

Groton Daily Independent

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No POPS Concert this year

There is no separate Pop's concert this year since there is no show choir or flex band. The music department will be incorporating pop stuff into its normal spring concert.



Friday, April 3

No Senior Meal.
NO SCHOOL - Easter Break
HS Baseball Practice, 6 p.m., GHS Gym
Emmanuel Lutheran: Good Friday Service, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Good Friday Service, 7 p.m.,
at St. John's
United Methodist: Good Friday Service: Noon at
Britton, 5 p.m. in Conde

Saturday, April 4

Pickleball, 9:30 a.m., Elementary Gym
Airport Fundraiser, 6:30 p.m., Groton Legion

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

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1440

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

Trump Drops Bondi

President Donald Trump fired Attorney General Pam Bondi yesterday, removing the country's top law enforcement officer after a 14-month tenure. Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche will serve as acting attorney general.

The move follows mounting scrutiny over Bondi's leadership. Critics have pointed to her handling of files tied to the Jeffrey Epstein investigation, as well as her efforts to pursue criminal cases against former FBI Director James Comey and New York Attorney General Letitia James. The House Oversight Committee last month subpoenaed Bondi for closed-door testimony related to Epstein, while the latter cases were dismissed in November after a judge ruled the lead prosecutor was unlawfully appointed.

Bondi's dismissal comes less than a month after Trump removed Kristi Noem as Homeland Security secretary, marking the second Cabinet departure of his second term. Trump is reportedly considering Lee Zeldin, the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, as a permanent replacement for Bondi.

Copenhagen Wreck Discovered

Archaeologists have uncovered the wreck of the Danish warship Dannebrog, announced on the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Copenhagen. The vessel, Denmark's flagship under Commodore Olfert Fischer, was found about 49 feet underwater in Copenhagen Harbor using sonar and underwater drones.

The ship exploded after being struck by the British fleet under the command of Adm. Horatio Nelson during the hourslong battle, which left thousands dead or wounded as Britain sought to weaken Denmark's alliance with Napoleon. Divers have recovered cannons, shoes, clay pipes, uniform insignia, and part of a sailor's jawbone, likely belonging to one of 19 crew members considered missing after the explosion. Divers are racing to excavate the wreck in murky waters before construction begins on a nearby coastal housing project.

The battle is traditionally associated with the phrase "turning a blind eye," as Nelson, who had lost sight in his right eye, is said to have ignored a superior's signal.

Italian Football Fallout

Italy's soccer federation president and delegation head resigned yesterday after the national team became the first former World Cup champion to miss qualification for three straight tournaments. The head coach is expected to follow.

Italy has won the World Cup four times, second only to Brazil (see historical winners). The team, however, hasn't advanced beyond the group stage since its last win in 2006. Over the last two decades, the program has cycled through three presidents and eight head coaches. An election on June 22 will determine a new federation president, who will likely oversee stadium renovations ahead of the 2032 European Championships, which Italy is cohosting with Turkey.

Meanwhile, tickets for the 2026 World Cup final (July 19) reached up to \$11K during the first open sale this week—likely the most expensive ever general admission ticket for a soccer match. Tickets to the 2022 final maxed out at roughly \$1.6K.

In other news, soccer stars Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo, Kylian Mbappé, and Vinícius Júnior are now Lego figurines.

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Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Judge dismisses most claims in Blake Lively's sexual harassment suit against costar Justin Baldoni.
"Bob's Burgers" star Eugene Mirman is saved from a fiery car crash by New Hampshire Gov. Kelly Ayotte (R) and her security (More, w/photos)

"Super Mario Galaxy Movie" earns \$34M domestically on opening day, setting a new April record and surpassing "Project Hail Mary" by about \$1M to become the biggest opening of 2026.

"Harry Potter" HBO series to air behind-the-scenes special chronicling search for actors to play Harry, Ron, and Hermione, and more.

Science & Technology

Cosmic radiation levels in an Australian underground lab confirmed low enough to host dark matter experiments.

Novel noninvasive procedure alters activity in the human amygdala, revealing the brain region's critical role in decoding ambiguous social cues; finding could provide insights into mental health conditions.

Indigenous people in the Western US invented dice over 12,000 years ago, the oldest evidence of gambling; games were primarily played by women to build social connections and used to trade with other tribes.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 +0.1%, Dow -0.1%, Nasdaq +0.2%).

Mortgage rates rise to 6.46% for 30-year fixed loans, reaching highest level in nearly seven months.

Blue Owl Capital caps withdrawals from its private credit funds at 5% after investors try to pull out 41% of money from a \$6B fund and 22% from a \$36B fund.

Tesla reports 358,023 vehicle deliveries in Q1, up roughly 6% from a year ago but below analyst expectations; Tesla shares drop more than 5%.

Politics & World Affairs

White House ballroom approved by key commission but still faces legal hurdles.

Justice Department says law requiring presidents to turn over records at the end of their term is unconstitutional.

President Donald Trump orders 100% tariffs on select brand-name drugs.

The UK convenes 41 countries to pressure Iran to reopen Strait of Hormuz after President Donald Trump said the US would not play a lead role in restoring the waterway during prime-time address Wednesday.

A 2,500-year-old golden helmet and two of three golden wristbands recovered after being stolen from a Dutch museum in January 2025.

Need a **Babysitter** or **House Cleaner**?

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House Cleaning Offered!

Text Jeslyn Kosel at (605)-290-7821

I'm in Groton but am willing to drive to nearby towns!

The advertisement features a colorful illustration of a teddy bear, a baby bottle, and a stack of colorful blocks on the left, and a yellow bucket with cleaning supplies on the right. At the bottom, there is a small house and a red car on a road.

Golden Eagles escape Tigers clutch

ABERDEEN — The Groton Area Tigers showed marked improvement and flashes of strong play, but Aberdeen Central High School came away with a pair of wins Thursday at the Aberdeen Dome.

The Golden Eagles rallied late to take the opener 9-8, then completed the sweep with a 6-3 victory in game two.

In the first game, Groton Area appeared to seize control in the third inning. The Tigers capitalized on control issues from Aberdeen Central pitching, drawing seven walks and turning them into six runs for a 6-3 lead.

Aberdeen Central answered late. Trailing 8-3 entering the bottom of the fifth inning, the Golden Eagles strung together timely hits and pushed across six runs to escape with the 9-8 win.

Jayden Penning and Talli Wright each collected a hit for Groton Area. The Tigers worked 12 walks in the game while Aberdeen Central pitchers recorded six strikeouts.

Game two followed a similar pattern, with Groton Area competing early before Aberdeen Central pulled away. The game was tied 1-1 after the first inning, and the Tigers loaded the bases but were unable to cash in.

Aberdeen Central took control in the second inning with three runs, then added two more in the third to build a 6-1 advantage. Groton chipped away with single runs in the fourth and fifth innings, but could not close the gap in a 6-3 loss.

Abby Fjeldheim highlighted the offense with an RBI triple. Riley Rose, Libby Cole, Hannah Sandness, McKenna Krause and Wright each added a hit. Groton Area left nine runners on base, while Aberdeen Central stranded five.

Despite the losses, head coach Amanda Bisbee said the progress from the Tigers was evident.

"These were real. This was fun today. This was softball today," Bisbee said. "The score might not have reflected it, but we played better today and stronger today than we did even in our Sisseton game."

Groton Area also flashed defensive ability, turning double plays and making diving catches in the field.

"We've got some things to work on," Bisbee said. "We haven't quite figured out signals and stealing yet, so that's coming. But the girls keep improving, and that's what matters."

Bisbee also noted the challenge of facing a more experienced program.

"They're a Double-A school, they've been playing for three years," she said. "I'm proud of our girls."

The Tigers, now 1-2 on the season, will face a tough test next week when they travel to take on the defending state champions, the Deuel Cardinals, in Clear Lake.

The games were broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by The MeatHouse in Andover.



Groton Area players warming up in the Aberdeen Dome.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

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GROTON 14U 2026

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>
May 27	Sisseton	Groton	5:30 PM
May 29	Clark	Groton	5:30 PM
June 2	Britton	Britton	5:30 PM
June 4	Milbank	Groton	5:30 PM
June 6	Redfield	Groton	DAY OF PLAY
June 8	Watertown	Groton	5:30 PM
June 9	Aberdeen Smitty's	Aberdeen	5:30 PM
June 13-14	Platte Tournament	Platte	TBD
June 16	Webster	Groton	5:30 PM
June 18	Britton	Groton	5:30 PM
June 19	Sisseton	Sisseton	5:30 PM
June 23	Watertown	Watertown	5:00 PM
June 25	Redfield	Redfield	5:30 PM
June 26-28	Vern Jark Tournament	Aberdeen	TBD
June 30	Milbank	Milbank	5:30 PM
July 6	Webster	Webster	5:30 PM
July 7	Clark	Clark	5:30 PM
July 10	Aberdeen Smitty's	Groton	5:30 PM
July 16-18	Regional Tournament	TBD	TBD
July 24-26	State "B" Tournament	Sisseton	TBD

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GROTON JR LEGION 2026

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
May 31	Clark	Clark	5:30 PM
June 1	Britton	Groton	5:30 PM
June 3	WIN	Northville	5:30 PM
June 6	Redfield	Groton	DAY OF PLAY
June 8	Watertown	Watertown	5:00 PM
June 9	Selby	Selby	6:00 PM
June 12 - 14	Clark Jr. Legion Tournament	Clark	TBD
June 15	Selby	Groton	5:30 PM
June 19	Volga	Volga	6:00 PM
June 22	Sisseton	Sisseton	5:30 PM
June 23	Britton	Britton	5:30 PM
June 24	Clark	Groton	7:00 PM
June 29	WIN	Groton	5:30 PM
July 8	Aberdeen Smitty's	Groton	5:30 PM
July 13	Sisseton	Groton	5:30 PM
July 15	Redfield	Redfield	7:00 PM
July 16	Watertown	Groton	5:30 PM
July 17	Aberdeen Smitty's "B"	Aberdeen	5:30 PM
July 19	Garretson	Clark	4:00 PM
	Clark		6:00 PM
July 27 - 28	Regional Tournament	TBD	TBD
August 7 - 9	State "B" Tournament	Redfield	TBD

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GROTON AREA TIGERS BASEBALL 2026

<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPPONENT</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>TIME</u>
April 6	Redfield Area - Varsity Redfield Area - JV	Groton	6:00 PM
April 10	M/H-H/W-W/WS/F - Varsity M/H-H/W-W/WS/F - JV	Groton	5:30 PM
April 11	PGDCWL - Varsity Redfield Area - JV	Redfield	3:00 PM 5:00 PM
April 13	Clark Area - Varsity Clark Area - JV	Clark	6:00 PM
April 17	WIN - Varsity WIN - JV	Northville	6:00 PM
April 22	SBW - Varsity SBW - Varsity	Sisseton	5:30 PM
April 24	M/H-H/W-W/WS/F - Varsity M/H-H/W-W/WS/F - JV	Miller	5:30 PM
April 26	Lennox - Varsity West Central - Varsity	Lennox	2:00 PM 3:30 PM
May 2	Rapid City Central - Varsity Redfield Area - Varsity	Redfield	TBD
May 4	Clark Area - Varsity Clark Area - JV	Groton	6:00 PM
May 6	SBW - JV SBW - JV	Groton	5:30 PM
May 9	Madison/Chester - Varsity Madison/Chester - Varsity	Milroy, MN	12:00 PM
May 11	WIN - Varsity WIN - JV	Groton	6:00 PM
May 17 - 20	North Super Regional Tournament	TBD	TBD
May 25-26	State B Tournament	Brookings	TBD



Jerica Locke is pictured front and center, surrounded by her GHS teammates, as she signs to play volleyball at North Dakota State College of Science Volleyball. (Courtesy photo Matt Locke)

Hanson: Pride as Jerica Takes Volleyball Career to Next Level

GROTON — For Groton Area head volleyball coach Chelsea Hanson, moments like these don't come around often.

That's what made Jerica's recent commitment to continue her volleyball career at the next level with North Dakota State College of Science Volleyball all the more special.

"Only a small percentage of female athletes choose to play any sport in college," Hanson said. "To see Jerica earn that opportunity says a lot about her work ethic, her commitment, and the kind of player she's become."

Jerica becomes just the second volleyball player Hanson has coached at Groton Area to continue her career outside of the Lady Tigers' black and gold, a milestone that underscores both the rarity and significance of the accomplishment.

Throughout her time in the program, Hanson said Jerica has been a steady presence on and off the court, setting an example for her teammates with her dedication and leadership.

"She's put in the time, whether that's in practice, in the offseason, or just continuing to improve her game," Hanson said. "Opportunities like this don't just happen — they're earned."

Hanson also noted how meaningful it was for the Groton Area team to be part of Jerica's signing day, sharing in a moment that reflects not only individual success but the strength of the program as a whole.

"Thanks to Jerica and her family for letting the team be part of her day," Hanson said. "It meant a lot to all of us. We are so proud of her and everything she's accomplished."

Jerica will now take the next step in her volleyball journey with the Wildcats, carrying with her the support of her coaches, teammates, and the Groton community.

"She's going to do great things," Hanson said. "This is just the beginning."

South Dakota PUC reminds South Dakotans to Call Before You Dig

PIERRE, S.D. – To kick off National Safe Digging Month on the right foot, South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioners are reminding consumers that calling 811 is an essential step in preparing for outdoor projects this spring.

“As we move toward warmer weather, many South Dakotans will be planning for and working on projects around their property. If those projects involve digging, contacting 811 should be your first step and be done before you ever break ground. Whether you are building a house, adding a fence, updating landscaping or relocating something on your property, notifying South Dakota 811 is an important step that can help ensure your safety and maintain the integrity of buried utilities,” said PUC Chairman Chris Nelson.

South Dakota state law requires South Dakota 811 be notified at least two working days prior to the beginning of any excavation project. That 48-hour notice gives utility providers time to mark the underground location of their infrastructure. The digger is responsible for avoiding those marked areas.

“One simple phone call to 811 or visit to their website can have a big impact. Not only is the notification a kind of free insurance for you as the excavator or homeowner, it can also help prevent serious injury, minimize risk of property damage and reduce risk of outages and damage to utilities that can be essential,” stated PUC Vice Chairperson Kristie Fiegen.

Failure to properly utilize South Dakota’s One Call service or ignoring utility location markings can have serious consequences. Digging in an area that has been marked or striking even a single line can result in all types of trouble including service disruptions, fines, significant repair costs, injury or even death.

“The depths of utility lines can vary and change over time. New property owners, especially in older neighborhoods, may decide to plant some things in an existing garden or an area where one would not expect a utility line to exist. However, older utility lines are often nearer the surface than we realize. It is always better to make the smart choice, protect yourself and your loved ones, and call the free service 811 before you start your project,” explained Commissioner Gary Hanson.

South Dakota 811 is free service. Homeowners and excavators can use an online portal to request an underground utility locate by visiting sdonecall.com.

For additional information, visit puc.sd.gov/consumer/811.aspx.

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Secretary of state announces validation of fourth gubernatorial petition; candidate field takes shape for 2026 primary

(Pierre, S.D.) – Secretary of State Monae L. Johnson has announced that Dan Ahlers will be placed on the ballot as a Democratic candidate for Governor at the Primary Election to be held on June 2, 2026.

A Democratic candidate for Governor requires 1,232 valid signatures in order to appear on the ballot. As outlined in SDCL § 12-1-36, the Secretary of State's office conducted a random sample of the petition signatures and found 93.3 percent to be valid. Based on the results of the random sample, 1,818 signatures were deemed valid.

With the addition of Ahlers, the filed candidates for Governor now include Republicans Dusty Johnson, Jon Hansen, and Larry Rhoden, along with Ahlers representing the Democratic Party.

Other statewide and federal races are also taking shape ahead of the 2026 Primary. Incumbent U.S. Senator Mike Rounds has filed as a Republican candidate. In the race for U.S. House, Republican Marty Jackley and Democrat Nicole "Nikki" Gronli have filed.

Upon the filing of a candidate petition, any interested person may challenge the Secretary of State's validation of the petition under SDCL § 12-1-13. A person challenging the validation must submit an original, signed affidavit listing each specific deficiency to the Secretary of State's office no more than five business days after validation.

For this candidate petition, the deadline to file a challenge is Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. (CT).



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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

April 7, 2026 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. PumpkinFest Discussion
4. Department Reports
5. Open Bids for 2026 Street Resurfacing Project and Award
6. Approval of Special Event Alcoholic Beverage License – Graduation Party on May 9, 2026, at Community Center – Julie Sandness
7. Approval of Special Event Alcoholic Beverage License – Graduation Party on May 15, 2026, at Community Center – Jason Warrington & Pat Krause
8. Review Estimate from H&M Custom Coating for Exterior Painting of City Hall
9. Review Quote from The Roofers for Mansard Roof/Awnings at City Hall
10. Approval of Updated Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) Designated Entity Contract and FES Amendment with WAPA and Heartland Energy to Permit Resale of RECs
11. Funding Request from Area IV Senior Nutrition
12. Discussion Regarding Implementing an Ordinance Addressing Motorized Scooters
13. 2026-2027 Malt Beverage License Renewals:
 - MJ's Sinclair
 - Ken's Food Fair
 - Dollar General
14. Minutes
 - a) City Council Meeting from March 17, 2026
 - b) Local Board of Equalization Meeting from March 17, 2026
15. Bills
16. 2026 Spring Cleanup – April 27th through May 1st
17. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
18. Hire Applicants for Summer Employment
19. Adjournment

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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA
GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 7, 2026, 8:45 A.M.
COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS
COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
 - ❖ *Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes.*
4. Brock Greenfield, SD Commissioner of School and Public Lands
 - a. Update on Richmond Dam Project
5. Dave Lunzman, Sheriff
 - a. Jail Contract with Davison County Sheriff's Office
 - b. Jail Medical Contract with Modern Day Health
6. Gene Loeschke, Director of Equalization
 - a. Annual Conference
7. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Grant Agreement for Weed & Pest to spray Yellow Toadflax
8. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of the General Meeting Minutes of March 31, 2026
 - b. Claims/Payroll
 - c. HR Report
 - d. Travel Requests
 - e. Landfill Tonnage Report for March
9. Other Business
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. Adjourn

You can join the Brown County Commission Meeting via **your computer, tablet, or smartphone** at <https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>
You can also dial in using your phone. United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311) - Access Code: 601-168-909 #
Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

Official Recordings of Commission Meetings along with the Minutes can be found at [Commission Meetings | Brown County](#)

DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING – 11:30 A.M. – COMMUNITY ROOM

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Pennington County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash
Where: SD Highway 44, mile marker 92, five miles east of Scenic, SD
When: 6:57 a.m., Thursday, April 2, 2026

Vehicle 1: 2007 Toyota 4Runner
Driver 1: 46-year-old male from Rapid City, SD, fatal injuries
Seat belt Used: No

Pennington County, S.D. – A Rapid City man died this morning in a single-vehicle crash five miles east of Scenic, SD.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates that a 2007 Toyota 4Runner was traveling eastbound on Highway 44 near mile marker 92 when the driver failed to negotiate a curve and went off the roadway into the north ditch, over corrected across the highway and entered the south ditch where the vehicle rolled before coming to rest.

The driver sustained fatal injuries.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is preliminary. The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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MONTH-TO-MONTH
Student: \$35.15 per month
Single: \$40.48 per month
2-Person: \$59.78 per month
Family: \$72.43 per month
Senior/PT: \$20 per month

Call or Text Paul at 605/397-7460
Call or Text Tina at 605/397-7285

Same rates for several years!

From Free Throws to Food: Donation Provides 900 Dozen Eggs to Feeding South Dakota

Dakota Layers and SDSU's Luke Haertle team up to support state-wide hunger relief.

Sioux Falls, S.D. (4/2/2026) – On April 1, 2026, 10,800 eggs were delivered by Dakota Layers to Feeding South Dakota's Sioux Falls warehouse to help fight hunger across the state.

Continuing its annual campaign for the 10th year, Dakota Layers donated one dozen eggs for every free throw made by the SDSU men's and women's basketball teams on their home court during the regular season. This year, the partnership grew with a new addition: one dozen eggs were also donated for every point scored by Jackrabbits guard Luke Haertle. Throughout the season, Haertle used his platform to raise awareness for Feeding South Dakota's mission to end hunger in South Dakota.

Between 365 free throws, 110 points by Haertle, and a generous donation from Dakota Layers - 900 dozen eggs will be distributed to neighbors through Feeding South Dakota's programs and network of partner agencies.

Luke Haertle shared that partnering with Dakota Layers has been a great experience, especially seeing the impact of Feeding South Dakota firsthand. He emphasized that the organization distributes a large amount of food to families across the state, helping ensure neighbors facing hunger have reliable access to the meals they need—work that closely aligns with his values.

"We continue to partner with Feeding South Dakota because we're proud to be part of the solution," said Tracy Ramsdell, Marketing Director of Dakota Layers. "Eggs are a simple yet powerful source of protein and we want to make sure families have consistent access to that nutrition."

A family-owned farm based near Flandreau, Dakota Layers has donated more than 5.2 million eggs to Feeding South Dakota since 2017. This year's campaign connects agriculture, athletics, and community - strengthening the network of support for Feeding South Dakota's mission.

"We're grateful for partners like Dakota Layers who show up year after year to provide for our neighbors facing hunger," said Lori Dykstra, CEO of Feeding South Dakota. "This donation helps us provide high-quality food to individuals and families when they need it most."

More than 113,000 South Dakotans face hunger. To learn more or support the mission, visit feeding-southdakota.org or follow Feeding South Dakota on social media.



Pictured are Katelyn Nehlich, April Abeln, Becky Kotzer, Douglas Heinrich, Paul Kosel and Brian Dolan. (Photo courtesy Kellie Locke)

Kotzer launches travel venture

The Groton Area Chamber of Commerce is welcoming a new business to the community with the addition of Experiences by Design, a travel service launched by Becky Kotzer.

Kotzer brings a passion for helping individuals and families plan meaningful and memorable trips, focusing on personalized travel experiences tailored to each client's interests and needs. Through her new venture, she aims to take the stress out of planning while opening the door to unique destinations and opportunities.

As she builds her business, Kotzer is also sharing travel inspiration, destination ideas and helpful tips through her Facebook page, offering followers a glimpse into the latest trends and insights she gathers along the way.

The Chamber encourages community members to connect with Kotzer and learn more about how Experiences by Design can help create their next getaway.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

One data center project 'unchanged' while another 'doesn't make sense' after rejected incentives

South Dakota lawmakers imposed new restrictions during legislative session while declining sales tax exemptions

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

One company plans to pause its project but another company's plan is "unchanged" after South Dakota lawmakers rejected incentives for large data centers.

Applied Digital has been courting South Dakota lawmakers and residents of Deuel County in far eastern South Dakota for years. The company planned to build a \$5 billion, 430-megawatt data center campus near the small town of Toronto.

The company believes South Dakota is a prime location for data centers because of its wind energy, its abundance of electrical power, and the potential for its cool climate to help data centers save on cooling costs. The Deuel County site is near Otter Tail Power's transmission lines and a natural gas-fired generation plant in Astoria.

Vice President of Applied Digital Nick Phillips said the project "doesn't make sense at this time" given lawmakers' rejection of tax incentives during the recently concluded legislative session. The company's agreement on the land near Toronto is up for renewal soon, and Phillips said the company will let it lapse.

"We're constantly looking at other options for power," Phillips said. "We prefer to do so in jurisdictions that treat us like other jurisdictions."

Any other nearby state to South Dakota "would make sense," Phillips added, aside from Colorado, which also does not have a sales tax exemption for data centers.

Phillips said Applied Digital could revisit its plans for South Dakota depending on the outcome of elections this year — there's a race for governor, and every legislative seat is up for election, which could result in a better result for incentive bills next year. But he said energy availability could change within a short timeframe and decide the project's fate.

"My suspicion is I'll be around in Pierre next year, but it's hard to tell at this time," Phillips said. "We'll get some more clarity this summer."

Separate plans for a proposed 500-megawatt-capable data center facility in northeastern Sioux Falls are "unchanged," according to a representative with Gemini, which is developing the project — it's just a matter of recruiting a tenant.

The company is pursuing "alternatives within the existing framework," including potential economic development programs through the Governor's Office of Economic Development.



A rendering of a proposed data center project in Deuel County, South Dakota. The project is proposed by Applied Digital and would be near the small town of Toronto. (Photo

courtesy of Applied Digital)

"It is not on hold, but like any project of this scale, it ultimately comes down to economics," the company said in an emailed statement. "We are continuing to evaluate all options, both within South Dakota and more broadly, just as any developer would."

Lawmakers rejected bills during the legislative session that would have provided exemptions or rebates on sales taxes for data centers, including on their software and equipment purchases.

