he sought meetings with the White House and Exxon Mobil on Maduro's behalf.

The trial offers a rare glimpse into the often unseemly role Miami — long a haven for exiles, corruption and anti-communist crusaders — plays in shaping U.S. policy in Latin America. As such, it is perhaps fitting that Rubio, Miami's most prominent politician, is set to take the stand Tuesday about his meetings with Rivera while the former congressman and an associate were allegedly helping Maduro mount a charm offensive in Washington.

Also likely to face scrutiny is Rodríguez, who relied on Rivera to set up meetings in New York, Caracas, Washington and Dallas in a bid to build U.S. support for normalizing relations with Venezuela — an effort that failed at the time but now appears within reach, albeit on unequal terms, following Maduro's ouster and the ascent of his more pragmatic aide.

"This case is about two things: greed and betrayal," prosecutor Roger Cruz said in his opening statement Monday. "The evidence will show that for \$50 million these two defendants made a pact to secretly lobby for Nicolás Maduro, the communist director, and his second in command Delcy Rodríguez."

Indictment details alleged covert lobbying and money-laundering scheme

An 11-count indictment, unsealed in 2022, charges Rivera and Miami political consultant Esther Nuhfer with money laundering and failing to register as a foreign agent.

Prosecutors allege that to hide their work, Rivera set up an encrypted chat group called MIA — for Miami — with his main conduit to the Maduro government: Venezuelan media tycoon Raúl Gorrín, who was subsequently charged in the U.S. with bribing top Venezuelan officials.

Members of the group used playful code words to discuss their activities: Maduro was the "bus driver," Sessions "Sombrero," Rodríguez "The Lady in Red," and millions of dollars "melons," according to prosecutors.

Rivera, 60, denies wrongdoing. His attorneys counter that his one-man firm, Interamerican Consulting, was hired by an American subsidiary of Venezuela's state-owned oil company — not PDVSA itself — and therefore did not need to register as a foreign agent.

His three-month, \$50 million contract, they say, was focused exclusively on luring Exxon back to Venezuela — commercial work that is generally exempt from the Foreign Agents Registration Act.

"This is like a murder case without a murder, a drugs case without drugs, a kidnapping case without a kidnapping," Rivera's defense attorney Ed Shohat said in his opening statement to the 12-person jury.

"Nothing happened," he added. "Not one single policy of the U.S. was impacted by this case."

Rivera's meetings with Rubio and others was wholly distinct from that consulting work, Shohat said, and tied to efforts he undertook with Maduro's opponents to usher in leadership less hostile to the U.S.

He described Rivera as a "staunch freedom fighter" and ardent opponent of communism who would never do anything to benefit Maduro. "The government's theory is utterly preposterous."

Plaintiffs in a parallel civil case accuse Rivera of doing little of the promised work and using the contract as cover for illegal lobbying. Of the roughly \$20 million he received, \$3.75 million went to a South Florida company that maintained Gorrín's luxury yacht.

'No turkey' without Rubio

Rubio's expected testimony is highly unusual — not since Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan testified at a mafia trial in 1983 has a sitting member of the president's Cabinet taken the stand in a criminal trial.

While Rubio isn't charged and there's no indication in the indictment that he acted improperly as a senator at the time, prosecutors say Rivera viewed him as a key ally in his outreach to the White House. For Rubio, prosecutors said in a pre-trial hearing last week, contact with Gorrín offered a backchannel

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to Caracas at a time U.S. authorities had detected a possible death threat against him from Venezuelan socialist party boss Diosdado Cabello.

Rivera and Rubio met at the senator's Washington home on July 9, 2017, according to the indictment. Rivera, the indictment says, told Rubio that he was working with Gorrín, who had persuaded Maduro to accept a deal in which he would hold free and fair elections.

"Remember, U.S. should facilitate, not just support, a negotiated solution," Rivera texted Rubio two days later as the senator was set to meet Trump, the indictment says. "No vengeance, reconciliation."

Following a second meeting between Rubio, Rivera, Gorrín and others, Rivera remarked in the chat that the bus driver — Maduro — would have to pay him for setting up the meeting with Rubio. Without the senator's support, Rivera said, there would be "no turkey," he wrote. At the same time, the group was trying to secure a meeting with White House aide Kellyanne Conway.

The outreach quickly unraveled, however. Later that month, Trump sanctioned Maduro and labeled him a "dictator," launching a "maximum pressure" campaign to unseat the president. Rubio took to the Venezuelan airwaves to press the White House's agenda.

"For Nicolás Maduro, who I am sure is watching, the current path you are on will not end well for you," Rubio said July 31, 2017, in a rare 10-minute address to the Venezuelan people that aired on Gorrín's network.

The State Department declined to comment.

Outreach to Exxon for Rodríguez

After the contract was signed, Rivera and Gorrín arranged a meeting in New York City between Rodríguez, then foreign minister and a PDVSA board member, and Sessions, whose Dallas-area district included Exxon's headquarters.

