

Groton Daily Independent

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Tuesday, April 21

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, mixed vegetables, mixed fruit, breadstick.
School Breakfast: Muffins.
School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, fries.
Grades 5 & 8 Science Testing
Olive Grove Golf Course Annual Meeting, 7 p.m.
St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
High School Track at Britton, 2 p.m.
Biogirls at Elementary Gym, 3:45 p.m.
Girls Fastpitch Softball at Hanson, Doubleheader starting at 4 p.m.
JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena
Groton City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

LIFE IS LIKE A MOVIE
IF YOU ARE SAD - DRAMA
IF YOU ARE AFRAID - SUSPENSE
IF YOU ARE ANGRY - ACTION
WHEN YOU LOOK AT THE MIRROR - HORROR
NOW YOU ARE - THAT'S SMILING COMEDY



Wednesday, April 22

EARTH DAY

Senior Menu: Hot beef combo, mashed potatoes and gravy, carrots, fruit.

School Breakfast: Oatmeal.

School Lunch: Pizza Crunchers, green beans.

Grades 5 & 8 Science Testing

High School Baseball at Britton, DH, 5:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

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

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

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

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.

Tariff Refund Reckoning

The federal government yesterday began refunding more than \$166B from global tariffs struck down by the Supreme Court in February, with interest accruing at roughly \$22M per day.

Only companies that paid tariffs directly are eligible for refunds, not consumers indirectly hit by higher prices. Amid class-action lawsuits, companies including FedEx and Costco have said they may share proceeds with customers, though details are unclear. The refund timeline is also uncertain: The government estimates it will take 60 to 90 days to issue refunds, but technical challenges could cause delays. A digital claims system had to be built to identify the global tariffs, process refunds, and issue payments. That platform can currently handle about 63% of affected import filings, with the remainder to follow.

After the Supreme Court's ruling, the Trump administration implemented a temporary 10% tariff on most imports and is exploring a new pathway for global tariffs under the Trade Act of 1974.

Boston's Defending Champions

Kenya's John Korir won yesterday's Boston Marathon for the second year in a row, finishing the men's race in 2 hours, 1 minute, 52 seconds—a course record. Kenya's Sharon Lokedi won the women's side, also for the second consecutive year, in 2:18:51.

This year, runners passed a 5-foot-6-inch bronze statue of Bobbi Gibb, the first woman to complete the Boston Marathon in 1966. Gibb had defied rules against women's participation and hid in the bushes near the starting line, finishing her race in 3:21:40 and unofficially running the next two races (women were allowed to race the marathon beginning in 1972). Now 83, Gibb made the sculpture herself.

The Boston Marathon is the world's oldest annual marathon, inspired by the first modern Olympic marathon in 1896. It is held every year on Patriots' Day, the state holiday commemorating Paul Revere's 1775 midnight ride and the inaugural battles of the American Revolution.

UK Vetting Failure Fallout

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer told Parliament yesterday he was wrong to appoint Peter Mandelson—whose ties to Jeffrey Epstein later emerged—as ambassador to the US, saying Foreign Office officials overrode a security clearance denial without informing him. Starmer faces calls to resign for misleading Parliament.

Mandelson, a veteran politician, was fired from his ambassadorship in September 2025 after US Justice Department documents revealed he allegedly passed sensitive government information to Epstein in 2009. British police arrested Mandelson in February on suspicion of misconduct in public office; he was released without charge and denies any wrongdoing.

The scandal has exposed gaps in the UK's appointment process: Vetting didn't begin until after Mandelson's role was publicly announced. Starmer said the process has been revised so full clearance is completed before appointments are made. A fired Foreign Office official, whom Starmer blamed, is set to give his own account today.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Singer D4vd is formally charged with first-degree murder in the death of a 14-year-old girl whose body was found dismembered and decomposed in the trunk of his Tesla; he is eligible for the death penalty.

Actor Patrick Muldoon, known for "Starship Troopers" and "Days of Our Lives," dies of a heart attack at age 57.

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Amy Winehouse's father loses court case against friends of his late daughter who auctioned dozens of her belongings.

Patricia McCormick's "Sold," a 2006 novel about sex trafficking in India, tops 2025 list of most challenged books at libraries nationwide; 4,235 books were challenged last year, topped only by 4,240 books in 2023 since tracking began in 1990.

Science & Technology

Zebrafish models reveal melatonin regulates sleep by reducing activity in specific receptors attached to neurons responsible for processing visual stimuli.

Scientists create first comprehensive roadmap of how HIV interacts with human cells, possibly leading to new treatments that help the body resist the virus.

Cannabis use in teens tied to slower gains in memory, attention, and thinking, according to the largest long-term study of brain development in US youth.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close down (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow -0.0%, Nasdaq -0.3%).

Apple CEO Tim Cook stepping down, becoming chairman; hardware executive John Ternus tapped as new CEO.

Jersey Mike's Subs, America's second-largest sandwich chain behind Subway, confidentially files for initial public offering.

Eli Lilly to acquire Kelonia Therapeutics for up to \$7B; Kelonia is developing tech to reprogram patients' T-cells to attack cancer from within the body.

Politics & World Affairs

FBI Director Kash Patel files a \$250M defamation lawsuit against The Atlantic over an article alleging he engages in excessive drinking, which affects his job performance, among other claims.

Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer resigns amid professional misconduct allegations.

Supreme Court says it will review Colorado Catholic preschools' exclusion from state funding over their refusal to admit LGBTQ+ families.

Virginia holds referendum today on Democrat-led redistricting effort; new maps are projected to lead to net pickup of four House seats for Democrats.



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Groton places second at Sisseton Invite; Johnson leads Tigers with top-10 finish

SISSETON — Groton Area turned in a solid team performance Monday, finishing second at the Sisseton Invitational with a team score of 498.

Groton Area Tigers trailed only Aberdeen Roncalli, which claimed the team title with a 403. Milbank followed Groton in third at 502, while Tri-Valley rounded out the team standings.

Groton was paced by a strong showing from Carlee Johnson, who carded a 106 to finish seventh overall in the individual standings. Johnson's round put her among the top competitors in a field dominated by Roncalli golfers.

Claire Schuelke added a steady performance for the Tigers, shooting a 123 to place 13th. Rylie Rose finished 18th with a 132, while Halee Harder rounded out Groton's scoring with a 137, placing 20th.

The Tigers showed depth throughout the lineup, with multiple golfers finishing in the middle of the pack to help secure the runner-up team finish.

Roncalli's Mackenzie Wegehaupt earned medalist honors with a 94, leading four Cavaliers in the top eight.

Groton Area rallies fall short against Arlington despite patience at the plate

Groton Area put together scoring chances and showed discipline at the plate, but a big fourth inning by Arlington proved too much to overcome in a 9-4 loss Monday on the road.

The Tigers found a way onto the scoreboard in the third inning, capitalizing on Arlington miscues. Groton Area pushed across two runs in the frame, both coming as the Cardinals committed errors, giving the Tigers a brief 2-0 advantage.

Arlington answered in the bottom half of the inning to take a 3-2 lead, using a combination of a fielder's choice, a Groton Area error and a passed ball to swing momentum.

The game turned in the fourth inning when Arlington broke through for five runs. Despite allowing just two hits in the inning, Groton Area issued walks and hit a batter, which the Cardinals converted into runs to extend the lead to 8-2.

Kinsley Rowen started in the circle for Groton Area, working 3 2/3 innings. She allowed eight runs, six of them earned, on two hits while striking out six and walking seven. Rylie Rose came in as relief pitcher.

Offensively, Groton Area made the most of limited opportunities. Jaedyn Penning and Makenna Krause each recorded a hit, with Penning driving in a run from the third base spot in the lineup. The Tigers continued to show patience at the plate, drawing nine walks, with Abby Fjeldheim and Rowen each collecting two.

Groton Area also applied pressure on the bases, swiping five stolen bases in the contest.

Arlington's Seeley VanOverbeke controlled the game in the circle despite issuing nine walks, striking out 10 over seven innings to earn the win.

Groton Area battled throughout, but the fourth-inning surge by Arlington created a gap the Tigers couldn't quite close. The team travels to Hanson today.

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Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

April 21, 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. Confirmation from HOSA to Take Control of PumpkinFest and Approval of City's Contribution to the Event
4. Authorization to Block Off Portion of Main Street and Allow Alcoholic Beverages within Barriers for Cornhole Tournament at Jungle Lanes to Support Groton Area HOSA on June 27, 2026, from 3pm to 9pm
5. Approval of Updated Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) Designated Entity Contract and FES Amendment with WAPA and Heartland Energy to Permit Resale of RECs
6. Funding Request from Area IV Senior Nutrition
7. Community Center Exterior Siding
8. Maintenance at Park Bathrooms and Update on FEMA Funding
9. GIS Discussion
10. March Finance Report
11. Minutes
12. Bills
13. Reminder: 2026 Spring Cleanup – April 27th through May 1st
14. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
15. Adjournment

Douglas County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash

Where: SD Highway 44, mile marker 325, six miles southwest of Corsica, SD

When: Sunday, April 19, 5:57 p.m.

Vehicle 1: 2016 Ford Fusion

Driver 1: 52-year-old male from Mitchell, SD, fatal injuries

Seat belt Used: Yes

Passenger 1a: 72-year-old female from Sioux Falls, SD, fatal injuries

Seat belt Used: Under investigation

Passenger 1b: 37-year-old female from Sioux Falls, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: No

Passenger 1c: 36-year-old male from Sioux Falls, SD, serious, non-life-threatening injuries

Seat belt Used: No

Douglas County, S.D. – Two people died in a single-vehicle crash Sunday evening six miles southwest of Corsica, SD.

The names of the people involved have not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates that a 2016 Ford Fusion was traveling eastbound on SD Highway 44 near mile marker 325 when the vehicle left the roadway and entered the south ditch. The vehicle hit a field approach, vaulted over a fence, then rolled, coming to rest in the field.

The driver and a passenger died at the scene. Two other passengers were life-flighted to a Sioux Falls hospital with serious, non-life-threatening 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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BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 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. Public Hearing for Special Event Alcoholic Beverage License for SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center
5. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign the JDC Agreement with Aberdeen School District
6. Approve Leah Eisenbeisz for the Junior Fair Board
7. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
 - a. R-O-W for Web Water
 - b. R-O-W for Bill Edwards & Diamond Five Farms, LLC
 - c. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Bid Contracts for the following:
 - i. Full Operation of Rental of Gravel Trucks & Road Machinery with the following: Diesel Machinery Inc.; H.F. Jacobs & Son Construction; Hanlon Brothers; Crush Mode
 - ii. Gravel Material with the following: Althoff Aggregates; LG Everist, Inc.; H.F. Jacobs & Son Construction; Hanlon Brothers; Hall Sand & Gravel
 - iii. Bituminous Plant Mix with Jensen Rock & Sand
 - d. Department Update
8. Allison Tunheim, HR Director
 - a. Discuss Benefits
 - b. Approve & Authorize Chairman to sign Contract with Wellmark BCBS
9. Discuss NE Council of Government (NECOG) Agreement and Proposed By-Law Changes
10. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 14, 2026:
 - i. General Meeting
 - ii. Brown County Board of Equalization
 - iii. Consolidated Board of Equalization
 - b. Approval of Special Meeting Minutes of April 15, 2026
 - c. Claims/Payroll
 - d. HR Report
 - e. Travel Requests
 - f. Abatements
 - g. Sheriff Reports for March 2026
11. Other Business
12. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
13. 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 #

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

EQUALIZATION BOARDS

11:00 AM - BROWN COUNTY BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

- Reconvene
- Tax Freezes
- Correction
- Contested Appeals
- Adjourn for 2026

1:00 PM – CONSOLIDATED BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

- Reconvene
- Contested Appeals
- Recess until April 28th

AGENDA

BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 – 7:00 PM

BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT COMMUNITY ROOM
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS)

- I. **Call to Order:** for Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission
- II. **Roll Call:** Stan Beckler, David North, Dale Kurth, James Meyers, Carrie Weisenburger, Paul Johnson, County Commissioner Mike Gage (who serves on this Board per SDCL 11-2-2) and Alternate Joel Wiedebush.
- III. **Opportunity for Public Comment if any.** Anyone may speak for up to three (3) minutes on any item that is not on this Agenda.
- IV. **Approval of April 21, 2026, Agenda:** Motion: 1st _____ 2nd _____
- V. **Approval of March 17, 2026, Minutes:** Motion: 1st _____ 2nd _____

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT (BOA)

- VI. **Old Business:**
 - 1) **Sign-up sheet:** On the table by the door entrance, there is a Sign-up Sheet. Please legibly sign in and mark YES or NO if you want to speak to the Board on any Agenda Item.
 - 2) **Permits:** Anyone that has submitted a Variance Petition (VP) or a Conditional Use Petition (CUP) to the Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) is still required to get their required PERMITS from the Zoning Office before starting their project if their Petition gets approved. Penalties may be assessed by Ordinance when starting projects without proper permits in place.
- VII. **New Business:** Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA).
 - 1) **Variance to Lot Size** in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as proposed Lot 1, "Elsen First Addition" in the SW1/4 of the SE1/4 of Section 5-T128N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 39554 101st Street; Liberty Twp.) to allow Lot 1 (5.00 acres) to be smaller than 40.0 acres and remain zoned as Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P).
 - 2) **Variance to Lot Size** in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as proposed Lot 1, "Tigh and Adrienne Fliehs First Addition" in the NE1/4 of Section 25-T125N-R61W of the 5th P.M., Brown

County, South Dakota (12247 406th Street; Claremont Twp.) to allow Lot 1 (13.56 acres) to be smaller than 40.0 acres and remain zoned as Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P).

- 3) **Conditional Use Petition (CUP)** in an Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) described as the SE1/4 of Section 2-T127N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (10665 399th Avenue; Greenfield Twp.) for a change of ownership of and existing concentrated animal feeding operation.

VIII. **Other Business:**

Completed as Zoning Board of Adjustment (BOA) & going to Planning Commission

AGENDA

BROWN COUNTY PLANNING/ZONING COMMISSION REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETINGS

TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2026 – 7:00 PM

BROWN COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX in the BASEMENT COMMUNITY ROOM
(STAIRWAY AND ELEVATOR ACCESS)

PLANNING COMMISSION

I. **Old Business:**

II. **New Business:** Brown County Planning/Zoning Commission as **Planning Commission.**

- 10) **Rezone Petition** for a 2.78± acre property described as Lot 3, “Jones 2nd Subdivision” the SE1/4 of Section 22-T123N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (39756 134th Street; Bath Twp.) to be rezoned from Agriculture Preservation District (AG-P) to Mini-Agriculture District (M-AG).
- 11) **Preliminary & Final Plat** for conveyance purposes on a property described as “Elsen First Addition” in the SW1/4 of the SE1/4 of Section 5-T128N-R62W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (approx. 39554 101st Street; Liberty Twp.).
- 12) **Preliminary & Final Plat** for financial purposes on a property described as “Tigh and Adrienne Flihs First Addition” in the NE1/4 of Section 25-T125N-R61W of the 5th P.M., Brown County, South Dakota (12247 406th Avenue; Claremont Twp.).

III. **Other Business:**

IV. **Executive Session:** (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2).

V. **Motion to Adjourn:** 1st _____ 2nd _____

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Schwan, Kucker lead Groton boys to strong runner-up finish; girls post relay wins at Ipswich

IPSWICH — The Groton Area middle school boys turned in a strong all-around performance Monday, finishing second in the team standings at the Ipswich Middle School Track Meet, while the girls were highlighted by multiple relay victories against a competitive field.

The Groton boys tallied 113.5 points to place behind only Aberdeen Roncalli (123), with contributions coming across sprints, distance events, relays, and field events.

Leading the way was Ryder Schwan, who dominated the short sprints with first-place finishes in both the 100-meter dash (11.63) and 200-meter dash (25.31). He was joined by teammates Trey Tietz (second in the 100, 12.44; fourth in the 200, 27.30), Ivan Schwan (third in the 100, 12.57; second in the 200, 27.19), and Trayce Schelle (fifth in the 100, 12.76; fifth in the 200, 27.74) to give Groton a strong presence in the sprint events.

Kyson Kucker added two more victories for the Tigers, winning the 400 meters in 56.28 and the 800 meters in 2:26.45, showcasing Groton's strength in the middle-distance races.

Groton's relay teams also played a key role in the runner-up finish. The 4x100 relay team of Keegan Kucker, Kyson Kucker, Trayce Schelle, and Ryder Schwan took first place in 49.50, while another Groton squad placed sixth. The Tigers also captured first in the 4x200 relay, with Ivan Schwan, Keegan Kucker, Trey Tietz, and Ryder Schwan finishing in 1:45.81.

In the field events, Trayce Schelle claimed first place in the high jump by clearing 5 feet, while Liam Lord added a fifth-place finish. Liam Johnson led Groton in the throws, placing seventh in the shot put (31-10.5) and 12th in the discus (74-1), with additional contributions from Gavin Hanten, Bentley Harms, and Hank Fliehs.

On the girls' side, Groton finished fifth as a team with 48 points, but made a strong statement in the relays.

The 4x100 relay team of Rowan Patterson, Brynlee Dunker, Andi Iverson, and Kinley Sandness raced to a first-place finish in 57.08. Groton followed that with another win in the 4x200 relay, as Patterson, Sandness, Libby Johnson, and Dunker crossed the line first in 2:02.26.

Individually, Charli Jacobsen led the Tigers with a first-place finish in the 100-meter hurdles (19.27), while Addison Steffes added a fourth-place finish in the same event (20.93). Rowan Patterson also contributed points with a sixth-place finish in the 100 meters (14.47).

Taylor Fliehs turned in a solid effort in the distance events, placing seventh in the 800 meters (2:55.26), while Shealee Gilchrist paced Groton in the 200 meters with a 19th-place finish.

In the field events, Andi Gauer led Groton in the discus with a throw of 49-10 to place 19th, while Lillian Davis added a 22nd-place finish.

Boy's Division

Team Scores: 1. Roncalli 123, 2. Groton Area ms 113.5, 3. Timber Lake 91.25, 4. Warner MS 71.25, 5. Ipswich MS 34, 6. Hoven 29, 7. Dupree MS 27, 8. Faulkton 18, 8. Selby 18, 10. Highmore MS 14, 11. Hitchcock-Tulare 12, 12. Langford Area 11, 13. Leola 8, 14. Aberdeen Christian MS 6

100 Meters: 1. Ryder Schwan, 11.63; 2. Trey Tietz, 12.44; 3. Ivan Schwan, 12.57; 5. Trayce Schelle, 12.76; 21. Quinton Flores, 14.20; 55. Wyatt Morehouse, 15.59

80. Hank Fliehs, 17.07; 85. Weston Kettner, 17.52; 88. Titan Johnson, 17.97; 90. Hayden Hubbard, 18.20

200 Meters: 1. Ryder Schwan, 25.31; 2. Ivan Schwan, 27.19; 4. Trey Tietz, 27.30; 5. Trayce Schelle, 27.74; 40. Wyatt Morehouse, 33.20; 71. Titan Johnson, 40.59; 74. Weston Kettner, 42.71

400 Meters: 1. Kyson Kucker, 56.28; 15. Quinton Flores, 1:07.23

800 Meters: 1. Kyson Kucker, 2:26.45; 9. Quinton Flores, 2:43.42; 17. Hayden Hubbard, 2:54.54

4x100 Relay: 1. Groton: Keegan Kucker, Kyson Kucker, Trayce Schelle, Ryder Schwan, 49.50; 6. Groton: (Liam Johnson, Wyatt Morehouse, Bentley Harms, Gavin Hanten), 59.22.

4x200 Relay: 1. Groton: (Ivan Schwan, Keegan Kucker, Trey Tietz, Ryder Schwan), 1:45.81.

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Shot Put - 8lb: 7. Liam Johnson, 31' 10.5"; 15. Gavin Hanten, 23' 9"; 17. Bentley Harms, 23' 8"; 25. Hank Fliehs, 20' 10"; 35. Grayson Warrington, 16' 6"

Discus - 1kg: 12. Liam Johnson, 74' 1"; 19. Gavin Hanten, 61' 7"; 26. Hank Fliehs, 53' 6"; 31. Grayson Warrington, 48' 10"

High Jump: 1. Trayce Schelle, 5' 0"; 5. Liam Lord, 4' 6"

Girl's Division

Team Scores: 1. Ipswich MS 155, 2. Timber Lake 111, 3. Roncalli 90, 4. Warner MS 67, 5. Groton Area ms 48, 6. Faulkton 27, 7. Aberdeen Christian MS 24, 8. Hitchcock-Tulare 19, 8. Hoven 19, 10. Selby 13.5, 11. Dupree MS 12, 12. Langford Area 10, 13. Leola 5, 13. McLaughlin MS 5, 15. Highmore MS 2.5

100 Meters: 6. Rowan Patterson, 14.47; 25. Shealee Gilchrist, 15.46; 30. Addison Steffes, 15.67; 35. Rowan Hanson, 15.90; 59. Hadley Heilman, 16.70; 61. Harley Furman, 16.77; 66. Lennox Locke, 17.22; 81. Gracie Borg, 26.64

200 Meters: 19. Shealee Gilchrist, 33.86; 48. Harley Furman, 36.82; 60. Lennox Locke, 37.79; 65. Gracie Borg, 38.73

400 Meters: 28. Rowan Hanson, 1:32.50

800 Meters: 7. Taylor Fliehs, 2:55.26

100m Hurdles - 30" / 0.762m: 1. Charli Jacobsen, 19.27; 4. Addison Steffes, 20.93

4x100 Relay:

1. Groton: (Rowan Patterson, Brynlee Dunker, Andi Iverson, Kinley Sandness), 57.08.

5. Groton: (Charli Jacobsen, Libby Johnson, Mya Moody, Zoe Olson), 1:01.79.

4x200 Relay: 1. Groton: (Rowan Patterson, Kinley Sandness, Libby Johnson, Brynlee Dunker), 2:02.26.

5. Groton: (Andi Iverson, Charli Jacobsen, Mya Moody, Zoe Olson), 2:06.86.

Shot Put - 6lb: 24. Lillian Davis, 22' 3.5"; 34. Hadley Heilman, 19' 3"; 39. Andi Gauer, 18' 6.5"

Discus - 1kg: 19. Andi Gauer, 49' 10"; 22. Lillian Davis, 47' 4"



Members of the Groton American Legion Squadron #39 unpacked the new chairs for the American Legion after their meeting Monday night. Pictured are Travis McGannon, Aaron Grant Jr., Mark Abeln, Tanner McGannon, Rylan Blackwood, Bruce Babcock and Aaron Grant.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

State wildfire division celebrates \$4 million investment in new facilities amid busy season

BY: SETH TUPPER

RAPID CITY — Firefighters who've been busy battling wildfires in South Dakota's Black Hills celebrated the opening Monday of two state-funded buildings to house their trucks, equipment and training.

Jay Wickham, the director of South Dakota Wildland Fire, has advocated for new facilities for many of the 28 years he's worked with the division.

He used the word "grateful" to describe his feelings Monday.

"Just a huge gratitude so that our people have a place they can call home, that they can be proud of," Wickham said.

In a building that formerly housed Wildland Fire's Rapid City employees, firefighters had to move equipment out of a storage loft above a meeting room several years ago after discovering the weight was 180% of the safe load, Wickham said. In Hot Springs, firefighters were parking trucks in a building with a dirt floor.

The new buildings cost the state about \$4 million, split nearly evenly between the two locations.

Lawmakers provided about \$2.5 million in 2023 at the request of the state Department of Public Safety, which includes the Wildland Fire division. After the cost estimates grew, then-Sen. David Johnson, R-Rapid City, sponsored successful legislation providing another \$1.4 million in 2024.

The Hot Springs building is dedicated to Trampus Haskvitz, a firefighter who died fighting the Coal Canyon wildfire in 2011.

Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden said during a ribbon-cutting in Rapid City that he has gained "a whole new appreciation" for wildland firefighters in the Black Hills after witnessing their work recently.

"You deserve proper equipment and proper facilities to make you safe and prepared for the dangers that you face every day," Rhoden said.

Firefighters have battled several major Black Hills wildfires in recent weeks, including the Qury Fire, which burned more than 9,000 acres near Custer, the Coyote Flats Fire, which burned more than 300 acres near Rockerville, and the 79 Fire, which burned more than 5,000 acres near Buffalo Gap.

Fire danger remains high due to a historically warm and dry winter followed by similar conditions this spring.

South Dakota Wildland Fire has about 45 full-time employees, plus roughly the same number of seasonal employees, spread among Black Hills locations in Lead, Custer, Rapid City and Hot Springs.

The state division works closely with local and federal firefighting agencies in the Black Hills, where the land is a checkerboarded mix of private, state, tribal and federal ownership.

During the recently concluded state legislative session, lawmakers took several other actions to help firefighters and prevent wildfires, which Rhoden highlighted Monday. Those actions included providing \$5 million for grants to purchase protective equipment for volunteer firefighters, approving a law that allows private landowners to conduct prescribed fires on state land in certain circumstances, raising the meal cost allowance for wildland firefighters, and budgeting \$160,000 for an eastern South Dakota fire management office.

Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.

Prison reform group will hear public comment and plans for seminary program, drug treatment

Third meeting of Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force follows groundbreaking for \$650 million men's prison

BY: JOHN HULT

Members of a Correctional Rehabilitation Task Force plan to talk through South Dakota's options for a prison seminary program, learn more about behavioral health at a soon-to-open Rapid City women's prison and take comments from the public on Wednesday.

The third meeting of the task force will begin at 10:30 a.m. Central time at the Military Heritage Alliance in Sioux Falls, about an hour and a half after the planned groundbreaking for a \$650 million men's prison on a plot of undeveloped land a few miles to northeast.

Republican Gov. Larry Rhoden formed the task force in the run-up to a special legislative session vote in September on the men's prison, an outgrowth of a separate task force dubbed Project Prison Reset. The reset group was formed in the wake of the Legislature's rejection in early 2025 of a more expensive plan to replace the oldest buildings on the South Dakota State Penitentiary campus in Sioux Falls, and Rhoden said the work of the rehabilitation task force would help guide discussions on how a new facility would address ongoing issues with repeat offenders, security and societal reentry within the Department of Corrections.

Around half of exiting inmates return to prison within three years of release — a higher average than neighboring states.

The rehabilitation group is led by Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen, who also served as chairman of the prison construction task force.

The agenda for Wednesday's meeting includes a presentation on the findings from a multi-month study of South Dakota's existing prison programming, conducted by the Council of State Governments Justice Center. The nonprofit organization has a \$160,000 contract with the state to offer technical support to the task force through March 2027.

The meeting will also include a presentation from Northwestern College, a Christian university in Orange City, Iowa, on how it might operate a prison seminary program endorsed by the rehabilitation task force's faith-based subcommittee and Rhoden. The program would train inmates to serve as degreed seminar-ians and faith leaders within the state's prison system, using a curriculum developed in Louisiana in 1995 that's since spread to several facilities across the U.S.

Corrections Secretary Nick Lamb told the task force in December he was initially skeptical of the program's value until he saw it implemented in Illinois, where Lamb worked as a prison administrator for several years before stints in New Mexico and Iowa.

A leader of the department's behavioral health system will also offer a rundown of programming at a new \$87 million women's prison that's nearing completion in Rapid City. The new prison includes a building devoted to a mother-infant program, which lets qualifying inmate mothers live full-time with their babies under supervision. The program has shown promise since its implementation at the Pierre women's prison in 2022, officials say.