Gov. Larry Rhoden signed two other data center-related bills into law last week. One will allow the state Public Utilities Commission to assess data center companies the cost of regulatory reviews related to their projects.

The other law requires local water providers to determine whether the water use of large data centers — for cooling of spaces filled with heat-emitting servers — is compatible with the local water supply. It also requires electrical providers to establish separate terms and conditions for large data centers and to require reimbursement for all costs fairly attributed to data centers. Additionally, the law prohibits the state from overriding local ordinances limiting, prohibiting or otherwise regulating data centers.

South Dakota does not have data centers of the size that have proliferated elsewhere in recent years, with developers pointing to a lack of sales tax incentive programs as a primary reason. Many new data centers serve the rapidly growing data-processing needs of artificial intelligence or cryptocurrency.

Opponents of incentives during the legislative session expressed concerns about singling out one industry for help, and about how the water and electrical demands of large data centers could affect other local water and electrical customers.

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.

South Dakota awards \$7.8 million from opioid settlement to combat addiction

BY: JOHN HULT

SIOUX FALLS — The latest round of funding from a nationwide opioid settlement will pay for a mobile street medicine clinic, addiction treatment training for primary care doctors, and recovery coaching for incarcerated people and recent inmates.

The money will also help fund a mobile crisis team on the Cheyenne River Reservation, expand addiction treatment for juveniles and pregnant women, and fund four substance use interventionists for the Sioux Falls School District.

The money comes from the makers and sellers of opioid painkillers linked to spikes in addiction and overdose deaths. South Dakota is expected to receive about \$99 million in settlement funds through 2038. The state's collected \$32.8 million so far, with 70% of the money going to the Department of Social Services for disbursement around the state and 30% going directly to localities.

Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden appeared alongside Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff to announce the awards on Thursday at the downtown Sioux Falls library.

"We have both an opportunity and an obligation to invest these dollars wisely and in a way that makes a real difference in our communities," Rhoden said.

The latest \$7.8 million in awards represent the second round of "transformative" grants — up to \$2 million each — given out since the state revamped its opioid settlement funding framework to create a tiered system. The state also offers mid-sized grants of up to \$50,000, awarded twice a year, and grants of up to \$5,000 to address immediate needs.

The state got \$67.5 million in "transformative" grant requests between November and January, according to a report delivered to the Legislature in March.

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South Dakota Department of Social Services Secretary Matt Althoff, left, appears with Gov. Larry Rhoden on April 2, 2026, at a press conference on opioid settlement funding at the downtown library in Sioux Falls. (John Hult/South

Dakota Searchlight)

building that trust, building some of the core skills that will help them be more successful," Colwell said.

That work is paid for through a private sector grant meant to address the needs of inmates in rural jails and prisons. With its \$920,700 from the opioid settlement, Face It can hire more coaches and expand its reentry work to inmates in Sioux Falls. Coaches are "at capacity" Colwell said, but the money to hire more of them "just wasn't there" without the opioid settlement dollars.

The state has awarded \$1.8 million in large-scale grants across four projects since the start of the state's current fiscal year in July, according to a report delivered to lawmakers in March. The state has awarded \$334,500 in smaller grants to 13 projects in that same time frame.

Opioid grant awards, April 2026

Avera Behavioral Health, Sioux Falls: \$3 million to expand adolescent addiction services at Avera's in- and outpatient mental health facility. The funding is meant to fill a gap created by the closure of a juvenile treatment facility.

Center for Family Medicine, Sioux Falls: \$750,000 to support training in addiction treatment at a full-service medical clinic. Funding will pay for a new postdoctoral fellow and support team.

Cheyenne River Long-Term Recovery Group, Eagle Butte: \$250,000 to support mobile crisis outreach on the Cheyenne River Reservation. The money will support mobile teams, a behavioral health navigation center, crisis response curriculum and public health outreach.

Face It Together, Sioux Falls: \$920,700 to support addiction recovery coaching services for those recently released from prison or jail. The funding is meant to build a comprehensive reentry program and aims to reduce repeat offenses.

Midwest Street Medicine, Sioux Falls: \$750,000 to help the mobile nonprofit's efforts to connect those released from prison or jail to support. The money will pay for a medical-grade mobile unit meant to offer medication-assisted treatment, detox, counseling and a mobile shower trailer.

Rapid City Triage 360/Pennington County Sheriff's Office Care Campus: \$615,000 to develop a plan for care coordination focused on addiction treatment and recovery services. The Care Campus offers detox

The Department of Social Services and an Opioid Advisory Committee make the call on which projects get the greenlight. They prioritize ones that fill a known gap in treatment and services for those affected by opioid use disorder or at risk of being affected, Althoff said. Sustainability and measurable outcomes are also prime factors.

The current crop of awardees "hold great promise of filling gaps" already identified by the department and opioid committee, Althoff said. A more thorough statewide needs assessment, paid for by \$325,000 from the settlement, is nearly complete, he added.

One of the awardees, the Sioux Falls nonprofit Face It Together, offers in-person addiction recovery coaching to people in Sioux Falls, Pierre and Watertown, and virtual coaching to clients anywhere in or outside the state.

It's been sending its recovery coaches into prisons in Springfield, Yankton and Pierre for about two years. The work starts six to nine months from an inmate's release and is meant to continue afterward, said Megan Colwell, the organization's director.

"We're coaching them in the incarceration setting, "We're coaching them in the incarceration setting," Colwell said.

services and addiction treatment.

Sioux Falls School District: \$1 million to hire four substance abuse and prevention specialists to serve students across grade levels.

The Link, Sioux Falls: \$100,000 to support a sustainability plan for care coordination and "recovery plan adherence." The Link is a public-private center for people "experiencing nonviolent behavioral health crises or seeking care for substance abuse."

West River Mental Health, Rapid City: \$186,000 to support substance use treatment for pregnant and postpartum women. The money will pay for a recovery health care assistant position at an existing mental health clinic.

Lewis and Clark Behavioral Health Services, Yankton: \$254,000 to support substance use treatment. The money is meant to help pay for a residential alternative care setting for pregnant and postpartum women.

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

Greenpeace seeks new trial, claiming jury pool biased in case over Dakota Access Pipeline

BY: MARY STEURER

Greenpeace has asked for a second trial after a judge entered a \$345 million judgment against the organization in a landmark case brought by the developer of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

The case "threatens to result in one of the largest miscarriages of justice in North Dakota's history," attorneys for the environmental group wrote in a brief filed last week.

After a three-week trial roughly a year ago, a Morton County jury directed Greenpeace to pay Energy Transfer about \$667 million, finding the environmental group at fault for inciting illegal acts against the company during anti-pipeline protests in North Dakota in 2016 and 2017 and for publishing false statements that harmed Energy Transfer's reputation.

Greenpeace denies Energy Transfer's claims and maintains that it brought the lawsuit to hurt the environmental movement.

Southwest Judicial District Judge James Gion in October slashed the jury's award to \$345 million, though he didn't finalize the award until late February.

Greenpeace is now taking steps to fight the judgment, which includes its motion for a new trial.

The environmental group's reasons for the request include claims that the jury instructions and verdict form contained errors, and that Energy Transfer was allowed to present unfair and irrelevant evidence to jurors. The group also alleges the jury pool was biased.

Greenpeace says the jury's award assumes that Greenpeace was entirely responsible for any injury Energy Transfer sustained related to the protests. Jurors were not given the opportunity to consider whether Greenpeace was only at fault for a portion of the damages, the organization wrote in its brief.



Tribal flags hang on a fence in August 2016 near the construction site of the Dakota Access Pipeline north of Cannon Ball, N.D. (Photo by Kyle Martin/

For the North Dakota Monitor)

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Attorneys for Greenpeace also referenced the mailers and other media circulated to Mandan and Bismarck residents before the trial that contained anti-Dakota Access Pipeline protest and pro-energy industry content.

The environmental group seeks a new trial in Cass County, arguing in part that the jury pool in the Fargo area would be more fair because its residents did not directly experience the Dakota Access Pipeline protests and because the local economy is less dependent on the energy industry.

If Greenpeace's request for a new trial is denied, it plans to appeal the case to the North Dakota Supreme Court, the organization has said.

Greenpeace previously asked for the trial to be moved from Morton County to Cass County in early 2025, which Gion and the North Dakota Supreme Court denied.

The lawsuit is against three separate Greenpeace organizations — Greenpeace USA, Greenpeace International and Greenpeace Fund.

Energy Transfer as of Wednesday morning had not submitted a response to Greenpeace's motion for a new trial. Previously, the company has defended the jury's verdict and disputed Greenpeace's claims that the court proceedings were not fair.

Energy Transfer has indicated it may appeal Gion's decision to reduce the award to \$345 million.

Greenpeace will not have to pay any of the \$345 million judgment for at least a couple of months, Gion ruled Tuesday.

Court documents indicate that the organization could have to pay a bond of up to \$25 million while appeals proceed, though the environmental group has asked the judge to waive or reduce this amount. Gion has not decided on this motion.

He noted that obtaining such a large bond will be challenging.

"The magnitude of this matter defies simple decisions," Gion wrote.

Energy Transfer in court filings urged the judge to require Greenpeace to post the full \$25 million.

Any bond money Greenpeace provides would be held by a third party while the appeals proceed, according to Greenpeace USA.

Greenpeace International has filed a separate lawsuit in the Netherlands that accuses Energy Transfer of weaponizing the U.S. legal system against the environmental group. Energy Transfer asked Gion to order that the overseas suit be paused while the North Dakota case is still active, which Gion denied. The company appealed his ruling to the North Dakota Supreme Court, which has yet to make a decision on the matter.

North Dakota Monitor reporter Mary Steurer can be reached at msteurer@northdakotamonitor.com.

This story was originally produced by North Dakota Monitor, 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.

Mary Steurer is a reporter based in Bismarck for the North Dakota Monitor. A native of St. Louis, Steurer previously worked as the local government reporter for the Casper Star-Tribune newspaper in Wyoming.

Pam Bondi out as Trump's attorney general

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — Attorney General Pam Bondi is leaving the Department of Justice and will be replaced for now by President Donald Trump's former personal defense lawyer, the president announced Thursday.

"Pam Bondi is a Great American Patriot and a loyal friend, who faithfully served as my Attorney General over the past year. Pam did a tremendous job overseeing a massive crackdown in Crime across our Country," the president wrote on social media.

Bondi will depart for an "important new job in the private sector, to be announced at a date in the near future," Trump added.

Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, "a very talented and respected Legal Mind," will move up in an acting role, he said.

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Attorney General Pam Bondi listens as President Donald Trump speaks during a lunch with the Kennedy Center board members in the East Room of the White House on March 16, 2026, in Washington, D.C. (Photo

by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

Blanche thanked the president on social media and praised Bondi for doing her job "with strength and conviction" adding he was "grateful for her leadership and friendship."

Trump did not indicate who he would nominate to succeed Bondi on a permanent basis.

Bondi's exit follows the departure last month of another high-profile Cabinet member, Kristi Noem, whom Trump reassigned from the position of secretary of Homeland Security.

Epstein files

Bondi, the former attorney general of Florida, oversaw the legally mandated release of government files on the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who surrounded himself with powerful figures, including Trump, even after he pleaded guilty to soliciting a minor in 2008. Epstein died in a Manhattan jail cell awaiting federal trial on sex trafficking charges.

Trump's name appeared thousands of times in the files, along with those of numerous celebrities, writers and tech giants. Trump denies knowing about Epstein's scheme to groom and solicit hundreds of young girls for sex.

Shortly after being installed as attorney general, Bondi touted her access to the Epstein files, telling Fox News in February 2025 that the sex offender's client list was "sitting on my desk," and distributing binders marked "Epstein Files: Phase I" to conservative political commentators.

By July, the department announced it had found no leads in the files warranting further investigation and that no further information would be made public. The announcement set off a firestorm in Congress that eventually led to the bipartisan passage of legislation mandating the department to release millions of documents related to Epstein.

Bondi received heavy criticism for missing the legally mandated deadline to release the files, and for a botched rollout that disclosed the names of several victims.

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform subpoenaed Bondi on March 4 to testify before the committee for its separate investigation of the files. Bondi appeared on Capitol Hill for a closed-door briefing with the committee that quickly turned heated, according to CNN's Kaitlan Collins.

Dem slams 'legacy of failure'

Lawmakers released an avalanche of statements upon Trump's announcement that Bondi will no longer hold the highest law enforcement role in the United States.

Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., ranking member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, slammed Bondi's tenure as a "profound betrayal not only of the Department of Justice but of the American people the Department exists to serve."

Bondi's "legacy of failure" includes the firing of prosecutors and federal law enforcement agents who investigated crimes committed leading up to and during the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol, Raskin said in a statement Thursday. Three FBI agents sued this week over their ouster.

"This shameful legacy is cemented by her grotesque mishandling of the Epstein files," Raskin said, alleging Bondi protected powerful figures by redacting their names, yet allowing names of victims to be publicly disclosed.

Bondi and Raskin shared a heated exchange over the Epstein files during a Feb. 11 oversight hearing, at which she called Raskin a "washed-up loser lawyer."

Bondi built a reputation of combativeness and an unwavering loyalty to Trump during hearings before lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, who chairs the Senate Committee on the Judiciary, thanked Bondi for being responsive to his oversight records requests and said she "helped bring violent crime down to historic lows."

"The Judiciary Committee stands ready to advance President Trump's next Attorney General nominee," Grassley said.

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

Homeland Security shutdown drags on, but Trump says he'll sign order to pay all employees

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate approved legislation Thursday that would end the shutdown at the Department of Homeland Security, sending the same bill it passed last week to the House, which didn't take any action during a brief session.

But it appeared the shutdown also could be affected by executive action. President Donald Trump wrote in a social media post later in the morning that he "will soon sign an order to pay ALL of the incredible employees at the Department of Homeland Security."

He didn't detail when that would take place or from where he would pull that money. White House spokespeople did not immediately respond to a request for details.

Asked about the Senate-passed bill, Speaker Mike Johnson's office didn't immediately return a request for comment as to when the House may approve the legislation. But members aren't scheduled to return from a two-week spring break until April 14.

The House could have cleared the measure for Trump's signature during a short session it held an hour after the Senate approved the bill, but its leaders chose not to.

Those pro forma sessions, as they are known, are held about every three days when one or both chambers of Congress are on break and the vast majority of lawmakers are away from Capitol Hill. They typically don't include any real work and are intended to avoid recess appointments.

The Senate approved the bill after a few procedural remarks from Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., and didn't hold a recorded vote.



The U.S. Capitol building in Washington, D.C., amid fog on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024. (Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

'Deep division and dysfunction'

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a statement after the House opted not to clear the legislation that the "deep division and dysfunction among House Republicans is needlessly extending

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the DHS shutdown and hurting federal workers who are missing another paycheck.”

“The Senate did its work twice to fund key parts of DHS without funding the lawlessness of ICE and Border Patrol,” he added. “House Republicans need to get to work and end the longest Republican shutdown in history.”

The DHS appropriations bill the Senate approved would provide funding for the vast majority of the department except Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Border Patrol.

It would ensure funding for the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Coast Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency and Secret Service.

Senators approved an identical DHS funding bill last week by voice vote, but Johnson, R-La., rejected it and instead put an eight-week stopgap spending bill up for a vote in the House.

That legislation had no chance of getting past procedural hurdles in the Senate, which require at least 60 lawmakers to vote to end debate.

Objections to immigration enforcement

Senate Democrats originally held up approval of the DHS spending bill after federal officers shot and killed two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis in January. They have said repeatedly since then they won't approve any more funding for immigration and deportation activities without new guardrails.

Thune reached a deal with Schumer last week to pass a DHS funding bill without any new money for ICE or the Border Patrol, which have tens of billions available from Republicans' "big, beautiful" law.

GOP lawmakers said at the time the idea was to approve another reconciliation package to further bolster funding levels for immigration enforcement and deportations.

“To my Democrat colleagues, this bill is the moderate option. What’s coming next is going to supercharge deportations,” Missouri Sen. Eric Schmitt said during floor debate at the time. “To my Republican colleagues, let this be a rallying cry every time the Democrats obstruct the safety of American families, the wall gets 10 feet higher and ICE gets another \$100 billion.”

Thune and Johnson released a statement Wednesday that they had brokered a deal to do just that, with Trump's support.

“In following this two-track approach, the Republican Congress will fully reopen the Department, make sure all federal workers are paid, and specifically fund immigration enforcement and border security for the next three years so that those law-enforcement activities can continue uninhibited,” they said. “In return, Democrats will once again demonstrate to the American people their support for open borders and keeping criminal illegal immigrants in America.”

Trump wrote in his social media post that “Republicans are UNIFIED, and moving forward on a plan that will reload funding for our FANTASTIC Border Patrol and Immigration Enforcement Officers.”

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

A Biden student loan plan has ended. Here's what borrowers need to know

BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA

WASHINGTON — A federal court order last month to effectively axe a Biden-era student loan repayment plan capped years of chaos for more than 7 million student borrowers enrolled in the program.

The Saving on a Valuable Education, or SAVE, plan marked a cornerstone of the Joe Biden administration's loan forgiveness efforts but became mired in legal challenges from several GOP-led states.

On July 1, federal loan servicers will start sending notices to borrowers instructing them to enter into a legal repayment plan within 90 days, the department said. Borrowers who do not switch within the 90-day window outlined by their servicer will be automatically placed into a new plan.

The agency issued guidance to borrowers in late March instructing them of the timeline and urging people to switch into a new plan.

Here's what borrowers need to know as they navigate next steps:



Student borrowers enrolled in the federal Saving on a Valuable Education, or SAVE, plan must find a new repayment plan or be automatically enrolled in one. (Getty Images)

How did we get here?

The program, introduced in 2023, sought to lower monthly loan payments for borrowers and forgive remaining debt after a certain period of time.

But millions of borrowers experienced chaos and confusion as they were forced to navigate complex court rulings, interest accrual on their debt and continued uncertainty over the plan's fate.

Borrowers were placed in an interest-free forbearance in 2024 amid legal limbo, and the department resumed charging interest on the debt of those in the program in August 2025.

President Donald Trump's administration in December announced a proposed agreement to end the plan.

The agreement stemmed from a legal challenge to the plan brought by Missouri, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, North Dakota, Ohio and Oklahoma in 2024.

A federal judge dismissed that lawsuit in late February, striking down the administration's efforts to axe the plan.

But a federal appeals court reversed the lower court's decision in March, effectively putting an end to the SAVE plan.

Was the SAVE plan already slated for elimination?

Congressional Republicans' mega tax and spending cut bill signed into law by Trump in July 2025 includes a sweeping overhaul of the federal student loan system.

Part of the GOP's "big, beautiful" law phased out the SAVE plan by July 2028.

I'm in SAVE. What are my new repayment options?

Borrowers have several new repayment options, and can switch to a new plan prior to receiving the incoming notice from their federal loan servicer.

One option includes the Income-Based Repayment, or IBR, plan, which ties borrowers' loan payment

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to their earnings.

Borrowers also have the option to enter into two repayment plans stemming from the GOP's "big, beautiful" law — the Repayment Assistance Plan, or RAP, and the Tiered Standard plan — which will both launch July 1.

Preston Cooper, senior fellow in higher education policy at the American Enterprise Institute, a right-leaning think tank, noted that whether IBR or RAP is a better deal for borrowers depends on their particular circumstances.

"I would recommend that if you are kind of earlier in your repayment journey, and you have a lot more interest because your balance is higher, the Repayment Assistance Plan is going to be your best bet," Cooper said.

"If you're later in your repayment journey, you're closer to that 20 or 25-year mark for forgiveness, Income-Based Repayment is probably going to be your better bet," he added.

Borrowers could also opt into a handful of other repayment options, such as the Pay as You Earn and Income-Contingent Repayment plans.

However, those two plans will be eliminated by July 2028 under Republicans' "big, beautiful" law, meaning borrowers would have to switch plans again in two years.

What other steps can I take in the meantime?

Michele Zampini, associate vice president for federal policy and advocacy at the Institute for College Access & Success, said the best thing for a borrower to do is "just be proactive."

"Make sure, from a very base level, you can access your account, you know all the basics of where you stand, and then do some comparisons across what plan options you're going to have," said Zampini, whose organization aims to advance affordability, accountability and equity in higher education.

Zampini also pointed to Federal Student Aid's loan simulator as a good resource for borrowers to get specific numbers to compare across plans.

"If there's a plan that you want to move into that's already open and available, if it's one of the older plans, start moving now, if you can afford it," she said. "And then, if you want to wait for the new plan to open ... know what that payment estimate is going to look like, and then set yourself a reminder for July to check back and look at the enrollment process once that plan opens."

Amid the "total dissonance and chaos" borrowers in SAVE have experienced, Zampini said the department "has really shirked its responsibility in at least keeping borrowers updated and giving them clear information on what's happening, when it's happening, and what the implications are going to be for their payments and kind of their budgets and what they have to do and when they have to do it."

What about the plan to eliminate the department?

Persis Yu, deputy executive director and managing counsel at the advocacy group Protect Borrowers, told States Newsroom she is "incredibly worried about borrowers not being able to figure out what to do, missing the deadline, getting put into a plan that they can't afford, and then falling into default, which has, of course, incredibly onerous consequences."

The end of SAVE also comes as the Trump administration continues its efforts to dismantle the Department of Education, including through a series of interagency agreements that transfer several of its responsibilities to other departments.

Under the most recent agreement, the Treasury Department will take over Education's responsibility for collecting on defaulted federal student loan debt — the first step in a multiphase process toward Treasury taking on Education's entire, roughly \$1.7 trillion federal student loan portfolio.

"The specifics of the plan with Treasury right now are about debt collection, but the overarching mission of dismantling the Department of Education at this moment means that there are not the people in place to oversee the servicers," Yu said.

Part of the administration's efforts to do away with the agency included a reduction in force initiated in

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March 2025 that hit wide swaths of the department, including Federal Student Aid, or FSA.

Yu also highlighted a March report from the nonpartisan Government Accountability Office, which found that staffing reductions at FSA affected the government's ability to determine how well student loan servicers are doing their jobs.