Later, Sessions tried to broker a meeting for Rodríguez with Darren Woods, who had succeeded Trump's then Secretary of State Rex Tillerson as CEO of Exxon. Rodríguez was looking to resolve a long-running investment dispute and enroll Exxon in reviving the OPEC nation's collapsing oil industry. The meeting never happened as Exxon lawyers rebuffed the outreach.

Almost a year after helping Rivera make inroads with Exxon, Sessions secretly traveled to Caracas for a meeting with Maduro arranged by Gorrín and Rivera, the indictment says. As part of the effort, Sessions also agreed to deliver a letter from the Venezuelan president to Trump.

The defense team also wanted Maduro and White House chief of staff Susie Wiles to testify. Maduro, through a lawyer, said he would invoke his constitutional right to remain silent if compelled, while prosecutors successfully quashed an attempt to subpoena Wiles, who was a registered lobbyist for Gorrín's Globovision network at the same time the media magnate was working with Rivera.

Before being elected to Congress in 2010, Rivera was a high-ranking Florida legislator. During that time he shared a Tallahassee home with Rubio, who eventually became Florida House speaker.

Rivera has previously faced controversy, including allegations he secretly funded a Democratic spoiler candidate in a 2012 congressional race. Last year, federal prosecutors dropped the case after an appeals court threw out a sizable fine imposed by a lower court. Rivera was also investigated — but never charged — for campaign finance violations and a \$1 million contract with a gambling company while serving in the Florida legislature.

Rivera has denied any wrongdoing and said both investigations were politically motivated.

Bracket Reset: NCAA Tournament down to a Sweet 16 of high-majors

By JOHN MARSHALL AP Sports Writer

Cinderella has been kicked out of the dance early for the second straight season.

Following a madness-promising first day of upsets, the NCAA Tournament has turned into a high-major affair.

The Sweet 16 invite is for power-conference programs only.

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Advocates for fewer automatic qualifiers and bracket expansion will have a field day with this one. "I think parity is great for the game, but things change," said Arizona coach Tommy Lloyd, who spent 21 seasons as an assistant at Gonzaga.

The Big Ten is the big conference on the block, pushing through a league-record six teams into the Sweet 16 — three in the same region.

The SEC has four Sweet 16 teams, the Big 12 three, the Big East two, the ACC one.

Mid-majors: zero for the second straight season.

East Region

The top three seeds made it through the East.

St. John's is the Darling.

The fifth-seeded Red Storm (30-6) blew a 12-point lead against Kansas, but Dylan Darling, who hadn't hit a shot all day, scored at the buzzer for a 67-65 win that sends St. John's to the Sweet 16 for the first time since 1999.

Next up for the Johnnies is a date with Duke on Friday in Washington.

The Blue Devils (34-2) and star freshman Cameron Boozer had an opening 1-vs.-16 scare against Siena but took it out on TCU with an 81-58 win to reach the Sweet 16 for the third straight season.

The second regional semifinal likely will leave both teams bruised and battered.

UConn (31-5) lost in the second round last season following consecutive national championships but clamped down on UCLA to earn a Sweet 16 return.

Michigan State (27-7) is in the Sweet 16 for the 17th time under coach Tom Izzo, led by the dynamic duo of Jeremy Fears Jr. and Coen Carr.

South Region

No. 2 seed Houston avoided having to play reigning national champion Florida — Iowa made sure of that — and will be playing at home for the South Region.

The Cougars (30-6) will be surrounded by Big Ten teams, starting with a 2-mile trip from campus against Illinois on Thursday.

The Illini (26-8) are big — bigger than any team in the country.

They used that size to their advantage, clobbering Penn and VCU to reach the Sweet 16 for the second time in three seasons under coach Brad Underwood.

The second East semifinal will be the battle of the corn.

No. 4 seed Nebraska (28-6) is the closest thing the Sweet 16 has to an underdog — only because it had never won an NCAA Tournament game prior to this season.

No. 9 seed Iowa (23-12) finished 10-10 in the Big Ten but has bullied its way through the bracket so far, reaching the Sweet 16 for the first time since 1999 by ending Florida's repeat bid.

Midwest Region

Michigan has looked every bit a top seed, winning its first two games by an average of 22 points.

Next up is a showdown with No. 4 seed Alabama on Friday in Chicago.

The Crimson Tide (25-9) washed away Texas Tech by raining down 19 3-pointers in a 90-65 thrashing to reach the Sweet 16 for the fourth straight season.

No. 2 seed Iowa State took a big hit when All-America forward Joshua Jefferson sprained his ankle in the Cyclones' opener and didn't play against Kentucky.

It did little to slow them down; the Cyclones (29-7) spun away from Kentucky 82-63 to reach the Sweet 16 for the third time under coach T.J. Otzelberger.

Iowa State hopes to have Jefferson back for Friday's game and will likely need him against Tennessee.

The No. 6 Vols (24-11) have been Sweet 16 regulars under coach Rick Barnes and made it four straight by outlasting Virginia 79-72.

West Region

The West has an SEC team disguised as Cinderella.

Texas has a world of resources and plays in the SEC yet found itself in Dayton, Ohio, as a No. 11 seed.

