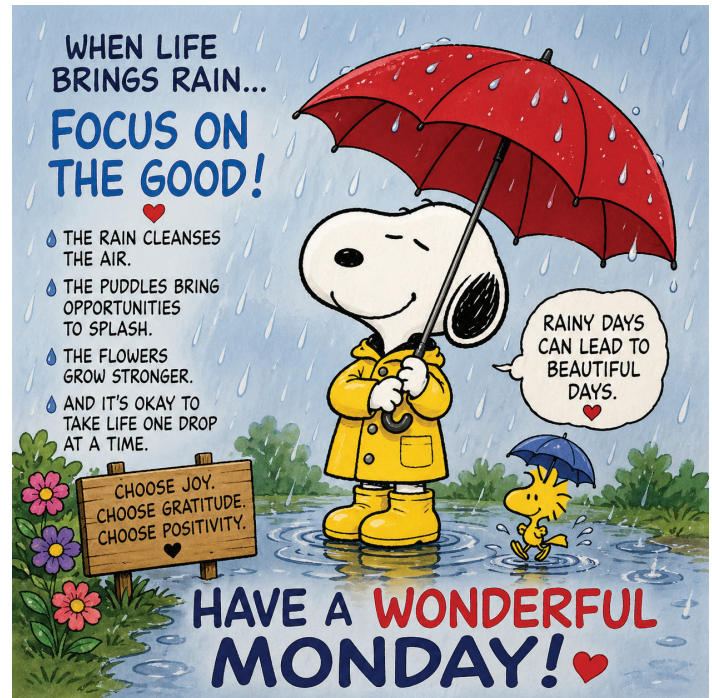


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## Monday, April 27

Senior Menu: Turkey wraps, lettuce/tomato,cheese; potato salad, fruit.

School Breakfast: Eggs.

School Lunch: Beef stir fry, rice.

Spring Cleanup through May 1

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.

Grades 3-5 ELA & Math Testing

**Cancelled:** Junior High Track Meet at Britton, 3:30 p.m.

Girls Fast Pitch Softball in Groton: Varsity at 4 p.m. followed by Junior Varsity. (Also Senior Recognition Night)

Pole Vault & Javelin in Warner (2pm)

Pickle Ball, 5:30 p.m., Elementary Gym

## Tuesday, April 28

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo, broccoli, fruit, breadstick.

School Breakfast: Scones.

School Lunch: Chicken breast, baby bakers.

Grades 3-5 ELA & Math Testing

- Rob Luecke Invitational HS Track Meet in Groton (Field Events @ 11am, Track Events @ 1pm)

Elementary Spring Concert, 7 p.m.

BioGirls, 3:45 p.m., Elementary Gym

JVT Practice, 7 p.m., Arena

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

## Wednesday, April 29

Senior Menu: French dip sandwich, vegetable pasta salad, fruit.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza.

School Lunch: Cheese quesadilla, corn and black beans.

Grades 3-5 ELA & Math Testing

HOSA Banquet, 5 p.m., GHS Gym

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

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

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

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

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.

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

**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.**

## WHCD Shooter Arrested

A gunman is in custody after storming the White House Correspondents' Association dinner Saturday. President Donald Trump, whom the acting attorney general described as the likely target, is unharmed.

The attack happened shortly after 8:30 pm ET, when police say a man armed with a shotgun, handgun, and multiple knives rushed past security at the Washington Hilton in downtown Washington, DC. Secret Service agents intercepted the gunman in the lobby while others escorted Trump out of the ballroom, and guests took cover. One Secret Service agent was shot in his bulletproof vest and later released from the hospital.

The suspect is Cole Allen, a 31-year-old teacher from California who released a manifesto suggesting he sought to target administration officials. Trump says the dinner will be rescheduled within 30 days in remarks shortly after the attack.

## Musk v. Altman

Elon Musk's lawsuit against OpenAI, its CEO Sam Altman, and several others (including Microsoft) heads to court today with jury selection in Oakland, California. Opening arguments are expected tomorrow.

Musk cofounded OpenAI alongside Altman and several others in 2015 with a founding mission to develop artificial intelligence to benefit all humanity, unencumbered by corporate interests). Musk alleges he was misled when he donated tens of millions of dollars on the understanding it would remain a nonprofit; OpenAI transitioned to a public benefit corporation in October of last year. The trial—which centers on two claims, unjust enrichment and breach of charitable trust—comes in the lead-up to OpenAI's potential public filing later this year. The company is targeting a \$1T valuation.

Musk seeks up to \$134B to be returned to OpenAI's nonprofit arm, and wants OpenAI to be forced to return to nonprofit status. Among high-profile tech leaders who could testify are Musk, Altman, OpenAI cofounder Greg Brockman, and Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella.