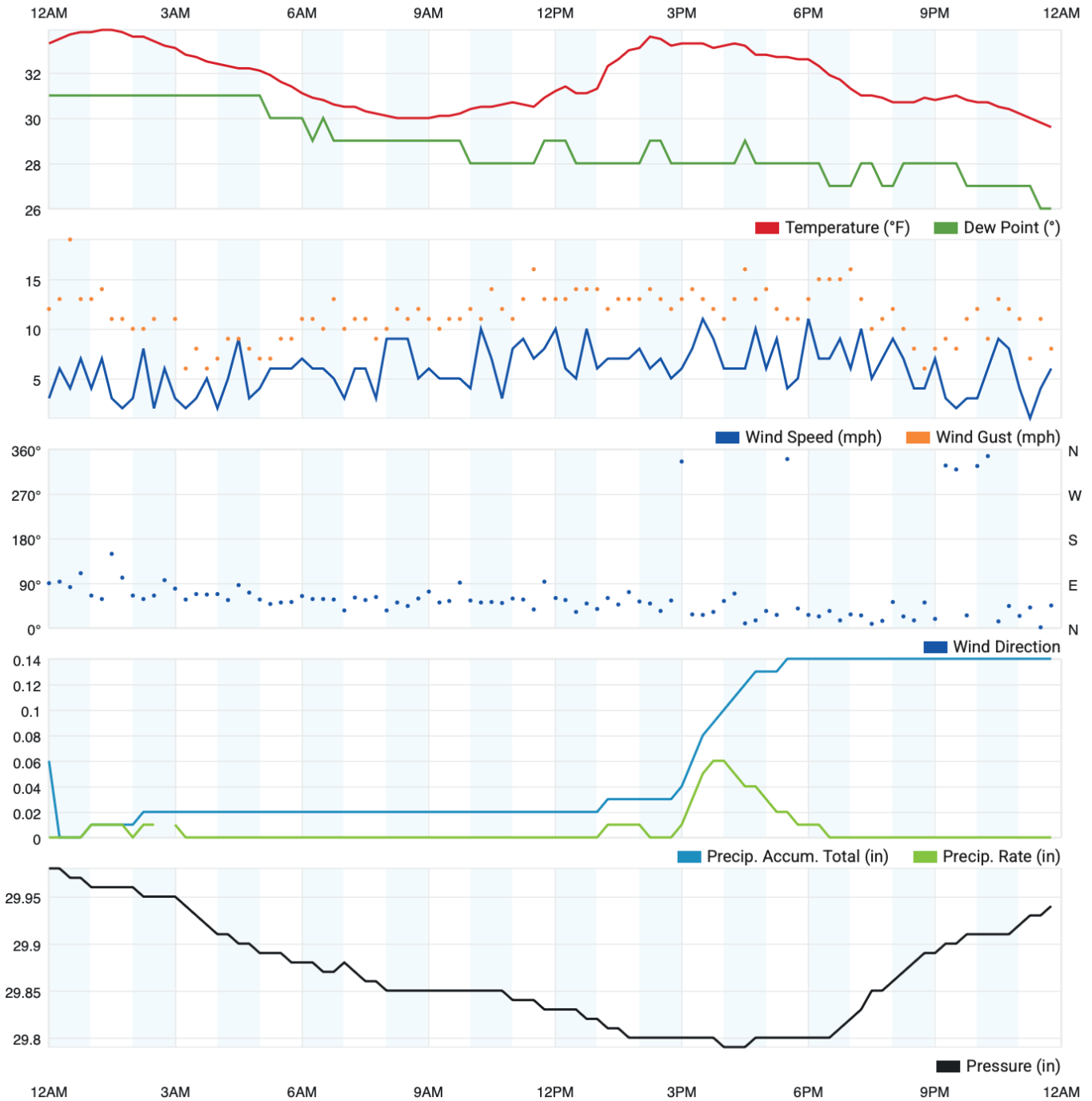
Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs






April 2, 2026



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Winter Storm Warning

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
80% / 100%	90%	70%		
High: 32 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 35 °F	Low: 24 °F	High: 42 °F
Wintry Mix then Snow	Snow	Snow Likely and Patchy Blowing Snow	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny

Winter Weather Returns April 3, 2026 2:46 AM

Wintry mix becoming all snow by evening

Key Messages

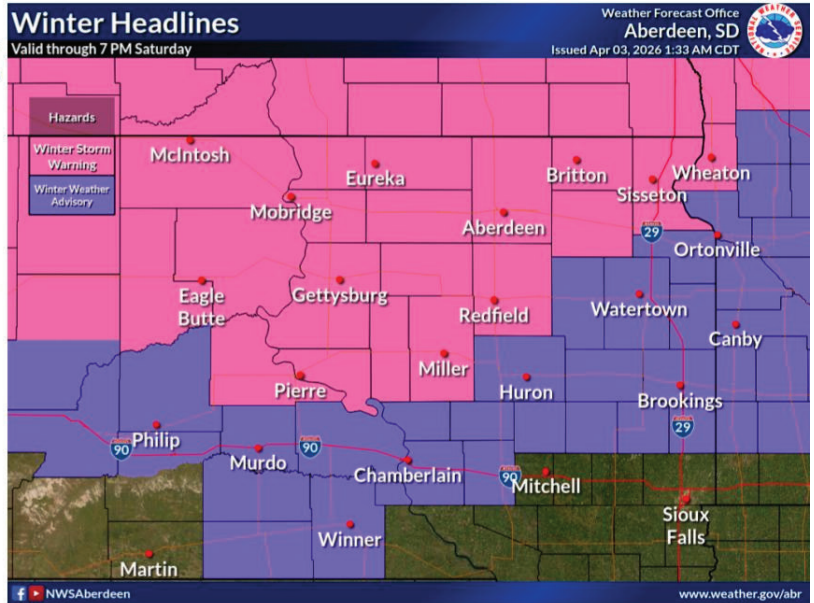
- Today: Freezing rain this morning along and south of Hwy 12. Change over to snow from west to east this afternoon and evening.
- Tonight - Saturday: Snow expected.
 - Total Ice: A tenth to a quarter of an inch
 - Total Snow: 6+ inches along and north of US HWY 212, 4+ inches along and north of US HWY 14
- **Precipitation Type: snow vs freezing rain/sleet will be HIGHLY DEPENDENT on temperatures at the surface and aloft as well as on exact track of the low**

What Has Changed

- Precipitation amounts are trending lower, but not enough to merit a headline change

Next Scheduled Update

- Friday afternoon



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A winter storm warning and winter weather advisory remain in effect for portions of the area through Saturday at 7 PM. Freezing rain spreads east this morning, changing to all snow from west to east this afternoon and evening.

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Winter Storm Timeline

April 3, 2026
2:53 AM

Snow and Ice Spreading East Today



Freezing rain will be the predominant precipitation type everywhere except north central SD.

By mid morning, expect a transition to **snow** west of the James Valley.

Heaviest snowfall occurs across north central SD. Snowfall rates around half an inch to an inch per hour are expected.

James Valley to the Coteau transitions to **snow** this afternoon.

The **heaviest snowfall** will move east this evening into tonight.

Expect snowfall rates around half an inch per hour.

Light snow remains over central and north central South Dakota overnight.

Snow ends from west to east through the morning and afternoon.

Winds pick up through the day to **gust up to 25-35 mph during the afternoon**, decreasing through the evening.

Could cause some patchy blowing and drifting snow and reduce visibilities slightly in areas.

Risk Levels	Little to None	Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
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National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

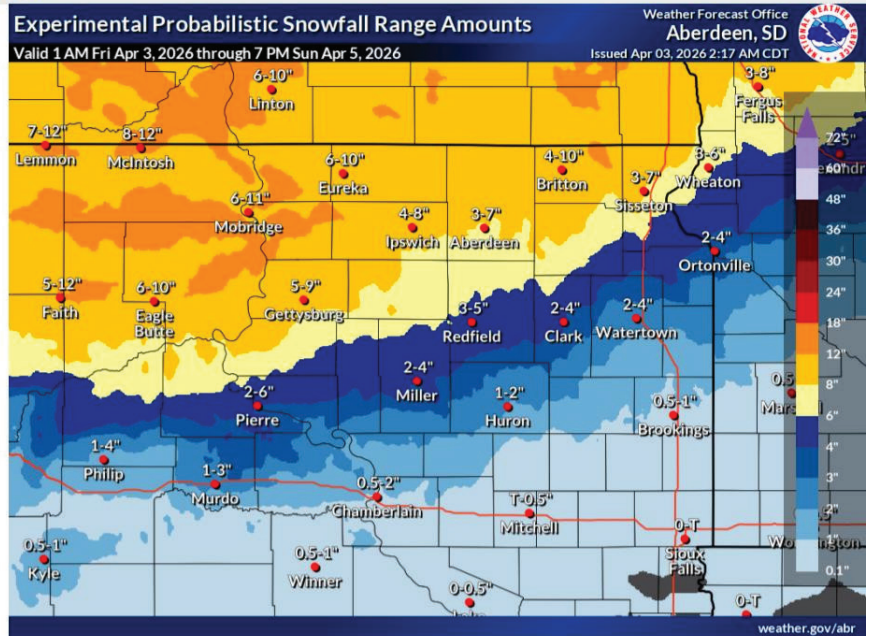


Snow Accumulations through Saturday

April 3, 2026
3:00 AM

Highest snow totals over northern SD

- Highest snow accumulation is expected along and north of Highway 212.
- Heavy, wet snow is expected through most of the event, until the backside of the storm.
- Warm ground temperatures may help melt snow initially, pushing the area towards lower end values.
- ◆ A delayed transition from freezing rain to snow will also support lower end totals.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

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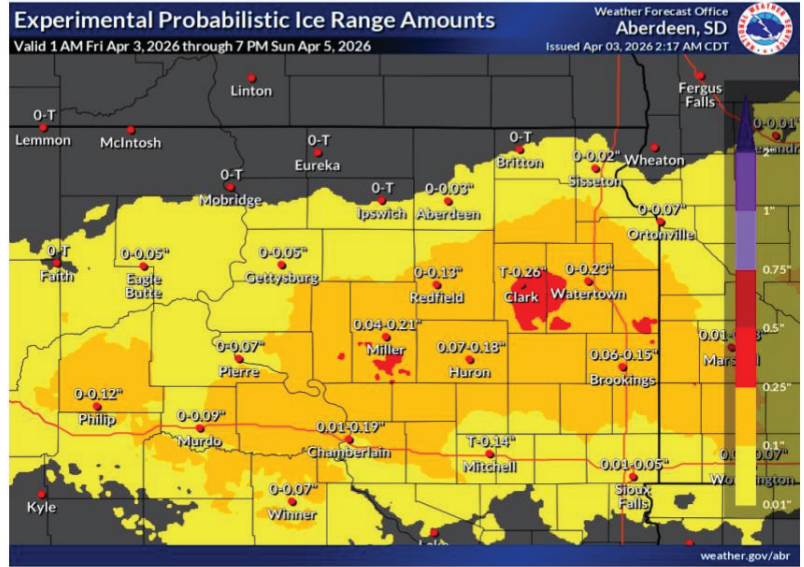


Ice Accumulations Today

April 3, 2026
3:06 AM

Freezing rain to spread eastward this morning

- ◆ Ice amounts dependent on exact track of the system and time of transition to snow. Highest accumulations expected along and south of Hwy 212.
- ◆ Freezing rain and melty/slushy snow may make roads slippery and travel difficult! Use caution if you are traveling!



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Freezing rain is expected to bring a tenth to a quarter inch of ice today with highest amounts from Miller to Watertown. Exact amounts will hinge on the track of the low and time of precipitation transition to snow.

Groton Daily Independent

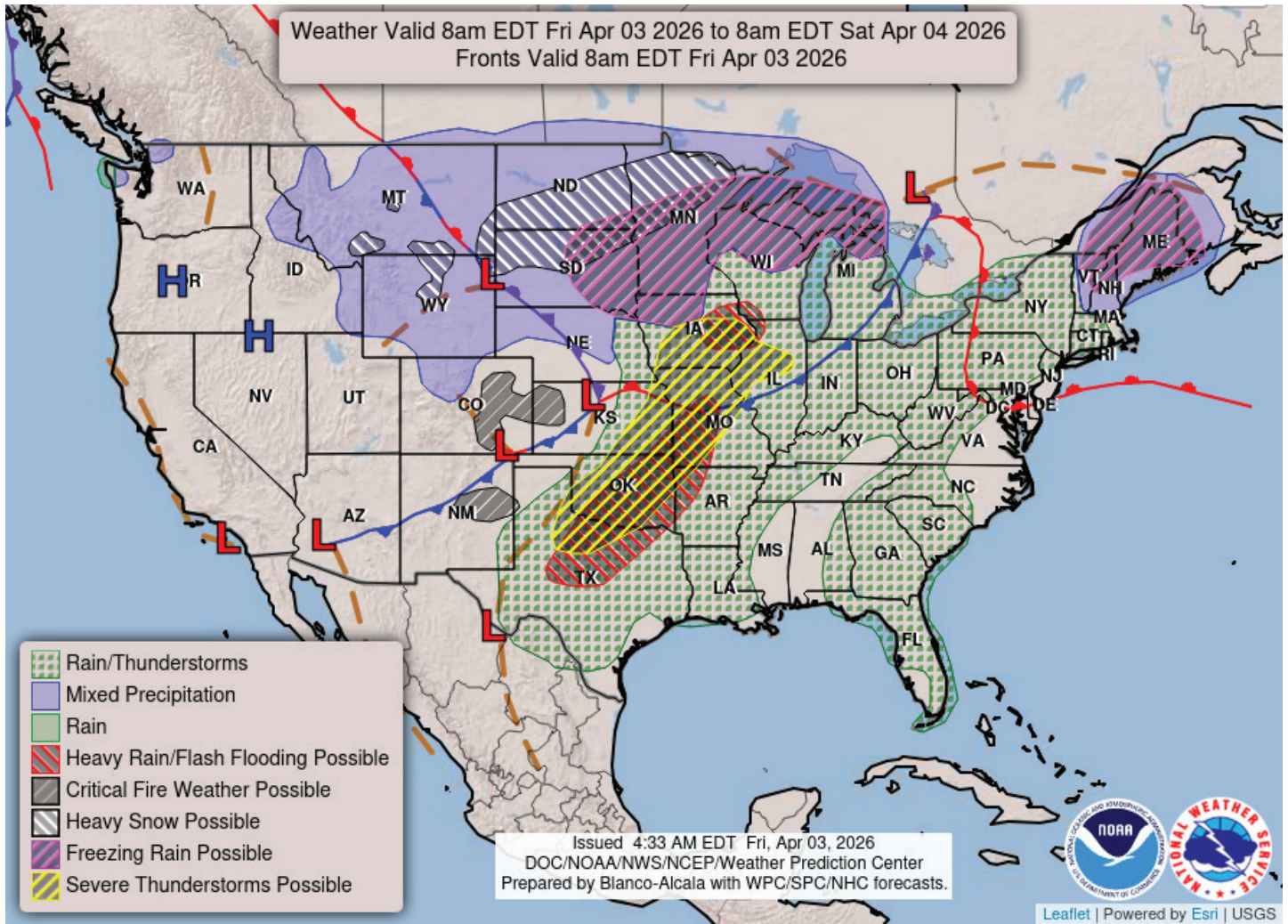
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 34 °F at 1:14 AM
Low Temp: 30 °F at 11:27 PM
Wind: 20 mph at 12:23 AM
Precip: : 0.14

Today's Info

Record High: 83 in 1921
Record Low: -2 in 2018
Average High: 52
Average Low: 27
Average Precip in April: 0.12
Precip to date in April: 0.14
Average Precip to date: 2.18
Precip Year to Date: 1.76
Sunset Tonight: 8:02 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:06 am



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Today in Weather History

April 3rd, 1968: Heavy snowfall, up to ten inches, was accompanied by winds of over 60 mph in South Dakota. Snowdrifts of up to 4 feet were reported, and many roads were closed. Aberdeen was one of the hardest hit areas, with 10.5 inches of snow and wind gusts of 62 mph. The strong winds and localized areas of icing caused considerable damage to utility lines.

April 3rd, 2003: Dry vegetation and windy conditions caused a grassland burn northeast of Bath, near the James River in South Dakota, to get out of control during the early afternoon hours. Strong north-to-northeast winds of 20 to 35 mph caused the fire to spread quickly south along the James River. The fire became one and a half miles wide and burned six miles to the south before being controlled. A total of 4,000 acres were consumed. The smoke from the fire could be seen from miles around and lowered visibilities enough to close State Highway 12 twice. At one point, traffic had to be diverted on Highway 12 for six hours due to the low visibility in smoke. Also, the smoke delayed the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe Railroad in Bristol and Andover on April 3rd. Twenty-one fire departments with around 250 people worked to bring the fire under control.

April 3rd, 2007: A sharp frontal boundary and an upper-level disturbance brought an unusual band of heavy snow across northern South Dakota. Snowfall amounts of 6 to 12 inches occurred from Eureka to Summit. Roads became snow-covered or slushy, making travel difficult. Due to the poor road conditions, several vehicles ended up in the ditch. Several schools and events were either postponed or canceled. Snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Eureka and Milbank, 7 inches at Conde, 8 inches at Hosmer, Columbia, Summit, and Britton, 10 inches at Webster, and 12 inches at Waubay.

April 3rd, 2009: An area of low pressure moved across the Central Plains, producing widespread snow over central and north-central South Dakota. Along with the snow came strong north winds of 15 to 30 mph, causing areas of blowing snow and reduced visibility. The snow and reduced visibility caused some travel problems. Snowfall amounts ranged from a few inches to almost a foot of snow. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches near Presho and Okaton, Fort Thompson, and Timber Lake; 7 inches in Murdo and 16 S Ree Heights; 8 inches 14 NNE Isabel; and 11 inches 3 NW Parade and 6 E Hayes.

1955 — Record snows fell in north central Wyoming and south central Montana. Billings MT received a storm total of 42.3 inches, and on the 4th reported a record snow depth of 35 inches. Sheridan WY established a 24 hour snowfall record of 26.7 inches. (2nd-4th) (The Weather Channel)

1974 — A "Super-Outbreak" of tornadoes ravaged the Midwest and the eastern U.S. Severe weather erupted early in the afternoon and continued through the next day. Severe thunderstorms spawned 148 tornadoes from Alabama to Michigan, most of which occurred between 1 PM (CST) on the 3rd and 1 AM on the 4th. The tornadoes killed 315 persons, injured 5300 others, and caused 600 million dollars damage. Alabama, Kentucky and Ohio were especially hard hit in the tornado outbreak. One tornado destroyed half of the town of Xenia OH killing 34 persons. Another tornado, near the town of Stamping Ground KY, produced a path of destruction a record five miles in width. A tornado raced through Guin AL at a speed of 75 mph. Two powerful tornadoes roared across northern Alabama during the early evening hours, killing fifty persons and injuring 500 others. Some rescue vehicles responding to the first tornado were

1987 — A storm in the southeastern U.S. produced a trace of snow at Mobile, AL, one inch at Jackson MS, and two inches at Meridian MS, the latest snow of record for those three locations. Birmingham AL received seven inches of snow, and up to nine inches was reported in northeast Alabama. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — A wind gust to 114 mph was clocked at Ann Arbor, MI, during a tornadic thunderstorm. Thunderstorms in Michigan and Indiana spawned five tornadoes that Easter Sunday, and also produced golf ball size hail. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Southern Plains to the southern and central Appalachians. The thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes, including one which caused eight million dollars damage at Fort Branch IN. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Rain and snow prevailed in the northeastern U.S., with snow reported in New York State. Boston MA was soaked with 2.91 inches of rain during the day and night, and up to half a foot of snow blanketed the hills of Steuben County NY that Tuesday night. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

At Calvary

At the cross, Jesus willingly demonstrated His great love for us by dying in our place.

Hebrews 10:10-14: 10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

13 waiting from that time onward UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

If asked what took place on Good Friday, many people could list the events that unfolded at Calvary—Christ was nailed to the cross, Roman soldiers gambled for His garments, and darkness covered the land. But far more was going on than the eye could see: At the cross, sin was judged.

In the garden of Eden, God warned that disobedience carried a severe penalty (Genesis 2:17). So from the start, His judgment of sin was prophesied, and later it was also pictured in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. Under that system, each transgression required an animal's blood to be sprinkled on the altar. The severity of the penalty—loss of a life—was a graphic way for our holy God to communicate how offensive and grievous sin is. It was a foreshadowing of the Lamb of God, who would come to pay for the sin of the world (John 1:29).

On the cross, Jesus Christ was what a lamb was on the altar—but with a significant difference: Under the old covenant, every time sin was committed, another animal had to die. Jesus, however, willingly offered Himself once for all to atone for the sin of the whole world (Hebrews 7:27).

If you haven't yet received this amazing free gift, won't you do so now? And let's all thank our Savior for it.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.02.26

7 18 38 46 55 4

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 42 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.31.26

18 35 45 60 65 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$90,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 27 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.01.26

26 34 39 42 51 5

All Star Bonus: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$21,050,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 14 Hrs 42 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.01.26

5 6 9 14 25

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$40,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 14 Hrs 57 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.01.26

27 31 47 56 68 14

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 26 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.01.26

4 10 11 52 64 24

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$217,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 15 Hrs 26 Mins 37 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Easter eggs can be dyed and still eaten. Just follow these tips to make sure it's safe

By SARAH RAZA Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Easter is around the corner, and it's time to start thinking about how to decorate your eggs.

Whether you're dyeing eggs for your table spread or planning to hide them for an egg hunt, it's important to follow food safety guidelines to minimize germs and maximize your egg quality.

You have some time to eat your eggs

Eggs are remarkably long lasting, so there needn't be a giant rush to eat them.

"Stores usually do turn over eggs pretty quickly, so the recommendation is you should consume eggs three to five weeks after you purchase them," said Kara Lynch, food safety educator with Michigan State University Extension.

There is also a benefit in letting eggs age just a bit, as older eggs can be easier to peel. That's because eggs shrink over time within the shell, creating an air pocket between the egg and the shell.

Hard boil your eggs

Egg processors clean eggs before they reach store shelves, but it also is important to thoroughly cook eggs to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, especially salmonella. That bacteria lives naturally in the gastrointestinal and reproductive tracts of chickens, said Kimberly Baker, associate extension specialist at Clemson University.

To cook your eggs, place them in a saucepan, fill it with water and bring it to a boil. After that, put the lid on, turn the heat off and let it sit for about 12 minutes. Some also favor turning down the heat and simmering eggs.

You can vary the time in the hot water depending on a desire for harder boiled or slightly creamier eggs, but the yolk should be pretty solid to be safe. Boiling them for too long can risk creating green sulfur development on the outside of the yolk.

How to cool the eggs

After that, Don Schaffner, food science department chair at Rutgers University, said there are two options.

You can run your eggs under cold water to reduce the temperature. From there, you can color them right away or place them back in the fridge until you're ready. Or, after you've boiled them, you can let them air dry until they've cooled.

The boiling process sanitizes the eggs, and as long as they are kept out of water, Schaffner said, they will remain safe to eat.

"You've boiled the egg, you've gotten rid of any bacteria that might be in the egg. And now you've air-cooled it, right? So it's going to cool more slowly, it's probably going to cook more," he said. "But most importantly, you don't have to worry about any bacteria from the water getting internalized into the egg."

It's OK to get food dye on your eggs

Either artificial or natural food dye is OK as long as the dye label says it's food grade. For those keeping track, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has been updating its guidance and regulations regarding certain dyes.

And no, it's not a problem if the dye seeps through the shell.

"Eggs kind of naturally have their own abilities to absorb only so much," Baker said.

As you're decorating the eggs and have the eggs outside, she suggested keeping your eggs in an ice bath, so they can stay at a cooler temperature while you're decorating.

Follow the 2-hour rule

Eggs should generally be kept at or below 40 degrees (4.4 degrees Celsius) to minimize the risk of contaminants.

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Cooked eggs that weren't air-cooled should spend no more than two hours at room temperature. And that's cumulative, including the time spent decorating and the time spent hiding during the Easter egg hunt.

But if it's particularly warm, then that two-hour rule may be shortened to one hour, Lynch said.

Hard boiled eggs are generally good for about a week in the fridge.

Give your eggs a rinse before peeling

Be careful with your eggs as you handle them.

One of the biggest concerns is making sure your eggs haven't cracked during an Easter egg hunt, making them vulnerable to contaminants. And once the egg has been hard boiled, there's no way to kill bacteria that get inside, Baker said.

"We don't want to be putting them in the soil or in lawns where pets have gone to the bathroom," she said.

Whether the eggs are hidden outdoors or in a corner of your home, you should rinse them in cool water before you peel them. And wash your hands, too, just in case the eggs have picked up something.

Consider using plastic eggs

If the Easter egg hunt means your eggs will be at room temperature for longer than two hours, experts recommended using plastic eggs for the hunt instead of real ones to minimize food safety risk.

"If it's an outdoor Easter egg hunt at any time, I would say go with the plastic eggs and be safe," Baker said. "And use your dyed Easter eggs as your centerpiece on your table or your buffet, and enjoy them that way."

Florida and Mississippi enact voter citizenship checks, sparking a lawsuit in the Sunshine State

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Governors in Florida and Mississippi signed into law measures that require officials to verify the citizenship of voters, just as similar legislation being pushed by President Donald Trump has stalled in Congress.

The law signed Wednesday by Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis was immediately challenged in court by civil rights organizations that said it will make it harder for Floridians to vote.

The citizenship provision of the law goes into effect Jan. 1. It requires voters to provide a birth certificate, passport or naturalization certificate as proof of citizenship if their eligibility to vote is challenged by government officials through cross-referencing voter registration applications with motor vehicle records.

"Many eligible voters do not have these documents and cannot obtain them for a variety of reasons -- including because they were born without a birth certificate in the segregated South, because their documents were destroyed in a hurricane, or because they cannot afford the hundreds of dollars it costs to replace them," the civil rights groups said in a lawsuit filed in federal court in South Florida.

The voting legislation being pushed aggressively by Trump in Congress would mandate that people provide documentary proof of citizenship to register to vote in federal elections, such as a U.S. passport, citizen naturalization certificate or a combination of a birth certificate and government-issued photo identification. It passed the House but was stalled in the Senate before lawmakers took a spring recess.

Under the Florida law, credit cards, student IDs and retirement community identifications can no longer be used as IDs when voting, and the citizenship status of a driver must be reflected on driver's licenses starting in July 2027.

DeSantis said the law improves the security and transparency of Florida's election system.

"In Florida, we will always stand up for election integrity," the Republican governor said.

The new Mississippi law signed Wednesday requires local officials registering people to vote to run additional citizenship checks if applicants don't have or can't provide driver's license numbers on their voter application. The law, which takes effect July 1, also requires the secretary of state to run annual checks of the voter rolls against an online database from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to flag any potential noncitizens who could be asked to provide proof of their eligibility.

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"This is another win for election integrity in Mississippi (and America)," Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, a Republican, said in a social media post. "We will continue to do everything in our power to make it infinitely harder - with a goal to make it impossible - to cheat in our elections!"

The Southern Poverty Law Center has said that the law could disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of Mississippians who don't have a passport, lack a birth certificate or whose last names don't match their birth certificates because of name changes due to marriage.

Four Republican-led states – Florida, Mississippi, South Dakota and Utah – have enacted laws this year to strengthen proof-of-citizenship requirements for voters. In Michigan, supporters of voter citizenship documentation have submitted 750,000 petition signatures in a bid to get a constitutional amendment on the November ballot.