Venhuizen, in a commentary published by The Dakota Scout, said the new women's prison will also include a drug therapeutic treatment unit large enough to serve 96 inmates at the 288-bed facility. He also pointed to recent investments in security meant to stem the flow of illegal drugs into state prison facilities.

Just under half the women imprisoned in South Dakota are serving sentences for drug offenses, according to the state's most recent Department of Corrections Annual Statistical Report, and eight inmates died from drug overdoses in 2025 in South Dakota prisons.

The task force is scheduled to take comments from members of the public starting at 2:15 p.m. Wednesday. A tour of the penitentiary campus in Sioux Falls, open only to task force members, will follow the meeting's adjournment at 3 p.m.

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Johnson's lead grows in new poll on race for Republican governor nomination

BY: SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT STAFF

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, R-South Dakota, has opened up a bigger lead in the race for the Republican nomination for governor, according to new poll results.

The poll, commissioned by South Dakota News Watch and the Chiesman Center for Democracy, shows Johnson with 34% support, followed by state House Speaker Jon Hansen at 18%, Gov. Larry Rhoden and businessman Toby Doeden each at 17%, and 14% undecided.

Mason-Dixon Polling & Strategy conducted the survey of 500 registered Republican voters in the state April 7-11.

Besides a wider lead for Johnson, who came into the race with the highest name recognition and most campaign funds, the new results indicate a negative trend for Rhoden, relatively unchanged results for Doeden, and a rise for Hansen since the last poll results from the same groups. Rhoden, the former lieutenant governor, is serving the remainder of former Gov. Kristi Noem's term after she resigned in January 2025 to work for President Donald Trump's administration.

In October, the same groups released poll results of Johnson 28%, Rhoden 27%, Doeden 15% and Hansen 10% with 21% undecided. Last April, the results were Johnson 28%, Rhoden 27%, state Attorney Marty Jackley (who has since become a candidate for U.S. House rather than governor) 18%, Doeden 4% and Hansen 2% with 20% undecided.

Separately, results from a KELOLAND-commissioned Emerson College Polling survey in March were Johnson 28%, Doeden 18%, Rhoden 17%, Hansen 14% and 23% undecided.

The primary election is June 2. The top vote-getter in the Republican primary for governor needs 35% support to avoid a top-two runoff. The winner advances to the Nov. 3 general election, in which the only other candidate for governor so far is Dan Ahlers, a Democrat who is unopposed for his party's nomination.

Interior's Burgum accused of 'kneecapping' wind and solar power in favor of oil, gas

BY: JACOB FISCHLER

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum defended the Trump administration's approach to energy production Monday, as Democrats on a U.S. House Appropriations panel accused the department of kowtowing to oil and gas interests at the expense of renewable energy.

Burgum said President Donald Trump's administration aimed to ease regulatory burdens on oil and gas producers, and said former President Joe Biden sought to shut out those industries in a misguided attempt to boost renewable energy sources.

Burgum indicated at several points that what Democrats called a pro-oil-and-gas bias was a correction to Biden's "over-rotation" toward wind and solar.

"The last administration said 'all of the above' and then there were a set of rules that were completely punitive against the stuff that we needed to actually, you know, have baseload power in this country," he said about Biden's oil and gas policy. "It was just too early. It was too premature to say we're going to shut all that down and we're going to transition."

But Democrats on the House Appropriations Interior-Environment Subcommittee said the Interior Department under Burgum was doing exactly the opposite: subsidizing fossil fuels while discouraging solar and wind power.

"Shortly after taking office, the White House moved quickly to halt offshore wind development and took steps to rein in solar and wind projects," Rep. Chellie Pingree, D-Maine, said. "Why? Why are we kneecapping industries that create jobs, expand our energy supply and help address the climate crisis? Because this administration's energy policy is based on political grievance, ideological hostility and, of course,

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propping up big oil and gas.”

California Democrat Josh Harder called for an overhaul of permitting regulations to enable faster construction of renewable energy infrastructure. Some of that responsibility fell to Congress, he said, but he complained that Trump was making it even harder for wind and solar projects to get off the ground.

“There is, again, one standard for one type of energy and another standard for another type,” he said. “I hear the complaints about previous administrations putting their thumb on the scale. What I see now is secretary-level approval required for one type of project, but not for another. And again, I don’t think that’s sustainable or good policy.”

Burgum responded that the administration was pro-hydro power and pro-nuclear, but was wary of “weather-dependent, intermittent” solar and wind power because those sources can be more expensive for ratepayers.

Cutbacks in parks, Bureau of Indian Education

The topic of Monday’s hearing was Trump’s \$16 billion budget request for the Interior Department for the next fiscal year. The request would keep the department’s funding roughly even with the current fiscal year, which was a nearly 12% cut from fiscal 2025.

Democrats voiced their disapproval of that new baseline, including a \$757 million cut to National Park Service operations.

“The department is on a dangerous course,” Pingree said. “This budget would only make the damage worse, and as the ranking member of the subcommittee, I will do everything in my power to oppose these reckless cuts and fight the administration’s destructive policies.”

Members of both parties raised questions about proposed cuts to the Bureau of Indian Education budget after the Department of Education offloaded part of its responsibility in that area to Interior.

The BIE would receive about \$437 million less under the proposed budget, a roughly 32% cut.

“While your agency begins to manage these new programs, I would strongly recommend — I’m sure you will — carrying out thorough tribal consultations to ensure that there are no funding award delays or program disruptions that would potentially harm,” full Appropriations Committee Chair Tom Cole told Burgum.

Cole, an Oklahoma Republican and enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation, is the first Native American to lead the Appropriations Committee.

Full committee ranking Democrat Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut, who is also the top Democrat on the subcommittee that oversees Education Department funding, said she was concerned about the shift.

“I worry about transferring the programs from Education,” she said. “Quite honestly, (BIE) doesn’t have a great track record, and I don’t know whether or not the funding that goes along with those programs is going to come over.”

Burgum said 16 full-time staffers in four Education Department programs would transfer to the BIE, along with all the funding for the programs.

Local issues

Members also raised a host of specific concerns.

Minnesota Democrat Betty McCollum criticized the U.S. Senate vote last week to undo restrictions on mining in the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota.

Rep. Jake Ellzey, a Texas Republican, focused much of his time on poor conditions at Maryland’s Fort Washington, a unit of the National Park Service a short drive from Washington, D.C.

Ellzey pointed to photos of buildings in need of repair and noted that a longtime park ranger retired last year and her role has not been filled, leaving only two rangers across almost 350 acres.

And subcommittee Chairman Mike Simpson, an Idaho Republican, joked that the Bureau of Land Management’s \$144 million wild horses and burros program was his top priority.

“If you can solve that problem, I don’t care what happens to the rest of the budget,” Simpson said. “We’ve been trying to deal with that for so long that it’s crazy.”

Show me the money: Businesses line up for \$166B in refunds from Trump's illegal tariffs

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Customs and Border Protection tariff refund system went live Monday, marking what small business advocates call a “complex” first step for entrepreneurs to recoup \$166 billion in import taxes accrued under President Donald Trump’s emergency tariffs, which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down in February.

Importers and brokers can now upload a detailed list of each tariff paid under Trump’s now illegal order to charge duties under the International Economic Emergency Powers Act, or IEEPA.

Customs officials estimate 330,000 importers paid the duties. Refunds are expected within 60 to 90 days, according to CBP.

The Supreme Court’s 6-3 decision earlier this year found Trump’s steep global tariffs exceeded his presidential powers.

Following the high court’s decision, U.S. Court of International Trade Judge Richard Eaton ordered the government to stop charging the tariffs and establish a refund system.

A handful of small businesses and Democratic state attorneys general led the legal challenge to Trump’s 2025 “Liberation Day” tariffs.

Small business owners angry, frustrated

States Newsroom documented the experiences of several small businesses across the U.S. who faced increased costs following Trump’s change in international trade policy.

Now many are experiencing a “confusing mix of relief,” Richard Trent, executive director of Main Street Alliance, told States Newsroom in an interview Monday.

Trent, whose organization advocates on behalf of small businesses said “our entrepreneurs, many of whom were angry that they had to pay tariffs in the first place, and were frustrated by the back-and-forth over the last year, opened up the portal this morning only to see that it had crashed. It just feels like the uncertainty just keeps popping up.”

Trent, who spoke to “five or six” businesses Monday morning who experienced technical issues, said the portal was up and running again by afternoon.

Customs and Border Protection did not confirm for States Newsroom whether the system had crashed, but rather provided a written statement.

“U.S. Customs and Border Protection has developed a new tool, the Consolidated Administration and Processing of Entries (CAPE), to efficiently process refunds, pursuant to court order, for importers and brokers who paid IEEPA duties,” according to an agency spokesperson.

“CBP has issued guidance to the trade community to help them prepare to use the new CAPE tool. Importers and brokers can visit CBP’s website for resources and step-by-step guidance,” the statement continued.

Monday’s launch is the first part of a four-step process in refunding the taxes paid by American businesses of all sizes.

Trent said the “complex” process is yet another hurdle for small operations.

“This is progress, but it’s not yet justice,” Trent said in an earlier statement Monday. “Small business owners should not have to jump through hoops to get back money they never should have had to pay. We need a refund process that is simple, accessible, and fast.”

Guides for refunds

The Liberty Justice Center, the libertarian legal advocacy group that represented small business plaintiffs before the Supreme Court, has established the Tariff Equity Refund Resource for America. The platform offers online guides for how to properly submit documentation for the refunds.

"We took this fight all the way to the Supreme Court on behalf of small businesses, and we're not stopping now," Sara Albrecht, chair of the Liberty Justice Center, said in a statement Monday. "We are a nonprofit law firm — our only goal is to help businesses recover every dollar they are owed, not to take a percentage of it. At a time when others are looking to profit off confusion, we are making this process clear, accessible and free."

Trump declared international trade a national emergency just over a year ago, citing a trade imbalance on imports and exports between the United States and several other countries. The president imposed a 10% blanket tariff on all global imports and steeper double-digit taxes on products from some of the top U.S. trading partners.

The president delayed and changed the rates on numerous occasions.

Following his Supreme Court loss, Trump imposed a new round of universal, temporary tariffs under a separate statute. The Liberty Justice Center is again representing small businesses in court to fight the new import taxes.

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

Advocates protest outside Air Force base where Lakota woman was allegedly killed

'I want her voice to be heard because she cannot speak for herself'

BY: AMELIA SCHAFER, ICT

ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE, S.D. — Sahela Sangrait's family, friends and community aren't done demanding justice for her.

Roughly one dozen community members gathered outside Ellsworth Air Force Base on April 17, in 30-degree weather and snowfall, to insist on accountability and transparency in her case.

Federal prosecutors have charged United States Airman Quinterius Chappelle with first degree murder in the 2024 homicide of Sahela "Toka Win" Sangrait, who was Mnicoujou Lakota. Prosecutors believe the crime took place at Chappelle's residence on the Air Force Base.

Sangrait's remains were found on March 4, 2025 in a remote area near Black Elks Peak in the Black Hills National Forest. Black Elk Peak, also known as Hínháŋ Káŋa or Heháka Sápa, is significant to the Lakota people. Sangrait was found under a distinct coffee table which law enforcement traced to a matching set in Chappelle's residence.

Chappelle was charged on March 17, 2025. He has since pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

"There's this lack of transparency," said Darlene Gomez, an attorney representing Sangrait's family. "We've seen a whole slew of women being killed and their families have to seek that justice because the federal government is not going to seek that."

The protest, organized by a Rapid City-based advocacy organization called the Medicine Wheel Ride, was done in an effort to push for openness and communication from the base. Advocates say officials on the base could have prevented this crime.

"We're being left unheard and nobody wants to take the time to listen to us," said Rhamie Light Bone, a citizen of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe who participated in the protest.

Light Bone said she did not know Sangrait personally but felt called to the event to help stand up disproportionate levels of violence against Indigenous women nationwide.

"I want her voice to be heard because she cannot speak for herself," Light Bone said.

What happened

The night of Sangrait's homicide, Box Elder law enforcement responded to reports of a domestic dispute at Chappelle's on-base residence. Officers left the property without contacting anyone inside, according

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to court documents filed in the Chappelle case.

Sangrait's friends and family attempted to report her missing on Aug. 11, 2024 and again in January 2025, but Box Elder Police did not report her missing until Feb. 10, 2025.

Air Force supervisors required Chappelle to report to Rapid City Police on August 12, 2024, when he arrived at work with scratch marks on his face, according to court documents.

Before the homicide, several Airmen sought protection orders against Chappelle claiming he made threats to shoot up the Air Force base, according to federal court documents. An internal investigation revealed an alleged "hit list" made by Chappelle listing fellow Airmen and supervisors.

Chappelle was involved in a separate domestic violence case handled internally by Air Force authorities. He was court-martialed in February 2024, according to Jesse Fagerland, a sergeant with the Pennington County Sheriff's Office. He was disciplined in November of that year, two months after the alleged murder. Chappelle also violated no contact orders twice, according to Fagerland.

Fagerland testified during Chappelle's March 28 arraignment in the Sangrait case.

Community members worry that Box Elder law enforcement officials were not aware of domestic violence charges made within the base against Chappelle, and if they were, they could have responded differently.

"I do have a lot of questions because it appears that there were a lot of steps missing and inconsistent with police policies," said Gomez, the Sangrait family's attorney. "The fact that Quinterius already had a history of domestic violence and strangulation and in this case was pending some type of court martial and was out and about doing his thing."

Additional defendants, suspect

Sangrait's autopsy report completed on March 10, 2025, showed three separate sets of DNA under Sangrait's fingernails, one set of female DNA and two sets of male. Drew Durand, a 25-year-old Box Elder woman, has since been charged with accessory after the fact and misprision of a felony in connection with Sangrait's homicide. Gomez said she wants to know why the other man has yet to be charged.

"I haven't seen any kind of follow up," about him, Gomez said.

A federal jury trial is scheduled to begin May 26 for Durand. Chappelle's trial was previously scheduled for the same date, but has since been postponed with no new trial date set.

Gomez said the family plans to file a civil lawsuit in the case, but did not say who the defendant or defendants might be.

Sangrait's funeral services are scheduled for the night of April 17 in Rapid City, South Dakota, at Woyatan Lutheran Church.

"The more people that know Sahela's story, the less likely she is to be forgotten," Gomez said.

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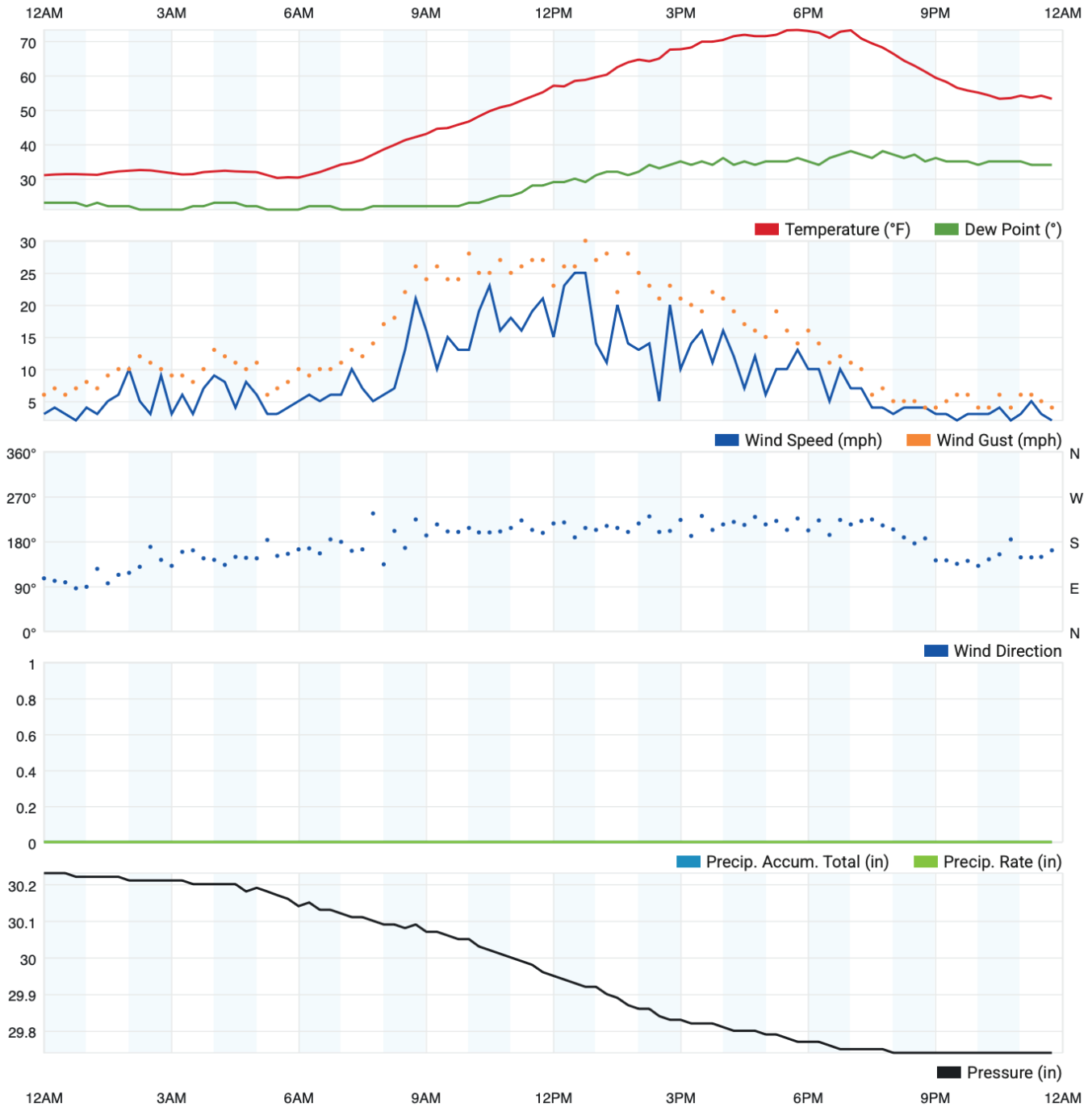
Amelia Schafer is the Indigenous Affairs reporter for ICT and is based in Rapid City. She is of Wampanoag and Montauk-Brothertown Indian Nation descent.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

April 20, 2026



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Today



High: 76 °F

Sunny

Tonight



Low: 49 °F

Mostly Clear

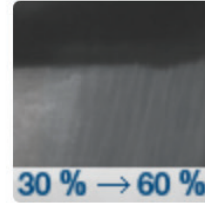
Wednesday



High: 88 °F

Mostly Sunny
then Mostly
Sunny and
Breezy

Wednesday
Night



Low: 58 °F

Breezy.
Chance
Showers then
Showers
Likely

Thursday



High: 73 °F

Slight Chance
Showers and
Breezy



Very High Fire Danger Returns Wednesday

April 21, 2026
3:56 AM CDT

Critical/near-critical fire weather conditions expected across the region

Key Messages:

- **Fire Weather Watch** for central and portions of northeast SD Wednesday afternoon/evening.
- Southerly **wind gusts 30-45 mph** across much of the region.
- **Afternoon humidity between 15 and 20 percent** in the watch area.
- Thunderstorms possible Wednesday night, with **cloud to ground lightning**.

NEW

Important Updates:

- Initial issuance of **Fire Weather Watch**.

Next Scheduled Briefing:

- Wednesday afternoon.

Fire Weather Watch

Valid: Wednesday afternoon through early evening

Weather Forecast Office

Aberdeen, SD

Issued Apr 21, 2026 2:41 AM CDT



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A Fire Weather Watch has been issued for Wednesday. Hot temperatures, dry air, and windy conditions develop across the area.

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THREAT ASSESSMENT

HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:
Isolated Severe Storms
Possible

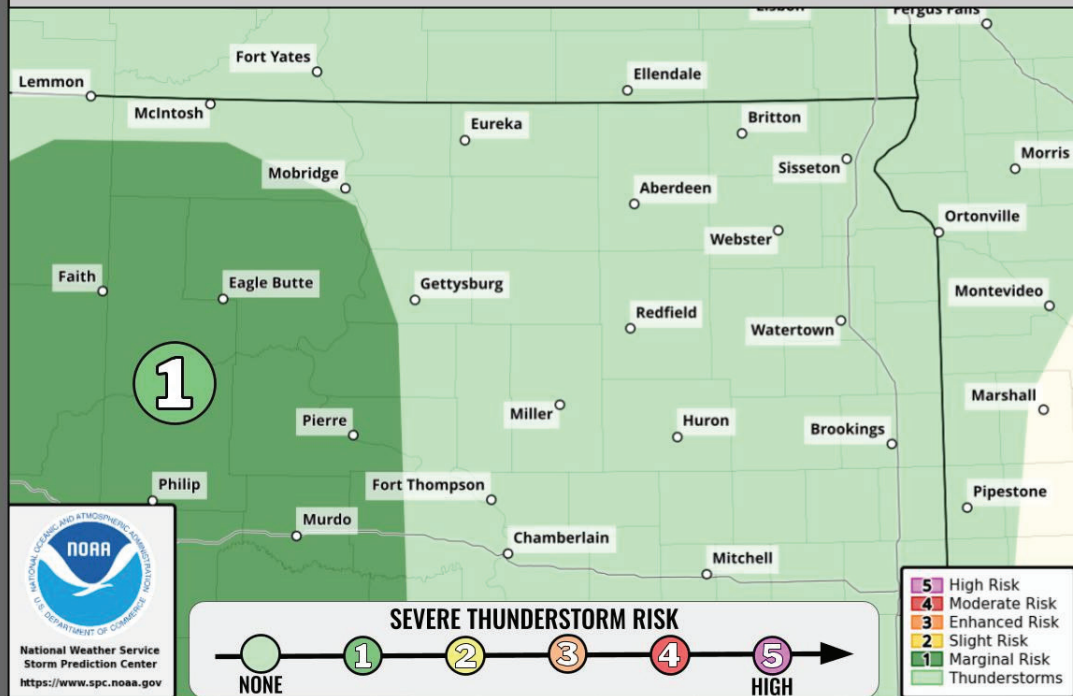
By Wednesday
evening

PRIMARY THREATS



DAMAGING
WIND GUSTS
of 60 mph

Marginal Risk for Severe Storms Wednesday Evening and Overnight



Humidity and Wind Timing Forecast

April 21, 2026
4:00 AM CDT

Dry and windy conditions will be present Wednesday afternoon

- Red boxes highlight times and locations of greatest concern for **potential critical fire weather conditions**.
- In these areas, **relative humidity (RH) is below 20 percent while winds are gusting generally between 30 and 45 mph**.

Average Wind Gust (mph) & Minimum RH (%) Forecast

		4/22 Wed						4/23 Thu								4/22 Wed						4/23 Thu										
		6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm			6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	12am	3am	6am	9am	12pm	3pm	6pm	9pm	
Aberdeen	WindGust	19	24	32	37	38	38	36	31	28	30	32	37	37	35			24	28	36	43	40	39	37	30	26	31	35	40	40	37	
	RH	63	44	31	24	24	33	47	67	72	39	30	28	33	46			51	36	24	18	20	29	49	70	57	35	28	28	34	48	
Britton	WindGust	21	24	31	37	37	40	39	37	31	33	35	36	35	34			17	22	28	31	29	27	24	21	21	27	33	39	41	37	
	RH	57	43	33	28	30	36	47	65	75	47	35	34	39	55			63	43	26	22	24	42	65	74	69	47	41	41	47	62	
Chamberlain	WindGust	16	24	36	40	38	36	31	24	20	26	31	37	38	34			21	27	36	39	34	31	26	26	29	34	37	43	44	38	
	RH	55	31	17	14	18	31	51	67	51	34	26	26	30	45			43	26	18	16	21	44	64	50	45	39	34	33	39	49	
Clark	WindGust	28	32	36	39	40	43	41	37	35	33	32	36	37	36			14	20	29	35	31	28	22	19	20	28	34	40	40	35	
	RH	57	48	36	30	30	38	49	72	78	47	35	33	37	52			52	33	19	16	22	46	63	71	55	40	35	34	39	52	
Eagle Butte	WindGust	20	24	29	31	28	26	24	24	27	34	41	46	47	43			25	30	37	44	40	40	38	33	30	32	35	39	40	37	
	RH	50	35	21	17	19	39	67	63	54	47	44	45	52	59			59	43	27	20	21	30	45	70	69	36	27	27	32	48	
Eureka	WindGust	22	26	33	39	36	34	30	25	23	29	36	43	45	39			20	24	29	35	33	37	37	35	31	32	32	33	31	31	
	RH	54	41	28	22	22	33	58	78	69	45	35	36	45	60			63	44	33	28	30	36	47	63	75	46	33	33	38	51	
Gettysburg	WindGust	23	26	33	38	33	32	29	24	24	31	37	44	41	38			23	27	32	36	36	39	39	37	34	33	32	32	31	32	
	RH	52	41	25	20	22	41	67	80	66	44	40	41	47	60			59	46	35	32	31	37	51	70	81	51	32	33	35	47	
McIntosh	WindGust	19	24	29	31	26	25	24	23	26	36	44	51	51	45			25	28	33	37	36	39	38	36	31	32	32	33	33	33	
	RH	58	40	31	26	28	44	67	69	61	53	51	53	60	67			57	43	34	31	29	36	49	70	75	49	34	34	37	53	
Milbank	WindGust	18	23	28	32	32	34	35	33	30	31	31	31	27	29			22	25	29	31	30	34	34	33	31	32	31	30	27	27	
	RH	68	47	36	30	32	39	51	65	78	51	35	33	38	51			66	42	34	30	30	37	51	63	75	53	36	36	39	51	
Miller	WindGust	24	28	36	43	40	39	37	30	26	31	35	40	40	37			24	28	36	43	40	39	37	30	26	31	35	40	40	37	
	RH	51	36	24	18	20	29	49	70	57	35	28	28	34	48			51	36	24	18	20	29	49	70	57	35	28	28	34	48	
Mobridge	WindGust	17	22	28	31	29	27	24	21	21	27	33	39	41	37			17	22	28	31	29	27	24	21	21	27	33	39	41	37	
	RH	63	43	26	22	24	42	65	74	69	47	41	41	47	62			63	43	26	22	24	42	65	74	69	47	41	41	47	62	
Murdo	WindGust	21	27	36	39	34	31	26	26	29	34	37	43	44	38			21	27	36	39	34	31	26	26	29	34	37	43	44	38	
	RH	43	26	18	16	21	44	64	50	45	39	34	33	39	49			43	26	18	16	21	44	64	50	45	39	34	33	39	49	
Pierre	WindGust	14	20	29	35	31	28	22	19	20	28	34	40	40	35			14	20	29	35	31	28	22	19	20	28	34	40	40	35	
	RH	52	33	19	16	22	46	63	71	55	40	35	34	39	52			52	33	19	16	22	46	63	71	55	40	35	34	39	52	
Redfield	WindGust	25	30	37	44	40	40	38	33	30	32	35	39	40	37			25	30	37	44	40	40	38	33	30	32	35	39	40	37	
	RH	59	43	27	20	21	30	45	70	69	36	27	27	32	48			59	43	27	20	21	30	45	70	69	36	27	27	32	48	
Sisseton	WindGust	20	24	29	35	33	37	37	35	31	32	32	33	31	31			20	24	29	35	33	37	37	35	31	32	32	33	31	31	
	RH	63	44	33	28	30	36	47	63	75	46	33	33	38	51			63	44	33	28	30	36	47	63	75	46	33	33	38	51	
Watertown	WindGust	23	27	32	36	36	39	39	37	34	33	32	32	31	32			23	27	32	36	36	39	39	37	34	33	32	32	31	32	
	RH	59	46	35	32	31	37	51	70	81	51	32	32	33	35	47		59	46	35	32	31	37	51	70	81	51	32	33	35	47	
Webster	WindGust	25	28	33	37	36	39	38	36	31	32	32	33	33	33			25	28	33	37	36	39	38	36	31	32	32	33	33	33	
	RH	57	43	34	31	29	36	49	70	75	49	34	34	37	53			57	43	34	31	29	36	49	70	75	49	34	34	37	53	
Wheaton	WindGust	22	25	29	31	30	34	34	33	31	31	32	31	30	27	27			22	25	29	31	30	34	34	33	31	31	32	31	30	27
	RH	66	42	34	30	30	37	51	63	75	53	36	36	39	51			66	42	34	30	30	37	51	63	75	53	36	36	39	51	