The Longhorns (21-14) pulled it together at just the right time in their first season under coach Sean

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Miller, knocking off No. 3 seed Gonzaga to become the sixth First Four team to reach the Sweet 16.

That earns them a spot in the West semifinals against No. 2 Purdue on Thursday in San Jose, California. Coach Matt Painter has molded the Boilermakers (29-8) into a model of consistency, reaching the Sweet 16 seven times the last nine seasons — including the 2024 title game — with their 79-69 win over Miami.

The showdown between No. 1 Arizona and No. 4 Alabama will be an NBA scout's delight.

The Wildcats (34-2) go eight deep in potential future pros and guard Jaden Bradley has a knack for making the biggest plays at the biggest moments.

John Calipari set the standard for recruiting NBA lottery picks at Kentucky, and it's been no different in his second season in Fayetteville. Fabulous freshman Darius Acuff Jr. was the star in Arkansas' 94-88 win over High Point, scoring 36 points as the Razorbacks secured their second straight Sweet 16 berth.

WNBA players unanimously approve a new 7-year collective bargaining agreement through 2032

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — WNBA players unanimously approved the new collective bargaining agreement on Monday with more than 90% participating in voting over the weekend.

The seven-year CBA, which will begin this season and run through 2032, represents a landmark labor deal for the WNBA and its players.

"This transformational CBA delivers consequential economic progress and expanded benefits that support players on and off the court," the union said in a statement. "It builds a stronger foundation for today's players, the next generation, and those who helped build the WNBA. It affirms the strength of our union and the power of our collective voice.

"Now it is time to get back to the game and the fans we love, competing at the highest level, and showing exactly what this league can be."

Once the WNBA Board of Governors approves the CBA it will become official. Then there will be a sprint to the start of the regular season on May 8.

First up is an expansion draft for the two new teams — Toronto and Portland. Rules regarding who the current teams will be able to protect and how the draft will work are still being figured out. The draft is expected to take place right around the Final Four.

Next up would be free agency. More than 80% of the league are free agents this year as players had signed deals that were going to expire last year. There are only two veteran players that aren't under rookie contracts who are signed for this season.

The college draft is scheduled for April 13 in New York.

Teams are expected to start training camp on April 19 and will have little time to get prepared for the regular season.

Iran built a vast camera network to control dissent. Israel turned it into a targeting tool

By DAKE KANG and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — The role of Israel's hijacking of Iran's street cameras in the killing of the country's supreme leader underscores how surveillance systems are increasingly being targeted by adversaries in wartime.

Hundreds of millions of cameras have been installed above shops, in homes and on street corners across the world, many connected to the internet and poorly secured. Recent advances in artificial intelligence have enabled militaries and intelligence agencies to sift through vast amounts of surveillance footage and identify targets.

On Feb. 28, Israel vividly demonstrated the potential of such systems to be hacked and used against adversaries when Israel tracked down Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei with the help of Tehran's own

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street cameras - despite repeated warnings that Iran's surveillance systems had been compromised, according to interviews and an Associated Press review of leaked data, public statements and news reports.

The use of hacked surveillance cameras among other intelligence in the operation to kill Khamenei was described to the AP by an intelligence official with knowledge of the operation and another person who was briefed on the operation. Neither was authorized to speak with the media and both shared information on condition of anonymity.

Iran has installed tens of thousands of cameras in its capital in response to waves of protests, most recently in January, when massive nationwide demonstrations ended in a bloody crackdown that killed many thousands of Iranians.

That Tehran's cameras were compromised was no secret: the city's cameras were repeatedly hacked starting in 2021, and last year, a senior Iranian politician warned publicly that cameras had been compromised by Israel, posing a national security threat.

Conor Healy, director of research at surveillance research publication IPVM, said Khamenei's killing illustrates a pressing security dilemma for governments seeking to quash dissent.

"The irony is that the infrastructure authoritarian states build to make their rule unassailable may be what makes their leaders most visible to the people trying to kill them," Healy said. "Do you trust who is watching?"

Warning signs

For years, cybersecurity experts have warned that cameras could be hacked for war.

In 2019, security engineer Paul Marrapese discovered he could easily hack millions of cameras from the comfort of his home office in California.

Despite speaking up repeatedly since, the number of unprotected cameras only continues to grow. A scan of unprotected camera feeds this year turned up nearly three million hits in almost every country in the world, Marrapese told AP, including nearly 2,000 cameras in Iran alone.

"There are millions and millions and millions of these throughout the world," Marrapese said. Many, he added, are trivially easy to hack: "They're just dumb little things. ... It's fish in a barrel."

Companies have advertised cameras hooked up online, accessible with cellphones, with feeds easily diverted by hackers. Many are installed with minimal security by unsophisticated users who fail to set up passwords or install security patches. Securing cameras takes constant vigilance, but hacking them takes identifying just one exposed vulnerability, such as an outdated system or a generic password like "1234."

Even surveillance systems set up by governments on networks sealed off from the internet are vulnerable: It takes just one insider turncoat to compromise such systems.

"Humans are kind of the weakest link," Marrapese said. "There's really only so much you can do."

Eyal Hulata, Israel's former national security adviser and a senior fellow at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, said Israel is under constant cyberattacks from Iran but has so far been able to defend against it.