The Republican-led Kansas Legislature also has passed legislation, though it still must go before the Democratic governor. Gov. Laura Kelly has until next week to decide whether she'll sign the bill and hasn't said publicly what she will do, though she has regularly vetoed past GOP-election bills. Supporters would need a two-thirds majority to override a veto — and thanks to Republican dissenters, the bill appeared to be a few votes short of that in the House.

Any efforts in Kansas to prevent noncitizens from registering to vote are shadowed by one of the state's biggest political fiascos in recent memory — a requirement imposed in 2013 that people registering to vote in the state for the first time provide documentation of their U.S. citizenship.

That law ended up blocking the voter registrations of more than 31,000 U.S. citizens who were otherwise eligible to vote, or 12% of everyone seeking to register in Kansas for the first time. Federal courts ultimately declared the law an unconstitutional burden on voting rights, and it hasn't been enforced since 2018.

NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani wants to crack down on 'bad landlords.' First he has to find them

By JAKE OFFENHARTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — On a recent weeknight, three tenants of an aging Bronx building were trading apartment horror stories inside a packed ballroom lined with city bureaucrats.

The occasion was the third in a series of "rental rip-off hearings," a new forum launched by New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani for disgruntled renters to air their complaints directly to housing officials — and in some cases, the mayor himself.

As she waited in line, Gulhayo Yuldosheva said she worried that noxious mold in her apartment had worsened her child's asthma. Nearby, her downstairs neighbor, Marina Quiroz, was showing a video of rats scurrying through her kitchen to a representative of the city's tenant protection office.

Ann Maitin, a longtime resident of the same building, had just met with the mayor.

"He let me go over my three minutes," she said, holding up a spiral notebook's worth of grievances.

Mamdani, a democratic socialist swept into office on a promise of zealous tenant advocacy, framed the event as a struggle session for renters, assuring the standing room only crowd that their stories would guide the city's efforts "to actually hold landlords accountable when they don't follow the law."

To the residents of 705 Gerard Avenue, this raised a practical problem: No one seemed to know who actually owned their building.

"It feels like such a basic question," said Maitin, a retired Verizon technician who recently organized the building's tenant association. "You'd think we'd have the right to that information."

Their situation is hardly unique. As corporate owners and investor groups have grown their share of the rental market in New York City, they are increasingly shielding their identities behind limited liability companies, or LLCs.

The practice, which has also been spreading nationally, is legal. But experts warn it could complicate Mamdani's promised crackdown, making it harder for the city and tenants to track the chronically negligent owners whose buildings the mayor has vowed to target and even seize.

"There are these big slumlords that everyone knows are doing predatory investment, but pinning them

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down is going to be difficult, for the LLC reason," said Oksana Mironova, a housing policy analyst at the Community Service Society. "That's a problem for the administration, and it's even worse for tenants."

'They treat us the same as the rats'

For Yuldosheva and her neighbors, finding their landlord is one of many problems afflicting their six-story building near Yankee Stadium.

Heat and hot water outages are regular enough that some tenants keep a thermometer on their fridge and the city's complaint hotline on speed dial. Common areas are often filthy, and increasingly populated by drug users. Getting help with an urgent maintenance issue "feels like waiting for Christmas in July," said Maitin.

During a monthslong elevator outage, a tenant who uses a wheelchair, Tommy Rodriguez, said he was forced to "slide down the steps, like a kid." Calls to the building management about a repair timeline went unanswered, he said.

Growing up in the building in the 1980s, Rodriguez recalled the previous landlord as a friendly and responsive neighborhood presence.

"This felt like a home before," Rodriguez said. "Now they treat us the same as the rats."

A large rodent had recently chewed a hole through his couch cushion. He handled the extermination himself, with a two-by-four.

A distressing breakthrough

Recently, tenants received a clue about their landlord, following the partial collapse of another Bronx building. The man identified in news stories as the owner of that building, David Kleiner, shared a Brooklyn office with their building manager, Binyomin Herzl.

A handful of tenants visited each of the building's 72 units, logging an array of decrepit conditions and unusual alterations.

"We didn't want to become the next news story," said Yuldosheva, pointing to a crack in the wall of a bedroom shared by her three children — a result, she feared, of the subway that rumbles just below her windows.

Lawsuits show that Herzl has been ordered to pay more than \$100,000 for violations across at least six Bronx buildings, several of which were found by a judge to pose an imminent hazard.

Reached by phone, Herzl said he didn't own any of those properties, but simply acted as a middleman between tenants and the true owners, whom he declined to list. "There's no one landlord," he said. "It's a group of investors."

Kleiner, who was previously featured on the city's "worst landlord" list, confirmed his partial ownership of 705 Gerard in a brief phone call, but declined further comment.

Herzl, meanwhile, attributed the tenants' complaints to "normal wear and tear" of a nearly century old building. He said Mamdani should focus on improving the city's public housing, rather than going after private landlords.

"Our buildings look like five star hotels against his," he added.

From fines to seizures

When landlords refuse to address a serious violation, like heat or hot water outages, the city can step in and order repairs, then bill the owner directly.

In the last three years, inspectors have ordered emergency repairs at 38 buildings that list either Herzl or Kleiner as an owner, according to records provided by the city's housing department. The men have been billed \$446,521 for those repairs.

Mamdani has proposed using such fines as a vehicle to bring distressed rental properties under city stewardship, by aggressively pursuing liens on delinquent landlords and buying up their portfolios through foreclosure auctions.

Just as the city can shut down unsanitary restaurants, Mamdani has said, landlords that "repeatedly put New Yorkers at risk will not be allowed to operate in New York City — with no exceptions."

In reality, the process is resource-intensive and legally fraught. It is made more complex by the nest

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of LLCs often used by landlords to obfuscate the full scope of their portfolios, according to Cea Weaver, director of the Mayor's Office to Protect Tenants.

"It'd be great to have a better sense of who owns the buildings that we are regulating and overseeing," she said.

State legislation that would have made it easier to identify LLC owners was recently vetoed by New York Gov. Kathy Hochul amid pressure from landlords.

New Yorkers vs. Bad Landlords

Kenny Burgos, the CEO of the New York Apartment Association, a landlord lobbying group, said Mamdani's tenant proposals — including freezing the rent for regulated tenants — would force landlords to cut back on maintenance and services.

"That's going to take away from the elevator budget, the boiler budget, the heating budget," he said. "It's a question of math: These buildings are crumbling because of policy, not because of bad landlords."

He characterized the rental rip-off hearings as "show trials" that took a "tribal approach" to the city's affordable housing crisis.

Despite the combative branding — "New Yorkers vs. Bad Landlords," blares one promotion — the Bronx event mostly resembled a standard constituent service night: City officials fielded questions about local laws, helped residents with paperwork and connected them to service providers.

Maitin left feeling "glad to be heard by someone who can actually do something about the problem," but felt it was too early to tell "if it's all talk."

The next morning, she was surprised to find the building's superintendent applying a fresh coat of paint to a staircase. Outside, workers were removing scaffolding that had been in front of the building for years.

"I think they caught wind of the rental rip-off," Maitin said. "They're scared."

Iran fires on targets across the Mideast while Israel and US hit Tehran as war nears end of 5th week

By JON GAMBRELL and DAVID RISING Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran fired on targets Friday across the Middle East, damaging a desalination plant and setting a refinery ablaze in Kuwait, while American and Israeli airstrikes hit the Islamic Republic as the war neared the end of its fifth week.

Tehran has kept the pressure on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbors, despite U.S. and Israeli insistence that Iran's military capabilities have been all but destroyed. In a sign that part of Iran's theocracy could be willing to negotiate, the country's former top diplomat published a proposal for ending the conflict in an influential American magazine.

Iran's attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and its tight grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas transits in peacetime, have roiled stock markets, sent oil prices skyrocketing, and threatened to raise the cost of many basic goods, including food.

Iran's ability to wreak havoc in the global economy has proved a major strategic advantage, and world leaders have struggled to figure out how to reopen the waterway. The U.N. Security Council was expected to look at a new proposal.

Iran's former top diplomat suggests terms to end the war

Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif — a diplomat with long experience negotiating with the West who remains close to a pragmatic wing of Iran's leadership — wrote on Friday that the time has come to end the suffering.

"Prolonged hostility will cause a greater loss of precious lives and irreplaceable resources without actually altering the existing stalemate," Zarif, who helped negotiate Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, wrote in Foreign Affairs magazine.

The U.S. has presented Iran with a 15-point plan for a ceasefire that includes reopening the Strait of Hormuz, dismantling Iran's nuclear facilities and limiting its missile production in exchange for sanctions

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relief. But no signs of progress were apparent in the diplomatic effort.

Iran's initial five-point counterproposal aired by hard-line state television included recognizing Iran's sovereignty over the strait, the removal of U.S. bases from the region, compensation for war damage, and a guarantee against further aggression — all things likely unpalatable to the Trump administration.

Zarif's proposal included elements of both of the plans.

Iran "should offer to place limits on its nuclear program and to reopen the Strait of Hormuz in exchange for an end to all sanctions — a deal Washington wouldn't take before but might accept now," he wrote.

Tehran and Washington were in talks about Iran's nuclear program when the U.S. and Israel began bombing on Feb. 28 — the second time under President Donald Trump that the U.S. has attacked while in negotiations.

It's not clear how much to read into Zarif's proposal. While he has no official position in Iran's government, he helped get reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian elected and would likely not have published such a piece without at least some authorization from senior leaders.

But it also remains clear who in Iran has the authority to negotiate since many leaders have been killed in the war. Immediately after the piece came out, Zarif wrote he had been "torn" about it — a sign he may already face pressure at home.

What's more, it's not clear how Trump will respond. He has vacillated between saying the U.S. is negotiating an end to the war and threatening to expand it. Thousands of U.S. Marines and paratroopers have been ordered to the region, raising speculation that there could be a ground offensive.

Iran targets a desalination plant and a refinery

Kuwait's Mina al-Ahmadi oil refinery came under Iranian attack, and the state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corp. said firefighters were working to control several blazes.

Kuwait also said that an Iranian attack caused "material damage" to a desalination plant. Such plants are responsible for most of the drinking water for Gulf states, and they have become a major target in the war.

Sirens also sounded in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia said it had destroyed several Iranian drones, and Israel reported incoming missiles.

Authorities in the United Arab Emirates shut down a gas field after a missile interception reportedly rained debris on it and started a fire.

Activists reported strikes around Tehran and the central city of Isfahan, but it wasn't immediately clear what was hit. A day earlier, Iran said the U.S. hit a major bridge, which was still under construction, killing eight people.

More than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran during the war. In a review released Friday, the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data, a U.S.-based group, said they found that civilian casualties were clustered around strikes on security and state-linked sites "rather than indiscriminate bombardment" of urban areas.

More than two dozen people have died in Gulf states and the occupied West Bank, while 13 U.S. service members have been killed, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel.

More than 1,300 people have been killed and more than 1 million displaced in Lebanon, where Israel has launched a ground invasion in its fight with the pro-Iranian Hezbollah militant group. Ten Israeli soldiers have also died there.

UN Security Council to take up Strait of Hormuz security question

Spot prices of Brent crude, the international standard, were around \$109 Friday, up more than 50% since the start of the war, when Iran began restricting traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

The U.N. Security Council was expected to vote Saturday on a proposal from Bahrain that would authorize defensive action to ensure vessels can safely transit the waterway. Bahrain's initial draft would have allowed countries to "use all necessary means" to secure the strait, but Russia, China and France — who have veto power on the Council — expressed opposition to approving the use of force.

Following meetings in Seoul between South Korean President Lee Jae Myung and French President Emmanuel Macron, the two leaders said they resolved to "cooperate to ensure safe passage" through the strait but did not offer specifics.

Trump offers murky path forward for Republicans as Iran war clouds midterm elections

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Politics Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — This is not the run up to the midterm elections that Republicans wanted.

A year and a half after winning the White House by promising to lower costs and end wars, Donald Trump is a wartime president overseeing surging energy costs and an escalating overseas conflict that many in his own party do not like.

He offered little clarity to a nation eager for answers this week during a prime-time address from the White House, his first since the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran more than a month ago, simultaneously suggesting that the war was ending and expanding.

"Thanks to the progress we've made, I can say tonight that we are on track to complete all of America's military objectives shortly, very shortly," Trump said. "We're going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks."

Trump's comments come roughly six months before voters across the nation begin to cast ballots in elections that will decide control of Congress and key governorships for Trump's final two years in office. For now, Republicans, who control all branches of government in Washington, are bracing for a painful political backlash.

"You're looking at an ugly November," warned veteran Republican pollster Neil Newhouse. "At a point in time when we need every break possible to hold the House and Senate, our edge is being chipped away."

Republicans confront evolving political landscape

It's hard to overstate how dramatically the political landscape has shifted.

At this time last year, many Republican leaders believed there was a path to preserve their narrow House majority and easily hold the Senate. Now they privately concede that the House is all but lost and Democrats have a realistic shot at taking the Senate.

Republicans are also struggling to coalesce around a clear midterm message on Iran.

The Republican National Committee has largely avoided the war in talking points issued to surrogates over the last month. The leaders of the party's campaign committees responsible for the House and Senate declined interview requests. Many vulnerable Republican candidates sidestep the issue, unwilling to defend or challenge Trump publicly.

The president remains deeply popular with Republican voters, and he has vocal supporters like Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

"That was the best speech I could've hoped for," he wrote on social media after Trump's address on Wednesday evening. Graham said Trump "gave the American people a clear and coherent pathway forward."

Trump made little effort to sell the conflict to Americans before the initial attack. Five weeks later, at least 13 U.S. service members have been killed and hundreds more injured. Thousands more troops have converged on the region, and the Pentagon requested \$200 billion in new funding.

The Strait of Hormuz, a key passage for a fifth of the world's oil, remains closed. The average price for a gallon of gasoline in the U.S. was \$4.08 on Thursday, according to AAA, almost a full dollar higher than on President Joe Biden's last day in office.

On Wednesday, Trump insisted that gas prices would fall quickly once the war concluded but offered no solution for reopening the Strait of Hormuz. Instead, he invited skeptical U.S. allies to do it themselves.

He insisted that the war would be worth it.

"This is a true investment in your grandchildren and your grandchildren's future," Trump said. "When it's all over, the United States will be safer, stronger, more prosperous and greater than it has ever been before."

Former Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Georgia Republican who was once among Trump's most vocal allies in Congress, lashed out against his Iran policy.

"I wanted so much for President Trump to put America First. That's what I believed he would do. All I heard from his speech tonight was WAR WAR WAR," she wrote on social media. "Nothing to lower the cost of living for Americans."

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Time is not on Trump's side

About 6 in 10 U.S. adults say the U.S. military action in Iran has "gone too far," according to AP-NORC polling from March. Roughly a third approve of how he's handling Iran overall.

The possibility of sending U.S. forces into Iran also appears politically unpalatable.

About 6 in 10 adults are "strongly" or "somewhat" opposed to deploying U.S. troops on the ground to fight Iran. That includes about half of Republicans. Only about 1 in 10 favor deploying troops.

At the same time, Trump's approval ratings have remained consistently weak. About 4 in 10 Americans approve of how he's handling the presidency, roughly in line with how it's been throughout his second term.

Republican strategist Ari Fleischer, a senior aide in former President George W. Bush's administration, acknowledged that Trump has not received the polling bump in this war that Bush got after invading Iraq.

Bush, of course, worked to build public backing for the Iraq War before going in. Immediately after the 2003 invasion, Bush's popularity soared, as did the stock market.

Public sentiment and the economy soured only after the conflict stretched on. It ultimately spanned more than eight years, spawning a generation of anti-war Republicans — and sowing the seeds of Trump's "America First" foreign policy.

"My hope is that the Trump experience is the exact opposite of the Bush experience," Fleischer said.

He said Trump must win the war decisively and quickly to avoid a further backlash, saying there could be a "very significant political upside if things end well, oil comes down and markets rally."

Fleischer added that Trump's actions will matter much more than his words.

"Ultimately, he is not going to get judged on his persuasion or his explanations or his assertions, he's going to get judged on results," he said.

Russia strikes targets in Kyiv region as Ukraine holds door open for Easter truce

By VOLODYMYR YURCHUK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia launched a "massive" missile and drone strike on Friday near the Ukrainian capital, killing one person and injuring eight, regional authorities reported, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signaled Kyiv's openness to a potential Easter truce. The holiday is celebrated on April 12 in both Ukraine and Russia.

Another person died Friday after a Russian bomb struck an apartment block in northern Ukraine, according to local officials.

"The Kyiv region is once again under a massive Russian missile and drone attack," said Mykola Kalashnyk, head of the regional military administration, in a Telegram post on Friday morning.

According to Kalashnyk, one person died and at least eight more suffered injuries as a result of strikes on three of Kyiv's satellite towns — Bucha, Fastiv and Obukhiv. About 20 animals died after a veterinary clinic was struck, Kalashnyk added.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Andrii Sybiha, said in a post on X that "almost half a thousand drones and cruise missiles" attacked Ukraine overnight.

"This is how Moscow responds to Ukraine's Easter ceasefire proposals — with brutal attacks," Sybiha said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Thursday signaled Kyiv's continued openness to a potential truce on Easter, which falls next week according to the Julian calendar followed by Orthodox churches in Ukraine and Russia.

Zelenskyy told reporters that the proposal had been communicated to Moscow through U.S. channels. He added that the Kremlin's response remains unclear.

Zelenskyy has previously offered a ceasefire for the Easter period — but Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier this week that Moscow wants a lasting peace settlement, not a temporary truce.

President Vladimir Putin unilaterally declared a 30-hour ceasefire last Easter, but each side accused the other of breaking it.

One person died on Friday in Ukraine's northern Sumy region, near the Russian border, after a Russian

guided aerial bomb struck a residential block in the city of Shostka, local Gov. Oleh Hryhorov reported. He said three more people were hospitalized with injuries following the strike, including a 29-year-old woman whose condition was serious.

In Russia, 192 Ukrainian drones were shot down overnight over Russia and occupied Crimea, the Russian Defense Ministry reported on Friday morning.

Two people were hospitalized on Friday following a Ukrainian drone strike on the Leningrad region, over 1,100 kilometers (684 miles) from the border, regional Gov. Alexander Drozdenko reported. According to Drozdenko, the drones also set fire to an "unoccupied" building within the Morozov industrial zone.

The settlement of Morozov houses a state-owned plant that makes explosives and components for ammunition, including solid fuel used in Topol-M missile systems. The plant was put under U.S., EU and other Western sanctions following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Twelve people, including at least three Russian soldiers, were injured in a Ukrainian drone strike late Thursday on Russia's Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, local Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported. Separately, he said that seven people were wounded in the region after a drone struck a commercial facility.

Four drones were downed during the night on the approach to Moscow, mayor Sergei Sobyenin reported Friday. He did not reference any casualties or damage.

Myanmar's parliament elects ruling general as president, keeping the army in charge

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar's parliament on Friday elected Min Aung Hlaing, a general who ousted Aung San Suu Kyi's civilian government in 2021 and kept an iron grip on power for the past five years, as the country's new president.

The move marks a nominal return to an elected government but is widely considered as an effort to keep the army in power after an election organized by the military that opponents and independent observers deemed neither free nor fair, and as civil war rages.

Transitioning to an elected government is also seen as a way to improve frosty relations with some Southeast Asian neighbors following the military takeover. China and Russia have supported the military administration, while Western powers imposed sanctions.

Min Aung Hlaing won an expected lopsided victory

Min Aung Hlaing was one of three nominees for the president's post, but was virtually guaranteed the job as lawmakers from military-backed parties and appointed members from the army hold a commanding majority in parliament.

The vote was held in the newly renovated parliament building in the capital, Naypyitaw, which was damaged in last year's earthquake.

Aung Lin Dwe, speaker of parliament's combined upper and lower house, announced that Min Aung Hlaing won 429 out of the 584 votes.

The two runners-up become vice presidents. Nyo Saw, a former general, had served as an adviser to Min Aung Hlaing, and Nan Ni Ni Aye, an ethnic Karen politician from the pro-military Union Solidarity and Development Party, will be the country's first female vice president. All three are expected to be inaugurated next week.

Min Aung Hlaing, who holds the rank of senior general, earlier this week relinquished his post of commander-in-chief because the constitution prohibits the president from simultaneously holding the top military position. A close aide, Gen. Ye Win Oo, took over the powerful job.

Meanwhile, much of the country remains enmeshed in a bloody civil war.

Opposition group says struggle for real change continues

Nay Phone Latt, a spokesperson for the National Unity Government — Myanmar's main opposition organization, which views itself as the country's legitimate government — charged that Min Aung Hlaing is responsible for numerous war crimes, and his easy assumption of the presidency proved that the political

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change some countries had hoped for will not materialize.

"Myanmar people do not accept it. The revolution will continue with great momentum," he told The Associated Press..

The 69-year-old Min Aung Hlaing had been the military chief since 2011. Under the military-imposed constitution, he held significant powers even before overthrowing Suu Kyi's government.

Parliament members were elected in three phases in December and January. Major opposition parties, including Suu Kyi's former ruling National League for Democracy, were either blocked from running or refused to compete under conditions they deemed unfair. Suu Kyi, 80, is serving a 27-year prison term on charges widely viewed as politically motivated.

Myanmar was under military rule from 1962 to 2016, when Suu Kyi's party won a landslide election victory. It won an even greater mandate in the 2020 polls, but the army staged a takeover in 2021 before the new parliament could convene.

Peaceful protests against military rule were then put down with deadly force, pushing pro-democracy activists to turn to armed resistance and ally themselves with ethnic minority groups who have been battling for greater autonomy for decades.

Deadly repression birthed ongoing civil war

Security concerns meant voting in the recent election could be held in only 263 of the country's 330 townships.

Nearly 8,000 activists and civilians have been killed since the 2021 army takeover, and some 22,872 political detainees are imprisoned, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, an independent group that tracks rights violations.

The military's major reliance on airstrikes — 1,140 strikes in 2025 alone, according to the U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project — accounts for hundreds of civilian casualties.

"If Min Aung Hlaing thinks that an official civilian title will shield him from prosecution for the many grave violations of international law that he is accused of overseeing as head of the military, that is not how international justice works," Amnesty International Myanmar researcher Joe Freeman said in statement.

The International Criminal Court in The Hague in 2024 began an investigation into charges of crimes against humanity after the chief prosecutor applied for an arrest warrant for Min Aung Hlaing over the military's brutal persecution of the Rohingya minority.

At long-awaited hearings at the International Court of Justice in January this year, Myanmar defended itself against accusations that it was responsible for genocide against the Rohingya. The West African country of Gambia first filed the case in 2019.

Oil prices surge while Asian share prices rise moderately

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Oil prices continued to surge on worries of a prolonged Iran war but most Asian markets that were open rose moderately in cautious trading Friday.

In Europe, trading was closed in France, Germany and Britain for the Good Friday holiday.

U.S. markets trading also was closed, but S&P 500 futures are trading and slipped nearly 0.3% to 6,604.50. Dow futures were down 0.3% at 46,615.00.

Benchmark U.S. crude rose 11.4% to \$111.54 a barrel. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, jumped 7.8% to \$109.03 per barrel.

"A more extended conflict raises the threat to physical infrastructure, extends disruptions through the Strait of Hormuz, and will entail a longer post-war recovery period, with price impacts spilling over later into the year," according to a report from BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions.

The U.S. relies on the Persian Gulf for only a fraction of the oil it imports, but oil is a commodity and prices are set in a global market.

The situation is very different in Asia. Japan, for example, needs access to the Strait of Hormuz for much of the nation's oil imports or would need alternative routes. But some analysts say Japan and other nations

are counting on an agreement with Iran to allow fuel to be transported through the strait.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 1.3% to finish at 53,123.49. South Korea's Kospi jumped 2.7% to 5,377.30. The Shanghai Composite sank 1.0% to 3,880.10. Trading was closed in Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Indonesia and India for the Good Friday holiday.

U.S. President Donald Trump late Wednesday vowed the U.S. will continue to attack Iran and failed to offer a clear timetable for ending the conflict in the Middle East.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar edged up to 159.63 Japanese yen from 159.53 yen. The euro cost \$1.1542, up from \$1.1537.

A look at how the Epstein files dogged Pam Bondi's time as attorney general

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — After Pam Bondi became U.S. attorney general last year, conservative influencers, online sleuths and others who wanted the government to disclose all it knew about Jeffrey Epstein thought they might have a champion in the Department of Justice.

So did Jess Michaels, one of the legions of women who have said they were sexually assaulted by the late financier and convicted sex offender with a roster of powerful friends in business, politics and beyond.

"I thought, 'Well, maybe a woman stepping into this role will finally, finally get the truth,'" Michaels recalled Thursday, after President Donald Trump announced Bondi was out of the nation's top law enforcement job.

"She had this opportunity to be a hero and to really do right by survivors of sexual violence and trafficking," Michaels said, "and she chose not to."