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 74 °F at 5:39 PM

Low Temp: 30 °F at 5:24 AM

Wind: 31 mph at 12:46 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1980

Record Low: 16 in 1936

Average High: 60

Average Low: 33

Average Precip in April.: 1.12

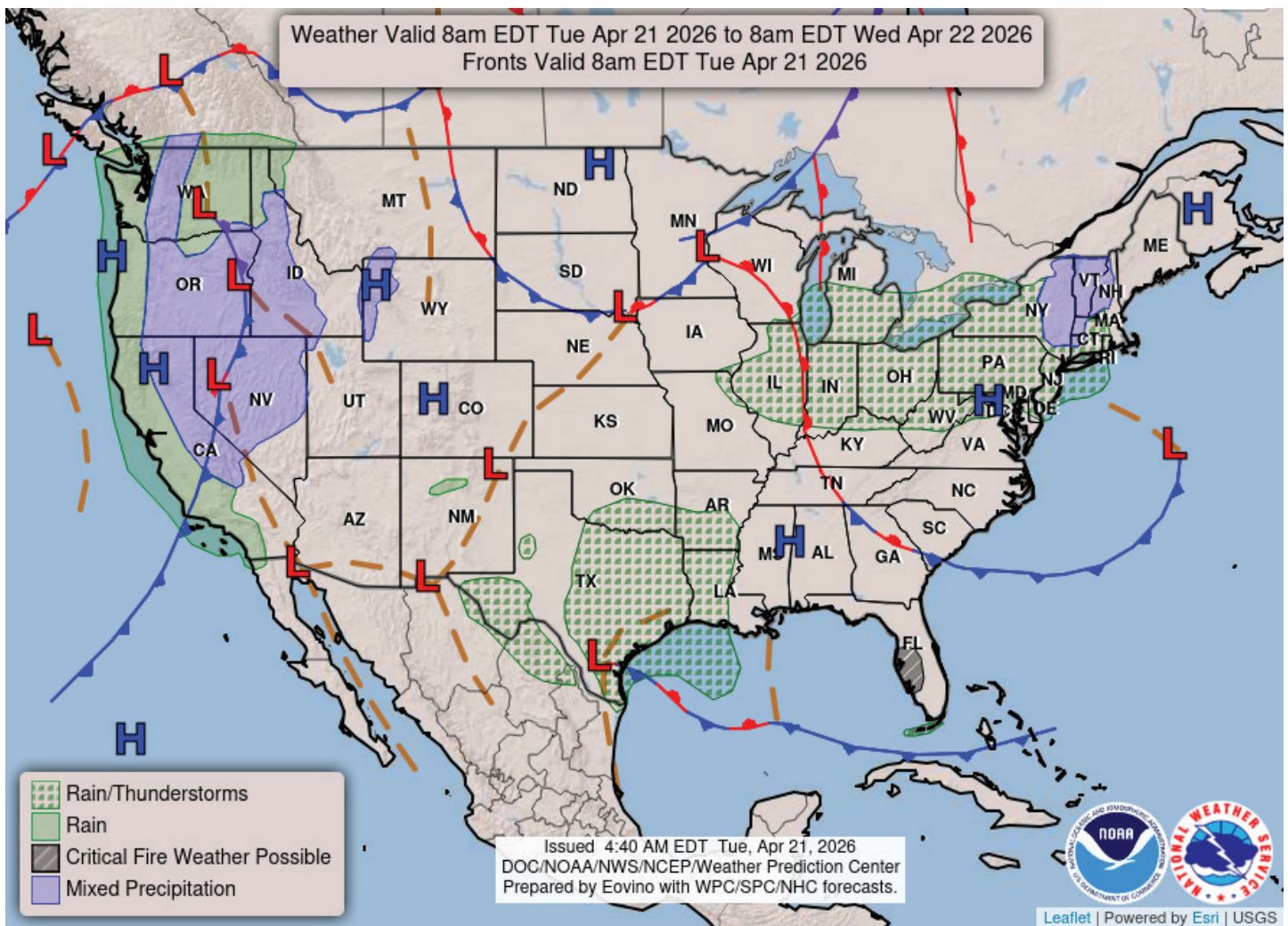
Precip to date in April.: 0.95

Average Precip to date: 3.18

Precip Year to Date: 2.57

Sunset Tonight: 8:25 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:34 am



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Today in Weather History

April 21st, 2007: Heavy rains of 2 to 2.50 inches caused flash flooding in and around Watertown. Many streets and several roads outside of town were flooded. During the evening, a warm front extending across the region was the focus for heavy rain and severe weather across far northeast South Dakota. Hail up to the size of quarters, along with heavy rains of over 2 inches, caused some flooding, mainly in Codington and Hamlin counties.

1958 — Portions of Montana were in the midst of a spring snowburst. Snowfall amounts ranged up to 55 inches at Red Lodge, 61 inches at Nye Mine, and 72 inches at Mystic Lake. (David Ludlum)

1967 — Severe thunderstorms spawned 48 tornadoes in the Upper Midwest. Hardest hit was northern Illinois where sixteen tornadoes touched down during the afternoon and evening hours causing fifty million dollars damage. On that Friday afternoon tornadoes struck Belvidere IL, and the Chicago suburb of Oak Lawn, killing 57 persons. (David Ludlum)

1980 — The temperature at International Falls MN hit 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 — Unseasonably warm weather prevailed from the Gulf of Mexico to New England and the Great Lakes Region, with twenty-nine cities reporting record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 82 degrees at Caribou ME, 94 degrees at Mobile AL, 95 degrees at Monroe LA, and 93 degrees at New Orleans LA, were records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — After having had just twelve rainouts in the previous twenty-six years at Dodger Stadium, a third day of heavy rain in southern California rained out a double-header at Dodger Stadium which had been scheduled due to rainouts the previous two days. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — The temperature at Las Animas, CO, soared to 100 degrees to establish a state record for April. Twenty-two cities in the central and southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Eight cities equalled or exceeded previous April records. (The Weather Channel) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail in Oklahoma, and also caused some flash flooding in the state. Thunderstorms over the Southern High Plains produced golf ball size hail at Roswell NM and El Paso TX. Easterly winds and temperatures near zero produced wind chill readings as cold as 50 degrees below zero for the spring festival (Piuraagiaqta) outdoor events at Barrow AK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2007 — The South Plains and Panhandle of West Texas were hit by an outbreak of severe thunderstorms. Between the hours of 5 and 6 pm, several thunderstorms developed across the western South Plains. Around 7 pm, a supercell produced a tornado which touched down around Fieldton (southwest of Olton) and then moved just south and east of Olton, doing damage to several structures and equipment. The thunderstorm continued to move northeast across northeast Lamb, northwest Hale, southeast Castro and southwest Swisher Counties, producing a long-lived tornado (along with hail up to the size of tennis balls). By 7:45 pm, the storm approached the town of Tulia in Swisher County. A tornado touchdown was reported in the town, causing major damage. The tornadic thunderstorm continued to move northeast across Swisher County over open country through about 8:30 pm. (NWS Lubbock, TX)

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Daily Devotion

Our Appointment

Jesus paid the penalty for sin, making it possible for us to live forever with our Father in heaven.

Revelation 20:11-15: 11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them.

12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds.

13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds.

14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.

15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

The moment we were born, a countdown began on our life. Every tick of the clock brings us one step closer to meeting the Lord face-to-face. Each of us will stand before Him as we approach our eternal destination.

The only way to gain eternal life is through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 5:11-12). Truly, our sin has separated us from the Father. But God's Son provided the solution to this universal problem: Christ lived a perfect life and then died on the cross at Calvary to atone for the countless sins of mankind (Romans 6:23). After three days, He rose from the grave, defeating death and evil. By trusting in what He did on our behalf, we no longer have to live apart from God.

To receive this amazing gift, we must simply believe in the Lord Jesus and what He did. As a result, we become new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17), are adopted as God's children (Ephesians 1:5), and enter into a never-ending personal relationship with our heavenly Father.

Do you have confidence about where you will spend eternity? You may assume you have time to figure out this important issue, but don't wait another minute to settle the matter, because later may never come. Repent of your sin today and follow Jesus.

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:

04.20.26

19 37 40 41 53 2

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 43 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.17.26

38 43 44 49 62 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$140,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 28 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.20.26

5 7 31 41 43 7

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$22,680,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 43 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.18.26

11 14 17 25 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$60,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 58 Mins 16 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.20.26

4 29 35 40 43 21

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 27 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

04.20.26

9 17 36 47 64 26

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$100,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 27 Mins 17 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

War, climate change and AI: What's at stake at this year's UN Indigenous forum

By ANITA HOFSCHEIDER/Grist Grist

Hundreds of delegates are arriving at the United Nations this week for the world's largest gathering of Indigenous peoples. But they arrive against an increasingly hostile global backdrop, facing an artificial intelligence boom driving new extraction on ancestral lands, a U.S. administration that has made it increasingly difficult for Global South delegates to secure visas to attend, and the twin challenges of climate change and green energy projects that have frequently run afoul of Indigenous land rights.

This year's United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues is focused on the grim topic of survival in the midst of war, with its official theme "Ensuring Indigenous Peoples' health, including in the context of conflict." Experts emphasize that Indigenous peoples already face health inequities from colonialism and climate change, and these harms are compounded by armed conflicts and militarization that risk ecological degradation and further displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands. Experts say that health for Indigenous peoples is directly tied to the environment, land, and sovereignty, and can't be siloed into clinical discussions about medicine or public health. Warfare isn't the only concern — advocates are seeing the extraction of critical minerals for the green transition drive Indigenous rights violations, and are echoing a long-standing call to make climate financing directly available to their communities, instead of through state or foreign intermediaries.

But before diplomatic conversations can even begin, many delegates must confront the practical barrier of visa restrictions put in place by the Trump Administration. Mariana Kiimi Ortiz Flores, who is Na'ánuu Savi from Mexico and works as an advocacy assistant at Cultural Survival, said last year, her organization prepared Indigenous representatives from Africa to attend the forum, but their visa applications were denied, and this year, one of their Indigenous staff members from South America was denied her visa as well.

"It's getting harder and harder to access the United States, not only because of the visa (issues)," said Flores. "People from the Global South, especially Indigenous peoples that have a certain look like brown skin and certain characteristics, we feel threatened because of the general climate of insecurity and hate speech against Latin people and Indigenous peoples."

Last year, Flores' organization helped Indigenous leaders from Bolivia attend the forum to protest mining in their traditional lands. They left the forum after being harassed by the leader of a political party in Bolivia, and, coupled with health issues, have decided not to return. "The forum is meant to be for Indigenous peoples, but we really felt that that's not what's happening anymore and that at the end of the day the states are the ones who have more power over our lives," Flores said. "This struggle of defending their land against this extractive industry is really affecting them not only physically but also mentally, spiritually."

That comprehensive toll is one of the central focuses of a key report by Geoffrey Roth, a Standing Rock Sioux descendant, former vice chair of the Permanent Forum, and board chair of the Indigenous Determinants of Health Alliance, an international Indigenous health advocacy nonprofit. "You can't separate human health from the health of the environment, or our culture, or our language," Roth said. "Indigenous people view health from a holistic perspective."

In his report, Roth outlines the Indigenous determinants of health, ranging from land tenure and governance authority that strengthen Indigenous well-being to risk indicators like land dispossession and exclusion from decision-making. Roth argues that fragmented approaches to Indigenous health frequently embraced by the U.N. system and state governments fail to adequately address health problems and underlying causes.

For example, biodiversity policies that ignore Indigenous rights miss opportunities to restore Indigenous land tenure that can both improve ecosystem outcomes and strengthen access to traditional foods. Mental health interventions that ignore state-sanctioned Indigenous language erasure overlook the potential to

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improve Indigenous mental well-being through language revitalization. "Indigenous health is not just about healthcare, it's about land, culture, food systems, and community," Roth said.

The Coquille Indian Tribe in Oregon adopted the Indigenous determinants of health by ordinance last year, and Roth has been working with them as chairman of their executive health board to incorporate the determinants of health across their agencies. "They understand that when they take elders out on a monthly basis to do fishing activities, that is health for those elders," he said. "It's continuing their tradition as Coquille people, and it improves the mental health, behavioral health of those elders that are able to participate in that, let alone the food they catch."

Roth also calls on the U.N. to recognize the value of Indigenous midwifery, which has been frequently banned in favor of Western practices, forcing Indigenous women into conventional institutions where they often face racism and "obstetric violence," such as procedures performed without their consent. "Indigenous people have been doing this for thousands of years, not only midwifery, but also caring for the environment and caring for our culture and preserving these food systems," he said.

In another report to UNPFII, former Permanent Forum chair Hindou Oumarou Ibrahim, who is Indigenous Mbororo from Chad, warns that AI acts as a double-edged sword for Indigenous communities. While she urges governments to help Indigenous peoples develop AI tools to revitalize endangered languages and monitor their territories, she also warns of a looming era of digital extractivism as generative AI systems and tech companies actively scrape cultural content, such as medicinal knowledge, traditional stories, and even genetic data.

Lydia Jennings, citizen of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe (Yoeme) and Huichol (Wixáritari), is an assistant professor of environmental studies at Dartmouth College. She said her advocacy for Indigenous data sovereignty — the movement ensuring communities retain the right to own and control their own data — began after a troubling discovery. She noticed a mining company had pulled information about Indigenous cultural practices from an environmental impact statement and was using it on its website to promote a mining project. "That was very alarming to me," she said. "How much information do we share in efforts to protect our sacred homelands? And what are the ways that we can govern how and who uses that data?"

Like Ibrahim, she says AI can be an opportunity for tribes, noting some might be interested in hosting data centers or using AI to help with language preservation or synthesizing information. However, she remains wary of how much Indigenous data AI systems may be co-opting without consent, as well as the severe risks that massive data centers pose to tribal lands and water resources. "Who has the power and how do we redistribute that power?" she asked. "It can be a tool to power and a tool to harm, but how do we choose to wield it?"

Jennings said there's a growing movement to incorporate best practices of Indigenous data sovereignty on multiple levels, ranging from academic research to national and international policies.

Another focus of this year's Permanent Forum is the climate crisis. In a February report focusing on nomadic peoples, experts warned that rigid state borders and exclusionary "fortress conservation" models are curbing the traditional mobility of pastoralists, hunter-gatherers, and seafarers, even as they deal with the fallout of both climate change and increasing lack of access to ancestral lands and waters.

The authors argue that mobility is a deliberate, knowledge-based climate adaptation strategy that state policymakers are actively erasing, citing an example of the Tuareg people in the Sahara Desert. "While the desert knows no borders, contemporary militarized frontiers increasingly restrict ancestral routes and undermine pastoral systems and access to services, rendering these lived realities of Indigenous Peoples invisible in official data and policy frameworks," the authors describe.

That echoes sentiments expressed by Samante Anne, who is Indigenous Maasai from Kenya and recently spoke at a virtual panel on pastoralists' legal rights on behalf of the Mainyoito Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization. Anne said although 60 percent of land in Kenya is considered communal, land is increasingly being subdivided for developments and claimed for carbon offset projects that limit pastoralists' access to land and movement.

"Mobility has everything to do with us adapting to climate change," Anne said. "Mobility has everything to do with ensuring our livelihoods are secure, our food security is good."

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Making progress on Indigenous health, artificial intelligence, and territorial rights is complicated by a persistent trend within the U.N.: lumping Indigenous peoples together with "local communities." In official policies and initiatives, the two groups are frequently merged under the acronym "IPLCs"—Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities. But while local communities represent a broad category of stakeholders, Indigenous peoples hold distinct, legally recognized rights under international law. Roth from the Indigenous Determinants of Health Alliance said he recently confronted this issue at the World Health Organization when the agency categorized an Indigenous initiative merely as an "equity" issue.

"This is not an equity issue," Roth said he told the agency. "We are not just another one of your minority populations. We are rights holders, and this needs to be approached from a rights-based approach."

"Conflating us with other populations really diminishes our rights and diminishes our ability to maintain our health in our communities," Roth said. This grouping also actively hinders participation, Roth said, pointing to the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity's IPLC working group as an example.

"I've tried to participate in that group several times, and as an Indigenous person, I don't feel welcome and I'm not able to participate," he said. "These (IPLC) institutions are a way to lessen or dilute the voice of Indigenous peoples in these global mechanisms, and that, to me, is unacceptable."

He is far from the only one who feels that way. In 2023, the U.N.'s three top Indigenous rights bodies — the Permanent Forum, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples — issued a joint statement demanding that U.N. environmental treaties stop using the IPLC acronym entirely. "Indigenous Peoples should not be grouped with an undefined set of communities that may have very different rights and interests," they wrote.

For advocates on the ground, that debate is just one part of a growing disillusionment with the U.N. system itself. Cultural Survival's Mariana Kiimi Ortiz Flores said that the institution has suffered from a willingness by member states to simply disregard its laws.

"The United Nations as an international institution has been losing its influence and its power," said Flores. But despite its bureaucratic hurdles, visa denials, and geopolitical hostility, she said she's among the many Indigenous peoples determined to show up this week.

"If we as Indigenous peoples don't do it," said Flores, "No one else will speak for us and defend us."

Fired former UK official says he felt political pressure to approve Mandelson as US ambassador

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The ex-civil servant behind the decision to approve Peter Mandelson's appointment as British ambassador to Washington says he felt political pressure from Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office to rush through the appointment despite security concerns.

The testimony by former Foreign Office head Olly Robbins turns up the heat on Starmer, who is facing calls to resign over the appointment of a scandal-tainted former politician and friend of Jeffrey Epstein to one of the U.K.'s most important diplomatic posts.

The prime minister fired Robbins last week after the revelation that Mandelson was approved for the job against the recommendation of the government's security vetting agency.

Robbins said the security concerns about Mandelson did not relate to his relationship with Epstein. He declined to say when questioned by lawmakers what led the government's vetting agency to flag Mandelson as a potential security risk.

Robbins said the vetting agency considered Mandelson a "borderline case" and was "leaning toward recommending against" giving him security clearance. Robbins decided to clear him anyway.

Starmer has called it "staggering" that Foreign Office officials failed to tell him about the security concerns, which he says he only found out about last week.

But Robbins said the rules bar details of the sensitive vetting process from being shared except in "exceptional circumstances."

Robbins told the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday that there was an "atmosphere

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of pressure" coming from Starmer's office to approve the appointment in January 2025, so Mandelson could be in post at the start of President Donald Trump's second term.

He said there was "a very, very strong expectation" that Mandelson "needed to be in post and in America as quickly as humanly possible."

Robbins said there was "a generally dismissive attitude" to the security vetting in January 2025, before Mandelson went to Washington.

However, Robbins insisted his department "did not bow to that pressure." He said his decision to grant Mandelson clearance was based on security advice that the risks could be managed.

Starmer acknowledged on Monday that he made the wrong judgment when he picked Mandelson for the job. But he said he would have withdrawn the appointment if he'd known about the security vetting.

Starmer fired Mandelson in September, nine months into the job, when new details emerged about his friendship with Epstein, a convicted sex offender who died in prison in 2019.

He has ordered a review into any security concerns arising from Mandelson's access to sensitive information while ambassador.

Critics say the Mandelson appointment is more evidence of bad judgment by a prime minister who has made repeated missteps since he led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024.

He picked Mandelson as ambassador despite being warned by his staff that Mandelson's friendship with Epstein exposed the government to "reputational risk."

Mandelson's business links to Russia and China also set off alarm bells. But his expertise as a former European Union trade chief and contacts among global elites were considered assets in dealing with the Trump administration.

The scandal has caused gloom among lawmakers in Starmer's center-left Labour Party, already anxious about its dire poll ratings. Starmer already defused one potential crisis in February, when some Labour lawmakers urged him to resign over the Mandelson appointment.

Mandelson is under police investigation for suspected misconduct in public office after a trove of Epstein-related documents released by the U.S. Department of Justice in January included emails suggesting Mandelson had passed on sensitive — and potentially market-moving — government information to Epstein in 2009, after the global financial crisis.

British police launched a criminal probe and arrested Mandelson in February. Mandelson has previously denied wrongdoing and hasn't been charged. He does not face allegations of sexual misconduct.

Pakistan presses ahead with preparations for Iran-US talks even with Tehran's participation unclear

By MUNIR AHMED, JON GAMBRELL and DAVID RISING Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan pressed ahead Tuesday with the groundwork for a second round of talks between Iran and the United States in Islamabad as a fragile ceasefire hung in the balance, even though it remained unclear whether Tehran would send a delegation.

Both sides remain dug in rhetorically, with U.S. President Donald Trump warning that "lots of bombs" will "start going off" if there's no agreement before the ceasefire deadline, which he put as Wednesday, and Iran's chief negotiator saying that Tehran has "new cards on the battlefield" that haven't yet been revealed.

The two-week ceasefire began on April 8, and seemed likely to be extended if talks resume as planned. White House officials have said that U.S. Vice President JD Vance would lead the American delegation, but Iran hasn't said who it might send, and Iranian state television on Tuesday broadcast a message saying that "no delegation from Iran has visited Islamabad... so far."

Iranian state TV long has been controlled by hard-liners within Iran's theocracy, and the on-screen alert likely reflects the ongoing internal debate within Iran's theocracy as it weighs how to respond to the U.S. Navy's seizure of an Iranian container ship over the weekend.

Strait of Hormuz control key to negotiations

The U.S. has instituted a blockade of Iranian ports to pressure Tehran into ending its stranglehold on the

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Strait of Hormuz, a key shipping lane through which 20% of the world's natural gas and crude oil transits in peacetime.

Iran's iron grip on the strait has sent oil prices soaring, and Brent crude, the international standard, was trading at close to \$95 per barrel on Tuesday, up more than 30% from Feb. 28, the day that Israel and the U.S. attacked Iran to start the war.

Before the war began, the Strait of Hormuz had been fully open to international shipping, and Trump has demanded that vessels again be allowed to transit unimpeded through the waterway.

European Union transportation ministers were meeting in Brussels on Tuesday to discuss how to protect consumers after the head of the International Energy Agency warned that Europe has "maybe six weeks" of jet fuel supplies remaining.

Over the weekend, Iran said that it had received new proposals from Washington, but also suggested that a wide gap remains between the sides. Issues that derailed the last round of negotiations included Iran's nuclear enrichment program, its regional proxies and the strait.

Iran's chief negotiator and parliamentary speaker, Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf, accused the United States on Tuesday of wanting Iran to surrender and said that on the contrary, Iran has been preparing "to reveal new cards on the battlefield."

"We do not accept negotiations under the shadow of threats," Qalibaf wrote in an X post.

Pakistan hopeful talks will proceed

Despite the rhetorical skirmishing between the two sides, Pakistani officials have expressed confidence that Iran will also send a delegation late Tuesday so that the talks could resume.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Tuesday spoke with his Egyptian counterpart, Badr Abdelatty, to discuss the latest regional developments, as part of diplomatic preparations before the planned talks, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Dar also met with the ambassador from China, which is a key trading partner with Iran, as the Foreign Ministry in Beijing said that the conflict was at a "critical stage of transition between war and peace."

"At such a moment, it is all the more necessary for all parties to show the utmost sincerity, remain committed to a political solution, maintain the momentum of the ceasefire and negotiations," ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said.

Security has been tightened across Pakistan's capital, where authorities have deployed thousands of personnel and increased patrols along routes leading to the airport.

The arrangements appear stricter than those put in place during the first round of talks held in Islamabad on April 11 and 12, suggesting the possibility of high-level participation, if negotiations make progress, said Syed Mohammad Ali, an Islamabad-based security analyst.

"Pakistan appears to be preparing for the possibility of visits by top U.S. and Iranian leaders if the talks advance to a stage where an agreement could be signed," he told The Associated Press.

Historic Israel-Lebanon talks also set to resume

Meanwhile, historic diplomatic talks between Israel and Lebanon were set to resume on Thursday in Washington, an Israeli, a Lebanese and a U.S. official said. All three spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the behind-the-scenes negotiations.

The Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors met last week for the first direct diplomatic talks in decades. Israel says the talks are aimed at disarming Hezbollah and reaching a peace agreement with Lebanon.

A 10-day ceasefire began on Friday in Lebanon, where fighting between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants broke out two days after the U.S. and Israel launched joint strikes on Iran to start the war. Fighting in Lebanon has killed more than 2,290 people.

Since the war started, at least 3,375 people have been killed in Iran, according to authorities. Additionally, 23 people have died in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Fifteen Israeli soldiers in Lebanon and 13 U.S. service members throughout the region have been killed.

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Oil prices slip and world shares mostly gain as US-Iran talks still in doubt

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Oil prices slipped and shares were mostly higher Tuesday in Europe and Asia as U.S.-Iran talks aimed at ending the war remained in doubt.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil dipped 0.7% to \$94.81. U.S. benchmark crude oil lost 0.9% to \$86.63 per barrel.

The war has disrupted transport of oil through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital waterway that usually is fully open to international shipping, pushing oil prices sharply higher.

U.S. President Donald Trump has demanded that vessels again be allowed to transit the strait unimpeded, imposing a blockade on Iranian ports. He has said Vice President JD Vance will visit Pakistan's capital Islamabad for talks with Iran. But after the U.S. Navy's seizure of an Iranian-flagged cargo ship, the Iranian side has made no commitment to more negotiations.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX rose 0.6% to 24,558.9 and the CAC 40 in Paris was little changed, at 8,333.05. Britain's FTSE 100 edged 0.1% higher, to 10,620.92.

The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were up just over 0.1%.

In Asian share trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 0.9% to 59,349.17 on strong gains for tech-related companies like Tokyo Electron, which rose 3.5%. Tech and energy giant SoftBank Group Corp. gained 8.5%, part of the latest wave of gains pinned on expectations of windfalls from artificial intelligence.

South Korea's Kospi jumped 2.7% to 6,388.47, and Taiwan's Taiex advanced 1.8%.

The Hang Seng in Hong Kong gained 0.5% to 26,481.48 and the Shanghai Composite index added 0.1% to 4,085.08.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined less than 0.1% to 8,949.40.

Oil prices had climbed Monday following the latest rise of tensions between the United States and Iran, but the moves were more modest than they were earlier in the war. U.S. stocks, meanwhile, gave back a bit of their record-breaking rally.

On Monday, the S&P 500 slipped 0.2% from its all-time high and the Dow industrials edged less than 0.1% lower. The Nasdaq composite fell 0.3%.

Worries over disruptions of supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf if Iran continues to block tankers from exiting the Strait of Hormuz are clouding investor sentiment.

The next big deadline is looming on Tuesday night at 8 p.m. Eastern time, which is early Wednesday Tehran time, when a ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran is scheduled to expire.