"There is high alert on all cyber fronts," he said.

For years, hacking cameras for war remained theoretical. But in 2023, Hamas hacked surveillance cameras in southern Israel ahead of its Oct. 7 attack, allowing the group to monitor Israeli army patrols and assisting the attack, according to Israeli media. That same year, a Ukrainian official told reporters that Russia attempted to hijack cameras near missile targets, a trend that continued in 2024 when Russians hacked cameras in Kyiv and last year, when they hacked cameras at border crossings.

Experts say advances in AI have allowed militaries to overcome a critical hurdle in weaponizing hacked footage: sifting through huge amounts of video to identify people, vehicles, and other targets, a task that once took teams of analysts weeks or months but can now be done in real time. With a simple keyword search, AI can scan feeds and return results almost immediately.

"It used to be that you could hack the cameras, but humans had to do the real work of figuring out where the person was," said cryptographer and security expert Bruce Schneier. "With AI systems ... you can do a lot more automatically."

The despot's dilemma

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Iran's cameras have been repeatedly hacked over the past few years.

In 2021, an Iranian exile group leaked footage of abuses at Tehran's notorious Evin prison. In 2022, another group claimed it hacked over 5,000 cameras around Tehran, dumping gigabytes of surveillance footage and internal data on a Telegram channel.

Then, during a 12-day war last summer, Israel used Tehran's cameras to track and bomb the location of a meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, injuring Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, according to Iranian lawmakers and an Israeli documentary.

"All the cameras at our intersections are in the hands of Israel," Mahmoud Nabavian, deputy chairman of the Iranian parliament's national security committee, told Iranian media in September. "Everything on the internet is in their hands ... if we move, they will find out."

The vulnerabilities have come amid Iran's stepped-up use of surveillance cameras after a series of protests roiled the country. Subway cameras, for example, are used to detect when women don't don the country's mandatory hijab, or headscarf, using facial recognition to identify violators.

But data collected to consolidate control creates a ripe target for hackers, said researcher Michael Caster, who investigated China's sales of surveillance technology to Iran.

"Malicious parties can more easily gain access," Caster said.

Iran in particular, long sanctioned by the West, faces difficulties in getting up-to-date hardware and software, often relying on Chinese-manufactured electronics or older systems. Pirated versions of Windows and other software are common. That makes it easier for potential hackers to target the country.

The Financial Times earlier reported on the use of cameras in Khamenei's killing.

The person briefed on the operation who spoke to the AP said that for years almost all the traffic cameras in Tehran had been hacked and the information transferred to servers in Israel. At least one camera was at an angle that allowed Israel to track daily movements of people, such as where they parked their cars near Iran's leadership compound, the two people said.

Algorithms helped provide information including people's addresses, routes they took to work and who protected them, according to the person briefed on the operation. That same person said the attack had been planned for months, but the operation was expedited once it was determined that Khamenei and his top officials would be in the leadership compound that morning.

Israel's prime minister's office didn't respond to request for comment.

Col. Amit Assa, a former official with Israel's Shin Bet domestic security service, said that such operations are powered by many sources of intelligence, such as undercover agents and bugged conversations.

However, Assa says cameras play a key role because they allow intelligence officers to identify people, providing key confirmation in deciding on whether to strike.

When you see a person's face on a screen in the command center, it helps in making the decision to put your "finger on the yellow button, as we say," he said.

More cameras, more coverage

Check Point Research, a cyber threat intelligence group, says Iranian hacking attacks on cameras have spiked since the beginning of the war, with surges of activity in Israel and Gulf countries such as Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates.

Such hacks could help Iran monitor targets and assess damage after missile strikes, according to Gil Messing, Check Point Research's chief of staff.

"The more people are installing cameras ... the more area is being covered by these cameras," Messing said. "It is very easy to use in order to get extra eyes into different places."

Analysts estimate there are more than one billion security cameras installed worldwide, triple the number a decade ago. Hundreds of millions more are installed every year.

Muhanad Seloom, assistant professor in security studies at the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, said that oil-rich Gulf countries like Qatar have long known their petroleum facilities could be targeted in a war and had their systems tightly secured. But only recently have officials in the region realized that street cameras, too, could be weaponized.

"I don't think anyone anticipated that these traffic cameras would become targeting tools ... there is

alarm all over," Seloom said. "How come Iran's whole leadership has been decapitated on the first day? ... It is a topic that is being talked about."

Across the region, governments are on high alert.

Gulf monarchies have barred residents from filming or livestreaming footage of Iranian strikes, with the UAE arresting dozens of people for sharing video of the conflict online. Though aimed in part to protect the country's reputation, the bans are also motivated by concerns that such footage could be exploited by the Iranian military, Seloom said.

Earlier this month, Israel's National Cyber Directorate said that it had warned hundreds of camera owners targeted by Iran and urged the public to change passwords and update software to starve off attacks.

Ali Vaez, Iran project director at the International Crisis Group, said though hacking has long been a concern in the Middle East, its increasing use since the war began was "a wake-up call".