The furor over the "Epstein files," as the trove of investigative records came to be known, wasn't the only controversy of Bondi's tenure. But the arc — first raising expectations for a big reveal, then declaring there was nothing to see, and ultimately a forced, flawed document dump — was a stubbornly problematic storyline that ran through her time as attorney general.

Bondi rejected criticism of her handling of the matter, and Trump on Thursday praised her as "a Great American Patriot and a loyal friend."

Michaels and other Epstein victims watched it all with shaken trust that Bondi's departure alone won't likely rebuild.

"This is not about a single person," accuser Annie Farmer said Thursday. "It is about a government and judicial system that has repeatedly failed Epstein survivors."

Here's a glance at Bondi's part in the Epstein saga:

February 2025: The binders

Freshly confirmed as attorney general for a president who had suggested on the campaign trail that he'd open more government documents on Epstein, Bondi whetted appetites by declaring on Fox News that "you're going to see some Epstein information released." And when a host asked about "releasing" the list of Jeffrey Epstein's clients — a long-rumored, never-seen sex trafficking roster — she replied that it was "sitting on my desk right now."

A day later, conservative commentators and content creators were brought to the White House to get DOJ binders emblazoned with "The Epstein Files: Phase 1" and "Declassified."

The attempt to showcase transparency soon backfired, once it emerged that the contents largely were already public. Bondi demanded that the FBI give her "the full and complete Epstein files," and she later said that she'd unearthed a "truckload" of previously withheld material and that "everything is going to come out to the public."

July 2025: The walkback

After months of anticipation, the Justice Department said it wouldn't release any more Epstein material. A court had sealed much of it to protect victims, and "only a fraction" would have come out if Epstein had gone to trial, the agency said in an unsigned memo. It added that authorities hadn't found evidence that

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merited new charges or investigations and that “perpetuating unfounded theories about Epstein” wouldn’t help victims get justice.

And, it said, there was no “client list.” As for Bondi’s prior comment that it was on her desk, officials said she had meant the overall case file.

Conservative influencers, among others, blasted the turnabout and questioned Bondi’s capability. But Trump stood by her, scolding a journalist for attempting to ask her a question about Epstein at a White House Cabinet meeting.

Trump had himself raised questions for some years after Epstein’s 2019 death in jail as the financier faced federal sex trafficking charges. After the Justice Department memo, however, the president suggested there was nothing more to say about Epstein and the country, including his own supporters, should simply move on.

November 2025: The legislation

Amid a drumbeat of disclosures that begin to exact consequences for some powerful people — particularly Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, Britain’s former Prince Andrew — Congress passed legislation to force the Justice Department to disclose its investigative files on Epstein. Trump signed it into law, casting the quest for Epstein information as a Democratic-led distraction from the Republican agenda.

Meanwhile, at his urging, Bondi announced that the U.S. attorney in Manhattan would investigate Epstein’s ties to some of the Republican president’s political foes, including Democratic former President Bill Clinton. None has been accused of misconduct by Epstein’s accusers; nor has Trump, another former Epstein friend. Both Clinton and Trump have said they knew nothing about Epstein’s misconduct and cut ties with him many years ago.

December 2025: The first batch

At the statutory deadline for making the Epstein files public, the Justice Department released only some of them. While the records included some material the public hadn’t previously seen, including some candid photos of Clinton, the documents didn’t break major ground and included little about Trump.

The department said it was continuing to review other Epstein records to make sure that victims were protected.

But Democrats cried cover-up, bill sponsor Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., accused the Justice Department of breaking the law by missing the deadline and redacting too much, and some Epstein accusers also questioned the extensive redactions.

January 2026: The big release

The Justice Department began releasing a huge cache of additional Epstein documents, videos and photos, though others remained under wraps.

The records pulled back a curtain on favor-trading and frank communications in a chummy elite that looked past Epstein’s 2008 guilty plea to soliciting prostitution from an underage girl in Florida. Some high-flying Epstein friends resigned or lost jobs in corporate America, academia, big law firms, the British, Slovakian and Norwegian governments and beyond.

But the documents disclosed highly personal information about some victims while redacting the names of Epstein correspondents in, for example, emails that appeared to refer to the sexual abuse of underage girls.

Gloria Allred, an attorney for numerous Epstein victims, said Thursday that Bondi betrayed them by failing to protect personal information in the files.

“She has destroyed the trust in the DOJ that victims had a right to expect, and her termination may be the only type of justice that survivors will receive from the DOJ,” Allred said by email.

February 2026: The hearing

At a congressional hearing, a combative Bondi tried to quell the Epstein files controversy. She defended how the Justice Department dealt with it, lobbed personal insults at Democrats and lauded Trump over, among other things, the performance of the stock market.

Bondi said she was deeply sorry for what Epstein victims suffered. But she declined a request from Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., to face and apologize to them for the Justice Department’s actions, and Bondi

dismissed Massie's critiques of the release of victims' personal information.

March 2026: The subpoena

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform subpoenaed Bondi to answer questions on April 14 about the Justice Department's handling of the Epstein investigation and file release. With five Republicans joining Democrats to support the subpoena, it reflected widespread discontent, including in the GOP base, over Bondi's management of the matter.

The future

For now, Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche will be the acting attorney general.

Michaels, who traveled to the Capitol last year to press for the files' release, wanted Bondi gone. But will Blanche do better?

"We can only hope. But given that they worked together, I don't have great expectations," she said.

The Associated Press generally does not identify people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Michaels has done.

Robert Glassman, an attorney for a woman who testified as "Jane" in the 2021 criminal trial of Epstein confidante Ghislaine Maxwell, noted that agency leaders come and go.

"For victims of sexual abuse, what matters is whether the institutions meant to protect them actually do their job," he said.

Artemis II astronauts rocket toward the moon after spending a day around Earth

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's Artemis II astronauts fired their engines and blazed toward the moon Thursday night, breaking free of the chains that have trapped humanity in shallow laps around Earth in the decades since Apollo.

The so-called translunar ignition came 25 hours after liftoff, putting the three Americans and a Canadian on course for a lunar fly-around early next week. Their Orion capsule bolted out of orbit around Earth right on cue and chased after the moon nearly 250,000 miles (400,000 kilometers) away.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I am so, so excited to be able to tell you that for the first time since 1972 during Apollo 17, human beings have left Earth orbit," NASA's Lori Glaze announced at a news conference.

The engine firing was flawless, she noted.

Canadian astronaut Jeremy Hansen said he and his crewmates were glued to the capsule's windows as they left Earth in the rearview mirror, taking in the "phenomenal" views. Their faces were pressed so tightly against the windows that they had to wipe them clean.

"Humanity has once again shown what we are capable of, and it's your hopes for the future that carry us now on this journey around the moon," Hansen said.

NASA had the Artemis II crew stick close to home for a day to test their capsule's life-support systems before clearing them for lunar departure.

Now committed to the moon, the Artemis II test flight is the opening act for NASA's grand plans for a moon base and sustained lunar living.

Commander Reid Wiseman, pilot Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Hansen will dash past the moon then hang a U-turn and zip straight home without stopping on land. In the process, they will go the farthest humans have ever traveled from Earth, breaking the Apollo 13 distance record set in 1970. They also may become the fastest during their reentry at flight's end on April 10.

History already made

Glover, Koch and Hansen already have made history as the first Black person, the first woman and the first non-U.S. citizen to launch to the moon. Apollo's 24 lunar travelers were all white men.

"Trust us, you look amazing. You look beautiful," Glover said in a TV interview after beholding the globe from pole to pole. "And from up here you also look like one thing: homo sapiens as all of us no matter

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where you're from or what you look like, we're all one people."

To set the mood for the day's main event, Mission Control woke up the crew with John Legend's "Green Light" featuring Andre 3000 and a medley of NASA teams cheering them.

"We are ready to go," Glover said.

Mission Control gave the final go-ahead minutes before the critical engine firing, telling the astronauts that they were embarking on "humanity's lunar homecoming arc" to bring them back to Earth. The capsule is relying on the gravity of Earth and the moon — termed a free-return lunar trajectory — to complete the round-trip figure-eight loop. The engine accelerated their capsule to more than 24,000 mph (38,000 kph) to shove them out of Earth's orbit.

"I've got to tell you, there is nothing normal about this," Wiseman said. "Sending four humans 250,000 miles away is a herculean effort, and we are now just realizing the gravity of that."

Flight director Judd Frieling said he and his team were all business while on duty but will likely reflect on the momentousness of it all once they go home.

"I suspect everybody understands that this is a once-in-a-lifetime moment," he told reporters.

Savoring views of Earth

The next major milestone will be Monday's lunar flyby.

Orion will zoom 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) beyond the moon before turning back, providing unprecedented and illuminated views of the lunar far side, at least for human eyes. The cosmos will even treat the Artemis II astronauts to a total solar eclipse as the moon temporarily blocks the sun from their perspective.

While awaiting their orbital departure earlier Thursday, the astronauts savored the views of Earth from tens of thousands of miles high. Koch told Mission Control that they can make out the entire coastlines of continents and even the South Pole, her old stomping ground.

NASA is counting on the test flight to kickstart the entire Artemis program and lead to a moon landing by two astronauts in 2028.

The so-called lunar loo may need some design tweaks, however.

Orion's toilet malfunctioned as soon as the Artemis crew reached orbit Wednesday evening. Mission Control guided astronaut Koch through some plumbing tricks and she finally got it going, but not before having to resort to using contingency urine storage bags.

The urine pouches are serving double duty. Mission Control ordered the crew to fill a bunch of the empty bags with water from the capsule's dispenser on Thursday. A valve issue arose with the dispenser following liftoff, and NASA wanted plenty of drinking water on hand for the crew in case the problem recurred. The astronauts used straws and syringes to fill the pouches with more than 2 gallons (7 liters) worth before pivoting to the moon.

Trump's White House ballroom gets final approval days after a judge ordered a halt to construction

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's White House ballroom won final approval from a key agency on Thursday, despite a federal judge recently ordering a halt to construction unless Congress allows what would be the biggest structural change to the American landmark in more than 70 years.

The 12-member National Capital Planning Commission, the agency tasked with approving construction on federal property in the Washington region, took the vote because U.S. District Judge Richard Leon's ruling — which came two days earlier — affects construction activities but not the planning process, said the commission's Trump-appointed chair, Will Scharf.

A vote of 8-1, with two commissioners voting present and one absent, allowed the plan to move forward.

Despite the agency's approval, the judge's ruling and a legal fight over the ballroom could stall progress on a legacy project that Trump is racing to see completed before the end of his term in early 2029. It's

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among a series of changes the Republican president is planning for the nation's capital to leave his lasting imprint while he's still in office.

Before the vote, Scharf, a top White House aide, noted that Leon's order has been stayed for two weeks as the administration seeks an appeal. He said, as he understood the decision, it "really does not impact our action here today."

Reading from notes, Scharf also delivered an impassioned defense of the project that reviewed the full history of changes and additions to the White House that were criticized when they were made but have become beloved with the passage of time. He spoke about the addition of the north and south porticos and the balcony added by President Harry Truman.

Scharf suggested that Trump's proposed ballroom will similarly come to be viewed as a wise addition — despite drawing contemporary opposition from some members of the public and government officials.

"I believe that in time this ballroom will be considered every bit as much of a national treasure as the other key components of the White House," Scharf said.

Scharf also said the project has been viewed negatively because of opposition to Trump, instead of the merits, saying, "I feel that we've been unfairly slighted in the press and otherwise for the way we've gone about reviewing this particular project."

The vote by the commission, which includes three members Trump gets to appoint, had initially been scheduled for March but was postponed to Thursday because so many people signed up to comment at the commission's meeting last month. The comments were overwhelmingly in opposition to the ballroom.

The lone "no" vote was cast by Phil Mendelson, a Democrat who chairs the Council of the District of Columbia. Linda Argo and Arrington Dixon, the two commissioners appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser, a Democrat, voted present.

Mendelson criticized the design of the ballroom addition and how fast it was approved.

"It's just too large," he said.

Criticism also came from Public Citizen, a nonprofit consumer advocacy organization. One of its attorneys, Jon Golinger, said the commission had discounted opposition from city officials and thousands of people who commented against the project, and ignored the judge's ruling. Several commissioners, including Scharf, had said they took the public feedback seriously.

"This approval is illegitimate and this vote is a joke," Golinger said.

Trump, in a statement after the vote, thanked the commissioners and said he was honored.

"When completed, it will be the Greatest and Most Beautiful Ballroom of its kind anywhere in the World, and a fabulous complement to our Beautiful and Storied White House!" the president said on social media.

Trump tweaks the ballroom design

Before voting, the commission considered design changes to the 90,000-square-foot (8,400-square-meter) ballroom addition that the president announced aboard Air Force One on Sunday, as he flew back to Washington from a weekend at his Florida home.

He removed a large staircase on the south side of the building and added an uncovered porch to the southwest side. Architects and other critics of the project had panned the staircase as too large and basically useless since there was no way to enter the ballroom at the top.

A White House official said the president had considered comments from the National Capital Planning Commission and another oversight entity, the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, which approved the project earlier this year, as well as members of the public.

The official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the ballroom design and spoke on the condition of anonymity, said additional "refinements" had been made to the exterior.

The ballroom, now estimated to cost \$400 million, has expanded in scope and price tag since Trump first announced the project last summer, citing a need for space other than a tent on the lawn to host important guests. Trump demolished the East Wing in October with little warning, and site preparation and underground work have been underway since then.

Two other Trump-appointed commissioners, Stuart Levenbach and James Blair, voted for the project.

Levenbach, who serves as vice chairman and is the federal government's chief statistician, said the White

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House is currently "not suited" to accommodate large numbers of guests and the addition will improve the "utility" of the compound.

He said tunnels and other structures underground at the White House made it impossible to place many features of the ballroom there, too, as some have suggested might be possible. Levenbach said the addition is a "multipurpose facility," noting that, in addition to a ballroom, it will also have offices for the first lady, kitchen space and a theater.

"This is not an expansion for its own sake," Levenbach said.

Blair, a deputy to White House chief of staff Susie Wiles, said visitors and guests of the president deserve a "better experience."

Scharf and Blair also said Trump will get "very limited use" of the ballroom before his term ends.

Judge says Trump isn't the owner of the White House

Trump went ahead with the project before seeking input from the National Capital Planning Commission and the Commission of Fine Arts, which he reconstituted with allies and supporters.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private nonprofit organization, sued after Trump demolished the East Wing last fall to build the ballroom addition — a space nearly twice as big as the mansion itself.

Trump says it will be paid for with donations from wealthy people and corporations, including him, though public dollars are paying for underground bunkers and security upgrades.

The trust sought a temporary halt to construction until Trump presented the project to both commissions and Congress for approval. Leon agreed but said that his order would take effect in two weeks and that construction related to security would be allowed.

No sign of war winding down in Mideast as Friday dawns with attacks across region

By JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING and MIKE CORDER Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — There was little sign Friday of the war in the Mideast winding down as Israel said it faced incoming fire from Iran, Kuwait and Bahrain reported being under attack, and Iran said eight people were killed while celebrating the close of Persian new year near a major bridge hit by a U.S. strike.

Tehran continued to demonstrate its ability to strike its neighbors even as U.S. President Donald Trump claimed the threat from the country was nearly eliminated and cheered the collapse of the bridge on Thursday, reportedly the tallest in the Middle East.

Iran decried the strike on the bridge, which also injured 95 people celebrating Nature Day, when Iranians gather for picnics and other celebrations outdoors on the last day of Nowruz, the Persian new year.

"Striking civilian infrastructure only conveys the defeat and moral collapse of an enemy in disarray," Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrote Thursday in a post on X.

Iran's attacks on Gulf states along with its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz have disrupted the world's energy supplies with effects far beyond the Middle East. That has proved to be Iran's greatest strategic advantage in the war. Britain held a call with nearly three dozen countries about how to reopen the strait once the fighting is over.

Trump has insisted the strait can be taken by force — but said it is not up to the U.S. to do that. In an address to the American people Wednesday night, he encouraged countries that depend on oil from Hormuz to "build some delayed courage" and go "take it."

Before the U.S. and Israel started the war on Feb. 28 with strikes on Iran, the waterway was open to traffic and 20% of all traded oil passed through it.

Iran continues to strike Israel and Gulf countries

Iran responded defiantly to Trump's speech, in which the American president claimed U.S. military action had been so decisive that "one of the most powerful countries" is "really no longer a threat."

A spokesman for Iran's military, Lt. Col. Ebrahim Zolfaghari, insisted Thursday that Tehran maintains hidden stockpiles of arms, munitions and production facilities. He said facilities targeted so far by U.S.

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strikes are "insignificant."

Trump, in his address, said U.S. "core strategic objectives are nearing completion."

Iran state media reported the attack on the B1 bridge, which was still under construction, citing authorities in Alborz province.

Trump posted footage on social media showing what he said was the collapse of Iran's biggest bridge and threatening, "Much more to follow." It was not immediately clear if the footage Trump shared was the B1 bridge.

In Lebanon — where Israel has launched a ground invasion against Iran-backed Hezbollah militants — Israeli strikes killed 27 people over 24 hours, the Health Ministry said.

More than 1,900 people have been killed in Iran during the war, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel. More than two dozen people have died in Gulf states and the occupied West Bank, while 13 U.S. service members have been killed.

More than 1,300 people have been killed and more than 1 million displaced in Lebanon. Ten Israeli soldiers have also died there.

Nearly three dozen nations talk about securing the Strait of Hormuz

Iranian attacks on about two dozen commercial ships, and the threat of more, have halted nearly all traffic in the waterway that connects the Persian Gulf to the open ocean.

Since March 1, traffic through the strait has dropped 94% over the same period last year, according to the Lloyds List Intelligence shipping data firm. Two ships are confirmed to have paid a fee, the firm said, while others were allowed through based on agreements with their home governments.

Saudi Arabia piped about 1 billion barrels of oil away from the Strait of Hormuz in March, according to maritime data firm Kpler, while Iraq said Thursday that it had started to truck oil across Syria to avoid the strait.

The 35 countries that spoke Thursday, including all G7 industrialized democracies except the U.S., as well as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, signed a declaration last month demanding Iran stop blocking the strait.

Thursday's talks were focused on political and diplomatic measures, but British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said military planners from an unspecified number of countries will also plot ways to ensure security once fighting ends, including potential mine-clearing work and "reassurance" for commercial shipping.

No country appears willing to try to open the strait by force while the war is raging. French President Emmanuel Macron, while on a visit to South Korea, called a military operation to secure the waterway "unrealistic."

But there is a concern that Iran might limit traffic through the waterway even after U.S. and Israeli attacks cease.

Oil prices rise again even as Trump suggests the war could end soon

The conflict is driving up prices for oil and natural gas, roiling stock markets, pushing up the cost of gasoline and threatening to make a range of goods, including food, more expensive.

Oil prices remained elevated, however, at \$111.54 for a barrel of U.S. crude, having soared following Trump's address. That's up about 50% from Feb. 28.

Though the oil and gas that typically transits the strait is primarily sold to Asian nations, Japan and South Korea were the only two countries from the region joining Thursday's call about the strait. The supply of jet fuel has also been interrupted, with consequences for travel worldwide.

Hegseth asks the Army's top uniformed officer to step down while US wages war against Iran

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth has ousted the Army's top uniformed officer and two other generals, the Pentagon said Thursday without giving a reason for the departures while the United States is waging a war against Iran.

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Gen. Randy George "will be retiring from his position as the 41st Chief of Staff of the Army effective immediately," said Sean Parnell, the Pentagon's top spokesman. George has held the post of Army chief of staff, which typically runs for four years, since August 2023 under the Biden administration.

The ouster, reported earlier by CBS News, is just the latest of more than a dozen firings of top generals and admirals by Hegseth since he took office last year. Like many of those other firings, Pentagon officials are not offering a reason for George's departure, which comes nearly five weeks into U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran and with no clear timeline from President Donald Trump on when the war may end.

Hegseth also has ousted Army Gen. David Hodne and Army Maj. Gen. William Green, according to a Pentagon official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive leadership changes. A reason for their departures also was not given.

General who rose rapidly under Hegseth will fill in

Gen. Christopher LaNeve will be stepping in as acting Army chief of staff, the Pentagon official said. LaNeve was serving as Hegseth's top military aide when Trump suddenly nominated him to be the Army's vice chief of staff last October. It is a meteoric rise for an officer who was only a two-star general two years ago.

He would take over for George, who is a graduate of West Point Military Academy and an infantry officer who served in the first Gulf War as well as Iraq and Afghanistan. He also served as Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin's top military aide from 2021 to 2022 during the Biden administration before taking on top leadership roles in the Army.

George made it through the initial round of firings under the Trump administration in February 2025, when Hegseth removed top military leaders, including Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the Navy's top uniformed officer, and Gen. Jim Slife, the No. 2 leader at the Air Force. Trump also fired Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Since then, more than a dozen other top military generals and admirals have either retired early or been removed from their posts.

Among those departures was George's deputy, Gen. James Mingus, who was vice chief of staff of the Army for less than two years. LaNeve was nominated to that post after earlier being plucked from commanding the Eighth Army in South Korea after less than a year in the job to be Hegseth's top military aide.

A spokesman for George could not be reached for comment.

Two other Army generals are fired

Of the other generals who were fired, Hodne had been head of the Army Transformation and Training Command, a unit that was only stood up in December as part of George's effort to modernize the Army and amid Hegseth's push to reduce the number of general officers in the military.

Green had been the Army's chief of chaplains. Hegseth announced two major reforms to the military's chaplain corps a little over a week ago.

In a video message last week, Hegseth said he wanted chaplains to focus more on God and less on therapeutic "self-help and self-care." In recent years, the military has become increasingly dependent on chaplains to help address the growing numbers of troops in mental health distress. Hegseth also said chaplains would no longer wear their rank on their uniform but instead would be identified by religious insignia.

The changes come as Iran war grinds on

The leadership shakeup comes as Army paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne division are heading to the Middle East along with thousands of Marines and other assets. The Trump administration has avoided questions about whether or not the U.S. military will deploy ground troops against Iran.

In a prime-time address Wednesday about the war, Trump offered no end date for the conflict and few details on his strategy going forward but did forecast more military action.

"We are going to hit them extremely hard over the next two to three weeks," Trump said of Iran, before adding that "we're going to bring them back to the Stone Ages where they belong."

Hegseth echoed that sentiment after the speech, with a post on social media that simply read, "Back to the Stone Age."

Iran's mission to the United Nations said on X that Trump's comment "reflects ignorance, not strength,"

noting that Iran's civilization spans over 7,000 years.

Shea Ralph named AP women's basketball Coach of the Year after Vanderbilt's 29-5 season

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Shea Ralph of Vanderbilt was named The Associated Press women's basketball Coach of the Year on Thursday after turning the Commodores into one of the top teams in the nation.

Ralph led a team that returned just one starter to the most successful season in school history. The team went 29-5, with 13 of those wins coming in the regular season against a rugged Southeastern Conference schedule. The Commodores finished tied for second in the conference, which matched the best finish in program history. They earned a 2-seed in the NCAA Tournament and reached the Sweet 16.

"It's wild. It's hard to wrap my mind around it. This whole year we haven't slowed down," Ralph told the AP. "I love basketball, I love the group that I coach. I love they stayed with me. It's been hard and it's been challenging, but in a good way."

Ralph received the award with her entire Vanderbilt coaching staff, as well as her mom, husband and daughter in attendance. It was also special for Ralph with her UConn family there as well as they were also there to celebrate AP Player of the Year Sarah Strong.

Ralph received 23 votes from the 31-member national media panel that votes on the AP Top 25 each week. UCLA's Cori Close, who was the AP Coach of the Year last season, was next with four. Ralph's mentor at UConn, Geno Auriemma, received two votes while Mark Kellogg of West Virginia and Kara Lawson of Duke each received one.

"The thing I love the most of where I'm at is the vision never changed," Ralph said. "That's really important to me. Do it at a high level at Vanderbilt is really important to me. They've shown what that looks like to invest in women. Really invest in women. The resources and money, but also the development and academics."

Ralph is the first Vanderbilt coach to win the award, which was launched in 1994-95. Her team, which won seven more games than the year before and was ranked as high as No. 5 in the AP poll, was led by All-America guard Mikayla Blakes.

"She's someone you would want to run through a brick wall for," Blakes said. "She has bought so much into us that it's only right that we continue to fight in this game for her, and she's someone who in tough moments you want to lean on. And that's the reason why I came here."

Vanderbilt started out 20-0 and had seven wins over ranked teams this season.

"I think truly we never talked about it," Ralph said of the undefeated start. "I chuckled to some of my staff members this is what I'm used to. I feel comfortable here. Keep kicking their butts in practice and challenging them and keep preparing the same way no matter what our record is."

UConn star sophomore Sarah Strong named the AP Player of the Year in women's college basketball

By DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer

PHOENIX (AP) — Sarah Strong of UConn was named The Associated Press women's basketball Player of the Year on Thursday after leading the Huskies to an undefeated season, setting the stage for a run to the Final Four.