"The current dynamic is one of a precarious balance of truce," Mizuho Bank said in a commentary, so "as the ceasefire draws to its 2-week deadline, the all-consuming question is whether both sides can seize on the talks to land on a US-Iran deal that ends the war."

For now, oil prices remain well below the \$119 per barrel level for Brent crude when fears were at their highest. And the S&P 500 is still above where it was before the war.

Several of the biggest U.S. banks said last week that they see the U.S. economy remaining resilient, particularly because of solid spending by U.S. consumers.

U.S. companies have been reporting big profits for the first three months of 2026, helping to support the market. Nearly nine out of 10 companies that have already reported earnings for January-March posted bigger profits than analysts had expected, according to FactSet.

If the rest of the companies in the S&P 500 match analysts' expectations, overall earnings per share for companies in the index will end up 13% higher than a year earlier, it estimates.

Other companies scheduled to report their results this week include UnitedHealth Group on Tuesday, Tesla on Wednesday and Procter & Gamble on Friday.

In other dealings early Tuesday, the U.S. dollar rose to 159.21 Japanese yen from 158.82 yen. The euro slipped to \$1.1767 from \$1.1789.

South Korean police seek to arrest K-pop mogul behind BTS

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean police said Tuesday they are seeking to arrest music mogul Bang Si-Hyuk, chairman of the agency behind K-pop supergroup BTS, as they expand an investigation into allegations that he illegally gained more than \$100 million in an investor fraud scheme.

The Seoul Metropolitan Police Agency confirmed that it has asked prosecutors to request a court warrant for arresting Bang, the billionaire founder and chairman of Hybe.

Bang's legal team in a statement to The Associated Press did not directly address the accusations but expressed regret that police were seeking his arrest "despite our full and consistent cooperation with the investigation over an extended period."

"We will continue to cooperate with all legal procedures and make every effort to clearly explain our position," the statement said.

Bang, who has been barred from leaving the country since August, is being investigated over allegations that he misled investors in 2019 by telling them Hybe had no plans to go public, prompting them to sell their shares to a private equity fund, before the company proceeded with an initial public offering. Police believe that the fund may have paid Bang around 200 billion won (\$136 million) in a side deal that promised him 30% of post-IPO stock sale profits.

Hybe officials say Bang denies any wrongdoing.

Bang's legal troubles are a major public relations setback for Hybe, coming as BTS embarks on a global tour after a nearly four-year hiatus as its seven members served their mandatory military service, which is required for most able-bodied South Korean males.

BTS performed in front of tens of thousands of international fans at a free comeback concert in Seoul last month and have also held several concerts in South Korea's Goyang city and Tokyo. The group is to kick off a series of U.S. events with a concert in Tampa, Florida, later this month.

Bang, a music executive and producer who founded Hybe as Big Hit Entertainment in 2005, is widely seen as one of the most powerful figures in K-pop and has sought to capitalize on the global success of BTS to build his company into an international pop powerhouse.

In 2021, Hybe spent about \$1 billion to purchase Scooter Braun's Ithaca Holdings, securing the management rights to artists like Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande.

While Hybe's roster includes some of K-pop's biggest acts, such as Seventeen, Le Sserafim and Katseye in addition to BTS, the company has seen turmoil in recent years, including a highly public fallout between Bang and star producer Min Hee-Jin over the popular girl group NewJeans.

The rift erupted in 2024 when Hybe attempted to remove Min as CEO of Ador, the subsidiary managing NewJeans, while accusing her of illegally attempting to take control of that company. Min, in turn, accused Bang of hostile treatment and of undermining NewJeans in favor of other groups, as the dispute moved into courts. Members of NewJeans, who have described Min as a mentor, tried to leave the label following her ouster, but a court last year ruled they must honor their contract through 2029.

Japan scraps a ban on lethal weapons exports in a change of its postwar pacifist policy

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan on Tuesday scrapped a ban on lethal weapons exports, a major change in its postwar pacifist policy as the country seeks to build up its arms industry amid worries over Chinese and North Korean aggression.

The approval by Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's Cabinet of the new guideline clears a final set of hurdles for many arms sales, including of Japanese-developed warships, combat drones and other weapons.

China criticized the change in policy, but it has been largely welcomed by Japanese defense partners like Australia and attracted interest from Southeast Asia and Europe.

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Opponents say the change violates Japan's pacifist constitution and will increase global tensions and threaten the safety of the Japanese people.

The new policy will "ensure safety for Japan and further contribute to the peace and stability in the region and the international society as the security environment around our country rapidly changes," Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara told reporters. "The government will strategically promote defense equipment transfers to create a security environment that is desirable for Japan and to build up the industrial base that can support fighting resilience."

Japan could start selling weapons like missiles and destroyers

Japan has long prohibited most arms exports under its post-World War II pacifist constitution. It has made recent changes because of rising global and regional tensions, but exports were limited to five areas: rescue, transport, alerts, surveillance and minesweeping.

The new guidelines scrap those limits and allows the export of equipment such as fighter jets, missiles and destroyers. That's a major change from existing exports such as flak jackets, gas masks and civilian-use vehicles that Japan has sent to Ukraine and intelligence radars sold to the Philippines.

For now, such exports will be limited to 17 countries that have signed defense equipment and technology transfer agreements with Japan. They also must be approved by the National Security Council, and the government will monitor how the weapons are managed afterward.

Japan remains committed to strict screening and export controls to third countries and will not offer lethal weapons to countries at war, officials said, but granted that exceptions could be made to that limit.

Japan began to export some non-lethal military supplies in 2014, and in December 2023 it approved a change that would allow sales of dozens of lethal weapons and components that it manufactures under licenses from other countries back to the licensors, clearing the way for Japan to sell U.S.-designed Patriot missiles to America to make up for munitions that Washington sent to Ukraine.

The 2023 revision also paved the way for Japan to jointly develop a sixth-generation fighter jet with Britain and Italy, and for Japan's biggest arms deal ever, which was formalized last week with Australia. It calls for Japan to deliver the first three of a \$6.5 billion fleet of Japanese-designed frigates for the Australian navy and jointly build eight others in that country.

Japan aims to build up its arms industry

Japan's domestic defense industry was long seen as a bad investment, limited to catering to only the Self-Defense Force and Defense Ministry. Dozens of former defense contractors have withdrawn from the market.

That is changing as Japan accelerates a buildup of its military and defense industry to play more offensive roles in the face of threats from China, North Korea and Russia.

The defense industry is one of 17 strategic areas targeted for growth under the Takaichi government. A growing number of major companies and startups are showing interest, especially in dual-use goods and drones.

The government also has increased funding for startups and academic research.

Officials say they believe Japan's new arms transfer rules would contribute to deepening of military and defense equipment cooperation with Japanese partners and to the regional deterrence.

Outlook for potential customers

Australia on Saturday signed an agreement with Japan for delivery of three of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' upgraded Mogami-class frigates and to jointly produce eight others. It welcomed Tokyo's new policy as a move to deepen their defense partnership.

New Zealand has also showed interest in the Japanese frigates. Several other countries have also expressed interests in Japanese defense equipment, including the Philippines, which is seeking to buy used destroyers, officials said.

Last week, a group of 30 NATO representatives visited Japan to discuss further deepening ties as the U.S. commitment to its alliance has been shaken by U.S. President Donald Trump. They visited a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Electric Corp., which is part of the trilateral fighter jet project and also known for its satellite technology.

Driven by the pressures of war, Iran gives its field commanders more power over militias in Iraq

By QASSIM ABDUL ZAHRA and SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iran has granted its commanders greater autonomy over militias in Iraq, allowing some groups to carry out operations without Tehran's approval, a shift driven by the pressures of the war, three militia members and two other officials told The Associated Press.

Many Iran-backed militias are funded through the Iraqi state budget and embedded within the security apparatus, drawing criticism from the United States and other countries that have borne the brunt of their attacks and say Baghdad has failed to take a tougher stance.

Despite mounting pressure from the U.S., Baghdad has struggled to contain or deter the groups. The most hard-line factions now operate under Iranian advisers using a decentralized command structure, the five officials told AP, each on condition of anonymity to speak freely about sensitive matters.

"The various forces have been granted the authority to operate according to their own field assessments without referring back to a central command," said one militia official, who didn't have permission to speak publicly.

The war in the Middle East has exposed the fragility of Iraq's state institutions and their limited ability to restrain these groups. A parallel confrontation between Washington and the militias has deepened the crisis, with factions acting as an extension of Iran's regional campaign and escalating attacks on U.S. assets in Iraq before a tenuous ceasefire deal was reached in April.

Even if the ceasefire agreement holds, Washington is expected to intensify efforts against the groups militarily and politically, particularly as they gain latitude to operate more independently, officials and experts said. On Friday, the U.S. imposed sanctions on seven commanders and senior members of four hard-line Iran-backed Iraqi militia groups.

"The U.S. is still going to feel it has the freedom of action to hit Iraqi militias," said Michael Knights, head of research for Horizon Engage, a geopolitical risk consulting firm, and an adjunct fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "That may well play out into an effort to try and guide a less militia-dominated government formation."

For Iran-backed militias in Iraq, a move to decentralized control

Days into the war sparked by U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, an Iranian delegation arrived in Iraq's Kurdish region and delivered a blunt message: If militia attacks escalated near U.S. military bases, commercial interests and diplomatic missions, Iraqi Kurdish authorities should not come to Tehran with complaints, as there was little they could do about it.

"They said they've devolved authority to regional Iranian commanders," a senior Iraqi Kurdish government official said on condition of anonymity, citing the subject's sensitivity.

In the past, Kurdish leaders in Iraq would call Iranian officials after attacks to ask why they had been targeted. "This time, they wanted to preempt that by saying, 'We can't help you with the groups in the south right now,'" the official said.

This shift reflects lessons drawn from the 12-day war in June, the official said. Militia officials corroborated the claim. During that war, operations were tightly centralized. In its aftermath, greater autonomy was granted in the field.

A spokesperson for Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, among the Iran-backed militia groups that have attacked the U.S. in Iraq, said there was "coordination" with Iran in launching attacks but didn't give details.

"Since we are allies of the Islamic Republic, we have coordination with our brothers in the Islamic Republic," Mahdi al-Kaabi said.

In the recent war, key Iraqi militia leaders appeared to step back from the latest phase and didn't appear to be directly involved in operations, Knights said. U.S. strikes largely killed mid-level commanders, according to militia officials.

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"None of the first-line leaders have been killed," said a second militia official, who wasn't authorized to brief reporters.

Rather than targeting top figures, the U.S. also focused on Iranian Revolutionary Guard advisory cells, said Knights, who tracked the attacks. In one strike in Baghdad's upscale Jadriya neighborhood, three Guard advisers were killed at a house used as their headquarters during a meeting, according to the second militia official.

Pressure on Iraq is intensifying

At the heart of government efforts to rein in militia groups lies a paradox: The factions the government says it cannot control are tied to political parties that brought it to power.

The Coordination Framework, an alliance of influential pro-Iran Shiite factions, helped install Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as prime minister in 2022. He now serves as caretaker premier amid a prolonged political deadlock.

Militia forces carrying out attacks on U.S. targets aren't rogue actors; they're part of the state's Popular Mobilization Forces, created after the fall of Mosul in 2014 to formalize volunteer units that were critical in defeating the Islamic State.

The PMF has evolved into a powerful force that surpasses the Iraqi army, with fighters receiving state salaries and access to government resources, including weapons and intelligence. The result, critics say, is a deep contradiction: Certain state-funded groups operate in line with Iranian priorities, even when doing so undermines Iraq's national interests.

Al-Sudani's office didn't respond to the AP's requests for comment on the decentralized control of militia groups.

The U.S. is focused on curbing the power of these groups in Iraq, the senior Iraqi Kurdish official and a Western diplomat said, which will put increasing pressure on the government, still functioning in caretaker status. The diplomat also spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't permitted to brief reporters.

Last week, Iraq's ambassador to the U.S. was summoned to Washington to hear U.S. condemnation of attacks by Iran-backed factions on American personnel and diplomatic missions, according to State Department deputy spokesperson Tommy Bigot.

"The Deputy Secretary affirmed that the United States will not tolerate any attacks targeting its interests and expects the Iraqi Government to take all necessary measures immediately to dismantle Iran-aligned militia groups," Bigot said in a statement.

Militias resist steps from Iraq's government

Al-Sudani has taken limited steps to curb militia influence, including further institutionalizing the PMF and occasionally removing commanders who act outside state authority. The efforts have met significant resistance from militia groups.

Further institutionalizing them has deepened their entrenchment within the state. The U.S. may seek to isolate the most hard-line factions — including Kataib Hezbollah, Harakat al-Nujaba, and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada — from others more embedded in Iraq's political system. "The bad militias from the worse militias," the senior Iraqi Kurdish official said.

Harakat al-Nujaba spokesperson al-Kaabi offered a dual framing of the group's position, stressing both its alignment with Iran and its claim to Iraqi state legitimacy.

"To put it bluntly, we are allies of the Islamic Republic," he said. He described the group as part of Iran's regional "axis" alongside Hezbollah in Lebanon and Ansar Allah in Yemen.

At the same time, he insisted the group operates within Iraq's political order, supporting the state and government when they serve national interests.

"It's true we're not affiliated with the government or the prime minister, but we respect the law and the constitution," he said.

Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer is leaving Trump's Cabinet after abuse of power allegations

By SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer is out of President Donald Trump's Cabinet, the White House said Monday, after multiple allegations of abusing her position's power, including having an affair with a subordinate and drinking alcohol on the job.

Chavez-DeRemer is the third Trump Cabinet member to leave her post after Trump fired his embattled Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem in March and ousted Attorney General Pam Bondi earlier this month.

In a statement posted on social media, Chavez-DeRemer praised Trump and wrote, "I am proud that we made significant progress in advancing President Trump's mission to bridge the gap between business and labor and always put the American worker first."

Unlike other recent Cabinet departures, Chavez-DeRemer's exit was announced by a White House aide, not by the president on his social media account.

"Labor Secretary Lori Chavez-DeRemer will be leaving the Administration to take a position in the private sector," White House communications director Steven Cheung said on the social media site X. "She has done a phenomenal job in her role by protecting American workers, enacting fair labor practices, and helping Americans gain additional skills to improve their lives."

He said Keith Sonderling, the current deputy labor secretary, would become acting labor secretary in her place. The news outlet NOTUS was the first to report Chavez-DeRemer's resignation.

Labor chief, family members faced multiple allegations

Chavez-DeRemer's departure follows reports that began surfacing in January that she was under a series of investigations.

A New York Times report last Wednesday revealed that the Labor Department's inspector general was reviewing material showing Chavez-DeRemer and her top aides and family members routinely sent personal messages and requests to young staff members.

Chavez-DeRemer's husband and father exchanged text messages with young female staff members, according to the newspaper. Some of the staffers were instructed by the secretary and her former deputy chief of staff to "pay attention" to her family, people familiar with the investigation told the Times.

Those messages were uncovered as part of a broader investigation of Chavez-DeRemer's leadership that began after the New York Post reported in January that a complaint filed with the Labor Department's inspector general accused Chavez-DeRemer of a relationship with the subordinate.

She also faced allegations that she drank alcohol on the job and that she tasked aides to plan official trips for primarily personal reasons.

Late Monday, on her personal X account, Chavez-DeRemer posted, "The allegations against me, my family, and my team have been peddled by high-ranked deep state actors who have been coordinating with the one-sided news media and continue to undermine President Trump's mission."

Both the White House and the Labor Department initially said the reports of wrongdoing were baseless. But the official denials got less full-throated as more allegations emerged — and when Chavez-DeRemer might be out of a job became something of an open question in Washington.

At least four Labor Department officials have already been forced from their jobs as the investigation progressed, including Chavez-DeRemer's former chief of staff and deputy chief of staff, as well as a member of her security detail, with whom she was accused of having the affair, The New York Times reported.

"I think the secretary demonstrated a lot of wisdom in resigning," Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said Monday after her departure was made public.

She enjoyed union support — rare for a Republican

Confirmed to Trump's Cabinet on a 67-32 vote in March 2025, Chavez-DeRemer is a former House GOP lawmaker who had represented a swing district in Oregon. She enjoyed unusual support from unions as

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a Republican but lost reelection in November 2024.

In her single term in Congress, Chavez-DeRemer backed legislation that would make it easier to unionize on a federal level, as well as a separate bill aimed at protecting Social Security benefits for public-sector employees.

Some prominent labor unions, including the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, backed Chavez-DeRemer, who is a daughter of a Teamster, for Labor Secretary. Trump's decision to pick her was viewed by some political observers as a way to appeal to voters who are members of or affiliated with labor organizations.

But other powerful labor leaders were skeptical when she was tapped for the job, unconvinced that Chavez-DeRemer would pursue a union-friendly agenda as a part of the incoming GOP administration. In her Senate confirmation hearing, some senators questioned whether she would be able to uphold that reputation in an administration that fired thousands of federal employees.

She was a key figure in Trump's deregulatory push

Aside from reports of wrongdoing in recent months, Chavez-DeRemer had been one of Trump's more lower-profile Cabinet picks, but took key steps to advance the administration's deregulatory agenda during her tenure.

For instance, the Labor Department last year moved to rewrite or repeal more than 60 workplace regulations it saw as obsolete. The rollbacks included minimum wage requirements for home health care workers and people with disabilities, and rules governing exposure to harmful substances and safety procedures at mines. The effort drew condemnation from union leaders and workplace safety experts.

The proposed changes also included eliminating a requirement that employers provide adequate lighting for construction sites and seat belts for agriculture workers in most employer-provided transportation.

During Chavez-DeRemer's tenure, the Trump administration canceled millions of dollars in international grants that a Labor Department division administered to combat child labor and slave labor around the world, ending their work that had helped reduce the number of child laborers worldwide by 78 million over the last two decades.

In her statement Monday, Chavez-DeRemer said, "While my time serving in the Administration comes to a conclusion, it doesn't mean I will stop fighting for American workers."

The Labor Department has a broad mandate as it relates to the U.S. workforce, including reporting the U.S. unemployment rate, regulating workplace health and safety standards, investigating minimum wage, child labor and overtime pay disputes, and applying laws on union organizing and unlawful terminations.

Pope's visit to Equatorial Guinea is a diplomatic challenge as he closes his Africa trip

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

LUANDA, Angola (AP) — Pope Leo XIV heads Tuesday to Equatorial Guinea for the final leg of his four-nation African journey, arriving in a country that presents perhaps the most diplomatically delicate challenge of this trip and his young papacy.

The former Spanish colony on Africa's western coast is run by Africa's longest-serving president, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, 83. He has been in power since 1979 and is accused of widespread corruption and authoritarianism.

The discovery of offshore oil in the mid-1990s transformed Equatorial Guinea's economy virtually overnight, with oil now accounting for almost half of its GDP and more than 90% of exports, according to the African Development Bank.

Yet more than half of the country's nearly 2 million people live in poverty. And rights groups including Human Rights Watch — as well as court cases in France and Spain — have documented how revenues have enriched the ruling Obiang family rather than the broader population.

Leo has shown he won't mince words on this maiden African journey as pope, and the church's teaching on the scourge of social inequity and corruption is clear. If Leo's stop in Cameroon was any indication, the

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pope's messaging in Equatorial Guinea might be just as sharp.

Upon arriving in Yaounde, Cameroon last week, Leo met with President Paul Biya, at 93 the world's oldest leader. Like Obiang, Biya has also been in power for decades — since 1982 — and like Obiang, he's accused of presiding over an authoritarian government.

Leo didn't hold back as he stood next to Biya and delivered his arrival speech in the presidential palace. "In order for peace and justice to prevail, the chains of corruption — which disfigure authority and strip it of its credibility — must be broken," Leo said. "Hearts must be set free from an idolatrous thirst for profit."

A secular but very Catholic country

Equatorial Guinea is officially a secular country, but the Catholic Church is at the center of its political and social systems.

Church leaders "are very much interconnected intrinsically with the government," said Tutu Alicante, a U.S.-based activist who runs the EG Justice rights group. "Part of it is the fear the government has instilled in everyone, including the church, and part of it is the monetary gains that the church derives from this government."

The Rev. Fortunatus Nwachukwu, No. 2 in the Vatican's missionary evangelization office, said the Catholic Church is present in difficult civil spaces and knows how to operate in them to carry out its mission.

"Should the church go to war against the government? Surely no," Nwachukwu said. "Should the church swallow everything as if it were normal? No. The church has to continue preaching justice, always in defense of life, human dignity and the common good."

That is particularly challenging in Equatorial Guinea, which with about 75% of its population Catholic is one of the most Catholic countries in Africa.

But it's also one of the most oppressed. In addition to official corruption, the country's government also faces rampant accusations of harassment, arrest and intimidation of political opponents, critics and journalists.

Corruption is a longstanding problem

It has consistently ranked among the bottom 10 countries in Transparency International's annual corruption perception index, though the government has in recent years taken some steps to improve the situation, said Transparency International's regional advisor for Africa, Samuel Kaninda.

The government passed an anti-corruption law and is working to fund an anti-corruption commission. But the only way such measures will be effective is if the commission is truly independent to investigate and the judiciary is independent as well, he said.

Kaninda said he hoped the pope's visit would draw attention to such shortcomings, and give the people of Equatorial Guinea hope. Even if the government exploits the visit to signal a papal endorsement of its rule, historically pope trips to even authoritarian regimes have ended up as a net positive experience for the people, he said.

"The risk is there, but at the same time, we see more of the opportunity to shed more light on a lot more that is happening there," he said.

A busy final stop on a long trip

At the very least, the first papal visit since St. John Paul II came in 1982 is giving seamstress Tumi Carine lots of business, as she makes dresses with fabric stamped with Leo's image.

"The coming of the pope brought us many customers," Carine said. "We are really grateful for the coming of the pope, so, we are really happy."

Leo has a packed schedule in Equatorial Guinea. He arrives and meets with Obiang and then delivers two sets of remarks: A speech to government authorities and diplomats, and then another speech at the national university.

In addition to celebrating Masses, he'll visit a psychiatric hospital and a prison and will meet with young people and their families. Before leaving Thursday, he'll pray at a memorial to victims of a 2021 blast at a military barracks in Bata that killed more than 100 people. The explosions were blamed on the negligent handling of dynamite in a barracks close to residential areas.

Gunman shoots several tourists at historic pyramids in Mexico, killing a Canadian

By FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ and MEGAN JANETSKY Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — An armed man standing atop one of the historic Teotihuacan pyramids opened fire on tourists Monday, killing one Canadian and leaving at least 13 people injured at the archaeological site north of Mexico's capital, authorities said.

The shooter was identified as 27-year-old Julio Cesar Jasso of Mexico, a state official told the AP on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to speak about the case. Jasso later died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, authorities said, and security officials found a gun, a knife and ammunition. Jasso was the sole assailant in the attack, the State of Mexico government confirmed on Monday night.

The local government said seven people were wounded by gunshots. How the other people were injured was not disclosed, but a number of people fell when shooting started, some while climbing on the pyramids.

Those taken to hospitals for treatment were six Americans, three Colombians, one Russian, two Brazilians and one Canadian, the local government said. The youngest person who was injured was 6; the oldest was 61, Mexican authorities said.

Video and photos published by local media showed a man, later identified as Jasso, standing with a gun on top of a pyramid while people ducked for cover. A number of gunshots rang out in the videos.

The Teotihuacan pyramids, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are a series of massive structures on the outskirts of Mexico City built by three different ancient civilizations. As one of Mexico's most important touristic destinations, the site drew more than 1.8 million international visitors last year, according to government figures.

The shooting took place shortly after 11:30 a.m. when dozens of tourists were at the top of the Pyramid of the Moon. The standing on the structure's platform began firing upward, according to a tour guide who was at the scene and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity for safety reasons.

"Some people, because they were scared ... threw themselves face down on the ground, and the rest of us started to go down," the guide said, recounting how the shooter, upon seeing the tourists descending the pyramid's steps, began firing.

Another group of visitors lay motionless on the pyramid's platform to avoid being targeted by the shooter, who authorities have not yet identified.

Brenda Lee, of Vancouver, British Columbia, said she was waiting to buy a souvenir when she and others in her group thought they heard firecrackers.

"Before we knew it, someone said, 'No, that's gunfire, run,' and we saw people coming off the top," she told CTV News, one of Canada's national television broadcasters.

"There were thousands of people there and there were a lot of gunshots that just kept coming," Lee said.

The scene quickly turned chaotic as people tried to escape, Lee said.

"And then a fellow jumped," she said. "It was someone trying to get away, and he dropped to the next level, but he fell on his back, and it was ... it just was awful."

In past years, staff at the archaeological site carried out security scans before people entered the area but have since stopped, one local guide noted.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum wrote on social media that the shooting would be investigated and that she was in touch with the Canadian Embassy.

"What happened today in Teotihuacán deeply pains us. I express my most sincere solidarity with the affected individuals and their families," she wrote.

Anita Anand, Canada's foreign affairs minister, said on X that as a "result of a horrific act of gun violence, a Canadian was killed and another wounded in Teotihuacán" and that her "thoughts are with their family and loved ones."

Later in the evening U.S. Ambassador to Mexico Ronald Johnson also expressed "deep concern" and

sadness over the deaths and numerous injuries, and said on a post on X that the U.S. is "ready to provide support as needed while Mexican authorities continue their investigation."

The National Institute of Anthropology and History said in a statement that the Teotihuacán archaeological site will remain closed until further notice.

Purdue Pharma to be sentenced in criminal opioids case, allowing settlement money to flow

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

A judge is expected to sentence OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma to forfeit \$225 million to the Justice Department on Tuesday, clearing the way for the company to finalize a settlement of thousands of lawsuits it faces over its role in the opioid crisis.

The penalty was agreed to in a 2020 pact to resolve federal civil and criminal probes it was facing. If the judge signs off, other penalties will not be collected in return for Purdue settling the other lawsuits.

After years of legal twists and turns, the settlement was approved by another judge last year and could take effect May 1. It requires members of the Sackler family who own the company to pay up to \$7 billion to state, local and Native American tribal governments, some individual victims and others.

Here's a look at the situation.

The sentence was years in the making

Purdue pleaded guilty to three federal criminal charges in November 2020.

The Stamford, Connecticut-based company admitted that it did not have an effective program to keep its powerful prescription painkillers from being diverted to the black market, even though it told the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration that it did.

It also admitted that it paid doctors through a speakers program to prescribe the drugs and paid an electronic medical records company to send doctors information on patients that encouraged more opioid prescriptions.

While Purdue produced only a fraction of the opioid pills that flooded the market in the 2000s, advocates have long seen aggressive sales of OxyContin as one of the touchstones of the crisis. At a 1996 event to rally Purdue's sales force, Richard Sackler, then a top Purdue executive and later president of the company, called for a "blizzard of prescriptions."

While Purdue is expected to pay \$225 million, the government agreed in the plea deal not to collect \$5.3 billion in criminal forfeitures and fines and \$2.8 billion in civil liabilities. Instead, portions of that money are considered part of the broader settlement — and the federal government will receive a small slice of that.

Up to \$7 billion from Sackler family members

The broader settlement calls for members of the Sackler family who own the company to contribute up to \$7 billion over 15 years. Most of the money is to go to government entities to use to fight the opioid crisis.

It's among the largest in a series of settlements by drugmakers, wholesalers and pharmacies in recent years — and the only major one that includes payments for some individual victims or their survivors.

Together, the settlements are worth more than \$50 billion, and most of the money is to be used to address the overdose epidemic.