Still, he said there's only so much that can be done to patch up vulnerabilities.

"It's a whack-a-mole," Vaez said.

Emmanuel Grégoire, a Socialist long involved in local politics, becomes Paris' new mayor

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Emmanuel Grégoire, a Socialist little known to the French public, was elected mayor of Paris in a runoff vote Sunday, succeeding fellow party member Anne Hidalgo.

Soon after claiming victory, Grégoire, 48, took a city bike through the streets of Paris toward City Hall, echoing his promise to make the French capital greener.

Grégoire won over 50% of the votes, beating out prominent conservative contender Rachida Dati who reached 41% while hard-left contender Sophia Chikirou got about 8%.

The race for Paris mayor was part of France's second round of municipal elections. Sunday's vote showed clear gains for the traditional left and right, and one major win for the far right in the French Riviera city of Nice.

Long a discreet figure in French politics, Grégoire had for years worked by Hidalgo's side.

Hidalgo was elected in 2014 and reelected in 2020 but chose not to seek a third six-year term after leading the city through the 2015 extremist attacks and the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Here are five things to know about Paris' new face.

A local political career

Grégoire was well-placed to step into the limelight when Hidalgo decided not to seek a third term.

He had joined the Socialist party at 24 in 2002, got involved in Paris politics and eight years later became the chief of staff of Paris' then-mayor, Bertrand Delanoë.

Grégoire subsequently worked in the prime minister's office under Socialist President Francois Hollande. He was first elected to the Paris City Council in 2014 and became Hidalgo's first deputy mayor from 2018 to 2024, overlooking key portfolios, including budget, urban policies and public services.

In 2024, he was elected a lawmaker to the National Assembly and last year launched his bid to succeed Hidalgo.

"An advantage we have is that we know Parisians very well," Grégoire told The Associated Press ahead of the election.

"I believe that in politics, it's healthy when grassroots work pays off more than social media" he said — a stab at his rival Dati, known for her outspoken style and being a regular guest in television shows.

A victim of child abuse

Grégoire recently revealed publicly he had been a victim of sexual abuse while in elementary school between the ages of 9 and 10.

"This is the story of a child who ... was sexually abused for several months during after-school activities at a municipal swimming pool," Grégoire told France Inter Radio last year. "At the time, I couldn't find the strength, the means, or the words to express that pain and suffering."

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"I kept it hidden for decades," he added.

Child abuse has been a key topic in Paris electoral campaign, as several reports of alleged abuse in Paris public schools recently broke out, which Grégoire said reopened his own scar. Critics accused him of having done nothing on the issue.

Grégoire said that since 2024, he was no longer in charge at City Hall.

A rivalry within the left

At the city level, Grégoire has led a broad left-ecologist political coalition of Socialists, Greens and Communists, but has ruled out any alliance with the hard-left party France Unbowed of veteran leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon.

France Unbowed once used to be a traditional ally of other left-wing parties. But the alliance collapsed as political rivals accused its politicians of tolerating antisemitic rhetoric. Some critics also blamed the hard left for fueling tensions after a far-right militant was beaten to death in the city of Lyon last month.

Ahead of the runoff, France Unbowed candidate Chikirou offered to join forces with Grégoire against Dati, but he declined, saying they do not share the same "values."

The remark reflected Grégoire's perception of Chikirou as being too radical while he defends a more moderate approach.

Focus on housing Parisians, not just tourists

Grégoire, for whom the housing issue has been central to his campaign, has repeatedly said that "Airbnb is my enemy."

"I'm fine with Parisians renting out their primary residence when they go on vacation. But I don't want entire neighborhoods in Paris to be emptied of their residents because apartments are used exclusively to house tourists," he said during the campaign.

With Paris long one of the world's top tourist destinations, tens of thousands of apartments are used as tourist rentals instead of being available to Parisians, Grégoire said.

He pledged to create 60,000 new social and affordable housing units as mayor.

"We have the same problems in Paris as in New York, San Francisco, cities with which I have worked a lot on these issues," Grégoire told the AP. "What happens if we don't regulate? Speculation drives residents out."

Grégoire also vowed to fight overcrowding in places like the Louvre Museum and the Montmartre neighborhood by highlighting less-visited sites and urging tourists to experience different locations.

In line with his predecessor's policies, Grégoire promised to further increase the number of cycling lanes and make the River Seine cleaner.

Feud with Hidalgo

Grégoire was long seen in the Socialist camp as the favorite to succeed Hidalgo, but a dispute between the two in 2024 almost derailed his bid.

"Anne Hidalgo didn't back me. She did everything she could to torpedo my candidacy. I am neither her candidate nor her heir," Grégoire told the Franceinfo news broadcaster about the feud last month without elaborating.

However, Grégoire acknowledged their closely shared views but said his approach is "different," describing himself as "available, accessible and always listening."

Hidalgo initially supported another Socialist figure to succeed her, but she ultimately endorsed Grégoire after he was chosen as mayoral candidate by party members last year.

She welcomed Grégoire with a hug and a rose at the City Hall on Sunday evening, praising his "very, very beautiful victory."