Strong became just the fifth player to win the award in her sophomore year, joining Oklahoma's Courtney Paris (2007), UConn stars Maya Moore (2009) and Breanna Stewart (2014), and USC's JuJu Watkins, who won it last year. The AP started giving out the award in 1995.

It's the 13th time that a Huskies player has won the award with Paige Bueckers being the last to do it before Strong in 2021.

Vanderbilt's Shea Ralph, who was a former UConn player and assistant coach, won the AP Coach of the

Year award. They both accepted the awards in front of a full room that included the entire UConn team, which gave a standing ovation when both winners were announced.

"I'm so blessed because I totally got to this point in my life because of my teammates," Strong said.

Strong received 25 votes from a national media panel that votes for the Top 25 each week. Vanderbilt's Mikayla Blakes garnered four votes and UCLA's Lauren Betts got the other two. Voting was completed before the NCAA Tournament began.

"Anybody that has watched us play would probably tell you that she's the heart and soul of our team," UConn coach Geno Auriemma said. "She elevates the play of everyone on our team."

He called Strong "the most low-key superstar you ever saw."

"You don't see that look in her eyes, you know, like, oh, my God, there's always just, a calmness," he said. "That's the best way I can describe it. That allows her to just be free and fluid and play without worry."

Auriemma has coached some of the greatest in the game including Breanna Stewart, Sue Bird, Maya Moore and Diana Taurasi. Strong fits in with them.

"The great ones, the great ones all had it. I never saw (Taurasi) nervous," he said. "You know that they came in as freshmen and you can tell by the look in their eyes, 'I can handle this. This is what I think. This is why I came here.' You know some may pretend, but you know deep down you're not ready for that moment. She's ready for that one."

Strong is averaging 18.6 points, 7.6 rebounds, 3.4 steals and 1.6 blocks a game while helping UConn go 38-0. She's shooting 59.4% from the field, 40.4% from 3 and 84.8% from the the foul line while playing just 27 minutes a game.

The sensational sophomore raised her game when the Huskies faced Top 25 opponents, averaging over 20 points and 10 rebounds per game. She reached 1,000 career points in her 59th career game, the third-fastest player in school history to reach the milestone.

Strong was the Big East Player of the Year as well as the Most Outstanding Player of the Fort Worth Regional.

Blake Lively's sexual harassment claims against Justin Baldoni tossed out but robust case remains

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Blake Lively's sexual harassment claims against Justin Baldoni over the movie "It Ends With Us" were dismissed Thursday by a federal judge who left intact three claims, including retaliation, that will let a jury hear many of the allegations anyway.

The written ruling by Judge Lewis J. Liman in Manhattan came after Lively, who starred in and produced the film, sued her co-star and director in December 2024. A trial is scheduled for May 18.

Baldoni and his production company Wayfarer Studios had countersued Lively and her husband, "Deadpool" actor Ryan Reynolds, accusing them of defamation and extortion. The judge dismissed Baldoni's claims last June.

In his ruling, Liman determined that Lively was an independent contractor rather than an employee. On that basis, he said she was not entitled to bring sexual harassment claims under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. That law prohibits employment discrimination on various grounds, including gender.

As to retaliation, the judge said some evidence might enable a jury to conclude that Baldoni's production company planned not only to damage Lively's reputation but to destroy her career amid fear she'd file a discrimination claim. Lively alleges a smear campaign has been "devastating for her reputation and career," the judge noted.

In an analysis of the sexual harassment claims, the judge said Lively's claims had to be viewed in the context of the movie they were working on.

"Lively claims that during filming, Baldoni leaned in and gestured as if he was intending to kiss her, and that he kissed her forehead, rubbed his face and mouth against her neck, put his thumb to her mouth

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and flicked her lower lip, caressed her, and leaned into her neck, saying "it smells good," the judge wrote. He said there was no question that the conduct would support a hostile work environment claim if it happened on a factory floor or in an executive suite.

However, the judge noted, Baldoni was "acting in the scene" and his "conduct was not so far beyond what might reasonably be expected to take place between two characters during a slow dancing scene such that an inference of hostile treatment on the basis of sex would arise. At least in isolation, the conduct was directed to Lively's character rather than to Lively herself."

Liman added: "Creative artists, no less than comedy room writers, must have some amount of space to experiment within the bounds of an agreed script without fear of being held liable for sexual harassment."

Despite those findings, the judge said some sexual harassment claims may be put to a jury to support two retaliation claims that survived the ruling, including one against It Ends With Us Movie LLC and Wayfarer Studios, and a third claim that was left intact alleging breach of a contract rider agreement against It Ends With Us Movie LLC.

The judge noted that Baldoni once said "pretty hot" after asking Lively to remove her jacket, exposing a lace bra underneath, and that when he was warned that it was inappropriate and distracting to make such comment, he allegedly rolled his eyes and responded: "Sorry, I missed the sexual harassment training."

Liman also cited a scene in which Baldoni pushed for Lively to perform a birth scene naked and then the scene was filmed over several hours without the set being closed to nonessential personnel.

In a statement, Lively attorney Sigrid McCawley wrote that Lively "looks forward to testifying at trial and continuing to shine a light on this vicious form of online retaliation so that it become easier to detect and fight."

She added: "This case has always been and will remain focused on the devastating retaliation and the extraordinary steps the defendants took to destroy Blake Lively's reputation because she stood up for safety on the set and that is the case that is going to trial."

A lawyer for Baldoni and his production company did not immediately comment.

"It Ends With Us," an adaptation of Colleen Hoover's bestselling 2016 novel that begins as a romance but takes a dark turn into domestic violence, was released in August 2024, exceeding box office expectations with a \$50 million debut. But the movie's release was shrouded by speculation over discord between Lively and Baldoni.

Lively appeared in the 2005 film "The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants" and the TV series "Gossip Girl" from 2007 to 2012 before starring in films including "The Town" and "The Shallows."

Baldoni starred in the TV comedy "Jane the Virgin," directed the 2019 film "Five Feet Apart" and wrote "Man Enough," a book challenging traditional notions of masculinity.

Rapper Pooh Shiesty charged with kidnapping over alleged dispute involving rapper Gucci Mane's label

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Federal prosecutors on Thursday accused rapper Pooh Shiesty and eight others of robbing three men at gunpoint and kidnapping them earlier this year in Texas following a contract dispute involving rapper Gucci Mane's record label.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in Dallas declined to name the victims and an FBI affidavit attached to a criminal complaint only refers to them by their initials. One victim, R.D., is described as the owner of 1017 Records, the label belonging to Gucci Mane, whose legal name is Radric Delantic Davis.

"The victims in this case came to Dallas to conduct legitimate business and they were met with firearms and violence," Ryan Raybould, the U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Texas, where the complaint was filed, said at a news conference Thursday.

Publicists for Gucci Mane didn't immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

The alleged confrontation happened Jan. 10 after the three victims flew to Dallas for what they thought was a business meeting at a music studio, according to the affidavit. Prosecutors said Pooh Shiesty, whose

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legal is name Lontrell Williams Jr., arranged the meeting, allegedly to discuss the terms of his contract with 1017 Records.

"Once these three men were inside the recording studio, Williams Jr. and eight co-conspirators — several of whom traveled from Memphis, Tennessee — executed a coordinated, armed takeover," said Raybould, who described Pooh Shiesty as the "ringleader."

Raybould said eight of the nine were arrested Wednesday. In Tennessee, the FBI in Memphis said Wednesday that it went to a home in the suburb of Cordova to serve court-approved warrants. Property records show it is owned by Pooh Shiesty.

Raybould described the three victims as music industry professionals. In the affidavit, the other two victims are referred to by the initials M.M. and B.P.

The affidavit said that Pooh Shiesty had asked to speak with the record label owner privately in a recording room. The label owner then entered the room with Pooh Shiesty, Pooh Shiesty's father and rapper Big30, whose legal name is Rodney Wright. Both Lontrell Williams Sr. and Wright are also defendants.

Pooh Shiesty produced contract termination paperwork and told the label owner to sign. They argued and Pooh Shiesty pulled what appeared to be an AK-style pistol and forced him to sign. Pooh Shiesty then took the man's wedding ring, watch, earrings and cash, the affidavit said.

When they left the room, the other defendants produced firearms and demanded property from the other two victims, the affidavit said, and the man referred to as M.M. was choked to near unconsciousness.

The affidavit said Wright blocked the studio door with his body to prevent the victims from leaving.

Messages to Wright and his label were not immediately returned Thursday. Contact information for Lontrell Williams Sr. could not immediately be found. A number listed for him was not in service. The number listed for the house in Cordova was also not in service.

Pooh Shiesty didn't immediately return an emailed request for comment. At the time of the alleged confrontation in Texas, he was on home confinement for a prior firearms conspiracy conviction out of Florida and was required to wear an electronic monitoring device, prosecutors said.

Investigators used data from the device, plus surveillance videos, cell phone records and images posted on social media, as part of their probe, the affidavit said.

Bradford Cohen, an attorney for Pooh Shiesty in that firearms case, did not immediately reply to an email and phone call for comment.

Gucci Mane is widely regarded as one of the pioneers of trap music alongside fellow Atlanta rappers T.I. and Jeezy. He emerged in the mid-2000s with his breakout single "Icy" and went on to build a vast catalog. He has also helped launch or develop artists including Young Thug and earned a Grammy nomination for his appearing on Lizzo's song "Exactly How I Feel."

Gucci Maine's career has also been marked by legal troubles and personal struggles. In the 2000s and early 2010s, he faced multiple arrests on charges including drug possession, assault and probation violations. In 2014, he was sentenced in a federal firearms case and was released from prison in 2016.

His 2017 memoir, "The Autobiography of Gucci Mane," reflects on his evolution as a music artist and personal struggles such as being diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. In recent years, he has publicly emphasized sobriety and stability.

Eggs for Easter cost much less in the US than last year. A look at the numbers

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

U.S. egg prices have fallen 60% from last year's record highs, making it easier for consumers to fill their Easter baskets and Passover Seder plates.

Bird flu was to blame for elevated retail prices during the first five months of 2025, and the course of the highly contagious disease is a big reason why prices are much lower now. An outbreak forced farmers and commercial producers to slaughter entire broods of egg-laying hens, but ebbing cases in the second half of last year helped restore egg supplies, said Mark Jordan, the executive director of agricultural research

firm LEAP Market Analytics.

The stubborn outbreak is still affecting U.S. poultry flocks, with the number of infected commercial flocks rising in March. But farmers have been rapidly replenishing flocks that died or had to be destroyed. Between July 2024 and July 2025 the number of egg-type chicks hatched in the U.S. rose 8%. It was the first sustained and substantial increase in the availability of specially-bred layer chicks since the bird flu outbreak began in 2022, Jordan said.

The Trump administration's decision to import nearly 1 billion eggs last year also helped lower prices, Jordan said, although imports have since returned to more normal levels. The U.S. also exported fewer eggs last year to help boost domestic supplies.

But what's good for consumers isn't necessarily good for farmers, who are finding it difficult to recoup their costs as egg prices plummet. They also may have to pay more for feed, including corn and soybean meal, because of the Iran war.

"Farmers are no strangers to volatility. It's part of the business. But in recent months, many have been selling eggs at or below the cost of production," said Emily Metz, the president and CEO of the America Egg Board, a trade group.

Here's a look at U.S. egg prices by the numbers, according to government figures:

- \$2.50 per dozen: Average U.S. price for a dozen eggs in February.
- \$6.23 per dozen: Average U.S. price for a dozen eggs in March 2025, which was an all-time high.
- 315.8 million: Number of egg-laying hens in the U.S. as of March 1. That's 8% higher than last year.
- 45 million: Number of egg-laying hens in Iowa, the top U.S. state for egg production.
- 205.7 million: Number of chickens and other birds in commercial and backyard flocks that died or were culled due to bird flu since February 2022.
- 5.22 million: Number of chickens and other birds that died or were culled because of bird flu in March 2026. That is more than double the number affected in March 2025.
- 657%: The percentage increase in U.S. imports of shell eggs in 2025 compared to the year before.
- \$1.05: Average cost for farmers to produce a dozen eggs, not including labor and transportation, according to the American Egg Board. In late March, the national average wholesale price of eggs was \$1.17 per dozen.
- 40,000: Number of real eggs that will be used for this year's White House Easter Egg Roll,

After crash, Tiger Woods told deputy he was 'talking to the president,' body camera shows

By R.J. RICO Associated Press

After crashing his SUV last week in Florida, Tiger Woods took out his phone and told a deputy, "I was just talking to the president," according to body camera footage released Thursday showing Woods' arrest on a DUI charge.

The phone conversation was not captured on video, but Woods could be heard saying, "Thank you so much," as he hung up and the deputy approached. It wasn't clear if Woods was referring to President Donald Trump, whose former daughter-in-law, Vanessa Trump, is dating Woods.

Shortly after the golfer's March 27 arrest, Trump was asked about Woods and told reporters: "I feel so badly. He's got some difficulty. Very close friend of mine. He's an amazing person. Amazing man. But, some difficulty."

The White House did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether Trump spoke to Woods after the crash.

The footage also shows how Woods appeared to be astonished as he was handcuffed after failing a sobriety test and a video from the back of the patrol car shows the handcuffed golfer hiccupping, yawning and repeatedly appearing to nod off during the 15-minute ride.

Woods told authorities he was looking at his phone and changing the radio station when his speeding Land Rover clipped the back of a truck and rolled onto its side on a residential road on Jupiter Island. No

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one was injured.

"I looked down at my phone, and all of a sudden — boom," Woods told an officer as he knelt on a lawn, prior to his arrest.

Body camera footage shows Martin County Sheriff's Deputy Tatiana Levenar then conducting a roadside sobriety test and telling Woods: "I do believe your normal faculties are impaired, and you're under an unknown substance, so at this time you're under arrest for DUI."

"I'm being arrested?" Woods responded.

"Yes, sir," Levenar said.

After handcuffing Woods, authorities searched his pockets and found two white pills.

"That's a Norco," Woods said after an officer pulled out the pills, referring to a painkiller that contains acetaminophen and the opioid hydrocodone. Authorities would later confirm that Woods was in possession of hydrocodone.

In the body camera footage, Woods told Levenar that he had not drunk any alcohol and that he had taken "a few" medications earlier in the day, though Woods' words are muted in the released video as he describes some of the drugs.

At the sheriff's office complex, after Woods was escorted into the "DUI room" where drivers are tested for being under the influence, Woods said, "I'm not drunk. I'm on a prescription medication," according to a supplemental sheriff's office report released Thursday.

Woods, 50, pleaded not guilty on Tuesday to suspicion of driving under the influence. He posted a statement Tuesday night saying that he was stepping away indefinitely "to seek treatment and focus on my health."

Woods agreed to a Breathalyzer test that showed no signs of alcohol, but he refused a urine test, authorities said. Under a change to Florida law last year, refusing an officer's request to take a breath, blood or urine test became a misdemeanor, even for a first offense.

During the field sobriety test, deputies noticed Woods limping and that he had a compression sock over his right knee. Woods explained he had undergone seven back surgeries and over 20 surgeries on his right leg, and that his ankle seizes up while walking.

Woods, who was hiccupping during questioning, continuously moved his head during one of the sobriety tests and deputies had to tell him several times to keep his head straight, according to an arrest report.

"Based on my observations of Woods, how he performed the exercises and based on my training, knowledge, and experience, I believed that Woods normal faculties were impaired, and he was unable to safely operate the motor vehicle," Levenar wrote.

Woods is the most influential figure in golf and has become as recognizable as any athlete in the world. The first person of Black heritage to win the Masters in 1997, he has captivated golf fans with records likely never to be broken.

His injuries have kept him from accomplishing more, including from a 2021 Los Angeles car crash that damaged his right leg so badly he said doctors considered amputation. He has not played an official event since the 2024 British Open. He was recovering from a seventh back surgery in October and was trying to return at the Masters, where he is a five-time champion.

Trump unveils 100% tariff on some patented drugs on 'Liberation Day' anniversary

By WYATTE GRANTHAM-PHILIPS AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump signed an executive order Thursday that could slap long-threatened pharmaceutical tariffs of up to 100% on some patented drugs from companies that don't reach deals with his administration in the coming months.

Companies that have signed a "most favored nation" pricing deal and are actively building facilities in the U.S. to onshore production of patented pharmaceuticals and their ingredients will have a 0% tariff. For those that don't have a pricing deal but are building such projects in the U.S., a 20% tariff will apply

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but will increase to 100% in four years.

A senior administration official told reporters on a press call that companies still have months to negotiate before the 100% tariffs kick in — 120 days for bigger companies, and 180 days for everyone else. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to preview the executive order before it was issued, did not identify any companies or drugs that were in jeopardy of getting hit with the increased tariffs but noted the administration had already reached 17 pricing deals with major drugmakers, 13 of which have signed.

In the order, Trump wrote that he deemed such actions necessary “to address the threatened impairment of the national security posed by imports of pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical ingredients.” It arrived on the first anniversary of Trump’s so-called Liberation Day, when the president unveiled sweeping new import taxes on nearly every country in the world that sent the stock market reeling. Those “Liberation Day” tariffs were among the duties the Supreme Court overturned in February.

Some warned of consequences of the coming tariffs announced Thursday. Stephen J. Ubl, CEO of pharmaceutical company trade group PhRMA, said taxes “on cutting-edge medicines will increase costs and could jeopardize billions in U.S. investments.” He pointed to America’s already large footprint in biopharmaceutical manufacturing and noted medicines sourced from other countries “overwhelmingly come from reliable U.S. allies.”

Trump has launched a barrage of new import taxes on America’s trading partners since the start of his second term and repeatedly pledged that sky-high levies on foreign-made drugs were on the way. But the administration has also used the threat of new levies to strike deals with major companies — like Pfizer, Eli Lilly and Bristol Myers Squibb — over the last year, with promises of lower prices for new drugs.

Beyond company-specific rates, a handful of countries have reached trade frameworks with the U.S. to further cap tariffs on drugs sent to the U.S. The EU, Japan, Korea and Switzerland will see a 15% U.S. tariff on patented pharmaceuticals, matching previously agreed rates for most goods, and the U.K. will get 10% — which Thursday’s order noted would “then reduce to zero” under future trade agreements. The U.K. previously said it secured a 0% tariff rate for all British medicines exported to the U.S. for at least three years.

Trump also unveils update to metal tariffs

In addition Thursday, Trump rolled out an update on his 50% tariffs on imported steel, aluminum and copper. Starting Monday, tariff rates on those metals will be calculated based on the “full customs value” of what U.S. customers pay when buying foreign metal under the latest order, which the administration officials claimed will keep importers from other countries from escaping higher payments.

Products fully made of steel, aluminum and copper will continue to be tariffed at 50% for most countries. But the administration is also shifting how tariffs are calculated for derivative metals — or finished goods that contain some of these metals, but are not made entirely of them.

For a product with metal that amounts to less than 15% of its entire weight (like the cap on a perfume bottle) only country-specific tariffs will now apply, officials told reporters Thursday. But for products with more metal, such as a largely steel washing machine, they said a 25% tariff will apply to the whole value.

More sectoral taxes are piling up

Thursday’s orders reflect the latest example of Trump tapping into sectoral duties. The president used Section 232 of the 1962 Trade Expansion Act to impose the levies, the same authority he cited to slap import taxes on cars, lumber and even kitchen cabinets. And many expect to see more product-specific import taxes down the road.

That’s because a ruling from the Supreme Court struck down tariffs Trump imposed using another law — the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act — to immediately slap tariffs on any country, at nearly any level.

While the Feb. 20 court decision marked a significant blow to Trump’s economic agenda, the president still has plenty of options to keep taxing imports aggressively. Beyond sectoral levies, Trump also imposed a 10% tariff on all imports under a separate legal power mere hours after the Supreme Court’s ruling, but that duty can only last for 150 days. Some two dozen states already challenged the new tariffs.

Trump has argued his steep new import taxes are necessary to bring back wealth that was “stolen” from the U.S. He says they will narrow America’s decades-old trade deficit and bring manufacturing back to the country. But Trump has also turned to tariffs amid personal grudges, or in response to political critics. And upending the global supply chain has proven costly for businesses and households that are already strained by rising prices.

Exclusive: Universities of Wisconsin leaders looking to oust system president who refuses to quit

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The president of the University of Wisconsin system said in letters obtained by The Associated Press on Thursday that he has been told to either resign or be fired, but has been given no reason and won’t step aside.

Jay Rothman, president of the multicampus 165,000-student university system since 2022, said in a letter addressed to the head of the Board of Regents dated March 26 that he has been given no reason why regents want him to leave.

Rothman said he has been told that his options are to resign or retire, and that if he doesn’t then the board “was prepared to terminate my employment despite all that has been accomplished.”

The Board of Regents held a closed emergency meeting on Wednesday night to discuss personnel matters. “The Board is responsible for the leadership of the Universities of Wisconsin and is having discussions about its future,” Amy Bogost, board president, said in a statement to AP. “We don’t comment on personnel matters.”

Rothman declined to comment when reached via email on Thursday.

“I believe my letter speaks for itself,” he said.

In the letter addressed to Bogost, Rothman said he had not been “provided any substantive reason or reasons for the Board’s finding of no confidence in my leadership.”

Because of that, Rothman said, “I am not prepared, as a matter of principle, to submit my resignation.”

Rothman also refused to resign in a second letter sent to two other regents on Wednesday after he said they urged him to step down during a Tuesday meeting. Rothman said the regents told him if he didn’t resign, the board was prepared to meet this weekend to fire him.

Rothman said those regents also could not give a reason for them wanting him to resign or be fired.

“I find this process to be nearly (if not completely) indefensible,” Rothman wrote.

Rothman said he asked for an opportunity to discuss the situation with the board and was told that would not happen.

Rothman’s tenure has been marked by his efforts to increase state funding amid federal cuts, debates over free speech on campus amid pro-Palestinian protests, and declining enrollment leading to eight branch campus closures.

Rothman raised the possibility of resigning in 2023 when the Board of Regents rejected a deal reached with the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature over diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. The board later reversed its vote and approved the deal.

Rothman noted in the March letter that “among so many other things,” the university will need to replace the chancellor of the flagship Madison campus this year. Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin is leaving to take the job as president of Columbia University.

“I do not believe my resignation at this time is in the best interests of either the Universities of Wisconsin or the state of Wisconsin,” Rothman said.

Rothman said in the letter that he has devoted his “heart and soul to the mission of the Universities of Wisconsin” and that he was surprised when told “an unidentified majority of the Board of Regents had lost confidence” in his leadership.

“When I asked you to articulate reasons for the Board’s conclusion and apparent lack of confidence in me, you merely noted that each Regent has his or her own perspective on the matter,” Rothman wrote.

"You did not provide any tangible reasons for the Board's determination."

Rothman, the former chair and CEO of the Milwaukee-based Foley & Lardner law firm, was chosen as UW president in 2022. He had no prior experience administering higher education.

His salary as UW president is \$600,943.

The Universities of Wisconsin consists of 13 universities and several other branch campuses.

Colorado court orders resentencing for former county clerk in election fraud scheme

By COLLEEN SLEVIN and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — A Colorado appeals court ruled Thursday that a former county clerk convicted in a scheme that sought to prove fraud in the 2020 presidential election should be resentenced because a judge wrongly punished her for statements protected as free speech.

Tina Peters is serving a nine-year prison term after being convicted of state crimes for sneaking in an outside computer expert to make a copy of her county's election computer system during a software update in 2021. A photo and video of confidential voting system passwords were later posted on social media and a conservative website.

Calls for Peters' release have become a cause celebre in the election conspiracy movement. President Donald Trump has sought unsuccessfully to pardon Peters and pressured Colorado to set her free.

Judges on the Colorado Court of Appeals upheld her conviction in a 74-page ruling that rejected a range of issues raised by Peters, including the notion that Trump has authority to pardon her state crimes. But they said a lower court judge should not have considered Peters' continued promotion of election fraud conspiracies when he sentenced her in 2024.

Judge called Peters a 'charlatan'

One of Tina Peters' lawyers, John Case, said the court's ruling affirmed the importance of free speech.

"Tina Peters was punished for words that she used to criticize our insecure and illegal voting system," he said. "The decision affirms that people are free to speak what they believe in Colorado as well as the rest of the United States of America."

Democratic Colorado Gov. Jared Polis, who has been considering granting clemency to Peters, praised the court's decision for rejecting Trump's pardon but upholding her free speech rights.

"This case has been very challenging and a true test of our resolve as a state to have a fair judicial system, not just for people we agree with but a fair system for Coloradans that we vehemently disagree with," Polis said in statement.

Peters was the former clerk in Mesa County, in the far western part of Colorado, and convicted by jurors in the Republican stronghold that has supported Trump.