Under the Purdue deal, members of the Sackler family would be shielded from lawsuits over opioids from those who agree to the payments.

Purdue itself would cease to exist and be replaced by a new company, Kinoa Pharma, which would operate for the public benefit and have a board appointed by the states.

The reorganization is considered one of the most complicated ever. By the end of last year, Purdue had paid law firms and other professionals working on all sides of the case more than \$1 billion, according to a court filing.

The sentencing doesn't include the company's owners

Members of the Sackler family have long been cast as villains in the opioid crisis, seeking to increase profits even as it became clear people were becoming addicted to OxyContin and overdosing.

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But no members of the family were charged.

Family members received \$10.7 billion in payments from Purdue from 2008 to 2018. They have not been paid by the company since 2018 — and the last of them left Purdue's board in 2019.

Under the settlement, they would not object if their names are removed from museums and other institutions they've supported — something that's already been happening.

Some victims are pushing for prosecutions

More than 54,000 people with personal injury claims against Purdue voted to accept the settlement, and 218 voted against it.

Still, some victims and their family members have been pushing back for years, asserting that the settlement and the guilty plea stop short of justice for victims of a crisis that has been linked to 900,000 deaths in the U.S. since 1999.

Tuesday's sentencing is one more chance for them to make that case to a judge.

Susan Ousterman's son, Tyler Cordiero, died at age 24 in 2020 after overdosing on a mixture that included fentanyl after years of using heroin and other opioids. She organized others who lost loved ones to deliver victim impact statements to the court ahead of the sentencing.

She said the aim was to persuade the judge to reject the plea deal and for the U.S. Justice Department to pursue criminal charges against individuals, including Sackler family members.

"It shouldn't be going to states and municipalities," said Ousterman, noting some governments have not yet used the funds they've received and others have used it in ways not closely linked to fighting the drug crisis. "They're not using that money effectively."

Deadly domestic violence cases stir calls for more prevention resources for Black communities

By SAFIYAH RIDDLE and COREY WILLIAMS Associated Press

Two headline-grabbing, deadly domestic violence cases, one in Louisiana and the other in Virginia targeting Black mothers, have sparked a national conversation about domestic violence prevention resources and mental health care available to Black communities.

Many advocates in the aftermath of the deadly shootings have said the tragedies pointedly highlight troubling underlying trends where Black women are more likely to experience domestic violence — and they see the killings as an opportunity to confront how disparities in access to care and resources make some women and children more vulnerable to violence in the home.

On Sunday morning, a man police identified as Shamar Elkins fatally shot seven of his children and another child in Shreveport, Louisiana. A relative has said Elkins was in the midst of separating from his wife who was wounded.

And last Thursday, police found the bodies of former Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax and his estranged wife, Dr. Cerina Fairfax, in their suburban Washington, D.C., home. Justin Fairfax shot his estranged wife and then himself, and their two children in the home at the time were unhurt, police said. Like Elkins, Fairfax was in the process of separating from his wife and had faced a judge's upcoming deadline to move from the house.

While it's not clear what prompted the Shreveport killings or the apparent murder-suicide in Annandale, Virginia, experts say that the harrowing details of the killings echo familiar patterns that play out in homes across the country — and underscore the need for solutions that address the root causes of the disparate violence.

A 'silent epidemic'

Sunday wasn't the first time that Elkins' family had suffered from gender-based gun violence: Shaneiqua Elkins and the other woman who was shot, Keosha Pugh, were sisters, and lost their mother to gun violence when they were under age 10, according to their uncle Lionel Pugh.

"It's sad. It just breaks you down," Pugh said.

Shreveport Councilman Grayson Boucher said at a news conference Monday that the Louisiana killings

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were emblematic of “a true epidemic of domestic violence” across the small southern city of roughly 180,000 people.

Those trends go well beyond Shreveport as experts have pointed out how both race and gender make Black women in particular more vulnerable to domestic violence.

More than four in 10 Black women experience physical violence from an intimate partner during their lifetimes — a much higher rate than women who are white, Hispanic, Asian or Pacific Islander — according to a 2014 study by the Centers for Disease Control.

Paméla Tate is the executive director of Black Women Revolt, which runs programs to prevent abuse and offers survivors’ resources. She said a logical skepticism about police and government child services agencies based on a history of institutionalized racism makes Black women reluctant to seek help — and especially vulnerable to domestic violence.

Additionally, Black women are two times more likely to be murdered by men than their white counterparts, according to a 2025 study published by the Violence Policy Center, based on federal government data from 2023. Those men are more often than not familiar to their victims, according to the study, which found that more than nine in 10 Black female victims knew their killers, with the majority of those killings being carried out with guns.

Ultimately, Tate said, “domestic violence doesn’t see color,” and is primarily driven by the prevalent belief among men — across racial demographics — that women are subjects or property.

“Domestic violence is about exerting power over someone that you profess to love and controlling their behavior,” Tate said.

Lack of resources for Black men

There has been intense speculation about the role that mental health crises might have played in both shootings.

A relative of Elkins’ wife told The Associated Press that Elkins had voluntarily checked into a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in January for about a week and a half for mental health help.

In Virginia, Justin Fairfax was a rising star in the Democratic Party until two women accused him of sexual assault, casting doubt on his trustworthiness as a political leader. The former lieutenant governor’s “mental and emotional health” suffered before he killed his wife and himself, according to court documents, which say he drank heavily and withdrew from his family after the allegations were made public in 2019.

Adult and child psychiatrist Christine Crawford hasn’t examined the killings in Shreveport or Annandale, but said financial troubles, marital issues and problems at work — in addition to underlying mental health vulnerabilities — can lead someone to “crack.”

“It makes some think about the amount of pain, distress and hopelessness they found themselves in at that time,” said Crawford, who practices at the Webster Clinic in Boston and is interim chief medical officer at the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

She noted many Black people find themselves priced out of programs and care for mental health for such reasons as private care costs and a lack of insurance.

That level of desperation can make some people feel “completely out of options on how to deal with the pain he was in at that moment,” Crawford said. T

Some have said that there are social dimensions to these economic trends, too.

“Mental health disparities in the Black community is not accidental,” said University of Michigan Social Work Professor Daphne C. Watkins. “They are the predictable result of structural racism” in schools, employment and other aspects of society.

Watkins, founder of the YBMen Project which provides young Black men with a safe place to discuss their mental health, manhood and social support, said studies show that 10% of Black adults experience moderate to severe depression, while 18% experience anxiety disorders.

But Black men tend to forego mental health treatment due to cultural expectations, in addition to costs, said Watkins. Without an outlet, stressors from family, work and relationships can pile up.

“For a long time, in the Black community, we didn’t talk about anxiety. Now, you have to talk about it

hand in hand along with depression.”

Mental health not an excuse, some say

Others have emphatically said that mental health is not an excuse for domestic violence.

“To say they’re mentally ill, that doesn’t cut it,” Tate said. “There are people who are depressed or people who have schizophrenia and don’t harm their partners, much less kill them.”

Shaneiqua Elkins and Cerina Fairfax could have been struggling with mental health challenges too, Tate added, and they both “had the same access or ability to go and purchase a gun” but chose not to.

“The mental illness is not what we’re talking about here,” she said.

Trump’s Federal Reserve nominee to face tough hearing before Senate panel

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kevin Warsh is taking another step toward his decade-long goal of winning the top job at the Federal Reserve by appearing at a hearing before the Senate Banking Committee on Tuesday. But the role that he may eventually assume could turn out vastly different than what he expected.

Inflation is worsening as the Iran war has spiked gas prices, making it much harder for the Fed to implement the interest rate cuts President Donald Trump so desperately seeks. The conflict could also slow the economy as well as hiring. And if Warsh ultimately becomes chair, he may very well find his predecessor, Jerome Powell, still sitting on the Fed’s governing board, an uncomfortable arrangement that hasn’t occurred since the late 1940s.

Warsh, a former top official at the Fed and a wealthy investor, will likely face a range of tough questions at the hearing. Democrats on the committee have already signaled they will press him about what they argue is a lack of transparency regarding some of his vast financial holdings, which total more than \$100 million, according to a recent disclosure.

Another top issue will be Trump’s repeated demands for cuts in the Fed’s short-term interest rate, which has created the perception that Warsh was nominated to do the president’s bidding. Most other Fed officials have said they support keeping the central bank’s key rate unchanged, now that inflation has begun to rise again.

Warsh expressed support for the Federal Reserve’s independence in written remarks released Monday that he will deliver at the hearing.

He said such political independence is “essential,” but he also said it wasn’t threatened when “elected officials — presidents, senators, or members of the House — state their views on interest rates.” Trump has repeatedly urged that Powell cut the Fed’s key rate from its current level of about 3.6%.

Warsh also underscored his commitment to one of the Fed’s two congressional mandates: Keeping inflation low. He did not mention the other, which is pursuing maximum employment.

“Inflation is a choice, and the Fed must take responsibility for it,” Warsh said in his prepared remarks. A tight focus on inflation typically leads officials to keep interest rates high to cool spending, rather than reducing rates to boost the economy, as Trump has demanded.

While the long-delayed hearing is a necessary step for Warsh, it’s not clear when the committee may even be able to vote on his nomination. The Justice Department is investigating Powell and the Fed over a building renovation, and Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican, has said he would effectively block Warsh until the probe is dropped.

“Clearly there’s a majority of the committee that’s not going to move this nomination forward, especially while this sham of a criminal investigation is going on,” Sen. Tina Smith, a Democrat from Minnesota, told reporters on a conference call Monday. “It feels a bit like we’re going through the motions when we really have not addressed the fundamental challenges that this nomination has.”

The turmoil could make a potential transition from Powell to Warsh an unusually turbulent one for the world’s most important central bank, which has typically seen smooth transfers of power. Should the change in leadership prove particularly bumpy, it could unnerve markets and lift longer-term interest rates.

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Powell's term as chair ends May 15. He said last month that he would remain as chair until a successor is named. Powell also is serving a separate term as a member of the Fed's governing board that lasts until January 2028. Fed chairs typically leave the board when their terms as chairs ends, but Powell also said last month he would remain on the board, even if a new chair is approved, until the investigation is dropped.

When asked about Powell's comments, Trump said he would fire Powell if he tried to stay at the Fed. Yet Trump's previous attempt to remove a Fed governor, Lisa Cook, has been tied up in courts. During oral arguments in January, a majority of justices on the Supreme Court appeared to lean towards letting Cook keep her job.

Did Pope Leo find his voice in Africa? Or did the world finally hear him?

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

LUANDA, Angola (AP) — And in Africa, the lion roared.

There is a case to be made that Pope Leo XIV, the careful, reserved, Midwestern Augustinian, found his voice on his epic trip through Africa, blasting the "handful of tyrants" and "chains of corruption" that have held parts of the continent hostage for centuries.

But the fact is, Leo has been preaching this kind of message for a while now, including in the context of the U.S.-Israeli war in Iran. It just took U.S. President Donald Trump's unprecedented broadside and Vice President JD Vance's claims of theological superiority for many people to pay attention, especially American Catholics.

"Yes, Pope Leo might give the impression that he is engaging, in his quiet way and with authority, and this is how it looks to the world press and social media," Cardinal Michael Czerny, a top Vatican official and aide to Leo, told The Associated Press.

"But in fact the Holy Father's homilies and talks in Africa have been prepared, well in advance, in terms of the local African reality and the church," Czerny said. "So, if they seem relevant to the current wars, controversy, this reminds us of Jesus saying, 'Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear!'"

Leo tried to make that point when he came to the back of Air Pope One on April 18, en route from Cameroon to Angola, and complained that "a certain narrative" had taken hold suggesting he was in a feud with Trump over the Iran war and his peace messages in Africa were directed at the president.

Leo insisted his words about tyrants and the religious justification for war had been wrongly interpreted and he was referring only to the African context, and to a separatist conflict in western Cameroon, in particular.

The thin line of the pope's explanation

But Leo also was trying to have it both ways. Yes, he was talking about the separatist conflict at a peace meeting in Bamenda. Yes, he was preaching the Gospel message of peace and fraternity. But he also has been talking about Trump, a lot.

"That distancing of Pope Leo from some interpretations was really a move to de-escalate a very dangerous situation," said Massimo Faggioli, a professor of theology at Trinity College Dublin. "Because the Vatican needs the United States to restore some kind of peaceful — not order — but a horizon of peace, a hope of peace."

Leo criticized Trump, directly, before he got to Africa. And in one remarkable comment two weeks ago, he encouraged the faithful to contact their congressional representatives to demand an end to the war.

The headline from the April 7 encounter outside Leo's country house in Castel Gandolfo was that Leo had called Trump's threat to annihilate Iranian civilization "truly unacceptable."

But the more significant message followed. "I would invite the citizens of all the countries involved to contact the authorities, political leaders, congressmen, to ask them, tell them to work for peace and to reject war," Leo said.

Faggioli termed the comment "the Vatican's nuclear option," making a direct appeal to U.S. voters to take a stand, because it genuinely feared Trump was about to take the Iran war in a vastly more catastrophic

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direction.

What came before Leo's unprecedented appeal

The Holy See had never resorted to such a directly political message from a pope even at the height of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when a Catholic president — John F. Kennedy — was on the verge of a nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, Faggioli said.

At that moment, Pope John XXIII did make a public appeal — his famous Oct. 25, 1962, radio address — with a strong, direct plea for peace including to “those who have the responsibility of power” to “do everything in their power to save the peace.”

The pope also sent private letters to Kennedy and Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and worked behind the scenes through diplomatic channels to de-escalate the situation. But he didn't urge U.S. voters to essentially choose which Catholic to listen to: their president or their pope.

“What is at stake now is that at a time of war, loyalties of Catholics are tested in a particular way,” Faggioli said. He added that however the situation ultimately resolves itself, the tension will complicate any future political aspirations of Catholics seeking high office, whether Vance on the Republican side or California Gov. Gavin Newsom on the Democratic side, as long as a U.S.-born pope is still in Rome.

Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director of the Global Catholic Research Initiative at the University of Notre Dame, said Leo has consistently operated “on a higher plane” but American Catholics are used to church discussion of morality in the context of sexuality, gender and abortion, and it's jarring to process foreign policy through a moral lens.

“So JD Vance can say the pope should stick to morality,” she said, “but war and peace are ancient moral issues.”

The Rev. Antonio Spadaro, the under-secretary in the Vatican's culture department, said Leo is continuing in the tradition of popes past to preach the Gospel message of peace. What has changed, he said, was how Trump reacted.

“The strong reaction arrived from America,” he said. “It was America that reacted to Leo's words, and not vice versa.”

Even with his direct comments about Trump, Leo was not engaging in an attack, Spadaro said.

“It's very dangerous to imagine that the pope is fighting with Trump, because it means demeaning the pope to a level of contrast, one against the other, which Trump may want but that the pope has no intention of doing,” he said.

New role, same Leo, Vatican official says

Spadaro added that from his perch, Leo hasn't changed at all from when he was known as Robert Prevost, the Chicago-born missionary priest.

“I see the Prevost I've always seen,” Spadaro said. “Let's say it's the backdrop that has changed, so his calm yet very direct style stands in stark contrast to a chaotic scenario, and that's why it's striking.”

For better or worse, the incredible saga of Trump, the war and geopolitics seems far removed from Leo's day-to-day ministering to his flock in Africa, who have turned out in droves to welcome the American pope in each stop on his four-nation tour.

The polyglot pope has made it easy for them to hear his words, delivering speeches, homilies and prayers in the languages of the faithful: French in Algeria, English and French in Cameroon, Portuguese in Angola and, starting Tuesday, Spanish in Equatorial Guinea.

Lucinea Francisco left her family behind on Sunday so she could see Leo at the Shrine of Mama Muxima, Angola's most popular pilgrimage destination. Some 30,000 people turned out for Leo's rosary prayer.

“My kids were crying to come, but I said no,” Francisco said. “This is a spiritual journey that I'm really going to face on my own.”

A preschool classroom is shaken by loss after a mass killing in Louisiana

By HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH Associated Press

Teacher Angela Hall always starts the day gathering her preschool students in a circle in their Shreveport, Louisiana, classroom. The kids giggle. They share. And they look for who's missing.

"Braylon, he's not here," she recalled one of her students saying Monday.

Braylon Snow, who just turned 5, was one of seven siblings who were fatally shot Sunday by their father in an attack that also killed their cousin. The shooting rattled classrooms in Shreveport where teachers like Hall on Monday came face-to-face with distraught parents and a messy stew of emotions.

In Hall's classroom at Johnnie L. Cochran Head Start, it's likely students noticed Braylon's absence immediately. Each day, Hall instructs her students to look around for friends who aren't there.

"When they come back tomorrow, we can tell them, 'Hey, we missed you, we're glad you're back'" she tells them.

But Hall wasn't ready to tell the students that the boy she described as a "cool little dude" wasn't returning. She kept circle-time moving. Numb and heartbroken, she lasted until noon and then went home.

"I'm no good to my babies right now because I just feel like I need to be in a moment of silence and just pray," she said.

Preschool comes to an end

At Head Start, preparation's for next month's graduation ceremony have been in full swing. Hall, an organist and pianist at her local Baptist church, wrote a song for the ceremony.

Students, who dress in caps and gowns for the festivities, have been busy learning the words, excited about the prospect of starting kindergarten in the fall. Hall was working hard to make sure they were ready.

Just last Thursday, she pulled Braylon's mother aside during morning drop-off, boasting that Braylon was writing his first and last name. Braylon also was getting so independent, squirting syrup for his pancakes onto his plate by himself. He didn't even need a reminder to wash his hands.

"Braylon doesn't give me any problems," she told his mother.

Braylon greeted Hall — known to her students as "Mrs. Hall" — each day with a small wave.

As the year progressed, she nudged more gap-toothed smiles from him. He loved his time on the playground — playing chase, tag and even partaking in "a little wrassling." She laughed as she remembered it.

"He was for the majority of the time kind of a quiet little soul in the classroom," she said. "When he did get a little extra energy or something, it was just a joy to see him smile and laugh."

News of the shooting emerges

But then came Sunday. After church, she went to her mother's house. It was then that she stumbled across an article about the shooting.

The number of victims was so high she struggled to comprehend it. Then she learned Braylon was among the victims. She also knew one of his brothers. He had been a Head Start student at the school last year.

"I just broke down and just started crying," she said.

The same thing happened Monday morning at drop off when she locked eyes with a parent. Neither could say anything; the preschoolers were all around them.

"I just immediately broke down," she said. So too did the parent and a teacher's aide.

She is relying on her faith now. She prays for the dead, for the families and also for the teachers.

"And I'm just praying for all the educators that were connected to these children because it's tough because my parents' babies, they become my babies. And I treat them like they're my own. So I'm just really praying that he sustains us all during this time.

"Just give us that strength."

Earthquake sets off brief tsunami alert and a megaquake advisory in northern Japan

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — A 7.7 magnitude earthquake Monday off northern Japan sparked a short-lived tsunami alert and an advisory of a slightly higher risk of a possible megaquake for its coastal areas.

The Cabinet Office and the Japan Meteorological Agency said there was a 1% chance for a megaquake, compared to a 0.1% chance during normal times, in the next week or so following the quake near the Chishima and Japan trenches.

Officials said the advisory was not a prediction but urged residents in 182 towns along the northeastern coasts to raise their preparedness while continuing their daily lives.

Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi urged residents to confirm their designated shelters and evacuation routes and to check emergency food and grab bags so they can run immediately when a megaquake hits. "The government will do our utmost in case of an emergency," she told reporters.

It was the second such advisory for the region in recent months. One was issued following a 7.5-magnitude quake in December but no megaquake occurred.

Still, Monday's earthquake and tsunami were a reminder to the quake-prone area of the March 2011 disaster that ravaged large swaths of the northern coast, triggering a nuclear crisis in Fukushima.

NHK television footage showed hanging objects swaying and people squatting at a shopping center in Aomori, as authorities told people to seek higher ground and avoid coastal areas.

The Fire and Disaster Management Agency said two people, one in Aomori and another in Iwate, were injured after falling.

Shinkansen bullet trains connecting Tokyo and northern Japan were temporarily suspended, leaving passengers in cars and on platforms waiting for service to resume.

The quake occurred off the coast of Sanriku at around 4:53 p.m. and was about 19 kilometers (11 miles) deep, JMA said. The U.S. Geological Survey measured the quake's strength as 7.4 magnitude.

A tsunami of about 80 centimeters (2.6 feet) was detected at the Kuji port and a smaller tsunami of 40 centimeters (1.3 feet) was recorded at another port, both in Iwate prefecture, before Japan lifted all tsunami alert and advisories.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority said nuclear power plants and related facilities in the region were intact and no abnormalities were detected.

It's been 15 years since a magnitude 9.0 earthquake and massive tsunami on March 11, 2011, ravaged parts of northern Japan, causing more than 22,000 deaths and forcing nearly half a million people to flee their homes.

Louisiana community is struggling to understand after man killed 8 children

By SOPHIE BATES, LEKAN OYEKANMI and JACK BROOK Associated Press

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — A stunned Louisiana city struggled to come to grips Monday with the massacre of eight children carried out by a father who was separating from his wife and used an assault-style weapon despite a 2019 felony firearms conviction.

The violence reverberated across Shreveport a day after the nation's deadliest mass shooting in two years. Schools brought in counselors for the victims' young classmates and community leaders called for a city-wide reckoning on stopping domestic violence.

"We cannot afford to wait until the next crisis," said Caddo Parish Sheriff Henry Whitehorn. "We owe it to the eight children who were lost."

The shooter, identified as Shamar Elkins, killed seven of his children and a nephew, police said. His wife and another woman were also shot and wounded.

Shooter 'just snapped,' brother-in-law says

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Elkins had voluntarily checked into a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in January for just over a week for mental health treatment, said his brother-in-law, Troy Brown, who lived in the house with his wife, Keosha Pugh, and was at work during the attack. Elkins appeared "better when he came home," he said.

Elkins' wife was seeking a divorce, which was causing him stress, Brown said. But everything seemed calm in the house when Brown left for work Saturday night, with the children playing games or watching TV.

"All I know is he just snapped," Brown told The Associated Press. "If I wouldn't have been at work, he was going to kill everybody in the house and that includes me."

Brown's wife, who made a series of frantic calls for help when the shooting started, and their 12-year-old daughter escaped through the home's roof, he said. His wife broke her pelvis after falling and has since had surgery, he said.

"She said she was running for her life," said Lionel Pugh, an uncle of the two women shot. "The only ones he didn't kill was the ones who got away."

Elkins died after fleeing and a police pursuit. It was not clear whether he was killed by officers who fired or from a self-inflicted gunshot, Shreveport Police Chief Wayne Smith said.

Officials said the children who died — three boys and five girls — ranged in age from 3 to 11 years old.

Brown said his 10-year-old son, who loved to go outside and run around and play with friends, was killed.

"I'm never going to get to throw the football with him again," he said "I'm never going to get to hear him say, 'Dad, can I get this bag of chips?'"

Elkins and his wife, identified by family members as Shaneiqua Elkins, were separating and had been due in court Monday, said Crystal Brown, a cousin of a woman shot in the attack. She said the couple had been arguing about the separation before the shooting.

Family members described Shaneiqua Elkins as a doting mother, who celebrated her children's success in school.

"She raised those kids right," Pugh said. "They were the center of her universe."

Gunman had no recent arrests for domestic violence, police say

While the shooter did not appear to have a long criminal history, court records showed Elkins was placed on probation in 2019 after pleading guilty to illegal use of weapons. In that case, Elkins fired five rounds at a vehicle and told police that someone inside it had pulled a gun on him, according to a police report.

Based on Louisiana law, a person convicted of certain violent felonies — including illegal use of weapons — are banned from having a gun for at least 10 years after completing their sentence and probation.

Authorities said Monday that how and when Elkins got the gun is being investigated.

Louisiana, a reliably red state, has expanded access to guns in recent years. For years, Democrats in Louisiana have proposed bills to tighten gun control — or at least put "red flag" measures in place. But Republicans have routinely blocked such legislation.

Investigators were not aware of other domestic violence issues involving Elkins, said police spokesperson Chris Bordelon.

Elkins had served in the Louisiana National Guard from 2013 to 2020, said guard spokesperson Lt. Col. Noel Collins. Elkins held the rank of private and had no deployments, Collins said.

The violence started before sunrise Sunday

Authorities said the shooting erupted before dawn at two homes.

Elkins shot a woman in a neighborhood south of downtown, and opened fire a few blocks away at the home where the children were targeted, police said.

One of the victims, 5-year-old Braylon Snow, was getting ready for preschool graduation next month, said Laurance Guidry, president and CEO of Caddo Community Action Agency, which runs the Head Start program where Braylon was a student.

"They have the cap and gowns just like you would have when you were graduating from high school," Guidry said.

Gov. Jeff Landry said during a news conference Monday that he thought he had seen evil up close after a truck attack last year on Bourbon Street left 14 dead. "But the tragedy that unfolded this weekend seems to have eclipsed that," he said.

Landry announced that the foundation created by the state's first lady will pay the children's funeral expenses.

A relative says they were a joyful family

Francine Monro Brown, a cousin of Shaneiqua Elkins, said she would often see the children playing in the yard on Sunday mornings when she drove past the house on her way to church.

"Happy children, joyful children. Shaneiqua is a great mother, She provided a great home for the kids," Brown said as she stood near a growing memorial of stuffed teddy bears, flowers and pink and blue balloons.

Betty Pugh, another cousin of Shaneiqua Elkins, said she was always with her children. "That was the way we were taught: to love our kids, to take care of our kids. And that's what she did," Pugh said.

The mayor of Shreveport, a city of about 180,000 residents in northwestern Louisiana, called it one of the city's worst days.

The shooting was the deadliest in the U.S. since January 2024, when eight people were killed in a Chicago suburb, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University.

Singer D4vd pleads not guilty to murder in death of 14-year-old Celeste Rivas Hernandez

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Singer D4vd pleaded not guilty Monday to a murder charge in the death of a 14-year-old girl who was last known to be alive nearly a year ago and whose dismembered and decomposed body was found in the entertainer's apparently abandoned Tesla.

The charges revealed key details and were among the first concrete public moves made in a grisly and horrific case that had been under a largely secret investigation in the seven months since Celeste Rivas Hernandez was found dead.

The 21-year-old D4vd, whose legal name is David Burke, was charged with first-degree murder, lewd and lascivious acts with a person under 14 and mutilating a body, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office said. A defense lawyer entered not guilty pleas to all counts on behalf of Burke, who made his first court appearance Monday. He appeared behind glass in a custody area, dressed in black. A judge said he would continue to be held without bail.

The girl's parents appeared at the hearing. They looked down as they entered the courtroom and sat in the audience. They did not speak to reporters outside court.

Alleged child sex abuse during a career on the rise

Authorities alleged the Houston-born alt-pop singer killed Rivas Hernandez to protect a career on the rise after she threatened to report their sexual relationship. His debut album, "Withered," was released just two days after authorities said she was last known to be alive. She was reported missing by her family in 2024, when she was 13. That was her age when, according to allegations in a criminal complaint, the singer engaged in continuous sexual abuse of her for at least a year from September 2023 to September 2024. California law penalizes abuse of a child under 14 especially harshly.

Authorities, who described her Monday as a "runaway," said Rivas Hernandez was 14 when she was killed with a sharp object on or around April 23, 2025, a day she was at Burke's house in the Hollywood Hills.

Prosecutors allege Burke mutilated her body about two weeks later.

The murder charges include special circumstances — lying in wait, committing crime for financial gain and murdering the witness in an investigation — that could carry the death penalty. Prosecutors haven't announced whether they will seek it.