As demand for GLP-1 pills and shots surges, healthy habits are still key

By JONEL ALECCIA AP Health Writer

Whether they're using weekly shots or daily pills, more Americans than ever are turning to anti-obesity drugs to lose weight and boost health.

About 1 in 8 U.S. adults say they are taking a GLP-1 drug, according to a recent survey by the health research group KFF.

Just since January, more than 600,000 prescriptions have been written for Novo Nordisk's new Wegovy pill, the company said. Early analysis suggests that more than a third of users are new to the drugs, according to Truvena, a health care data company.

But medication alone isn't the answer, experts caution. It also takes lifestyle changes — healthy diet, exercise, adequate sleep and stress management — to reap the biggest benefits from the drugs known as GLP-1s.

"The biggest mistake people make with GLP-1 medications is thinking the prescription is the treatment," said Dr. Katherine Saunders, an obesity medicine expert at Weill Cornell Medicine and co-founder of FlyteHealth, a weight-loss treatment company.

GLP-1s can spur weight loss and health benefits on their own, but the effects are larger and last longer when the drugs are combined with lifestyle changes, a recent review of nearly three dozen studies found.

Here's what experts say you should know about GLP-1 drugs and healthy habits:

It's not all about weight

Obesity is a big driver of chronic disease, including conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. But the focus should be overall health and not just the numbers on a scale, said Dr. Jody Dushay, an endocrinologist and obesity expert at Harvard Medical School.

"Health is what you eat, how much you move your body, what is your blood sugar, what is your blood pressure, what is your cholesterol," she said. "All of those things are really important."

The GLP-1 drugs work by targeting hormones in the gut and brain that slow digestion and target appetite and feelings of fullness. That effect "levels the playing field," said Saunders, making it easier to adopt healthy habits like eating less and moving more.

"Social media and advertising sometimes create the impression that these medications are a quick fix, but obesity is a complex, chronic, progressive disease" that requires ongoing medical management, she added.

What does research show about GLP-1s and lifestyle changes?

The clinical trials of anti-obesity medications like Wegovy and Zepbound included structured lifestyle programs along with the medication, which are advised along with every new prescription.

That results not only in significant weight loss, but improved health markers.

A February study of more than 98,000 U.S. military veterans found that those who used a GLP-1 and adhered to six to eight healthy habits had a 43% lower risk of serious cardiovascular events such as stroke and heart attack than those who didn't use the drugs and followed three or fewer such habits.

Lifestyle habits "can substantially amplify the benefits of modern medications" noted Dr. Frank Hu, a lead author and chair of the nutrition department at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

Which changes are most important?

To maximize the benefits of GLP-1s and reduce potential side effects like nausea, vomiting, constipation and muscle loss, Dushay and other experts offer specific advice.

Maintain muscle by eating 20 grams to 30 grams of protein per meal, which could include fish, poultry, yogurt and beans. Eat more fiber and drink more water — as much as 8 to 12 cups a day. If heartburn or nausea is a problem, avoid fried foods and spicy foods, and don't lie down after meals.

Aim for 150 minutes of aerobic exercise a week, or, ideally, about an hour a day. Add in 30 minutes of strength training two or three times a week, such as lifting weights or using resistance bands.

Get enough sleep — seven to nine hours a day for a healthy adult. Take steps to reduce mental and

emotional stress.

Finally, check in with a health care provider about your progress. The GLP-1 drugs can have rare but serious side effects, the experts noted.

"Someone really does need to keep track of: What is the pace of your weight loss? What are your side effects? And not just mailing you a prescription every month," Dushay said.

North Korea says summit with Japan is off unless Tokyo drops 'its anachronistic' ways

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Monday a summit between her brother and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi won't happen if Japan sticks to "its anachronistic" approach.

Kim Yo Jong's statement came after Takaichi told reporters last week that she had informed U.S. President Donald Trump during a summit in Washington that she had "a very strong desire" to meet Kim Jong Un.

"But this is not the one that comes true, as wanted or decided by Japan," Kim Yo Jong said. "In order for the top leaders of the two countries to meet each other, Japan should first be determined to break with its anachronistic practice and habit."

Kim Yo Jong, who is also a senior official, didn't explicitly say what Japan's "anachronistic practice and habit" are. However, in 2024, she said in a statement that North Korea's acceptance of a reported offer for a meeting by one of Takaichi's predecessors would depend on Japan tolerating the North's nuclear weapons program and ignoring its past abductions of Japanese nationals. The meeting eventually didn't occur.

In her latest statement carried by state media on Monday, Kim Yo Jong said: "I don't want to see the prime minister of Japan coming to Pyongyang." But she still described her rejection as "just my personal position," suggesting she was pressuring Japan to make concessions.

Observers say North Korea likely aims for better ties with Japan to drive a wedge between the United States and its allies. Meanwhile, Tokyo wants to resolve the cases of Japanese citizens abducted by North Korea during the 1970s and 1980s.

After years of denial, North Korea acknowledged in a 2002 summit between Kim Jong Il, the late father of Kim Jong Un, and then-Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, that its agents had kidnapped 13 Japanese. North Korea allowed five of them to return to Japan. Japan believes more people might have been abducted and that some could still be alive.