She was unapologetic when she was sentenced by Judge Matthew Barrett and insisted that she tried to unearth what she believed was fraud for the greater good. He ripped into her, calling her a "charlatan" who had used her position to "peddle snake oil."

The appeals court found that Barrett violated her rights to free speech by punishing Peters for persistently alleging fraud in the 2020 election. They noted that because Peters is no longer serving as an election clerk, she can no longer engage in the conduct that led to her conviction.

"The trial court obviously erred by imposing sentence at least partially based on Peters' protected speech," Judge Ted Tow wrote in Thursday's ruling.

What's next

The court sent Peters' case back to a lower court for a judge to issue a new sentence. That can't happen for at least 42 days to give time for the parties to appeal.

Case said he would likely ask for Peters to be sentenced to time served and released.

But 21st Judicial District Attorney Dan Rubinstein, who prosecuted Peters, said the judge potentially could issue a sentence similar to the original one while complying with the appeals court ruling.

Trump has threatened to take "harsh measures" against Colorado unless the state releases Peters. In

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February, Trump said Colorado was "suffering a big price" for refusing to release her.

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, a Democrat who is running for governor, has accused the Trump administration of waging a revenge campaign by choking off funds and ending federal programs over the state's refusal to free Peters.

Weiser said in response to the ruling that the original sentence had been "fair and appropriate."

"Whatever happens with her sentence, Tina Peters will always be a convicted felon who violated her duty as Mesa County clerk, put other lives at risk, and threatened our democracy. Nothing will remove that stain," Weiser said in a statement.

Appeals court rejects Trump's pardon

The U.S. Justice Department inserted itself into Peters' bid to be released while her state appeal was considered. The federal Bureau of Prisons also tried to get Peters moved to a federal prison. After both efforts failed, Trump in December announced a pardon for Peters.

However, the appeals court judges said they could find no prior example of a president pardoning someone for a state crime. And they rejected her attorneys' claims that Peters actions had been carried out while "defending a federal interest."

"We have found no instance where the presidential pardon power has been stretched in such a way as to invade an individual state's sovereignty," they said, adding that the President's pardon has "no impact" on the state's case against Peters.

The Associated Press left messages with the White House for comment.

Peters was convicted of three counts of attempting to influence a public servant and one count each of conspiracy to commit criminal impersonation, first-degree official misconduct, violation of duty and failure to comply with the requirements of the secretary of state.

Peters' lawyers didn't deny that she used the security badge of a local man she pretended to hire to allow the an associate of MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell to make a copy of the Dominion Voting Systems election computer server during an annual software update in 2021.

But they said she only wanted to preserve election data and find out whether any outside actor had accessed the system while ballots were being counted. They said she didn't want the information made public.

What to know about attempts to force out the Universities of Wisconsin president

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — The president of the 165,000-student University of Wisconsin system is fighting attempts by the board of regents to force him to retire or face being fired.

The surprise effort to remove Jay Rothman from the post he has held since 2022 was detailed in letters Rothman sent to regents over the past week that were obtained Thursday by The Associated Press.

Here is what to know about the situation:

What's the president's job?

The president of the Universities of Wisconsin oversees the entire university system, which includes the flagship Madison campus, 12 other universities and several other branch campuses.

The president reports to the 18-member board of regents. Vice presidents and chancellors who run the campuses, including the main one in Madison, report to the president.

The president also oversees staffing at the system's administrative offices and directs work done there.

Rothman is the eighth president of the UW System, which was created in 1971 by the state Legislature.

Why is this happening?

It came as a surprise that the board of regents wanted to remove Rothman.

Details emerged in two separate letters Rothman sent to regents he met with. No concerns had been aired publicly by regents about Rothman's performance. According to Rothman, no regent has explained to him why they want him out.

"When I asked you to articulate reasons for the Board's conclusion and apparent lack of confidence in

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me, you merely noted that each Regent has his or her own perspective on the matter," Rothman wrote in a March 26 letter to the board president. "You did not provide any tangible reasons for the Board's determination."

The AP contacted all 18 board members on Thursday, and they either did not respond to emails or had no comment.

Can the board do this?

It is unclear whether the board can fire the president without cause. A spokesperson for the university was checking on what the law allows.

Rothman said in his letter to the board president that he had not been "provided any substantive reason or reasons for the Board's finding of no confidence in my leadership."

Because of that, Rothman said, "I am not prepared, as a matter of principle, to submit my resignation."

It has all been done in secret, until now

The board of regents met behind closed doors on Wednesday to discuss personnel matters. But until Rothman's letters were obtained by the AP on Thursday, there was no inkling that the meeting was about his future.

Rothman said in a letter sent Wednesday to two regents that they told him if he didn't resign they were prepared to meet over the weekend to fire him.

Who is Jay Rothman?

Rothman spent his career as an attorney, rising to become chairman and CEO of the Milwaukee-based Foley & Lardner law firm before being hired as UW president. Foley & Lardner has 1,100 attorneys and 22 offices nationwide.

Regent Karen Walsh, who led the presidential search committee, in 2022 called him a "servant leader" who builds consensus. She declined to comment when contacted Thursday.

Rothman holds a bachelor's degree from Marquette University in Milwaukee and a law degree from Harvard University.

What did he do as UW president?

Rothman's tenure has been marked by his efforts to increase state funding amid federal cuts, debates over free speech on campus amid pro-Palestinian protests, and declining enrollment leading to eight branch campus closures.

Rothman raised the possibility of resigning in 2023 when the board of regents rejected a deal reached with the Republican-controlled Wisconsin Legislature over diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. The board later reversed its vote and approved the deal.

The fight over Rothman's future comes as the university will need to replace the chancellor of the flagship Madison campus this year. Chancellor Jennifer Mnookin is leaving to take the job as president of Columbia University.

Stocks recover from early losses and close with a weekly gain. US oil tops \$110 a barrel

By DAMIAN J. TROISE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks shook off an early stumble to finish with slim gains on Wall Street Thursday and close out their first winning week since the start of the Iran war.

The early decline for stocks was driven by a surge in oil prices following a national address late Wednesday from President Donald Trump. He vowed the U.S. will continue to attack Iran and failed to offer a clear timetable for ending the conflict in the Middle East. Oil prices eased slightly during the day, but still remain elevated well above \$100 per barrel.

The S&P 500 rose 7.37 points, or 0.1%, to 6,582.69. Several days of solid gains this week helped the benchmark index notch a 3.4% gain for the week. That's the first weekly gain since the conflict started for index at the heart of many 401(k) accounts. Stock markets will be closed for Good Friday.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 61.07 points, or 0.1%, to 46,504.67. The Nasdaq composite rose

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38.23 points, or 0.2%, to 21,879.18. Both indexes also notched weekly gains.

A barrel of U.S. crude oil rose 11.3% to \$111.54, though prices rose close to \$114 at one point during the day. The price of Brent crude, the international standard, jumped 7.8% to \$109.03 per barrel. Crude oil prices have been the main force behind the sharp swings for stocks globally. Shipping traffic has been severely curtailed in the Strait of Hormuz, where a fifth of the world's traded oil passes through during peacetime.

Crude oil prices had been sliding back toward \$100 per barrel prior to Trump's address on Wednesday. The U.S. only relies on the Persian Gulf for a fraction of the oil it imports, but oil is a commodity and prices are set in a global market. A disruption anywhere affects prices everywhere.

Stocks have been broadly sliding since the war began, with indexes often rising and falling sharply along with statements from Trump about the direction of the war. Just on Monday, the S&P 500 briefly neared a 10% drop from its record, a steep-enough fall that professional investors have a name for it: a "correction. The index gained ground Tuesday and Wednesday on hope that the war could end soon.

"For markets, a prolonged conflict increases the risk of sustained pressures on inflation, global growth, interest rates, and equity valuations," wrote Adam Turnquist, chief technical strategist for LPL Financial, in a note to investors.

Airlines and other travel-related companies were among the biggest losers on Thursday. United Airlines fell 3% and Carnival shed 3.5%.

Tesla fell 5.4% after a report showing that sales over the past three months fell short of analysts' expectations.

Several big technology stocks gained ground to help counter losses elsewhere in the market. Intel jumped 4.9% and Advanced Micro Devices rose 3.5%.

Treasury yields remained relatively steady in the bond market. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 4.30% from 4.32%.

Wall Street is worried that higher energy prices are adding to already stubbornly high inflation. Rising fuel prices take a bigger chunk out of consumers' wallets in several ways. Directly, gasoline prices in the U.S. have surged 36 percent from a month ago to average \$4.08 per gallon, according to the auto club AAA.

Indirectly, rising fuel prices tend to make a wide range of services and goods more expensive. Flights become more expensive as airlines raise ticket prices to offset rising fuel costs. Consumer goods become more expensive as shipping and transportation costs rise.

Inflation has been stubbornly above the Federal Reserve's 2% target. The war and its corresponding surge in energy prices effectively pushes inflation higher and that has dashed hopes for the Fed to cut interest rates. Wall Street had hoped for the central bank to cut rates in order to help offset a weakening job market. Lower interest rates could help stimulate the economy by lowering borrowing costs, but they also risk worsening inflation.

Traders came into 2026 forecasting several cuts to the Fed's benchmark interest rate, which influences rates for mortgages and other loans. They are now expecting the benchmark rate to remain steady this year.

The war has also caused an anomaly of sorts in the oil market. Brent crude oil futures are typically priced higher than those for U.S. crude oil, but the war flipped that on its head. Because of the supply constraints, the sooner a buyer needs a barrel of oil, the more they'll have to pay. Right now, the most actively traded futures contract for U.S. crude oil is for delivery in May, while the Brent futures contract is for delivery in June. That shorter timeframe is why U.S. crude is trading for more than Brent.

Tom Kloza, chief energy adviser at Gulf Oil, points out that a buyer who needs oil immediately will pay about \$3 to \$5 a barrel above the futures price for U.S. crude and an even steeper premium for Brent.

Pam Bondi, a Trump loyalist who oversaw Justice Department upheaval, is out as his attorney general

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday that Pam Bondi is out as his attorney general, ending the contentious tenure of a loyalist who upended the Justice Department's culture of independence from the White House, oversaw large-scale firings of career employees and moved aggressively to investigate the Republican president's perceived enemies.

The departure followed months of scrutiny over the Justice Department's handling of files related to the Jeffrey Epstein sex trafficking investigation and failed efforts to meet Trump's unwavering demands for criminal cases against his adversaries. As Trump's own frustrations mounted, he began privately discussing firing Bondi, people familiar with the matter say.

"Pam Bondi is a Great American Patriot and a loyal friend, who faithfully served as my Attorney General over the past year," Trump said in a statement. He added, "We love Pam, and she will be transitioning to a much needed and important new job in the private sector, to be announced at a date in the near future."

Trump named Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche, one of his former personal lawyers, as the acting attorney general. Three people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Thursday that he has privately discussed Lee Zeldin, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency, as a permanent pick.

In her own statement, Bondi called the job "the honor of a lifetime" and said she would be working over the next month to transition the position to Blanche.

Bondi came into office 14 months ago, pledging that she would not play politics with the Justice Department. But she quickly set out to do Trump's bidding, heaping lavish praise at congressional hearings and White House events, firing prosecutors deemed insufficiently loyal to the president and opening investigations into his political foes. The intense turmoil contributed to the resignations of hundreds of employees, with the norm-breaking actions stirring concern that the department was being wielded as a tool to advance Trump's personal and political interests.

"Pam Bondi oversaw an unprecedented weaponization of the Justice Department that brought our nation's rule of law to its knees," said Sen. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat.

Bondi rejected accusations that she politicized the Justice Department and said her mission was to restore the institution's credibility after overreach by President Joe Biden's Democratic administration, which included two federal criminal cases against Trump. Bondi's defenders have said she worked to refocus the department to better tackle illegal immigration and violent crime and brought much-needed change to an agency they believe unfairly targeted conservatives.

Embracing, supporting and protecting the president

Bondi's public embrace of the president, however, marked a sharp departure from her predecessors, who generally took pains to maintain an arm's-length distance from the White House to protect the impartiality of investigations and prosecutions. Bondi postured herself as Trump's chief supporter and protector, praising and defending him in congressional hearings and placing a banner with his face on the exterior of Justice Department headquarters.

She called for an end to the "weaponization" of law enforcement that she said occurred under the Biden administration, even though Biden's attorney general, Merrick Garland, and Jack Smith, the special counsel who produced two cases against Trump, have said they followed the facts, the evidence and the law in their decision-making. Bondi's critics, meanwhile, said she was the one who had politicized the agency.

"You've turned the People's Department of Justice into Trump's instrument of revenge," Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland, the top Democrat on the House Judiciary committee, said at a February hearing.

Bondi delivered a combative performance but few substantive answers at that hearing, as she angrily insulted her Democratic questioners with name-calling and praised Trump for the performance of the stock market — "The Dow is up over 50,000 right now!" — and openly aligned herself as in sync with a president whom she painted as a victim of past impeachments and investigations.

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Even Republicans began to challenge her, with the GOP-led House Oversight Committee last month issuing a subpoena to her to appear for a closed-door interview about the Epstein files.

Under Bondi's leadership, the department opened investigations into a string of Trump foes, including Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell, New York Attorney General Letitia James, former FBI Director James Comey and former CIA Director John Brennan. The high-profile prosecutions of Comey and James were short-lived as they were quickly thrown out by a judge who ruled that the prosecutor who brought the cases was illegally appointed.

Trump repeatedly praised and defended Bondi publicly but also showed flashes of impatience with his attorney general's efforts to meet his demands to prosecute his rivals. In one extraordinary social media post last year, Trump called on Bondi to move quickly to prosecute his foes, including James and Comey, telling her, "We can't delay any longer, it's killing our reputation and credibility."

Bondi oversaw the exodus of thousands of career employees — both through firings and voluntary departures — including lawyers who prosecuted violent attacks on police at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021; environmental, civil rights and ethics enforcers; counterterrorism prosecutors; and others.

Fumbling the Epstein files

She struggled to overcome early stumbles over the Epstein files that angered conservatives eager for government bombshells about the case, which has long fascinated conspiracy theorists. She herself had fed the conspiracy theory machine with a suggestion in a 2025 Fox News Channel interview that Epstein's "client list" was sitting on her desk for review. The department later acknowledged that no such document exists.

Bondi was ridiculed over a move to hand out binders of Epstein files to conservative influencers at the White House, only for it to be later revealed that the documents included no new revelations. And despite promises that more files were going to become public, the Justice Department in July said no more would be released, prompting Congress to pass a bill to force the agency to do so. Ultimately, the department said it had complied with its obligations by releasing millions more records.

Jess Michaels, an Epstein survivor who traveled to the U.S. Capitol last year to press for the files' release, said she was optimistic when Bondi took office but lost faith after Bondi distributed the binders at the White House.

"I think she had this opportunity to be a hero and to really do right by survivors of sexual violence and trafficking, and she chose not to," Michaels said by phone. "It is outrageous, the volume of miscalculation she has made."

The Epstein files fumbles led to a stunning public criticism from White House chief of staff Susie Wiles, a close friend of Bondi's, who told Vanity Fair that the attorney general "completely whiffed." The Justice Department's release of millions of pages of Epstein files did little to tamp down criticism, prompting a House committee, with the support of five Republicans, to subpoena Bondi to answer questions under oath.

Bondi, who defended Trump during his first impeachment trial, was his second choice to lead the Justice Department, picked for the role after former Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida withdrew his name from consideration amid scrutiny over sex trafficking allegations.

Trump says he'll sign order to resume pay for Homeland Security. His move bypasses Congress

By KEVIN FREKING, JOEY CAPPELLETTI and COLLIN BINKLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Thursday he will soon sign an order to pay all Department of Homeland Security employees who have gone without paychecks during the record-long partial government shutdown that has reached 48 days.

Despite that unilateral move announced in a social media post, the funding lapse for some DHS needs is likely to stretch into next week as the House contemplates passing a Senate plan it had previously rejected to fund the bulk of the agency, though not its immigration enforcement operations.

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Trump used a similar maneuver to resume pay for the Transportation Security Administration after many employees had called out from work, resulting in long delays at airport security lines for travelers. Trump's latest intervention is expected to apply to other non-law enforcement employees at the department, including many employees at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Coast Guard and the agency responsible for coordinating federal cybersecurity efforts.

Trump said their families "have suffered far too long."

"Nevertheless, help is on the way for our Brave and Patriotic Public Servants who have continued to work hard, and do their part to protect and defend our Country," Trump said.

There was no legislative resolution Thursday after both the House and Senate met for just a few minutes in pro forma sessions. Nonetheless, the Republican leadership and Trump have coalesced around a plan to fully fund DHS as part of a two-step process. The agreement puts the congressional leaders on the same page for ending the impasse after they had pursued separate paths that resulted in Congress leaving Washington last week for its spring recess without a fix.

During the brief sessions, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., put aside the House plan to fund the entire department for 60 days. Then the House met briefly without taking up the bipartisan Senate plan that had been worked out with Democrats, though Thune is looking toward eventual passage.

"I don't know the particulars around what the House will do with it," Thune told reporters. "My assumption is, at some point, hopefully, they'll move it."

Johnson's about-face

Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., and Thune, announced Wednesday that they would return to the Senate measure, which funds most of DHS with the exception of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and U.S. Border Patrol. Republicans will try later to fund those agencies through party-line spending legislation that could take months to finish.

Neither outcome is guaranteed, and the strategy could potentially still face opposition from the GOP's own ranks even though Trump has given his support.

Johnson's embrace of the two-track plan marks a sharp reversal from less than a week ago, when he derided it as a "joke" and said he was "quite convinced that it can't be that every Senate Republican read the language of this bill."

Public backlash was swift after lawmakers left Washington last week without a resolution, with the tabloid website TMZ posting paparazzi-style photos of members at airports and out of town. The regularly scheduled break, while drawing criticism, is typically used by lawmakers to reconnect with constituents and travel abroad.

Johnson now appears to be on board. But securing support from his own conference could prove more difficult after a sizable group of House Republicans blasted the Senate-passed bill last week.

House Republicans held a conference call later Thursday to discuss the next steps. The GOP leadership indicated to lawmakers that it does not expect to recall them to Washington from the spring recess; they are due back April 14.

Lawmakers also heard from White House budget director Russ Vought. The White House is expected to release Trump's 2027 budget proposal on Friday.

Funding ICE and Border Patrol remains a hurdle

Democrats in both chambers were aligned last week with the Senate's plan, and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York blamed House Republicans on Thursday for taking no action on it during the brief morning session.

"The deep division and dysfunction among House Republicans is needlessly extending the DHS shutdown and hurting federal workers who are missing another paycheck," Schumer said.

Johnson will look to persuade the most conservative lawmakers within his conference to go along with the two-step approach agreed upon with the president, and Trump's latest social media post could help. The president thanked Thune and Johnson for their work, and sought to project Republican unity.

"Republicans are UNIFIED, and moving forward on a plan that will reload funding for our FANTASTIC

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Border Patrol and Immigration Enforcement Officers," Trump wrote.

Many in the GOP conference have taken the stand that ICE and the Border Patrol need to be included as part of any funding agreement.

"Let's make this simple: caving to Democrats and not paying CBP and ICE is agreeing to defund Law Enforcement and leaving our borders wide open again," Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., posted on X. "If that's the vote, I'm a NO."

Meanwhile, the budget package that Trump wants voted on by June 1 is expected to fund ICE and Border Patrol through the remainder of Trump's term, as a way to try to ensure those agencies are no longer at risk from Democrats objecting to his immigration enforcement agenda.

Thune acknowledged the potential hurdles to that route, such as efforts to expand the scope of the bill. He said the goal is to keep it "as narrow and focused as possible" in order to pass it "with haste."

The vast majority of DHS employees have reported to work during the shutdown, but many thousands have gone without pay. As more Transportation Security Administration agents called out from work, there was increasing frustration for air travelers confronted by long waits at some airport security lines. Those bottlenecks appeared to be clearing this week as agents began receiving backpay after Trump signed an executive order.

About 10,000 FEMA workers are being paid because their wages come out of the non-lapsing Disaster Relief Fund. At least 4,000 FEMA employees are furloughed or currently working without pay.

Dizzying US fuel prices are determined by factors largely outside of a gas station's control

By HANNAH FINGERHUT Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — The near-daily changes in U.S. gas prices are dizzying for drivers, who are left feeling frustrated and cash-strapped by the highest fuel costs since 2022.

With the Iran war pushing up prices worldwide, the U.S. average for a gallon of gas topped \$4 on Tuesday, according to AAA. The uncertainty at the pump is trickling down from a massive, volatile oil and gas market that's making it hard for gas stations to keep up.

Oil prices soared when U.S. markets opened Thursday following President Donald Trump's speech Wednesday promising to hit Iran "extremely hard" in the coming weeks. He asked Americans for patience.

U.S. drivers have spent the past month gaming out when to fill up or hunting for deals as gas prices can change from one day to the next, or from one nearby station to another.

Lonnie McQuirter, director of operations at 36 Lyn Refuel Station in south Minneapolis, said wholesale fuel prices are going up, sometimes multiple times a day, and are the main reason he's had to charge more for gas than a month ago.

About a mile (1.6 kilometers) off Interstate 35, the neighborhood convenience store posted \$3.399 a gallon for regular gas on Thursday, which is about 20 cents lower than the metro average, according to AAA.

"We price based on what we're able to buy fuel at, and how well we can operate," McQuirter said. He declined to speculate about his competitors, saying, "They've got different economics."

McQuirter said his margins have gotten much tighter. He's also facing higher credit card fees and rising costs to maintain pumps. Still, in times like these, with consumers "screaming for help," McQuirter said small operators like him act on emotion more than greed.

"We're in our stores every day looking our customers in the eye," he said. "It really takes a toll when people are having to cut back on certain things in order to afford to live."

What factors into gas prices?

A lot of it is outside the gas retailer's control. Roughly half the price at the pump pays for the cost of crude oil, the main ingredient in gasoline, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. About 20% goes to refiners who turn crude into gas.

Those costs have risen as crude oil prices jumped in response to the war and shipping disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. Gas retailers are adjusting the price at the pump to account for the higher price they

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just paid for their next shipment of gasoline.

Taxes — federal, state and local — account for nearly 20% of the price, while about 10% is left for retailers, who still have to pay for transportation, labor and other expenses.

Retailers' markup has averaged about 38 cents a gallon over the past five years, according to the convenience store trade group NACS, citing data from research firm OPIS. After expenses, stations may keep roughly 15 cents per gallon, said Jeff Lenard, a vice president at NACS.

"Some make more, some make less," Lenard said.

Patrick De Haan, head of petroleum analysis at GasBuddy, compared it to a homeowner's role in setting their sale price.

"If I was selling a house today, I'd be beholden to whatever the housing market is," De Haan said. "That's the same for gas station owners. Whatever the price of oil and gasoline are, they are a price taker, not maker."

Why might prices differ from one gas station to the next?

Although the national average just passed \$4 a gallon, the price that drivers pay varies widely by state, city and station.

Taxes alone can create large gaps. California's gas taxes and fees totaled about 71 cents per gallon last year, compared with roughly 9 cents in Alaska.

Distance from refineries, the type of retailer, how much volume the location goes through and whether there are other fuel options nearby also play a role.

Gas stations near competitors may choose to price gasoline competitively on large outdoor signs to attract drivers, hoping they'll come inside and buy higher-margin items, said Neal Walters, a partner focused on energy at the global management consulting firm Kearney.

"It's one of the only retail locations where you don't have to go into the store to find out what you're paying," Walters said.

Who benefits from rising prices?

While U.S. retailers sell hundreds of millions of gallons of gas a day nationwide, they typically won't see large gains when prices rise.

"The margins shrink when prices go up because it's harder for them to pass along the increases as quickly as they themselves get them," De Haan of GasBuddy said.

When oil prices start to fall, retailers may recover some of those losses, particularly if there's uncertainty about future supply costs. Prices can rocket up but tend to drift down like a falling feather, said Garrett Golding, assistant vice president for energy programs at the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas.

Higher gas prices can also hurt sales inside the gas stations, if customers who are being squeezed at the pump spend less on other things.

"So it's not always the case that higher prices mean the service station owners are actually doing better," Golding said.

Most profits in the oil and gas supply chain are made upstream, he said, by companies that extract and refine crude oil. Still, Golding said they aren't necessarily celebrating; at some point, a significant spike in prices could hurt demand.

"It may be a good stretch of days or weeks for them," he said, "but they're also cautious of what it could portend."

Trump uses Iran war address to urge an increasingly skeptical electorate to give him a bit more time

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump used his first major address since launching his war in Iran to assure Americans that all of his military objectives will be completed "shortly" and urge an increasingly skeptical electorate to give him a little bit more time.

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Trump in his Wednesday evening speech dialed back the bluster that's dominated his rhetoric in recent days as world markets convulse and a badly battered Iran is still landing some effective blows on Gulf neighbors' infrastructure and U.S. bases.