The witness Burke is alleged to have killed is Rivas Hernandez herself, who could have given testimony about the sex crime allegations.

Defense says D4vd 'did not murder Celeste Rivas Hernandez'

"We believe the actual evidence will show David Burke did not murder Celeste Rivas Hernandez," lead

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defense attorney Blair Berk said in court. "We would like to have the evidence come into the light of day."

Berk told the judge that after media reports of months of secret grand jury proceedings, she would like a public preliminary hearing to take place as soon as possible so a judge can decide whether there is enough evidence for trial.

Burke is entitled under California law to have the evidentiary hearing within 10 court days of his arraignment. Nearly all defendants waive their right to have it happen that fast, but he didn't. A hearing to work out what will happen next was scheduled for Thursday.

"We'll be very happy to put on the evidence that we've collected," said Deputy District Attorney Beth Silverman, the lead prosecutor.

A missing child and the grisly discovery of a body

The case is a "a parent's nightmare," Los Angeles County District Attorney Nathan Hochman said at a news conference Monday announcing the charges.

The long-dead body of Rivas Hernandez was found inside a Tesla that was towed from the Hollywood Hills on Sept. 8, when Burke was on tour in support of his album. It was a day after she would have turned 15.

Her family had reported her missing from her hometown of Lake Elsinore, about 70 miles (112 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles.

The singer had been under investigation by an LA County grand jury looking into the death. The probe was officially secret, but its existence — and Burke's designation as its target — was revealed in February when his mother, father and brother objected in a Texas court to subpoenas demanding they testify. The 2023 Tesla Model Y was registered in the singer's name at their address, according to court filings. Authorities did not publicly acknowledge him as a suspect until his arrest Thursday.

Police investigators searching the Tesla in a tow yard found a cadaver bag "covered with insects and a strong odor of decay," court documents said. Detectives partially unzipped the bag and found a head and torso.

Investigators from the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner's Office removed the bag and "discovered the arms and legs had been severed from the body," according to court documents. A second black bag was found under the first, and dismembered body parts were inside it. No cause of death has been publicly revealed, and police got a judge to block the release details of the autopsy. The court order was expected to be lifted after the charges.

"I had the chance to meet with some of the family members of Celeste and their grief is incalculable as to what happened to their daughter," Hochman said.

D4vd was a social media-savvy singer making breakthroughs

D4vd, pronounced "David," gained popularity among Gen Z for his blend of indie rock, R&B and lo-fi pop. He went viral on TikTok in 2022 with the hit "Romantic Homicide," which peaked at No. 4 on Billboard's Hot Rock & Alternative Songs chart. He then signed with Darkroom and Interscope Records and released his debut EP "Petals to Thorns" and a follow-up, "The Lost Petals," in 2023.

The Associated Press confirmed that D4vd was dropped by Interscope last year.

When the body was discovered, the singer continued his North American tour, but when reports of his possible involvement spread widely, he canceled the final two shows and a European tour that was to follow.

On April 11, about two weeks before the killing, he made his debut appearance at the Coachella music festival, where he talked to the AP.

"I was such an internet kid. The internet is really what I claim as my home," he said. "My neighborhood was Instagram and the society was the internet."

Victor Wembanyama is a unanimous selection as the NBA's defensive player of the year

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

There had never been a unanimous NBA Defensive Player of the Year. Until now.

Victor Wembanyama — as expected — was announced Monday as the league's top defensive player.

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The San Antonio center was second in the voting for DPOY as a rookie, was the favorite last season until a medical condition ended his season prematurely, then left no doubt this year.

At 22, he's the youngest winner of the award.

"The real struggle might have been getting to 65 games," Wembanyama said — referring to the number he needed for award eligibility — on NBC Sports Network. "But I'm super, super happy to win this award and actually super proud to be the first-ever unanimous."

Oklahoma City's Chet Holmgren was second and Detroit's Ausar Thompson was third after both helped their teams secure No. 1 seeds for the playoffs. But this was never in doubt, not after the 7-foot-4 — or maybe taller — Wembanyama led the NBA in blocked shots for a third consecutive season and generally terrorized opponents any time they wanted to score.

"Best player in the world," Spurs forward Keldon Johnson said.

The NBA will continue its award announcements Tuesday when the Clutch Player of the Year — either Minnesota's Anthony Edwards, Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander or Denver's Jamal Murray — is revealed. Wembanyama is also a finalist for MVP, with the winner of that trophy not set to be revealed until next week at the earliest.

First, the league got this announcement out of the way. And Wembanyama's win was accompanied by a slew of milestones.

— Every other winner of the award had been at least 23. Wembanyama doesn't turn 23 until next January.

— The Spurs became the first franchise with four players to win DPOY, which was first handed out in the 1982-83 season. The others? Alvin Robertson in 1986, David Robinson in 1992 and Kawhi Leonard in 2015 and 2016.

— Wembanyama joins Robinson and Michael Jordan as the only players to win both Rookie of the Year and DPOY.

"I've had the chance to have great coaches over my career who have taught me great habits on defense," Wembanyama said.

The biggest accomplishment may be this: Wemby got every voter to agree.

Golden State's Stephen Curry was the unanimous MVP in 2016 and in the 10 seasons that have followed, there have been only two instances of a player collecting 100% of the first-place votes for an award.

Those were Wembanyama for Rookie of the Year in 2024, and now this.

No player in at least the last 50 seasons — and maybe ever, since it's hard to say with certainty because some full voting results for awards handed out generations ago are not known publicly — has won two major individual awards unanimously.

It's the 10th known unanimous pick in any vote for MVP, Rookie of the Year, Sixth Man of the Year, Most Improved Player, DPOY or Coach of the Year. And some of the biggest names, including LeBron James and Michael Jordan, never won a major award unanimously.

"I feel like he is one of the hardest workers that I've ever been around," Johnson said. "He takes his craft very seriously. I feel like this is just a small token of what's to come for Victor. He's a special player now. He's a special player on the court and even more special person off the court as well. This is just a small token, small flowers that's given to him for Defensive Player of the Year."

Holmgren and Thompson both got votes for the first time; a panel of reporters and broadcasters who cover the league were asked to pick their top three in the category, with ballots due last week before the playoffs started.

Minnesota's Rudy Gobert — a four-time DPOY winner — was fourth, followed, in order, by Toronto's Scottie Barnes, Boston's Derrick White, Oklahoma City's Cason Wallace, Houston's Amen Thompson, Atlanta's Dyson Daniels and New York's OG Anunoby.

There was a three-way tie for 11th between Detroit's Jalen Duren, Golden State's Draymond Green — the 2017 winner — and Miami's Bam Adebayo.

Wembanyama is an MVP finalist (along with Oklahoma City's Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, the reigning MVP, and three-time winner Nikola Jokic of Denver), which almost certainly means he'll be an All-NBA first-team selection. And the DPOY win means he'll also be on the All-Defensive team, so the Frenchman is assured

of no fewer than four trophies from this year's award season.

"We often overlook the team aspect," Wembanyama said. "I'm sitting here. I happen to be the guy who's put in the spotlight, but I am part of a system and I couldn't get this award and I couldn't do what I do if it wasn't for my teammates ... and my coaching staff."

Tim Cook will step down as Apple CEO and hand reins over to the iPhone maker's hardware leader

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Apple CEO Tim Cook is stepping down from the job that he inherited from the late Steve Jobs, ending a 15-year reign that saw the company's market value soar by more than \$3.6 trillion during an iPhone-fueled era of prosperity.

Cook, 65, will turn the CEO duties over to Apple's head of hardware engineering, John Ternus, on Sept. 1 while remaining involved with the Cupertino, California, company as executive chairman. That's similar to the transitions made by Amazon's Jeff Bezos and Netflix's Reed Hastings after they ended their highly successful tenures as CEO.

To allow Cook to assume his new job, Arthur Levinson will relinquish his role as Apple's non-executive chairman while remaining on its board of directors.

"It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be the CEO of Apple and to have been trusted to lead such an extraordinary company," Cook said in a statement. "I love Apple with all of my being, and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with a team of such ingenious, innovative, creative, and deeply caring people."

Ternus, 50, has been with Apple for the past quarter century, including the past five years overseeing the engineering underlying the iPhone, iPad and Mac — a role that made him a prime candidate to succeed Cook.

"I am profoundly grateful for this opportunity to carry Apple's mission forward," Ternus said in a statement.

Cook and Ternus may have more to say about the changing of the guard on April 30 when Apple is scheduled to release its financial results for the first three months of the year.

The transition to a new CEO comes at a pivotal time for Apple. Artificial intelligence has unleashed the most upheaval within the industry since Jobs unveiled the first iPhone in 2007. Apple has gotten off to a rough start in AI after stumbling in its efforts to deliver new features built on the technology, as promised nearly two years ago.

Earlier this year, Apple finally turned to Google — an early leader in the AI race — for help making the iPhone's virtual assistant Siri into a more conversational and versatile helper.

"Cook created a major legacy at Apple but it was ultimately time to pass the torch to Ternus with the AI strategy now the focus," Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives said.

Although he never shook the perception that he lacked Jobs' vision, Cook leveraged the popularity of the iPhone and other breakthroughs orchestrated by his predecessor to lift Apple to heights that seemed unfathomable when it was on the brink of bankruptcy during the mid-1990s.

Not long after Cook took over, Apple became the first publicly traded company to be valued at \$1 trillion, then became the first to be valued at \$2 trillion and \$3 trillion, too.

But after Apple's slow start in AI, chipmaker Nvidia rode the feverish demand for its processors that power that technology to be the first company to reach the \$4 trillion threshold and then the first to break through the \$5 trillion barrier, too. Apple is currently valued at \$4 trillion, up from \$350 billion when Tim Cook took over in August 2011, shortly before Jobs died after a long bout with cancer.

"Steve Jobs was never going to be an easy act to follow, yet Tim Cook took Jobs' legacy and transformed Apple into a durable, resilient financial powerhouse," said Forrester Research analyst Dipanjan Chatterjee.

Besides guiding Apple to a phenomenal run of financial success, Cook also made his mark in an October 2014 essay acknowledging his homosexuality — a disclosure by the leader of a renowned company that was hailed as a breakthrough for the gay rights movement.

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Before his death, Jobs spent time grooming Cook to be his successor – a move that reflected the Apple co-founder's respect and admiration for an executive that he hired in 1998 to oversee the company's supply chain. Knowing his successor would likely be measured against his legacy, Jobs advised Cook to be guided by his own instincts and never bother musing, "What would Steve do?"

Cook, an Alabama native who previously worked at Compaq Computer and Apple's former nemesis, IBM, masterminded the intricacies of an international supply chain that plumbed the cheaper labor and efficiency of China's manufacturing plants. It has played an instrumental role in the production of the Mac computers, iPods, iPhones, iPads and other products that account for most of Apple's annual revenue of \$416 billion – up from \$108 billion when Cook became CEO.

But most of Apple's best-selling devices were all conceived while Jobs was still CEO, raising questions about whether Cook was more of a logistics man than an idea man.

"While Cook has kept Apple's growth trajectory moving at a steady clip, he has not overseen a step-change innovation that would reset Apple's competitive position for the next two decades, as Jobs did with the iPhone," Chatterjee said.

The company did create the two popular new product lines – the Apple Watch and wireless AirPods headphones – and a still-niche Vision Pro headset for experiencing virtual reality, but none of them have been the kind of breakthroughs that became Jobs' trademark. Meanwhile, other ballyhooed projects such as Apple's effort to build a self-driving car never materialized after years of research and investments.

Apple's reliance on overseas manufacturing required Cook to master the art of political diplomacy, particularly while President Donald Trump waged trade wars with China during both his terms in the White House. After persuading Trump to exempt the iPhone and other products from Trump's first-term tariffs, he faced a more daunting challenge during the current administration.

While insisting that Apple shift its iPhone manufacturing from China to the U.S., Trump imposed some tariffs on the device this time around. But Cook still managed to minimize the fees by shifting the production of iPhones destined for the U.S. market to India and also winning some exemptions after promising Apple would invest \$600 billion in the U.S. during Trump's second administration.

Trump offers mixed messages about path ahead for US war against Iran

By AAMER MADHANI, MUNIR AHMED and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump offered mixed messages on Monday about the path ahead for the U.S. war against Iran, declaring that he was in no rush to end the conflict while also expressing confidence that further negotiations with Tehran will soon take place in Pakistan.

With the 14-day ceasefire to expire Wednesday, Trump whipsawed in telephone interviews and social media posts between measured optimism that a deal could soon be reached and warning that "lots of bombs" will "start going off" if there's no agreement before the ceasefire deadline.

Trump indicated that he still expects to dispatch his negotiating team, led by Vice President JD Vance, to Pakistan's capital of Islamabad for a second round of talks, even as Iran insisted it would not take part until Trump dialed back his demands.

Iran's chief negotiator and parliament speaker, Mohammed Bagher Qalibaf, accused the United States of wanting Iran to surrender and added that on the contrary, Iran has been preparing "to reveal new cards on the battlefield."

"We do not accept negotiations under the shadow of threats," Qalibaf wrote in a post on X early Tuesday.

Trump insisted he feels no pressure to end the war until Iran agrees to his terms.

"I am under no pressure whatsoever," Trump said on his Truth Social platform, "although, it will all happen, relatively quickly!"

Pakistani officials moved ahead with preparations for a new round of talks between the U.S. and Iran as the tenuous ceasefire was further strained over the weekend by renewed conflict around the Strait of Hormuz.

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Trump told Bloomberg News he was "highly unlikely" to renew the ceasefire.

Iran holds out on resuming negotiations

Tensions flared after the U.S. Navy attacked and seized a ship on Sunday that it said was trying to evade its blockade of Iranian ports. On Saturday, Iran fired at vessels and abruptly stopped traffic in the strait, abandoning its promise to allow some ships to pass and claiming the U.S. was not holding up its side of the ceasefire.

The U.S. actions are "incompatible with the claim of diplomacy," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Monday in a social media post.

He gave no indication what Iran will do after the ceasefire expires or whether Iran will return to a second round of negotiations with the U.S.

Over the weekend, Iran said it had received new proposals from the U.S. but suggested that a wide gap remains between the sides. Issues that derailed the last round of negotiations included Iran's nuclear enrichment program, its regional proxies and the strait.

Iran has throttled traffic through the strait, which connects the Persian Gulf to the open seas, since shortly after the U.S. and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28 to start the war. The U.S. has also instituted a blockade of Iranian ports. Roughly one-fifth of the world's oil trade normally passes through the strait.

Trump swipes at war critics, seeks to calm investors

The U.S. president lashed out at war critics at home who are urging him to wrap up the conflict that began more than seven weeks ago.

"How bad is it that when you are in the middle of negotiations and you have got the Iranians in a perfect position, including being militarily defeated, and you have Democrats and some Republicans asking to settle it now?" Trump told the New York Post.

Even as Trump bristled at his detractors, he sought to soothe jittery investors as U.S. stocks slipped modestly Monday, following the chaotic weekend in the Persian Gulf.

The president found himself remonstrating his energy secretary, Chris Wright, who on Sunday said American motorists might not see gas prices fall back into the \$3 per gallon range until late this year or next year.

"I disagree with him totally. I think it'll come roaring down if it ends," Trump told PBS. "If we end it, if Iran does what they should do, it will come roaring down."

Israel-Lebanon talks to resume, official says

Meanwhile, historic diplomatic talks between Israel and Lebanon were set to resume Thursday in Washington, an Israeli, a Lebanese and a U.S. official said. All three spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the behind-the-scenes negotiations.

The Israeli and Lebanese ambassadors met last week for the first direct diplomatic talks in decades. Israel says the talks are aimed at disarming Hezbollah and reaching a peace agreement with Lebanon.

A 10-day ceasefire began Friday in Lebanon, where fighting between Israel and Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants broke out two days after the U.S. and Israel launched their war on Iran. Fighting in Lebanon has killed more than 2,290 people.

In two separate encounters on Monday, the Israeli air force struck and killed Hezbollah militants that the military said approached its troops in a threatening way. Israel has carried out several airstrikes since the ceasefire went into effect.

Hezbollah said it detonated explosives Sunday in an Israeli convoy inside Lebanon.

Iran says more than 3,000 have been killed in the country so far

Since the war started, at least 3,375 people have been killed in Iran, according to a new toll released Monday in official Iranian media by Abbas Masjedi, the head of Iran's Legal Medicine Organization.

He did not break down casualties among civilians and security forces, saying instead that 2,875 were male and 496 were female. Masjedi said 383 of the dead were children 18 years old and younger.

Additionally, 23 people have died in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Fifteen Israeli soldiers in Lebanon and 13 U.S. service members throughout the region have been killed.

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Oil prices on the rise again after renewed conflict in Strait of Hormuz
Iran's grip on the strait has sent oil prices skyrocketing and given rise to one of the worst global energy crises in decades.

Oil prices were up again Monday, with Brent crude, the international standard, at just over \$95 a barrel — up from about \$70 a barrel before the war started.

Iran said it had reopened the strait to ships Friday, but traffic halted after Trump refused to lift the U.S. blockade.

Sunday's U.S. seizure of the Iranian cargo was the first such interception under the blockade. Iran's joint military command called the armed boarding an act of piracy and a ceasefire violation.

Trump said the blockade will remain "in full force" until Tehran agrees to a deal. The U.S. military said on Monday that it has directed 27 ships to return to Iranian ports since the blockade began last week.

What to know about a Louisiana father fatally shooting 8 children, including his own

SHREVEPORT, La. (AP) — A Louisiana father fatally shot eight children, including seven of his own, and shot and wounded his wife and another woman in the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S. in more than two years.

The attack on Sunday morning unfolded in two homes in a Shreveport neighborhood. The gunman, identified as 31-year-old Shamar Elkins, died after a police pursuit that ended with officers firing on him, authorities said.

Police have not provided a motive for the killings. Family members said Elkins and his wife were separating and community leaders called for a reckoning over domestic violence as the shooting reverberated across the city, including in the classrooms where the children attended school.

Here's what to know about the attack.

Shootings began before sunrise

The attack began before dawn in a neighborhood south of downtown Shreveport.

Police received the first report around 5:55 a.m. from a caller stating they were on top of a house where someone had been shot, Shreveport Police Chief Wayne Smith said. Five minutes later, police were told that Elkins had shot everyone inside the 79th Street house.

Troy Brown, Elkin's brother-in-law, said his wife and his 12-year-old daughter had escaped through the home's roof.

Officers arrived within minutes but another call at 6:07 a.m. reported a second attack on nearby Harrison Street, where the caller said Elkins had shot her before fleeing, according to Smith. Police then received word the gunman had stolen a car, leading to a pursuit and eventually an exchange of gunfire.

Elkins was pronounced dead about an hour after police received the first call. It was not clear whether he was killed by officers or from a self-inflicted gunshot, Smith said.

Gunman had felony gun conviction

Court records showed that Elkins was placed on probation in 2019 after pleading guilty to illegal use of weapons. A police report for that case said Elkins fired five rounds at a vehicle and told police that someone inside it had pulled a gun on him.

Under Louisiana law, a person convicted of illegal use of a weapon is banned from having a gun for at least 10 years after completing their sentence and probation. Investigators were not aware of other domestic violence issues involving Elkins, said police spokesperson Chris Bordelon.

Authorities have not said how or where Elkins obtained the weapon used in Sunday's attack.

Elkins had served in the Louisiana National Guard from 2013 to 2020, held the rank of private and had no deployments, a guard spokesperson said. He was a signal support system specialist and a fire support specialist.

Elkins had voluntarily checked into a Department of Veterans Affairs hospital in January for just over a week, according to Brown. He said Elkins appeared "better when he came home" and seemed fine a day

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before the shooting.

The murdered children were all under 12

The eight children ranged in age from 3 to 11. Besides Elkins' seven children, his nephew was among the slain, according to the Caddo Parish coroner's office.

Family members described the gunman's wife, Shaneiqua Elkins, as a doting mother who celebrated her children's success in school and carefully dressed them before family events.

Francine Monro Brown, a cousin of Shaneiqua Elkins, said she would often see the children playing in the yard on Sunday mornings when she drove past the house on her way to church. She called them "happy" and "joyful."

Family member says couple was separating

Elkins and his wife were separating and had been arguing about their relationship before the shooting, said Crystal Brown, a cousin of a woman shot in the attack.

The shooting in Shreveport was the deadliest in the U.S. since January 2024, when eight people were killed in a Chicago suburb, according to a database maintained by The Associated Press and USA Today in partnership with Northeastern University.

Oil prices rise and US stocks give back a bit of their record-breaking rally

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil prices climbed Monday following the latest rise of tensions between the United States and Iran, but the moves were more modest than they were earlier in the war. U.S. stocks, meanwhile, gave back a bit of their record-breaking rally.

The S&P 500 slipped 0.2% from its all-time high for just its second drop in 14 days after the United States seized an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel that it said had tried to evade its blockade of Iranian ports. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 4 points, or less than 0.1%, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.3%.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude oil, the international standard, climbed 5.6% to settle at \$95.48 on worries that Iran could keep petroleum pent up in the Persian Gulf if it continues to block tankers from exiting the Strait of Hormuz.

It's a turnaround from the prior trading day on Wall Street, when stocks soared and oil prices tumbled after Iran said Friday it was reopening the strait to commercial traffic. That enthusiasm vanished quickly after Iran closed the strait again Saturday following the U.S. decision to press ahead with its blockade of Iranian ports.

The next big deadline is looming on Tuesday night at 8 p.m. Eastern time, which is early Wednesday Tehran time, when a ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran is scheduled to expire.

Still, oil prices remain well below the high points reached so far in the war. Brent crude's price briefly got above \$119 per barrel when fears were at their highest. And the S&P 500 is still above where it was before the war.

Monday's relatively muted moves suggest investors still see a possibility of a U.S.-Iranian agreement that could get oil flowing again from the Middle East to customers worldwide. It would be in both countries' economic interests to end the war.

Companies with big fuel bills fell to some of Wall Street's larger losses following the rise in crude's cost, as they have through much of the war.

Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings dropped 3.5%, and Royal Caribbean Group lost 1.1%.

United Airlines sank 2.8%, and American Airlines fell 4.2% after American said it's not interested in a merger with United. Airline stocks had flown higher last week following a report saying United wanted to combine with its rival.

On the winning side of Wall Street was TopBuild, a distributor of insulation and building products, which jumped 19.4%. QXO is buying it in a deal valued at roughly \$17 billion.

QXO said the deal would make it the continent's second-largest publicly traded building products dis-

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tributor, and its stock fell 3.1%.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 16.92 points to 7,109.14. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 4.87 to 49,442.56, and the Nasdaq composite slipped 64.09 to 24,404.39.

One big reason the U.S. stock market has been so strong recently is the big profits that U.S. companies have been reporting for the first three months of 2026, as well as expectations for continued growth.

While reporting stronger profits for the latest quarter than analysts expected, several of the biggest U.S. banks said last week that they see the U.S. economy remaining resilient, particularly because of solid spending by U.S. consumers.

"Despite geopolitical risks, the earnings recovery remains intact," according to Morgan Stanley strategists led by Michael Wilson. It's remained so solid that analysts have even raised their profit expectations since the war began for the spring of 2026.

Along with JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and other big banks, about 10% of companies in the S&P 500 have already reported their results for the start of 2026. Nearly nine out of 10 have delivered a bigger profit than analysts expected, according to FactSet.

If the rest of the companies in the index match analysts' expectations, overall earnings per share for S&P 500 companies will end up 13% higher than a year earlier, according to FactSet.

That's big because stock prices tend to follow the path of corporate profits over the long term. Other companies scheduled to report their results this week include UnitedHealth Group on Tuesday, Tesla on Wednesday and Procter & Gamble on Friday.

In stock markets abroad, indexes fell in Europe following a better finish in Asia. Germany's DAX lost 1.2%, and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.8% for two of the world's bigger moves.

Animal welfare protesters converge on Wisconsin governor's office seeking release of beagles

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Animal welfare activists converged outside of Wisconsin Gov. Tony Evers' Capitol office on Monday, chanting "Free the dogs!" and demanding that the governor and attorney general do what they can to shut down a beagle breeding and research facility where many of the protesters clashed with police two days earlier.

An estimated 1,000 activists from around the country came to Ridgman Farms in rural Blue Mounds in an attempt Saturday to free an estimated 2,000 beagles kept there about 25 miles (about 40 kilometers) southwest of the capital, Madison. They were met by police who repelled them with tear gas, rubber bullets and pepper spray. The Dane County Sheriff's Department said 29 people were arrested.

More than 100 protesters were met outside of the Capitol hallway that leads to the offices of Evers and Attorney General Josh Kaul by police officers who handed out constituent contact forms for Wisconsin residents to complete.

Evers and Kaul did not immediately return messages seeking comment. No one from their offices spoke directly to the protesters, some of whom carried pictures of Evers, Kaul and U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin interacting with dogs.

Aidan Kankyoku, a co-leader of the Coalition to Save the Ridgman Dogs that organized the effort, said they were hoping that both Evers and Kaul would break their silence about the dog breeder. Kankyoku said activists also wanted Kaul to execute a search warrant on the facility to investigate allegations of ongoing animal cruelty.

Ridgman has denied mistreating animals but agreed in October to give up its state breeding license as of July 1 as part of a deal to avoid prosecution on animal mistreatment charges. A special prosecutor determined that Ridgman was performing eye procedures on the dogs that violated state veterinary standards.

Under that settlement, Ridgman will no longer be able to sell beagles to outside researchers starting July 1. Ridgman says it has served as a biomedical research facility "that supports health studies benefitting

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both humans and animals" for more than 60 years. Nearly all of its current research is aimed at improving veterinary medicine, according to its website.

Ridglan said in a statement Monday that activists "have spread false and highly misleading claims about our research and our deep commitment to animal welfare, fueling dangerous levels of anger and hatred." Ridglan said staff members have been threatened and followed as they leave the facility.

Many of those who were at the facility on Saturday returned to the Capitol on Monday to decry law enforcement's reaction. Some of them showed off bruises they said were caused by rubber bullets.

Dane County Sheriff Calvin Barrett defended the actions of his officers, telling The Associated Press on Monday that their response was "appropriate and decisive" to the risk posed by between 300 and 400 protesters who attempted to break into the facility.

"We were outnumbered," Barrett said of the 26 officers on scene.

The activists were organized into three groups, with one willing to commit felony breaking and entering, another willing to be arrested for trespassing, while others were there to peacefully protest, the sheriff said.

The sheriff's department released a video that showed a truck driving through Ridglan's gate, which Barrett said put officers and Ridglan staff who were in its path at risk. Barrett said another video released Monday showed an activist taking a baton away from an officer as protesters tried to rush the gate to the facility.

Protesters previously broke into the facility in March and took 30 dogs. Twenty-seven people were arrested on trespassing and other charges.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan last week questioned U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. during a House Appropriations Committee hearing about federal grants going to organizations that use beagles from Ridglan Farms.

Kennedy said he had a hard time believing what Pocan was telling him but that he would look into it.

Pocan on Sunday called on state officials to work with Ridglan on a plan for releasing the dogs that won't overwhelm placement groups and prevent the beagles from being euthanized.

Kankyoku said if Ridglan would release the dogs, homes and veterinary care could be found for them.

"We just want the dogs out," he said.

Witnesses subpoenaed to testify before DC grand jury in John Brennan investigation, AP sources say

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department has subpoenaed several witnesses to testify before a federal grand jury in Washington as part of its investigation into former CIA Director John Brennan, three people familiar with the matter said Monday.