Koizumi made a second visit to North Korea and met Kim Jong Il again in 2004, the last time the two nations held talks.

Chances for a North Korea-Japan summit remain slim as North Korea refuses to return to diplomacy with the U.S. and South Korea since 2019. Trump, who met Kim Jong Un three times between 2018 and 2019, has repeatedly expressed his intentions of resuming dialogue with Kim, but the North Korean leader suggested he could only return to talks if the U.S. drops "its delusional obsession with denuclearization" of North Korea.

Takaichi said that Trump expressed his support for the immediate resolution of the abductees' cases and that he indicated he would "provide cooperation in various ways" concerning meeting Kim Jong Un.

Slovenia's president urges talks on future government after tight election outcome

LJUBLJANA, Slovenia (AP) — Slovenia's president on Monday urged the country's political parties to start talks on forming a new government as soon as possible after a parliamentary election on the weekend in the European Union country ended with no clear winner and the main players practically tied.

Prime Minister Robert Golob's liberal Freedom Movement won 29 seats in the 90-member assembly while the opposition right-wing Slovenian Democratic Party, or SDS, won 28, according to preliminary results of

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99.85% of votes counted by the state election authorities.

The outcome means that no party has a clear majority of 46 seats and that a future government will depend on smaller parties that emerged as kingmakers following the vote. It was not immediately clear what shape potential future alliances might take.

"I urge them to sit down at the negotiating table as soon as possible," President Nataša Pirc Musar said on X. She congratulated the pro-EU ruling Freedom Movement party, which had a lead of less than 1%, describing it as "the relative winner" of the election.

Sunday's vote was seen as a key test of whether the EU member nation stays on its liberal course or sways toward the right. The undecided outcome also reflects deep divisions among Slovenia's 1.7 million eligible voters.

Golob's government has been a strong liberal voice in the 27-nation EU. SDS leader Janez Jansa is a populist-style politician and a close ally of nationalist Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. His return to power would be a boost to Europe's right-wing blocs.

Golob on Sunday evening thanked the voters on the relative victory, saying that "we have remained the leading party." He predicted "tough weeks ahead" when he will meet with parliamentary parties to try to find common ground.

Jansa, an admirer of U.S. President Donald Trump, said his party would not want to form a weak coalition government. He said a "balance of political powers ... based on what we see now, will not provide much stability."

The vote was held after a heated campaign that featured allegations of foreign interference and corruption, further whipping already heightened political tensions between the two opposed blocs.

Pensioner Rajko Campa, from the capital Ljubljana, said he was surprised by the election results and that he supported Jansa's conservatives, arguing that it is healthy to change those in power every few years.

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

ICE officers will begin assisting TSA as shutdown frustrates travelers and screeners

By SEUNG MIN KIM and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's decision to order federal immigration agents to U.S. airports to help with security during a budget impasse is drawing concerns that their presence may escalate tensions among air travelers frustrated over hourslong waits and screeners angry about missed paychecks.

Trump made clear on Sunday that he was going ahead with the plan to have immigration enforcement officers assist the Transportation Security Administration by guarding exit lanes or checking passenger IDs unless Democrats agreed to fund the Department of Homeland Security. Democrats are demanding major changes to federal immigration operations and showing no sign of backing down.

Hundreds of thousands of homeland security workers, including from the TSA, U.S. Secret Service and Coast Guard, have worked without pay since Congress failed to renew DHS funding last month.

"Bad idea," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, about the new airport security plan, which Trump said would start Monday.

"What we need to do is, we need to get the DHS issues resolved, we need to get the TSA agents paid," she told reporters at the Capitol, where the Senate held a rare weekend session. "Do you really want to have even additional tensions on top of what we are already facing?"

Senators advanced the nomination of Sen. Markwayne Mullin, R-Okla., to be Trump's next homeland security secretary by a largely party-line vote, 54-37, with two Democrats joining most Republicans. A vote on the confirmation could come as early as Monday. Mullin has tried to make the case that he would be a steady hand after the tumultuous tenure of Kristi Noem, Trump's first DHS secretary.

Border czar heads up airport security effort

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White House border czar Tom Homan, named by Trump to lead the new airport security effort, has also been meeting with a bipartisan group of senators over the partial shutdown. While he characterized those sessions as "good conversations," he said they were "not at a point yet where we're in total agreement."

Meanwhile, Homan said in Sunday news show interviews that the increased role of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at airports — its specific duties and numbers — was subject to discussions with the leadership of TSA and ICE. DHS spokeswoman Lauren Bis said "hundreds" of ICE officers would be deployed, but she would not disclose the airports where they would go, citing security reasons.

"It's a work in progress," Homan said. The priority, he said, was "the large airports where there's a long wait, like three hours."

Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens issued a statement Sunday night saying officers from ICE and Homeland Security Investigations would be deployed to the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport starting Monday morning.

At the airport on Sunday, some travelers waited in line for nearly six hours at the main security checkpoint, where only two TSA agents were on hand midafternoon to check IDs. Many missed their flights and scrambled to book later flights or add themselves to standby lists that were already dozens of names long.