But the Republican president's promise to "finish the job" hardly built confidence with a jittery market as oil prices surged and Asian stocks fell as he vowed that the U.S. will continue to hit Iran very hard.

He offered no detail about the state of negotiations with Iran that could bring about a promised endgame that he insists could come in a matter of weeks. There was also no overt lashing out at NATO allies for failing to fall in line and help him reopen the critical Strait of Hormuz waterway — something White House officials had said would be a prominent part of his roughly 20-minute address.

The U.S. will continue to hit Iran hard for the next two or three weeks, he said, without saying how much longer the war would last. But he offered a plea to Americans to show a little patience.

"We are in this military operation, so powerful, so brilliant, against one of the most powerful countries for 32 days, and the country has been eviscerated and essentially is really no longer a threat," Trump said. "This is a true investment in your children and your grandchildren's future. The whole world is watching, and they can't believe the power, strength and brilliance."

Trump finds himself not only negotiating with an enemy that refuses to throw in the towel but also dealing with an American tolerance for a conflict that's being stretched.

Most Americans believe recent U.S. military action against Iran has gone too far, and many are worried about affording gasoline, according to an AP-NORC poll conducted in mid-March, a couple of weeks after the war started. While Trump is deploying more warships and troops to the Middle East, about 59% of Americans say U.S. military action in Iran has been excessive.

Meanwhile, 45% are "extremely" or "very" concerned about being able to afford gas in the next few months, up from 30% in an AP-NORC poll conducted shortly after Trump won reelection with promises that he would improve the economy and lower the cost of living.

Americans, Trump noted, have certainly shown patience during times of war.

"American involvement in World War I," he said, "lasted one year, seven months and five days. World War II lasted for three years, eight months and 25 days. The Korean War lasted for three years, one month and two days. The Vietnam War lasted for 19 years, five months and 29 days. Iraq went on for eight years, eight months and 28 days."

Hours before his address, Trump seemed to reflect on the domestic pressure he's feeling to wrap up the war.

Speaking at a private lunch at the White House to mark Easter, Trump argued that the U.S. could "very easily" use this moment to take Iran's oil. It is "unfortunate," he lamented, that there did not seem to be patience among the American people for such an effort.

"They want to see it end," he said. He added, "People in the country sort of say, 'Just win. You're winning so big. Just win. Come home.' And I'm OK with that, too."

Democrats lash at Trump for failing to offer a coherent argument for conflict

Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said Trump's speech was "grounded in a reality that only exists in Donald Trump's mind."

The president, Democrats fumed, offered no plan for how he would go about reopening Hormuz, the critical waterway for oil tankers that a battered Iran has effectively choked off even though Trump claims it's been defeated.

For allies worried about a global economy that's been rattled by rising oil prices, Trump suggested they "buy oil from the United States of America" and "build up some delayed courage" and help the U.S. secure the strait. Trump made no attempt to answer his European critics who say he entered his war of choice against Iran without consulting global allies but is now expecting the world to help him fix the unintended damage that it has caused.

"We are losing this war," Murphy added. "We cannot destroy all their missiles or drones, nor their nuclear program. Iran projects more power in the region than they did before the war, especially if they now permanently control the Strait of Hormuz. We are spending billions we don't have and losing American lives

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in a war that is destabilizing the world and making us look feckless.”

President steers clear of suggesting ground troops deployment could be coming

Trump offered cautious optimism that those now in power in Iran after more than a month of U.S. and Israeli strikes are “less radical and much more reasonable” with much of the pre-war Islamic Republic’s hierarchy taken out. He didn’t explicitly mention a Monday deadline he has set for Iran to open the strait or face attacks from U.S. forces on its energy infrastructure, though he made clear that he remains open to targeting the heartbeat of Tehran’s economy.

“If there is no deal, we are going to hit each and every one of their electric generating plants very hard and probably simultaneously,” Trump said. “We have not hit their oil, even though that’s the easiest target of all, because it would not give them even a small chance of survival or rebuilding. But we could hit it, and it would be gone.”

Trump also notably did not signal that he’s making any preparation for a ground invasion by American troops.

He seemed to steer away from the possibility of sending ground troops to secure Iran’s nearly 1,000 pounds (450 kilograms) of highly enriched uranium, saying it “would take months” for Iran to get to it as it’s buried under the rubble created by last year’s American bombing campaign of Iran’s nuclear sites.

Trump has offered shifting reasons for launching the war, but he has been consistent in articulating that a primary objective in joining Israel in the military action is ensuring that Iran will “never have a nuclear weapon.”

But over the course of the conflict, he has been more circumspect about how far he’s willing to go to follow through on his pledge to destroy Iran’s weapons program once and for all, including seizing or destroying the near-bomb-grade nuclear material that Iran possesses.

“We have it under intense satellite surveillance and control,” Trump said in his prime-time speech. “If we see them make a move, even a move for it, we’ll hit them with missiles very hard again. We have all the cards. They have none.”

UK gathers more than 40 countries to press Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain accused Iran on Thursday of holding the world’s economy hostage as diplomats from more than 40 countries held talks on ways to press Tehran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital oil route that has been choked off by the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran.

The U.S. didn’t attend the virtual meeting, which came after U.S. President Donald Trump made clear that he thinks securing the waterway is not America’s job. Trump has also disparaged America’s European allies for failing to support the war and renewed his threats to pull the U.S. out of NATO.

U.K. Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper said the talks, which focused on political and diplomatic rather than military means, showed “the strength of our international determination” to reopen the strait. The 41 countries represented came from all continents except Antarctica, a reflection of the global tremors from a war that has sparked shortages of fuel and fertilizer and higher prices for food far beyond the Middle East.

“We have seen Iran hijack an international shipping route to hold the global economy hostage,” Cooper said at the start of the meeting. Cooper said “unsustainable” spikes in oil and food prices were “hitting households and businesses in every corner of the world.”

Shipping in the strait has slowed to a trickle

Iranian attacks on commercial ships, and the threat of more, have halted nearly all traffic in the waterway that connects the Persian Gulf to the rest of the globe’s oceans, shutting a critical path for the world’s flow of oil and sending petroleum prices soaring.

There have been 23 direct attacks on commercial vessels in the Gulf since the war began on Feb. 28, and 11 crew members have been killed, according to shipping data firm Lloyd’s List Intelligence.

Traffic through the strait has slowed to a trickle, with what remains dominated by sanctions-evading

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tankers carrying Iranian oil, Lloyd's List Intelligence said in a briefing Thursday. It said a murky operation under which Iran vets who can pass continues to operate as Tehran maintains its chokehold over the key waterway.

In a televised address on Wednesday night, Trump said countries that depend on oil flowing through the Strait of Hormuz "must grab it and cherish it" — because the U.S. would not.

No country appears willing to try and open the strait by force while fighting rages and Iran can target vessels with anti-ship missiles, drones, attack craft and mines.

French President Emmanuel Macron said opening the strait by force is "unrealistic."

The reopening of the strait "can only be done in coordination with Iran," through negotiations that would follow a potential ceasefire, Macron told reporters Thursday during a visit to South Korea.

France is pushing for an international mission involving European and non-European nations to escort oil and gas tankers through the waterway after the most intense phase of the conflict is over. The British government said military planners from an unspecified number of countries will meet next week to plot ways to ensure security once the fighting ends, including potential mine-clearing work and "reassurance" for commercial shipping.

The U.K. hopes Thursday's meeting will help isolate Tehran and weaken its desire to block shipping. Cooper said participants — senior officials from countries including France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and the United Arab Emirates — discussed increasing diplomatic pressure over Iran's "reckless" attacks and tightening economic screws to prevent Tehran profiting from control of the strait.

The meeting also discussed working with the U.N.'s International Maritime Organization to free 2,000 ships and 20,000 seafarers trapped by the conflict, she said.

No concrete measures were announced, however.

The meeting sends a message to Trump

The international effort idea has echoes of the international "coalition of the willing" that has been assembled, led by the U.K. and France, to underpin Ukraine's security after a future ceasefire in that war. That coalition is, in part, an attempt to demonstrate to the Trump administration that Europe is stepping up to do more for its own security.

The urgency of stronger continental defenses has been reinforced by Trump's renewed suggestion that the U.S. could leave NATO. He said Wednesday that the military alliance had "treated us very badly."

David B. Roberts, reader in Middle East Security Studies at King's College London, said international coalition-building efforts over Hormuz are "definitely linked to the wider Trumpian antagonism toward NATO, that other members of NATO are not pulling their weight.

"Without a doubt, this is Britain and France, notably, trying to lead the way, to very visibly show a certain sort of utility" to the Trump administration.

"There's also the very pragmatic reality that America is an oil exporter," he added. "The immediate pressures about the fallout of the of the energy blockage in the Gulf, they fall on Europe and of course Asia, far more than America."

Judges say ICC prosecutor in sexual misconduct inquiry can potentially resume work, documents show

By MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — The embattled chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court can potentially resume his duties, a three-judge panel said, after rejecting a United Nations investigation of alleged sexual misconduct with a female aide, according to conclusions viewed by The Associated Press.

A final decision on the fate of British barrister Karim Khan is now up to the Assembly of States Parties, the body that oversees the ICC. The group moved Wednesday to extend the investigation as it grapples with an unprecedented process, unrest among ICC staff and external pressures.

Khan temporarily stepped down in May 2025 pending the outcome of an investigation by the U.N.'s Office of Internal Oversight Service into allegations of sexual misconduct, which he has steadfastly denied.

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The U.N. investigation found evidence that Khan had "nonconsensual sexual contact with (the aide) in his office, at his private residence, and whilst on mission," according to a copy of its report.

In a statement to AP on Wednesday, Khan said through his lawyers that he "firmly maintains that he did not engage in any inappropriate conduct toward the complainant, whether sexual or otherwise."

Khan's lawyers also stated that he "categorially denies both any nonconsensual sexual conduct and the existence of any consensual sexual relationship."

The ICC has declined to comment.

The three judges, selected by the assembly for a legal assessment of the U.N. investigation, found last month that the investigation was not conclusive enough. Nevertheless, the judges said they were compelled to make a determination, and they said the findings "do not establish misconduct or breach of duty under the relevant legal framework," according to their 85-page assessment.

"The resolution of a number of disputes, which remains outstanding, would be necessary before a proper characterisation of the facts can be made," said the judges, who evaluated more than 5,000 pages of evidence.

The judges wrote that the U.N. investigators "failed to indicate which witnesses' testimony they found credible" and "did not resolve narrative inconsistencies."

The U.N. investigators were tasked with carrying out an investigation but not assessing whether Khan's behavior amounted to misconduct. The three-judge panel was to use the criminal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt," according to its report, and its advice is not binding on the assembly.

The process is unprecedented for the ICC, and the Assembly of States Parties has had to repeatedly create new rules to accommodate the situation.

Khan's lawyers stressed in a statement Thursday that the three-judge panel unanimously found that the U.N. investigation did not establish any misconduct or breach of duty. His lawyers also noted that the U.N. investigation did not make a final determination of misconduct or breach of duty, and that their material required legal evaluation.

Accusations uncovered

In October 2024, an AP investigation revealed that Khan was facing internal accusations of sexual misconduct.

According to whistleblower documents seen by AP, Khan is alleged to have seen the woman working in another ICC department and moved her into his office. She later became a regular presence on official trips, the documents said.

On one foreign trip, Khan allegedly asked her to rest with him on a hotel bed and then "sexually touched her," the documents said. Later, he came to her room at 3 a.m. and knocked on the door for 10 minutes, according to allegations in the documents.

Other alleged nonconsensual behavior cited in the documents included locking the door of his office and sticking his hand in her pocket. He also allegedly asked her several times to accompany him on a vacation.

Two co-workers reported the alleged misconduct to the court's watchdog in May 2024. The investigation was closed after five days when the woman opted against filing a formal complaint because she said she feared retaliation, AP reported at the time.

The case has taken a toll on the woman who was at the center of the case. The U.N. investigation said that at one point, she was placed on a suicide watch.

"I have been left with little dignity and no privacy," she said in an interview. The AP generally does not identify those who say they have been subjected to sexual misconduct.

Unrest among staff

A group of staff members within the prosecutor's office sent a letter Wednesday to the Assembly of States Parties, expressing serious concerns about Khan's potential return.

According to the document, which was seen by AP, the group felt the U.N. investigation was "incompatible with continued confidence in the prosecutor's leadership."

One senior staff member said "people are deeply afraid" of retaliation and three other members of staff in the prosecutor's office expressed similar views. All spoke on condition of anonymity because they were

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not authorized to talk to the media.

According to the report from U.N. investigators, before he took his leave, Khan was accused of engaging in behavior that was "retaliatory in nature" toward two members of staff who were supportive of the alleged victim.

The ICC and US sanctions

The initial inquiry took place a few weeks before Khan sought arrest warrants against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over actions in Gaza. In November 2024, a three-judge panel signed off on those charges.

In response, U.S. President Donald Trump sanctioned 11 ICC staff, including Khan, for pursuing the investigations. Judges and prosecutors had their bank accounts closed and their U.S. visas revoked.

The restrictions have had a huge impact on the court's work and staff morale.

Danish warship sunk by Nelson's British fleet discovered after 225 years

By JAMES BROOKS Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — More than 200 years after being sunk by Adm. Horatio Nelson and the British fleet, a Danish warship has been discovered on the seabed of Copenhagen Harbor by marine archaeologists.

Working in thick sediment and almost zero visibility 15 meters (49 feet) beneath the waves, divers are in a race against time to unearth the 19th-century wreck of the Dannebrog before it becomes a construction site in a new housing district being built off the Danish coast.

Denmark's Viking Ship Museum, which is leading the monthslong underwater excavations, announced its findings on Thursday, 225 years to the day since the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801.

"It's a big part of the Danish national feeling," said Morten Johansen, the museum's head of maritime archaeology.

A great deal has been written about the battle "by very enthusiastic spectators, but we actually don't know how it was to be onboard a ship being shot to pieces by English warships and some of that story we can probably learn from seeing the wreck," Johansen said. The Associated Press was the only international outlet given access to the site.

In the Battle of Copenhagen, Nelson and the British fleet attacked and defeated Denmark's navy as it formed a protective blockade outside the harbor.

Thousands were killed and wounded during the brutal hourslong naval clash, considered one of Nelson's "great battles." The intention was to force Denmark out of an alliance of Northern European powers, including Russia, Prussia and Sweden.

At the center of the fighting was the Danish flagship, the Dannebrog, commanded by Commodore Olfert Fischer.

The 48-meter (157-foot) Dannebrog was Nelson's main target. Cannon fire tore through its upper deck before incendiary shells sparked a fire aboard.

"(It was) a nightmare to be on board one of these ships," Johansen said. "When a cannonball hits a ship, it's not the cannonball that does the most damage to the crew, it's wooden splinters flying everywhere, very much like grenade debris."

The battle also is believed to have inspired the phrase "to turn a blind eye." After deciding to ignore a superior's signal, Nelson, who had lost sight in his right eye, reportedly remarked: "I have only one eye, I have a right to be blind sometimes."

Nelson eventually offered a truce and a ceasefire was later agreed with Denmark's Crown Prince Frederik.

The stricken Dannebrog slowly drifted northward and exploded. Records say the sound created a deafening roar across Copenhagen.

Marine archaeologists have discovered two cannons, uniforms, insignia, shoes, bottles and even part of a sailor's lower jaw, perhaps one of the 19 unaccounted-for crew members who likely lost their lives that day.

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The dig site will soon be enveloped by construction work for Lynetteholm, a megaproject to build a new housing district in the middle of Copenhagen Harbor that is expected to be completed by 2070.

Marine archaeologists began surveying the area late last year, targeting a spot thought to match the flagship's final position.

Experts say the sizes of the wooden parts found match old drawings. Dendrochronological dating, the method of using tree rings to establish the age of wood, match the year the ship was built. They also say the darkened dig site is full of cannonballs, a hazard for divers navigating waters darkened by clouds of silt stirred up from the seabed.

"Sometimes you can't see anything, and then you really have to just feel your way, look with your fingers instead of with your eyes," diver and maritime archaeologist Marie Jonsson said.

Chronicled in books and painted on canvases, the 1801 battle is deeply embedded in Denmark's national story.

Archaeologists hope their discoveries may help reexamine the event that shaped the Scandinavian country and perhaps uncover personal stories of those who went into battle on that day 225 years ago.

"There are bottles, there are ceramics, and even pieces of basketry," Jonsson said. "You get closer to the people onboard."

Russian aerial attacks kill 2 in Ukraine as Easter prisoner exchange planned

By VOLODYMR YURCHUK Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian aerial attacks on civilian areas of Ukraine killed two people and injured at least three others, officials said Thursday, as the warring countries work on a prisoner exchange for Easter.

Periodic prisoner exchanges have been one of the few positive outcomes of otherwise fruitless monthslong U.S.-brokered negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv. The talks have delivered no progress on key issues preventing an end to Russia's invasion of its neighbor, now in its fifth year.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy offered a ceasefire for the Easter period, but Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier this week that Moscow wants a lasting peace settlement, not a temporary truce.

President Vladimir Putin unilaterally declared a 30-hour ceasefire last Easter, but each side accused the other of breaking it.

Russia's human rights ombudswoman Tatyana Moskalkova said Thursday that both sides are working on exchanges of prisoners. "Ahead of Easter, a lot of work is being done today to prepare prisoner exchanges," Moskalkova told reporters.

Gen. Kyrylo Budanov, Zelenskyy's chief of staff, said last week he hoped for a "major exchange" of prisoners this Easter. Orthodox Easter falls on April 12.

A Russian strike on Synelnykove, in the Dnipropetrovsk region, killed one person and injured a woman and a 12-year-old boy, according to regional military administration chief Oleksandr Hazha.

A strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, started a fire in an apartment block and injured a 61-year-old woman, regional head Oleh Syniehubov said.

A ballistic missile strike on the northern city of Chernihiv killed one person and injured a 17-year-old girl, the head of the city's military administration, Dmytro Bryzhynskyi reported.

Another attack targeted the Odesa region, authorities said, as Russia fired 172 strike drones at Ukraine. Air defense systems shot down 147 of them, according to Ukraine's air force.

US jobless aid filings fall to 202,000 as layoffs remain low despite uncertainty of Iran war

By MATT OTT AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. applications for unemployment benefits fell last week as layoffs remain sparse despite a softening labor market and rising energy costs due to the Iran war.

The number of Americans applying for jobless aid for the week ending March 28 fell by 9,000 to 202,000

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from the previous week's 211,000, the Labor Department reported Thursday. That's fewer than the 212,000 new filings analysts surveyed by the data firm FactSet were expecting and within the range of the past several years.

Filings for unemployment benefits are considered representative of U.S. layoffs and are close to a real-time indicator of the health of the job market.

A number of high-profile companies have cut jobs recently, including the software maker Oracle, which according to media reports cut thousands of workers this week.

Others that have recently announced job cuts include Morgan Stanley, Block, UPS and Amazon.

Weekly jobless aid applications have stabilized in a range mostly between 200,000 and 250,000 since the U.S. economy emerged from the pandemic recession. However, hiring began slowing about two years ago and tapered even further in 2025 due to President Donald Trump's erratic tariff rollouts, his purge of the federal workforce and the lingering effects of high interest rates meant to control inflation.

Employers added fewer than 200,000 jobs last year, compared with about 1.5 million in 2024, according to the data firm FactSet.

Last month, the Labor Department reported that U.S. employers unexpectedly cut 92,000 jobs in February, a sign that the labor market remains under strain. Revisions also slashed 69,000 jobs from December and January payrolls, nudging the unemployment rate up to 4.4%.

The March jobs report is due out Friday.

The surprisingly weak employment picture in February adds to the economic uncertainty over the war with Iran, which has caused oil prices to surge more than 40% and saddled business and consumers with higher costs.

This comes at a time when inflation was already relatively high in the U.S.

The Commerce Department recently reported that the Fed's preferred inflation gauge rose 2.8% in January compared with a year earlier. That's above the Fed's 2% target and the latest sign that prices were persistently elevated even before the Iran war caused spikes in oil and gas costs.

That persistent inflation, combined with the uncertainties brought on by the conflict in the Middle East, led the Fed to leave its benchmark lending rate alone at its last meeting and raised doubts that a cut was coming anytime soon.

Central bank officials voted to raise the rate three times to close 2025 out of concern for a weakening job market.

The American labor market appears stuck in what economists call a "low-hire, low-fire" state that has kept the unemployment rate historically low, but has left those out of work struggling to find a new job.

The Labor Department's report Thursday showed that the four-week moving average of jobless claims, which evens out some of the weekly swings, declined by 3,000 to 207,750.

The total number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits for the previous week ending March 21 jumped by 25,000 to 1.84 million, the government said.

Today in History: April 3, Unabomber arrested in Montana

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, April 3, the 93rd day of 2026. There are 272 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 3, 1996, Theodore Kaczynski (kah-ZIHN'-skee), the Harvard-educated mathematician known as the Unabomber, was arrested at a remote Montana cabin by FBI agents. From his off-the-grid location, Kaczynski waged a 17-year bombing campaign that killed three people and injured 23 others, permanently maiming several of his victims. (He died in prison on June 10, 2023, at age 81.)

Also on this date:

In 1860, the first Pony Express mail delivery rides began, one heading west from St. Joseph, Missouri, and one heading east from Sacramento, California.

In 1882, outlaw Jesse James was shot and killed in St. Joseph, Missouri, by Robert Ford, a member of

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James' gang.

In 1936, Bruno Richard Hauptmann was electrocuted in Trenton, New Jersey, for the 1932 kidnap-murder of 20-month-old Charles Lindbergh Jr.

In 1944, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Smith v. Allwright*, struck down a Democratic Party of Texas rule that allowed only white voters to participate in Democratic primaries.

In 1948, President Harry S. Truman signed into law the Marshall Plan, designed to help European allies rebuild after World War II and resist communism.

In 1968, civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. delivered what was to be his final speech, telling a rally of striking sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee, "I've been to the mountaintop. ... I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land!" (The following day, King was killed by an assassin's bullet at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis.)

In 1973, the first handheld portable telephone was demonstrated for reporters on a New York City street corner as Motorola executive Martin Cooper called Bell Labs engineer Joel S. Engel, who led the team that developed the design for the first cellular telephone system.

In 1974, an outbreak of tornadoes began hitting wide parts of the South and Midwest before jumping across the border into Canada; 148 tornadoes caused more than 300 fatalities in what became known as the 1974 Super Outbreak.

In 1996, a U.S. Air Force jet crashed as it approached Dubrovnik, Croatia; all 35 people on board were killed, including U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown.

In 2009, a gunman opened fire on a room where immigrants were taking a U.S. citizenship exam in Binghamton, New York, killing 13 people before taking his own life.

In 2022, shooters opened fire in California's capital city of Sacramento, killing six people and wounding 12 as bars closed for the night in the city's downtown. (Three suspects were arrested in connection with the shootings; one died in jail in 2024.)

Today's birthdays: Actor Marsha Mason is 84. Singer Wayne Newton is 84. Singer Tony Orlando is 82. Singer-songwriter Richard Thompson is 77. Actor Alec Baldwin is 68. Actor David Hyde Pierce is 67. Actor-comedian Eddie Murphy is 65. Celebrity chef Cat Cora is 59. Olympic skiing gold medalist Picabo Street is 55. Actor Jennie Garth is 54. Actor Adam Scott is 53. Football Hall of Famer Jared Allen is 44. Actor Cobie Smulders is 44. Singer Leona Lewis is 41. Actor-comedian Rachel Bloom is 39. Model and actor Paris Jackson is 28. Actor Elsie Fisher is 23.

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Winter Storm Warning

URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
National Weather Service Aberdeen SD
603 AM CDT Fri Apr 3 2026

MNZ039-SDZ006>008-011-018-032115-
/O.CON.KABR.WS.W.0002.260403T1200Z-260405T0000Z/
Traverse-Brown-Marshall-Roberts-Day-Spink-
Including the cities of Sisseton, Aberdeen, Wheaton, Britton, Redfield, and Webster
603 AM CDT Fri Apr 3 2026

...WINTER STORM WARNING REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL 7 PM CDT SATURDAY...

* WHAT...Heavy mixed precipitation and patchy blowing snow expected. Total snow and sleet accumulations between 4 and 10 inches and ice accumulations around one tenth of an inch. Winds gusting as high as 35 mph.

* WHERE...Portions of west central Minnesota and northeast South Dakota.

* WHEN...Until 7 PM CDT Saturday.

* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult. The combination of falling snow and winds will lead to periods of blowing snow that may briefly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the Friday morning and evening commutes.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

If you must travel, keep an extra flashlight, food, and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency. In Minnesota, the latest road conditions can be obtained at 511mn.org, or by calling 5 1 1. In South Dakota, the latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.