The subpoenas were issued in recent days and represent an effort by the Justice Department to press forward with the investigation even as a Florida-based career prosecutor who'd been helping lead the inquiry left the case after expressing doubts about the legal viability of a potential criminal prosecution.

Joseph diGenova, a former Justice Department lawyer who served as a top prosecutor in the 1980s and later supported legal efforts by President Donald Trump to overturn his 2020 election loss, has since been sworn in to serve as a special counselor to the attorney general, and is expected to work on the investigation.

The months-old Brennan investigation is one of several criminal probes the Justice Department has opened over the last year against Trump's perceived adversaries. It centers on one of the Republican president's chief grievances — a U.S. intelligence community finding that Russia interfered on his behalf during his successful 2016 presidential campaign.

The subpoenas were described by people with knowledge of them who spoke on condition of anonymity to The Associated Press to discuss an ongoing criminal investigation. At least three were said to have been issued, said two of the people. CBS News earlier reported the issuance of subpoenas.

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Brennan served as CIA director under President Barack Obama and was in that role when the intelligence community in January 2017 published an assessment detailing Russian interference aimed at helping Trump defeat Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton in 2016. An investigation led by special counsel Robert Mueller concluded that Russia meddled on Trump's behalf and that his campaign welcomed the assistance, but it did not find sufficient evidence to prove a criminal conspiracy.

The Justice Department last year received a criminal referral from Rep. Jim Jordan, the Republican chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, alleging that Brennan made false statements before the panel in 2023 about the preparation of the intelligence community assessment. Brennan and his lawyers have vigorously denied any wrongdoing and have called the investigation politically motivated.

The investigation has been unfolding for months in Florida, with investigators lining up interviews and issuing subpoenas for records. The latest subpoenas seek grand jury testimony in Washington, an indication that prosecutors expect they would have to bring any criminal case in Washington since that is where Brennan's testimony took place.

On Friday, it was revealed that a key national security prosecutor in Florida who'd been handling the investigation, Maria Medetis Long, left the case. She expressed doubts about the case and was removed, another person familiar with the matter said.

The Justice Department has tapped diGenova, 81, a Trump loyalist who served as the U.S. Attorney in Washington for part of the 1980s, to serve as a special counselor to the attorney general. He was sworn in Monday in Florida and is expected to work on the Brennan investigation.

DiGenova supported Trump's false claims that the 2020 election was stolen from him. He made headlines that year when he said Chris Krebs, a top Trump administration cybersecurity official who had determined that the 2020 election was free of major fraud or interference, should be killed. diGenova later apologized and a lawsuit filed against him by Krebs was withdrawn.

Businesses begin claiming refunds for Trump tariffs struck down by US Supreme Court

By MAE ANDERSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A refund system for businesses that paid tariffs which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled President Donald Trump imposed without the constitutional authority to do so launched Monday.

Importers and their brokers could begin claiming refunds through an online portal beginning at 8 a.m., according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the agency administering the system.

It's the first step in a complicated process that also might eventually lead to refunds for consumers who were billed for some or all of the tariffs on products shipped to them from outside the United States.

Companies must submit declarations listing the goods on which they collectively put billions of dollars toward the import taxes the court struck down on Feb. 20. If CBP approves a claim, it will take 60-90 days for a refund to be issued, the agency said.

The government expects to process refunds in phases, however, focusing first on more recent tariff payments. Any number of technical factors and procedural issues also could delay an importer's application, so any reimbursements businesses plan to make likely would trickle down to consumers slowly.

The co-owner of a clothing company based in Washington, D.C., said the system seemed buggy on Monday when she tried to create an account on the portal, which was required before companies could do anything else. A lawyer in Northern Virginia said his clients reported some system delays and lag time.

In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court found that Trump usurped Congress' tax-setting role last April when he set new import tax rates on products from almost every other country, citing the U.S. trade deficit as a national emergency that warranted his invoking of a 1977 emergency powers law.

Although the court majority did not address refunds in its ruling, a judge at the U.S. Court of International Trade determined last month that companies subjected to IEEPA tariffs were entitled to money back.

Not all taxed imports immediately eligible

Customs and Border Protection said in court filings that over 330,000 importers paid a total of about

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\$166 billion on over 53 million shipments.

Not all of those orders qualify for the first phase of the refund system's rollout, which is limited to cases in which tariffs were estimated but not finalized or within 80 days of a final accounting.

To receive refunds, importers have to register for the CPB's electronic payment system. As of April 14, 56,497 importers had completed registration and were eligible for refunds totaling \$127 billion, including interest, the agency said.

System requires accuracy

Meghann Supino, a partner at Ice Miller, said the law firm has advised clients to carefully list in their declarations all of the document numbers for forms that went to CBP to describe imported goods and their value.

"If there is an entry on that file that does not qualify, it may cause the entire entry to be rejected or that line item might be rejected by Customs," she said.

Supino thinks the portal going live will require composure as well as diligence.

"Like any electronic online program that goes live with a lot of interest, I would expect that there might be some hiccups with the program on Monday," she said. "So we continue to ask everyone to be patient, because we think that patience will pay off."

Nghi Huynh, the partner-in-charge of transfer pricing at accounting and consulting firm Armanino, said most companies claiming refunds will have imported a mix of items, and not all will qualify right away.

"It's about having a clear process in place and keeping track of what's been submitted and what's been paid, so nothing falls through the cracks," she said. "Each file can include thousands of entries, but accuracy is critical, as submissions can be rejected if formatting or data is incorrect."

Patience with the process

Small businesses have eagerly awaited the chance to apply for refunds. Rebecca Melsky, co-owner of the clothing brand and online store Princess Awesome, said she was unable to register for a portal account Monday despite trying to submit her CPB import code and company information using two different web browsers.

She said Princess Awesome would file for a refund eventually. The company imports some of its clothes from factories in Bangladesh, China, India and Peru. Melsky estimated it paid \$32,000 in IEEPA tariffs.

"My expectations have been pretty low about whether we were actually going to see any money back to us," she said. "I'm heartened by the fact that there's any system at all, but I'm only slightly more optimistic than I was last week, which was not very."

Justin Angotti, an associate attorney in the international trade practice of global law firm Reed Smith, said his clients ultimately had their declarations accepted Monday, even if it might have taken a few attempts.

"So far, Customs has been very responsive in trying to troubleshoot the issue," Angotti said.

Will consumers see refunds?

Tariffs are paid by importers, and some companies pass on the tax costs to consumers via higher prices.

The system starting up Monday will refund tariffs directly to the businesses that paid them, which are not obligated to share the proceeds with customers. However, class-action lawsuits that aim to force companies, ranging from Costco to Ray-Ban maker Essilor Luxottica, to reimburse shoppers are winding their way through the U.S. legal system.

Individuals may be more likely to receive refunds from delivery companies like FedEx and UPS, which collected tariffs on imports directly from consumers. FedEx has said it would return tariff refunds to customers when it receives them from the CPB.

"Supporting our customers as they navigate regulatory changes remains our top priority," FedEx said in a statement. "We are working with our customers as CBP begins processing refunds and plan to begin filing claims on April 20."

Defending champion John Korir breaks Boston Marathon record and Sharon Lokedi also repeats

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — John Korir outran the strongest field in Boston Marathon history and still had enough energy left to bounce around Boylston Street after learning he had blistered the course record, too.

The defending champion rode a tailwind on Monday to the fastest finish in the race's 130-year history, winning in 2 hours, 1 minute, 52 seconds. That was 70 seconds faster than Geoffrey Mutai's then-world best in 2011, and the fifth-fastest marathon of all time.

Korir said he knew he was on a record pace at the 40-kilometer mark, but he didn't bother to check the clock as he crossed the finish line. He was informed of his accomplishment by Boston Athletic Association president Jack Fleming, and jumped for joy.

"When they told me I had run the course record, that's when I started to be happy," said the 29-year-old Kenyan, who last year joined his brother to become the first relatives to win the race. "I knew I would defend my title. But I didn't know I could run that fast."

Sharon Lokedi joined Korir as a back-to-back champion, winning the women's race in 2:18:51 — a year after she shattered the course record by more than 2 1/2 minutes. The winners receive \$150,000 and a gilded olive wreath sent from the plains of Marathon, Greece; Korir will receive another \$50,000 for the course record.

Alphonse Felix Simbu of Tanzania, who was 55 seconds back, and 2021 champion Benson Kipruto, another 3 seconds behind him, also were fast enough to beat the previous record on the hilly course that typically rewards racing strategy more than footspeed.

Kelvin Kiptum holds the marathon world record, with a 2:00:35 on the flatter Chicago course in 2023.

"Boston is not (usually) about time," Kipruto said. "Today, it was about time."

Zouhair Talbi and Jess McClain ran the fastest times ever in Boston for Americans — leading the seven U.S. men and 12 U.S. women who finished in the top 20.

Talbi, who competed in the 2024 Paris Olympics for Morocco and became a U.S. citizen last year, was fifth in 2:03:45; McClain, who crossed in 2:20:49, also finished fifth.

"I think we're in an era in distance running, on the men and women's sides, but especially the women's side, where we're all making each other so much better every time we line up with one another," McClain said. "And I think it's just going to get stronger and stronger."

Korir recovered after falling at the start last year to claim the title won by his brother Wesley in 2012.

This year, he broke away from the pack as it headed into the Newton hills and opened a 40-second lead. Korir peeked behind him as he went through Kenmore Square with a mile to go, sticking out his tongue and spreading his arms as he ran down Boylston Street.

Lokedi moved toward the front of the pack around Mile 17 and charged up Heartbreak Hill to pull ahead. On a day that started in the 30s but warmed to 45 degrees (7 degrees Celsius) by the start, Lokedi pulled off her gloves as she went through Coolidge Corner in Brookline and smiled her way down Boylston Street.

"I didn't know how fast I was going. I just wanted to run as fast as I could," said Lokedi, who realized on the bus to the start that she forgot her watch and had to borrow one. "I just wanted to get to the finish line as fast as possible."

Loice Chemnang was second, 44 seconds back — a performance that would have been a course record before Lokedi's 2:17:22 last year. Mary Ngugi-Cooper was third, completing the Kenyan sweep of the women's podium.

Marcel Hug of Switzerland won his ninth wheelchair title in 1:16:06, a time second only to his 2024 course record. He is one shy of the all-category record of South African wheelchair athlete Ernst van Dyk's 10 Boston Marathon wins.

Two-time winner Daniel Romanchuk of Champaign, Illinois, was second behind Hug for the fourth straight time.

In the women's wheelchair race, Eden Rainbow-Cooper of Britain won her second Boston title, finishing

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in 1:30:51 to beat runner-up Catherine Debrunner of Switzerland by more than two minutes.

The athletes arrived in Hopkinton with frost on the ground and temperatures in the 30s. Although it warmed up through the day, it was the coldest starting temperature since 2018, when 38 degree temperatures combined with a headwind and driving rain that led to the slowest winning times in more than 40 years.

But the clear skies and a tailwind on Monday had the fastest field in the event's history expecting fast times for the second year in a row.

"Obviously the tailwind played into a lot of the approach," McClain said. "You don't get these conditions every year, so if you're going to go full send and 'Carpe Diem,' this is the year to do it. And that was kind of the mindset."

Runners may have noticed some changes this year, with the race turning to a crowd scientist for help in spreading things out a little so they don't face bottlenecks on the narrow streets of the eight cities and towns along the course. And at the start is a new statue of and by marathon pioneer Bobbi Gibb — the first statue on the course honoring a woman.

Jack Fultz, who was serving as grand marshal on the 50th anniversary of his "Run for the Hoses," said the weather was the "polar opposite" from the day of his 1976 win in temperatures approaching 100 degrees (38 degrees Celsius).

"I am just trying to soak it all in, to remember it all," he said in Hopkinton on Monday before the race. "There are almost are no words to fully describe the kind of experience. You have a dream of a lifetime and all of a sudden it comes true."

Starmer admits mistake in appointing Mandelson as UK ambassador but resists calls to resign

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Keir Starmer acknowledged Monday that he made the wrong judgment when he picked Jeffrey Epstein 's friend Peter Mandelson as U.K. ambassador to Washington, batting away a barrage of calls to resign over a scandal that has left his leadership teetering.

Starmer said he would have withdrawn the appointment if he'd known Mandelson had failed security checks, as he tried to explain why Mandelson was given the U.K.'s most important diplomatic post. Starmer placed blame squarely on Foreign Office officials who he said failed to tell him about the security concerns and approved Mandelson's appointment despite them.

Starmer told lawmakers in the House of Commons that "I would not have gone ahead with the appointment" had he known the truth. He called it "frankly staggering" that officials didn't tell him about the failed vetting.

"At the heart of this, there is also a judgment I made that was wrong," Starmer added. "I should not have appointed Peter Mandelson.

"I take responsibility for that decision, and I apologize again to the victims of the pedophile Jeffrey Epstein, who were clearly failed by my decision."

Starmer fired Mandelson in September, nine months into the job, when new details emerged about his friendship with Epstein, a convicted sex offender who died in prison in 2019.

His explanation was greeted with jeers from opposition lawmakers, incredulous that the nation's leader hadn't known about the failed security vetting.

Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch said Starmer's lack of curiosity was hard to believe.

"It doesn't appear that he asked any questions at all. Why? Because he didn't want to know," she said.

Starmer denies misleading Parliament

Starmer was attempting to set the record straight after repeatedly telling lawmakers that "due process" was followed when Mandelson was appointed.

Though he apologized for his error of judgment, he denied misleading Parliament, which is usually considered a resigning offense.

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Starmer fired the top Foreign Office civil servant, Olly Robbins, within hours of the revelation by The Guardian last week. But allies of Robbins say he never would have been able to share sensitive vetting information with the prime minister.

Robbins is expected to give his own version of events to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee on Tuesday.

Badenoch noted that Robbins is the latest high-profile government departure linked to Mandelson. She said that instead of taking responsibility for his mistakes, Starmer "has thrown his staff and his officials under the bus."

Ed Davey, leader of the centrist Liberal Democrats, said Starmer "gives every impression of a prime minister in office but not in power." Davey said appointing Mandelson was "a catastrophic error of judgment. And now that it's blown up in his face, the only decent thing to do is to take responsibility."

Senior government colleagues have defended the prime minister. Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy said that if Starmer had known about the failed security vetting, "he would never, ever have appointed him ambassador."

But lawmakers in Starmer's center-left Labour Party, already anxious about its dire poll ratings, are restive. Starmer already defused one potential crisis in February, when some Labour lawmakers urged him to resign over the Mandelson appointment.

He could face a new challenge if, as expected, Labour takes a hammering in local and regional elections on May 7, which give voters a chance to pass a midterm verdict on the government.

Warnings about Epstein ties went unheeded

Critics say the Mandelson appointment is more evidence of bad judgment by a prime minister who has made repeated missteps since he led Labour to a landslide election victory in July 2024.

Starmer has struggled to deliver promised economic growth, repair tattered public services and ease the cost of living, and has been forced into repeated policy U-turns.

He picked Mandelson as ambassador despite being warned by his staff that Mandelson's friendship with Epstein exposed the government to "reputational risk."

Mandelson's business links to Russia and China also set off alarm bells. But his expertise as a former European Union trade chief and contacts among global elites were considered assets in dealing with U.S. President Donald Trump's administration.

A trove of Epstein-related documents released by the U.S. Department of Justice in January included emails suggesting Mandelson had passed on sensitive, and potentially market-moving, government information to Epstein in 2009, after the global financial crisis.

British police launched a criminal probe and arrested Mandelson in February on suspicion of misconduct in public office. Mandelson has previously denied wrongdoing and hasn't been charged. He does not face allegations of sexual misconduct.

Starmer said he had ordered a review into any security concerns arising from Mandelson's access to sensitive information while ambassador.

Many questions remain unanswered after Starmer's 2 1/2-hour question-and-answer session, including why Mandelson failed the vetting and whether officials felt political pressure to approve the appointment.

Several lawmakers asked why Starmer chose Mandelson for the job despite red flags.

"I'm interested in his judgment," said Scottish National Party lawmaker Stephen Flynn. "Does he believe himself to be gullible, incompetent or both?"

Mother and 6 children killed in explosion and fire at central Pennsylvania home

MILL HALL, Pa. (AP) — An Amish woman and her six children ranging in age from 3 to 11 were killed in a swift-moving house fire after an explosion that shook nearby houses in rural northcentral Pennsylvania, authorities said.

Firefighters responding to a report of an explosion and fire at a home in Lamar Township in Clinton

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County near Mill Hall on Sunday morning said seven people were trapped, but they couldn't search the house engulfed in flames, Pennsylvania State Police said in a statement.

All seven died. Police identified them as Sarah Stoltzfus, 34, four sons, ages 11, 10, 5 and 3, and two daughters, ages 8 and 6.

An obituary posted online by a local funeral home identified Stoltzfus as a member of the Old Order Amish Church community. She is survived by her husband, David Stoltzfus, it said.

A police report issued earlier gave the spelling of her last name as Stolzfs.

The cause is under investigation. A propane leak inside the home may have caused the explosion and fire, police said, noting that exterior propane tanks did not explode and were not contributing factors for the explosion and fire.

Neighbor Christina Duck told WNEP-TV she was eating breakfast when it began.

"And I heard a boom and I could feel it and I got up and looked out the window and I could see the flames through the windows and I come running outside and within a minute the whole house was completely engulfed," Duck said. The family moved in a couple of months ago, Duck said, noting that she often saw the children outside playing.

By the time firefighters got there, "there was no saving that house, it went up so fast," she said.

WNEP-TV showed video of what it said was members of the Amish community arriving at the scene to clean up and pay respects.

The Amish prioritize their deep Christian faith and family life, eschewing many modern conveniences. They wear traditional clothing and use horses and buggies for much of their transportation. They often speak a German dialect known as Pennsylvania Dutch.

Supreme Court will hear from religious preschools challenging exclusion from taxpayer-funded program

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to hear from Catholic preschools that say it's unconstitutional to exclude them from a state-funded program because they won't admit kids from LGBTQ+ families.

In the latest religious rights case for the conservative-majority court, the justices will hear from Colorado's St. Mary Catholic Parish and the Archdiocese of Denver, which are supported by the Republican Trump administration.

The schools argue that Colorado is violating their religious rights by barring them from the taxpayer-funded universal preschool program over their faith-based admission policies. They say the state has allowed other preschools to prioritize children with disabilities or those from low-income families, so admission based on religious beliefs about gender and same-sex marriage should be allowed, too.

The state said that religious schools are welcome to participate but are required to follow nondiscrimination laws. Income and disability decisions are in line with those rules, Colorado said. The program was created by a 2020 ballot measure and provides public funding for preschool at schools selected by parents.

The plaintiffs are represented by the group Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which applauded the high court's decision to take up the case.

"The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that states cannot exclude families from government benefits because of their faith. We're confident the Court will say the same thing here and put a stop to Colorado's no-Catholics-need-apply rules," said Nicholas Reaves, a senior counsel at Becket.

As part of the case, which will be heard in the fall, the court will consider narrowing a landmark 1990 decision over the spiritual use of peyote, a cactus that contains a hallucinogen called mescaline. That opinion, written by conservative icon Justice Antonin Scalia, found religious practices don't create exemptions from broadly applicable laws.

The justices declined a push from the schools, along with a Catholic family in Colorado, to overturn the ruling.

The high court recently has backed other claims of religious discrimination while taking a more skeptical view of LGBTQ+ rights.

The justices last month ruled against another law in Colorado that banned "conversion therapy" for LGBTQ+ kids after the measure was challenged by a Christian counselor.

Last year, the justices found that parents who have religious objections can pull their children from Maryland public school lessons that use LGBTQ+ storybooks. In 2022, the court found a high school football coach who knelt and prayed on the field after games was protected by the Constitution.

The court deadlocked, though, over a plan to establish a publicly funded Catholic charter school after Justice Amy Coney Barrett recused herself.

EU hosts Palestinian peace conference as it seeks greater sway in the Middle East

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Europe turned its attention to the Palestinians on Monday as the election defeat of Israel ally Victor Orban in Hungary gives new momentum to efforts addressing Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

More than 60 nations sent representatives to Brussels for talks with Palestinian representatives on stability, security and long-term peace.

The European Union has largely been on the sidelines in the Middle East despite being the biggest provider of aid to the Palestinians and backing a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A majority of EU member countries now recognize an independent Palestinian state after many expressed outrage over Israeli actions in Gaza. The 27-nation bloc is also Israel's top trading partner and a major buyer of Israeli weapons.

But the EU had no role in negotiating the October ceasefire in Gaza that took effect after two years of war. And European moves to condemn or sanction some Israeli actions frequently had been vetoed by Orbán.

Now Hungary's next leader, Péter Magyar, is indicating he will act differently from Orbán on Israel. And some leaders critical of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, like Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, are pushing for decisive action.

Challenging Europe's agreement with Israel

Magyar has said he would seek "pragmatic relations" with Israel but also rejoin the International Criminal Court, which issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu over Gaza. Orbán defied that warrant while hosting Netanyahu in 2025, then started the process of Hungary leaving the world's only court for war crimes and genocide.

Magyar also said he might not continue Orbán's policy of vetoing actions on Israel — a stumbling block that EU leaders critical of Israel have failed to overcome over the past three years of conflict in the Middle East.

After the Brussels meeting, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said that without Orbán's veto action could be coming soon, such as imposing sanctions on violent Israeli settlers.

"We have 27 countries and 26 countries want to put violent settlers sanctions in place," she said. "The one who doesn't want the sanctions on violent settlers has gotten their upper hand. Now, this country had elections, and we'll have a new government."

The Spanish prime minister wants the EU to suspend its long-standing Association Agreement with Israel and has said Spain will make a formal proposal at an EU foreign ministers' meeting on Tuesday.

However, a suspension seems unlikely because countries such as Austria and Germany tend to back Israel.

The agreement in force since 2000 sets out the legal and institutional framework within which the bloc and Israel conduct trade and cooperation. The EU has found indications Israel had violated that agreement in its military campaign in Gaza.

Other action, such as targeted sanctions on Israeli settlers in the West Bank, could be approved if a

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"qualified majority" — 15 of the 27 nations representing at least 65% of the EU's population — agree.

Ongoing attacks by Israeli settlers in the West Bank, and continued devastation in Gaza, have dimmed the prospect for a two-state solution, said Belgian Foreign Minister Maxime Prévot ahead of Monday's meeting.

"The two-state solution is being made more difficult by the day," Prévot said. "But Belgium and many European and Arab partners continue to believe that this remains the only realistic path to a lasting peace, for Israelis, for Palestinians and for the stability of the entire region."

Palestinian prime minister calls for unity

Gaza requires "one state, one government, one law and one goal," Palestinian Prime Minister Mohamed Mustafa said in Brussels.

"Our common objective of achieving one security structure under the legitimate authority should guide the effective coordination between the International Stabilization Force, the Palestinian Authority, security institutions and other international actors. Security must not be fragmented," he said.

He also called for "the gradual and responsible collection of arms from all armed groups and also the full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza." The disarmament of Hamas is a major challenge in next steps for the ceasefire in Gaza.

In the West Bank, Palestinians say Israel has used the cover of the Iran war to tighten its grip over the territory, as settler attacks surge and the military imposes additional wartime restrictions on movement, citing security.

The EU has avoided directly joining the Board of Peace created by the Trump administration to tackle Gaza, preferring the multilateralism of the United Nations and global legal norms. But the bloc is eager to not be sidelined in diplomacy in the Middle East, just across the Mediterranean.

During the Brussels meeting, Mustafa said he had met for the first time Nikolay Mladenov in the Bulgarian diplomat's role as the Trump-appointed director of Board of Peace. He said he pressed Mladenov on ongoing Israeli military action in Gaza, increasing humanitarian assistance and security in the coastal enclave. "We see eye to eye on many things, and I think that we will be meeting again in the near future," Mustafa said.

Here's what to know about Timmy, the humpback whale that's sick and stranded in the Baltic Sea

BERLIN (AP) — A humpback whale's likely final days in the Baltic Sea have been livestreamed across the globe as multiple rescue efforts failed to coax it back into deeper waters while the marine mammal gets sicker and weaker.

Nicknamed Timmy by local media, many fear the whale may soon die in the Baltic Sea's shallow waters near the eastern German town of Wismar.

The animal faces long odds in finding its way back out into the North Sea, a journey of several hundred kilometers (miles), and then to the Atlantic Ocean.

Here's what to know:

Whale is far from its natural habitat

Timmy was first spotted swimming in the region on March 3. It is not clear why the whale swam into the Baltic Sea, far from its natural habitat in the Atlantic Ocean. Some experts say the animal may have lost its way while swimming after a shoal of herring or during migration.

Since then, the mammal has become repeatedly stranded in shallow waters. It's in clear distress, breathing irregularly and mostly barely moving for days.

Timmy is also suffering from a bad skin condition, related to the Baltic Sea's low salt content, and rescuers have applied kilos (pounds) of zinc ointment.

On top of all that, the whale keeps swimming in the wrong direction when it does move.

Drama has captivated Germany

Local media have produced dayslong livestreams to feed the outsized public attention over the fate of the whale. Online newspapers have blasted push alerts with the smallest developments about Timmy's health.

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Activists have staged protests on the beach in Wismar calling for the animal's liberation, while influencers have debated whether the best way to help the animal is to let it die in peace or keep trying to assist its return to the Atlantic Ocean.

Interest has been so strong that police had put up a 500-meter (1,640 foot) protection zone to keep curious bystanders from getting too close and stressing the stranded whale even more.

Despite these efforts, a 67-year-old woman jumped off a boat on the weekend trying to get close to the whale before she was stopped.

Experts are split on rescue attempts

Attempts to refloat the mammal with the help of police boats, excavators and inflatable boats had temporarily freed it. But the whale, which measures 12 to 15 meters (39 to 49 feet) long and weighs 12 metric tons (nearly 26,500 pounds), never found its way back to the North Sea.

Experts then came up with a sophisticated plan to use air cushions to lift the animal onto a tarp, which would have been secured to two pontoons and attached to a tugboat. State officials approved the private initiative, but the whale started swimming again Monday as the tide rose. Boats attempted to guide the mammal toward the right path, though some have lost all hope.

Thilo Maack, a marine biologist at Greenpeace, told The Associated Press the efforts are actually causing the animal severe stress.

"I believe the whale will die very soon now. And I would also like to raise the question: What is actually so bad about that?" he said. "Yes, animals live, animals die. This animal is really, really very, very, very sick. And it has decided to seek rest."

Carney says Canada's economic ties with US are a weakness that must be corrected

By JIM MORRIS Associated Press

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said in a video address released Sunday that Canada's strong economic ties to the United States were once a strength but are now a weakness that must be corrected.

In the 10-minute address, Carney spoke about his government's efforts to strengthen the Canadian economy by attracting new investments and signing trade deals with other countries.

"The world is more dangerous and divided," Carney said. "The U.S. has fundamentally changed its approach to trade, raising its tariffs to levels last seen during the Great Depression.

"Many of our former strengths, based on our close ties to America, have become weaknesses. Weaknesses that we must correct."

Carney said tariffs imposed by U.S. President Donald Trump have affected workers in the auto and steel industries. He added that businesses are holding back investments "restrained by the pall of uncertainty that's hanging over all of us."

Many Canadians have also been angered by Trump's comments suggesting Canada become the 51st state.

Carney said he plans to give Canadians regular updates on his government's efforts to diversify away from the U.S.

"Security can't be achieved by ignoring the obvious or downplaying the very real threats that we Canadians face," he said. "I promise you I will never sugarcoat our challenges."