Dickens said all federal personnel would report to TSA and be assigned tasks such as line management and crowd control. "Federal officials have indicated that this deployment is not intended to conduct immigration enforcement activities," his statement said.

Homan said immigration officers, as an example, could cover exits currently monitored by TSA agents, freeing them to work screening lines. Another option, he said, was having ICE agents check identification before people enter screenings areas.

"We're going to be a force multiplier," Homan said, while also acknowledging there were limits.

"I don't see an ICE agent looking at an X-ray machine, because we're not trained in that," he said. He pledged to have "a plan by the end of today, where we're sending -- what airports we're starting with and where we're sending them."

But Everett Kelley, president of the American Federation of Government Employees, which represents more than 50,000 TSA employees, condemned Trump's plan, saying in a statement that ICE agents are not trained or certified in aviation security.

"Our members at TSA have been showing up every day, without a paycheck, because they believe in the mission of keeping the flying public safe," Kelley said Sunday. "They deserve to be paid, not replaced by untrained, armed agents who have shown how dangerous they can be."

Budget talks stall as airport worries worsen

Democrats have said they are willing to fund TSA and most other parts of DHS as they press for changes to immigration operations after the deaths of two U.S. citizens at the hands of federal agents in Minneapolis during an immigration enforcement operation. ICE officers are largely being paid during the partial shutdown, thanks to an influx of cash from Trump's big tax breaks bill last year.

"There are lots of ideas swirling right now," said Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D. "The good news in all that is people realizing this has to get fixed, it has to get solved."

As budget talks stayed behind closed doors Sunday, senators said they had few details of which airports or how many immigration officers were being dispatched. Some welcomed the effort.

"I don't think it can hurt," said Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D. "They can help relieve some of the pressure."

Trump said in a social media post that on Monday, "ICE will be going to airports to help our wonderful TSA Agents who have stayed on the job" despite the partial government shutdown. He further criticized Democrats.

Travelers at some airports worried about reaching their gates Sunday.

At Atlanta's airport, lines wrapped from one end of the airport to the other.

The scene appeared more chaotic at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York. Large crowds of anxious travelers piled toward security checkpoints, and TSA staff shouted through megaphones to tell people not to push one another.

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For Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, one concern is the uncertainty that passengers are facing over possible wait times at any airport on any given day.

"Do I have to come an hour and a half early? Do I have to come four hours early? They don't know until the day of or the afternoon of their flight," he said. "So if we can alleviate that, again, the president wants to take away that leverage point for Democrats and make travel easier for the American people."

Homan appeared on CNN's "State of the Union" and "Fox News Sunday," while Duffy was interviewed on ABC's "This Week." _____

Associated Press writers Collin Binkley in West Palm Beach, Fla., Anthony Izaguirre in Lindenhurst, N.Y., Yuki Iwamura in New York, Nicholas Riccardi in Denver, Kate Brumback in Atlanta, Margery Beck in Omaha, Neb. and Rebecca Santana in Washington contributed to this report.

Today in History: March 24, Exxon Valdez runs aground off Alaska, creates massive oil spill

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, March 24, the 83rd day of 2026. There are 282 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 24, 1989, the supertanker Exxon Valdez (vahl-DEEZ') ran aground on a reef in Alaska's Prince William Sound and began leaking an estimated 11 million gallons of crude oil.

Also on this date:

In 1882, German scientist Robert Koch announced in Berlin that he discovered the bacillus responsible for tuberculosis.

In 1921, the Women's Olympiad, the first international women's sporting event, began in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

In 1980, Catholic Archbishop Óscar Arnulfo Romero of El Salvador, an advocate for the poor and oppressed, was shot and killed as he celebrated Mass in San Salvador. (Pope Francis would declare Romero a saint on Oct. 14, 2018.)

In 1999, NATO launched airstrikes against Yugoslavia in a campaign to stop ethnic cleansing, marking the first time in its 50-year existence that it attacked a sovereign country.

In 2015, Germanwings Flight 9525, an Airbus A320, crashed in the French Alps, killing all 150 people on board; investigators said the jetliner was deliberately downed by the 27-year-old co-pilot, Andreas Lubitz.

In 2016, a U.N. war crimes court convicted former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić of genocide and nine other charges for orchestrating a campaign of terror that left 100,000 people dead during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia; Karadžić received a sentence of 40 years in prison, later increased to life.

Today's Birthdays: Chef and TV presenter Mary Berry is 91. Musician Carol Kaye is 91. Fashion and costume designer Bob Mackie is 87. Singer Nick Lowe is 77. Golf Hall of Famer Pat Bradley is 75. Fashion designer Tommy Hilfiger is 75. Actor Kelly LeBrock is 66. TV personality Star Jones is 64. Actor Lara Flynn Boyle is 56. Actor Alyson Hannigan is 52. Football Hall of Famer Peyton Manning is 50. Actor Jessica Chastain is 49. Basketball Hall of Famer Chris Bosh is 42. Dancer Val Chmerkovskiy is 40. Actor Christopher Briney is 28. NFL safety Damar Hamlin is 28.