It's not the first time Carney, who served as a central bank governor, first at the Bank of Canada and later with the Bank of England, has spoken about a shift in world power.

During a speech in January at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, he received widespread praise for condemning economic coercion by great powers against small countries.

His remarks brought a rebuke from Trump.

"Canada lives because of the United States," Trump said after the speech. "Remember that, Mark, the next time you make your statements."

There was no immediate White House reaction Sunday to the address.

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Carney's comments came days after securing a majority government following special election wins and as the opposition Conservatives push him to deliver a U.S. trade deal, which was among his promises in last year's election.

A review of the current version of the North American Free Trade Agreement between Canada, the U.S. and Mexico is scheduled for July.

In his address, Carney said he wants to attract new investments into Canada, double the size of clean energy capacity and reduce trade barriers within the country. He also emphasized Canada's increased defense spending, reduction in taxes and efforts to make housing more affordable.

"We have to take care of ourselves because we can't rely on one foreign partner," he said. "We can't control the disruption coming from our neighbors. We can't control our future on the hope it will suddenly stop.

"We can control what happens here. We can build a stronger country that can withstand disruptions from abroad."

Carney said simply hoping the "United States will return to normal" is not a feasible strategy.

"Hope isn't a plan and nostalgia is not a strategy," he said.

Carney said Canada has "been a great neighbor" standing with the U.S. in conflicts including Afghanistan, plus two World Wars.

"The U.S. has changed and we must respond," he said. "It's about taking back control of our security, our borders and our future."

Tired of political turmoil, Bulgarians give ex-president a convincing mandate for change

By VESELIN TOSHKOV Associated Press

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — The center-left coalition of ex-president Rumen Radev has emerged as the clear winner of Bulgaria's parliamentary election, the country's central electoral commission said Monday, ending half a decade of political fragmentation.

With all the ballots counted on Monday, results showed the Progressive Bulgaria coalition receiving 44.6% of the vote, some 30 percentage points ahead of the center-right GERB party of veteran leader Boyko Borissov and the pro-Western reformist bloc led by the We Continue the Change party. Those parties ran almost neck and neck, scoring 13.4% and 12.6% respectively. Borissov conceded defeat and congratulated Radev.

Two other parties also appear to have gained seats in the 240-seat chamber, according to the latest results.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, on Monday congratulated Radev on his election victory.

"Bulgaria is a proud member of the European family and plays an important role in tackling our common challenges. I look forward to working together, for the prosperity and security of Bulgaria and Europe," she posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Radev promises a "European path" but with conditions

Radev described his party's victory as unequivocal, a "victory of hope over distrust, a victory of freedom over fear," saying Bulgaria would "make every effort to continue on its European path".

"But believe me, a strong Bulgaria and a strong Europe need critical thinking and pragmatism. Europe has fallen victim to its own ambition to be a moral leader in a world without rules," Radev told reporters.

During his presidency, Radev gained a reputation as being sympathetic to Russia. He repeatedly opposed EU efforts to send military aid to Ukraine for its war against Russia's full-scale invasion. He has often argued that supporting Ukraine risks drawing Bulgaria into the war and has favored reopening talks with Russia as a way out of the conflict.

Maria Simeonova, head of the Sofia Office of the European Council on Foreign Relations, said that although as president Radev often expressed pro-Russian statements, prompting comparisons to a "new

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Orbán," given his landslide victory at home, he is likely to now seek external legitimacy through building relationships with other European leaders.

"Radev is unlikely to openly adopt an Orbán-style rhetoric, at least in his engagement with European counterparts. His criticism — particularly regarding financial and military support for Ukraine or sanctions against Russia — will be aimed primarily at the domestic audience," said Simeonova.

Radev left the presidency to bid to be prime minister

Radev resigned from the mostly ceremonial presidency in January, a few months before the end of his second term, to launch a bid to lead the government in the more powerful role as prime minister.

The 62-year-old former fighter pilot earned a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the U.S. Air War College in 2003, before being appointed Bulgarian air force commander. His supporters are divided between those hoping he will put an end to the country's oligarchic corruption and those lining up behind his euroskeptic and Russia-friendly views.

Bulgaria's previous conservative government collapsed in December after nationwide anti-corruption protests drew hundreds of thousands of mainly young people to the streets.

Radev's popularity surged as he cast himself as an opponent of the entrenched mafia and their ties to high-ranking politicians. At campaign rallies he vowed to "remove the corrupt, oligarchic model of governance from political power."

NATO and EU member Bulgaria has been repeatedly criticized for not tackling corruption and for deficiencies in the rule of law.

Vessela Tcherneva, Deputy Director of the Berlin-based European Council on Foreign Relations, said that the most important task for Radev's government will not be foreign policy but rather freeing Bulgarian institutions from the control of Borissov and the leader of the Movement for Rights and Freedoms, Delyan Peevski, an oligarch sanctioned for corruption by the US and Britain.

"For that he would get support from the reformist pro-European coalition We Continue the Change in parliament," Tcherneva added.

Maybe this means an end to years of fragmented parliaments

Since 2021, the nation of 6.5 million has struggled with fragmented parliaments that produced weak governments, none of which managed to survive more than a year before being brought down by street protests or backroom deals in parliament.

Tired of the seemingly never-ending election roulette, people on the street reacted with mixed feelings to the latest election results.

"Above all, we expect a more stable judicial system, and for trust in institutions to truly be restored. Until now, they have been heavily influenced by various figures, many of whom, as we can see from the current results, have now left the government," said Nikoleta Dimitrova, a 37-year-old shop assistant from Sofia.

Accountant Cveta Gerogjeva, 55, was less optimistic: "I hope that we will really live a better life, but I am not sure that there will be stability for a long period. Probably we will vote again."

With no end in sight to their deployment, National Guard troops roam Washington

By GARY FIELDS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The cherry blossoms draw more than a million visitors to Washington's Tidal Basin annually. This year was no different, except some strolling the area between the Lincoln Memorial and the Thomas Jefferson Memorial were dressed in camouflage -- and armed.

Eight months after President Donald Trump declared a crime emergency in the nation's capital and called up the National Guard, more than 2,500 troops remain, in a deployment that has grown increasingly routine, with no clear end in sight.

Deployments to other cities have ended or been paused by courts in California and Illinois, while more limited operations are ongoing in cities including New Orleans. But in Washington, guard members still walk city streets and patrol metro stations, tourist attractions, neighborhoods and parks.

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Even with pivotal elections looming this year, that lingering presence is barely mentioned in city council meetings or by candidates running for mayor and Congress — perhaps reflecting both competing priorities and a sense that local officials have little power to stop it. Unless the courts step in, the guard will remain at least through the end of the year, if not longer.

"Taxpayers are paying more than a million dollars a day to have them walk around," said Phil Mendelson, chairman of the District of Columbia Council, in an emailed response to questions.

And, he said, "the presence of armed soldiers on American streets is not a good look."

An indefinite deployment drags on

Trump, a Republican, issued an executive order in August to deal with what he called a crime emergency. The order brought the guard in, along with hundreds of additional federal law enforcement officers.

Over the months, guard members have responded to medical emergencies, assisted with arrests, helped local police enforce the city's juvenile curfew and carried out beautification projects. The D.C. Guard helped with snow removal during a major storm in January.

While the guard members do not make arrests, the Trump administration argues their support to the broader mission has helped reduce crime. The White House said 12,000 arrests have been made by the task force since operations began, including 62 known gang members, and thousands of illegal firearms were seized.

White House spokesperson Abigail Jackson said the president's crime task force in the city has "yielded tremendous results for local communities."

"Every local leader should want to mimic this success in their own locales," Jackson said.

But officials disagree over how much credit the deployment can be given in Washington, a heavily Democratic city. Figures show crime was already on the decline before, although those figures are being investigated after claims arose against local police that they may have been manipulated.

A court battle over the guard deployment is ongoing, and without a judge stepping in it could go on as long as the White House wants.

Asked how long the guard deployment would continue, Jackson said in an email that there were "no announcements to make."

The office of D.C. Attorney General Brian Schwab, which is challenging the deployment in court, declined to comment, citing the pending lawsuit. The National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon did not answer requests for comment.

Guard presence absent from public discourse

Mayor Muriel Bowser, who is not running for reelection, has walked a fine line on the guard's deployment and the broader federal intervention, at once appearing to work with the president but also pushing back on some of his demands, like local cooperation for immigration enforcement.

Leading candidates to replace Bowser and the city's 18-term non-voting delegate in Congress, Eleanor Holmes Norton, have focused on affordability, statehood and trying to hold federal agencies accountable for their role in the surge.

The District Council, which includes at least four candidates for mayor or delegate, unanimously approved a measure to increase transparency in federal law enforcement operations. While the military deployment is mentioned at times on campaign websites and in ads, it isn't currently a central campaign issue.

Other pressures on the city, including unemployment and lost revenue tied to federal workforce cuts, have taken priority. The city's primaries are June 16, along with a special election for an at-large city council seat.

Some residents say frustrations over the guard eased after two members of the West Virginia contingent were ambushed just blocks from the White House, killing Specialist Sarah Beckstrom, 20, and severely injuring her colleague.

Kevin Cataldo, a neighborhood commissioner who joined the local Metropolitan Police on a walkalong in his neighborhood recently, said he already treated the guard members courteously, making a point to acknowledge them because they did not choose to be in the city. The shooting ambush deepened his sympathies for them. "That was just horrible," he said.

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District Council member Brianne Nadeau said constituents continue to ask why the guard is still around but the complaints are far fewer than at the start of the deployment.

"It would be great if the federal government would use its money and resources to help the District on the things we need help with and not act like an invading army," Nadeau said in an email.

Fellow council members and mayoral candidates Janeese Lewis George and Kenyan McDuffie have raised similar issues, including the high costs.

There has been little recent public polling specifically on attitudes toward the presence of uniformed personnel in U.S. cities.

With DC's limited autonomy, pushback is a challenge

Several groups are planning protests and other events on May 1 to oppose the federal surge, including the continuing presence of the National Guard, said Keya Chatterjee co-founder and executive director of Free DC, an advocacy group that fights for the city's autonomy. Among the goals: "an end to the military occupation of D.C. before the June election."

Chatterjee said normalizing the guard's presence makes it easier to suppress dissent and "tilt the playing field" in elections.

The presence of guns and military personnel could create an intimidating atmosphere during elections, Chatterjee said. Citizens have to step in and "number one, we have to help our neighbors feel safe voting."

Scott Michelman, legal director at the American Civil Liberties Union of the District of Columbia, said the situation underscores the city's limits on self-governance.

Washington is a federal district with limited autonomy where Congress retains authority to review the city's laws and control its budget and where the president has direct control of the D.C. Guard and can authorize an indefinite military deployment with little effective resistance from local authorities.

"We should have local control and local democratic accountability for the people who enforce our laws," Michelman said. "D.C. is uniquely disempowered in our system in many ways."

Grieving, traumatized survivors return to their homes 5 months after deadly Hong Kong fire

By KANIS LEUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Keung Mak knew what he would see and he already was hurting, but he had to go back.

For the first time since Hong Kong's deadliest fire in decades engulfed his apartment building in November, Mak stepped into his former home again Monday. His social worker had previously shown him a photo of the devastation.

The ceiling of the apartment where he and his wife lived for over 40 years and raised their children was burned so badly that steel rebar was visible. The floor was littered with broken tiles and parts of the apartment needed reinforcement to prevent collapse.

After the return visit to his charred home on the first floor with his family, the 78-year-old was left disappointed.

"All things were burned and turned into ashes," Mak said.

The fire spread rapidly across seven of the eight buildings in the apartment complex in the suburban district of Tai Po, killing 168 people. Starting Monday, the thousands of residents displaced by the fire were returning to see what is left of their homes and retrieve their belongings. The process is expected to continue into early May.

Hong Kong Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk said over 1,400 people registered for the return are 65 or older, public broadcaster Radio Television Hong Kong reported. He said over 260 people returned to the complex Monday and police received some requests for help from residents who suspected their assets had been lost.

As the investigation into the cause of the fire continues, survivors have been living as best they can,

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scattered across the city, many in temporary housing as they wait to find out where they can resettle.

Loss of valuables in the ruins

The exteriors of some buildings remained blackened from the flames, a reminder of the tragedy.

The return will be particularly difficult for many of the complex's older residents, who made up over a third of some 4,600 people who lived there before the blaze.

With elevators out of service, some have been training to improve their fitness in preparation for climbing the stairs up the 31-story buildings.

There were many items in Mak's apartment that the family cherished and longed to retrieve: a fishing rod Mak's son bought him as a gift, wedding photos from half a century ago, letters from their son. All of them were destroyed. They were able to retrieve some charred photo albums with pages stuck together and faces damaged beyond recognition.

Mak's wife, Kit Chan, 74, likened their home to ruins. A box that stored her jewelry including two diamond rings was empty and she suspected theft. The family reported their losses to the authorities.

"My mood is not so good because when I think of valuable, worth remembering items, they are all lost," she said, pointing to a red cloth with guest signatures from her wedding.

Other residents found items including a painting, wedding rings and a damaged jewelry box.

Former residents have complex feelings

Steven Chung said the staircases were blackened when he climbed several flights and found some valuable belongings he wanted to retrieve. But he had concerns beyond his possessions.

"I worry about another problem because housing prices are increasing rapidly these days," he said.

Cyrus Ng, 39, lived on the 10th floor of the Wang Fuk Court complex with his parents for over a decade before moving out.

In the immediate aftermath of the fire, he couldn't sleep, feeling angry, sad and worried about his parents. Nearly five months later, he is more emotionally settled but has not fully accepted what happened.

"We know there are suspicious issues behind this," he said. "I hope we can really find the truth."

A lawyer representing an independent committee conducting an ongoing inquiry into the fire's cause has said almost all fire safety systems failed on the day of the blaze because of human error.

Ng has mixed feelings about returning next week to their apartment, which was spared the worst damage. He fears the emotional impact on his parents, but looks forward to the chance to retrieve their title deed, old photos, clothes and other valuable items.

He also said he is worried about theft after months of vacancy. Police arrested three men in March on suspicion of stealing from the site.

Mixed responses to resettlement offers

The government previously said repairing the damaged buildings cost-effectively would be difficult. Officials were inclined to demolish the seven fire-ravaged buildings, and have proposed to buy back the homeownership rights from the fire victims.

They cited results from a residents' survey, dashing hopes for those who want their homes on the site rebuilt.

Some residents questioned that stance. Data from the fire inquiry showed that only half of some 1,700 apartments in the seven buildings were damaged, to varying degrees.

Ng wondered if some of the buildings could be repaired to allow some residents to return, though his parents were already considering the government's offer of an apartment elsewhere. He plans to take photos of his apartment during his return to document its condition and help prove that some homes were unaffected.

Other residents who lived in the only building in the complex that escaped the fire face the trauma of living with nightmarish memories.

Stephanie Leung, a resident of that block, is reluctant to live in the same apartment again. She said her family would face great mental stress every time they looked out over the seven other buildings where their former schoolmates or friends died.

She hopes the government will include her block in the same plan as the other buildings, while allowing those who want to remain to stay.

"Whenever I go back, I want to cry," she said.

UK police arrest 2 in connection with weekend arson attack on synagogue

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British police said Monday they arrested two teenagers in connection with an arson attack on a synagogue in northwest London over the weekend, as Jewish leaders express concern about a wave of incidents targeting their community.

Deputy Commissioner Matt Jukes of London's Metropolitan Police Service said officers arrested two young men, aged 19 and 17, overnight in relation to the attack on the Kenton United Synagogue in the borough of Harrow. The department has made a total of 15 arrests related to six attacks on Jewish targets and a Persian-language media organization critical of Iran's government that occurred over the past few weeks, he said in an interview with the BBC.

One "serious line of inquiry" is that Iran is hiring local criminals to carry out these attacks amid tensions in the Middle East, including the U.S.-Israeli war against the Islamic Republic, Jukes said.

"We've seen a pattern with other actors of thugs for hire, people taking cash that looks like quick and easy money," Jukes said. "This is part of the modern hybrid war fought by proxies."

In the most recent incident, a bottle containing a flammable liquid was thrown through the window of the Harrow synagogue on Saturday night, causing smoke damage, police said.

Counterterrorism police are investigating the series of incidents, which began on March 23 when an arson attack destroyed four ambulances owned by a Jewish charity that serves people of all faiths in north London. No one has been injured in the incidents.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office said he "shares the country's shock at the recent antisemitic attacks."

"He stands with the Jewish community and he is determined to do more to give them the security they deserve," his spokesman, Dave Pares, said Monday.

Police on Friday closed Kensington Gardens, a central London park visited by thousands of tourists and local residents every day, after a group that Israel has linked to Iran posted a video claiming Israel's nearby London embassy was going to be attacked with drones carrying dangerous substances.

Police said the embassy was not attacked, but the force shut the park as officers examined discarded items including two jars containing powder. Police said nothing harmful was found.

Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis said on Sunday that "a sustained campaign of violence and intimidation against the Jewish community of the UK is gathering momentum."

"Thank God, no lives have been lost, but we cannot, and must not, wait for that to change before we understand just how dangerous this moment is for all of our society," he said on X.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Vicki Evans said police are aware that a group calling itself Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamia had claimed responsibility for most of the attacks in Britain. The same group has claimed responsibility for incidents in recent months at places of worship, business and financial institutions across Europe, all of which appear to be linked to Jewish or Israeli interests, she said.

Israel's government has described Harakat Ashab al-Yamin al-Islamia, whose name means the Islamic Movement of the Companions of the Right, as a recently founded group with suspected links to "an Iranian proxy."

The U.K. has accused Iran of using criminal proxies to conduct attacks on European soil targeting opposition media outlets and the Jewish community. Britain's MI5 domestic intelligence service says that more than 20 "potentially lethal" Iran-backed plots were disrupted in the year to October.

An Iraqi captain keeps sailing despite the threat of attack amid regional war

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Aboard an oil tanker plying the tense waters between the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz, Iraqi Captain Rahman Al-Jubouri continues to work in one of the world's most volatile maritime corridors, where the U.S.-Israel war with Iran has disrupted global trade and left some crews stranded and exposed to attacks.

The hostilities are not new for al-Jubouri, a veteran who has worked at sea since 1984 and lived through decades of upheaval, including the Iran-Iraq War and the 1991 Gulf War. Once again, he finds himself operating in high-risk waters, as sporadic military strikes threaten vessels seeking to navigate through chokepoints like Bab el-Mandeb and the Persian Gulf.

"Work has become a real risk; we don't know when we might be bombed. We're sailing over a ball of fire," he said.

Al-Jubouri has been on board his tanker, the Palau-flagged Sea Moon, for four months. Currently he and his crew are sailing from the Gulf of Aden toward the Gulf of Oman to unload oil at Ras Isa port in Yemen. He spoke to The Associated Press by phone.

Although his route does not pass through the Strait of Hormuz itself, it is still considered high-risk because he is close to the entrance to the strait. The journey has seen delays because of security considerations and logistical disruptions amid the regional war sparked by the U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran.

The war has put commercial vessels in the crossfire amid the ongoing standoff between Washington and Tehran over the Strait of Hormuz. Several tankers have been targeted in attacks carried out by Iranian forces and allied groups. Intermittent disruptions and threats to close the Strait of Hormuz, a critical chokepoint for global oil flows, has also left vessels delayed, rerouted, or stranded in the Gulf.

On Sunday, American military forces forcibly seized an Iranian-flagged cargo ship that tried to get around a naval blockade near the strait, the first such interception since the blockade of Iranian ports began last week.

The dangers of his work mean his crew undergoes regular safety drills to prepare for potential attacks. "We've trained them on how to respond if the ship comes under fire, God forbid," he said.

Last year, while docked at a Yemeni port, his vessel came under bombardment. "I immediately cut the ropes, prepared the engines, and left the port at my own risk to protect the crew and the ship," he said.

Shrapnel struck the tanker as it pulled away, causing minor damage, but the crew escaped unharmed. Despite the ongoing threat, the vessel later returned to port operations and resumed its planned route.

Not all of al-Jubouri's crew can bear the dangers of the job, however. His team has thinned from 27 sailors to 17, he said. Fear drove them away.

The psychological toll is compounded by long stretches at sea. For four months, al-Jubouri has not seen his family. Like many sailors, he struggles with homesickness.

"We suffer from being away from our families and our homelands," he said. While internet access on board allows crew members to stay in touch, the distance feels especially stark amid the strain of an ongoing war.

Basic supplies, at least, remain steady. Food and bottled water are regularly replenished at port, with no major shortages reported.

Al-Jubouri's four decades at sea allow him to adapt under pressure, he said.

French prosecutors summon Elon Musk over allegations of child abuse images and deepfakes on X

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Elon Musk has been summoned to Paris on Monday, where investigators are looking into allegations of misconduct related to the social media platform X, including the spread of child sexual abuse material and deepfake content.

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The world's richest man and Linda Yaccarino — the former CEO of X — have been summoned for “voluntary interviews,” while other employees of the platform are scheduled to be heard as witnesses throughout this week, the Paris prosecutor’s office said.

It remains unclear whether Musk and Yaccarino will travel to Paris. A spokesperson for X did not respond to questions from The Associated Press and Yaccarino’s current company, eMed, did not answer a request sent to the press email.

French prosecutors also suspect that controversy around the platform’s AI system Grok’s deepfakes was concocted to boost the value of Musk-owned companies ahead of a key market listing, and alerted U.S. authorities. Musk welcomed a report that U.S. justice officials refused to help French investigators, posting on X, “This needs to stop.”

The reason for summoning Musk

Musk was summoned after a search took place in February at the French premises of X as part of an investigation opened in January 2025 by the cybercrime unit of the Paris prosecutor’s office. Musk and Yaccarino have been invited in their capacities as managers of X at the time of the events investigated. Yaccarino was CEO from May 2023 until July 2025.

“These voluntary interviews with the executives are intended to allow them to present their position regarding the facts and, where appropriate, the compliance measures they plan to implement,” prosecutors said. “At this stage, the conduct of this investigation is part of a constructive approach, with the ultimate objective of ensuring that platform X complies with French law, insofar as it operates within the national territory.”

The Paris prosecutor’s office said Musk and Yaccarino’s potential no-show on Monday “is not an obstacle for investigations to continue.”

What is being investigated

French authorities opened their investigation after reports from a French lawmaker alleging that biased algorithms on X likely distorted the functioning of an automated data processing system. It expanded after the AI system, Grok, generated posts that allegedly denied the Holocaust, a crime in France, and spread sexually explicit deepfakes.

It’s looking into alleged “complicity” in possessing and spreading pornographic images of minors, sexually explicit deepfakes, denial of crimes against humanity and manipulation of an automated data processing system as part of an organized group, among other charges.

Grok, which was built by xAI and is available through X, sparked global outrage this year after it pumped out a torrent of sexualized nonconsensual deepfake images in response to requests from X users.

Grok also wrote in a widely shared post in French that gas chambers at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp were designed for “disinfection with Zyklon B against typhus” rather than for mass murder — language long associated with Holocaust denial.

In later posts on X, the chatbot reversed itself and acknowledged that its earlier reply was wrong, saying it had been deleted, and pointed to historical evidence that Zyklon B was used to kill more than 1 million people in Auschwitz gas chambers.

French prosecutors alert U.S. authorities

In March, the Paris prosecutor’s office alerted the U.S. Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) — the U.S. federal agency responsible for regulating and overseeing financial markets — suggesting “that the controversy surrounding sexually explicit deepfakes generated by Grok may have been deliberately orchestrated to artificially boost the value of the companies X and xAI — potentially constituting criminal offenses,” prosecutors said.

The Paris prosecutor’s office said this could have been done “ahead of the planned June 2026 stock market listing of the new entity formed by the merger of Space X and xAI, at a time when company X was clearly losing momentum.”

Justice Department brushes off French call

According to the Wall Street Journal, the Justice Department told French law enforcement authorities it

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wouldn't facilitate their efforts to investigate Musk's X. The newspaper reported that the Justice Department's Office of International Affairs, in a two-page letter last week, accused the French of inappropriately using its justice system to interfere with an American business.

The letter also said France's requests for U.S. assistance "constitute an effort to entangle the United States in a politically charged criminal proceeding aimed at wrongfully regulating through prosecution the business activities of a social media platform."

French judicial authorities didn't respond to requests for comments.

Investigations launched into several internet platforms

The cybercrime unit of the Paris prosecutor's office has launched in recent years a series of investigations focusing on internet platforms' suspected illegal activities.

French-language website Coco, which was cited in the landmark trial that turned Gisèle Pelicot into a global icon against sexual violence, closed in 2024 as its manager is accused of complicity in spreading child pornography and trafficking of children for sexual purposes, among other things.

Pavel Durov, the founder of the Telegram messaging app, was handed preliminary charges and placed under judicial supervision for allegedly allowing criminal activity on the platform, including child sexual abuse material and drug trafficking.

The Paris prosecutor's office opened last year an investigation into TikTok over allegations that the platform allows content promoting suicide and that its algorithms may encourage vulnerable young people to take their own lives.

Meanwhile, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) said it has lodged a new complaint against X with the cybercrime unit of the Paris prosecutor's office targeting "the platform's policies that allow disinformation to flourish."

Today in History: April 21, Prince dead at age 57

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, April 21, the 111th day of 2026. There are 254 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 21, 2016, Prince, one of the most inventive and influential musicians of modern times, was found dead at his home in suburban Minneapolis from an accidental fentanyl overdose; he was 57.

Also on this date:

In 1836, an army of Texans, led by Sam Houston, defeated the Mexican Army, led by Antonio López de Santa Anna, in the Battle of San Jacinto, the final battle of the Texas Revolution.

In 1910, author Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, died in Redding, Connecticut, at age 74.

In 1918, German Air Force pilot Manfred von Richthofen, nicknamed "The Red Baron," was killed at age 25 after being shot during a World War I air battle over Vaux-sur-Somme, France. He was credited with 80 air combat victories.

In 1930, fire broke out inside the overcrowded Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus, killing 322 inmates in the deadliest prison disaster in U.S. history.

In 1975, with Communist forces closing in on Saigon, South Vietnamese President Nguyễn Văn Thiệu resigned after nearly 10 years in office, fleeing the country five days later.

In 1980, Rosie Ruiz was the first woman to finish at the Boston Marathon, but was later exposed as having cheated by entering the racecourse less than 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) before the finish line. (Canadian Jacqueline Gareau was named the actual winner.)

In 2015, an Egyptian criminal court sentenced ousted Islamist President Mohammed Morsi to 20 years in prison over the killing of protesters in 2012. (Morsi collapsed and died during trial on espionage charges in June 2019.)

In 2021, an Indonesian navy submarine went missing north of the resort island of Bali and was found days later to have sunk and cracked open, killing its 53 crewmembers.

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In 2025, Pope Francis, who charmed the world with his humble style and concern for the poor but alienated conservatives with critiques of capitalism and climate change, died at 88. Born Jorge Mario Bergoglio in Argentina, he became the Catholic Church's first Latin American pontiff when he was elected in 2013.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian-filmmaker Elaine May is 94. Author-activist Sister Helen Prejean is 87. Singer Iggy Pop is 79. Actor Patti LuPone is 77. Actor Tony Danza is 75. Actor Andie MacDowell is 68. Musician Robert Smith (The Cure) is 67. Actor Rob Riggle is 56. Actor James McAvoy is 47. Former NFL quarterback Tony Romo is 46. Actor Gugu Mbatha-Raw is 43. Actor Thomas Doherty is 31.