## Marathon Record Falls

The longstanding two-hour marathon milestone was broken in London over the weekend—not just by one competitor, but two. Kenyan Sabastian Sawe finished the race in 1:59:30, finishing 11 seconds ahead of Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha (in what was the latter's first official marathon).

The sub-two-hour mark was unofficially broken in 2019 by Eliud Kipchoge, but had never been reached in a sanctioned race. Both Sawe and Kejelcha ran in a newly debuted Adidas shoe model weighing less than 100 grams (roughly equal to a deck of cards) and designed to return energy from sole compression with each step. The women's winner, Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa, also wore the shoes and finished in 2:15:41.

The winning time is equivalent to running a mile in 4 minutes and 33 seconds, 26 times in a row. See how the development of energy return technology in shoes has pushed elite runners to previously.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Four siblings who once defended Michael Jackson against child sexual abuse allege they were victims of child sex trafficking; family reportedly settled with Jackson estate in 2020 for \$16M.

Michael Jackson biopic earns \$217M in global box office debut, best ever biopic opening weekend.

Stagecoach country music festival is temporarily evacuated due to high winds.

Combined with Coachella, the two music festivals generate \$700M.

A record 805,000 attendances were logged over three days at NFL draft last week in Pittsburgh, breaking the 775,000 record from Detroit in 2024.

## Science & Technology

Anthropic shares results from Project Deal, an experiment demonstrating AI agents can effectively negotiate for goods on behalf of buyers and sellers.

Trump administration reportedly fires all 24 members of the National Science Board.

The mechanical motion of a beating heart is found to suppress cancer growth in mice; may explain why cardiac tumors are relatively rare.

Researchers produce the most detailed image ever of a key part of the Vibrio bacteria—the cause of cholera—known as the sheathed flagellum, which helps it move.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets end Friday mixed (S&P 500 +0.8%, Dow -0.2%, Nasdaq +1.6%), with the S&P and Nasdaq closing at record highs.

Intel shares jump 24% as company posts its best day since 1987; Nvidia shares rise 4.3% as company passes \$5T market cap again.

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-NC) drops block on advancing Trump administration nominee Kevin Warsh as the next Federal Reserve chair; current Chairman Jerome Powell's term ends May 15.

Google to invest at least \$10B in Anthropic, rising to as much as \$40B if company hits performance targets; deal values Anthropic at \$350B.

## Politics & World Affairs

Car bomb explodes near police station in Northern Ireland weeks after police foil similar attack; authorities blame Republican groups attempting to undermine the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

Al-Qaida-linked militants and separatists strike Mali's capital of Bamako and claim they seized two cities, Kidal and Mopti, in coordinated attacks including car bombs, armed drones.

Syrian court begins to hold trials for Assad-era government officials, most being tried in absentia.



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With the 18th pick in the 2026 NFL Draft, the Minnesota Vikings select Caleb Banks, defensive lineman, Florida.

I talked about Banks as a possibility for the Vikings in the second round, so taking him at 18 is a bit of a reach - especially with players like cornerback Jermod McCoy and safety Dillon Thieneman still available. According to the Wide Left consensus board, put together every year by Arif Hasan and covering data from 134 draft analysts, Banks was the 40th ranked player in this year's draft class.

The talent is undeniable. Banks is 6'6", 327 lbs, instantly making him the largest defensive lineman on the Vikings' roster. He has a quick first step

to go along with immense power at the point of attack. He's also versatile, able to line up at every spot along the defensive line.

He's not a perfect prospect, however. His height can work against him at times, allowing offensive linemen to get under his pads and dislodge him in the run game. He's inconsistent with his hand placement, which makes it harder for him to disengage from blocks. He also relies too heavily on his natural talents and hasn't developed many tools in his pass-rushing toolbox.

The good news is all of those things are fixable, and defensive coordinator Brian Flores should be able to maximize his skill set.

The bad news is that his biggest red flag, injuries, can't be fixed. He was only on the field for 90 snaps last season because of a foot injury (although credit where it's due, he worked hard to make it back for the final two games of the season instead of sitting out and preparing for the draft). A great Senior Bowl performance had his draft stock on the rise, but Banks broke his foot again at the Combine.

If he can stay healthy, Caleb Banks has the potential to be an All-Pro caliber player. But a 327-pound player breaking the same foot twice in an eight-month span is a major concern.

The Vikings ended up making four selections on day two of the draft, but the biggest news of the day isn't who they added to the roster. As the second round was underway, it was announced that the Vikings traded their best pass rusher, Jonathan Greenard, to the Philadelphia Eagles. In return for Greenard and a seventh-round pick, the Vikings received two third round draft picks (2026 and 2027).

Rumors began earlier this offseason that Greenard was unhappy with his current contract and wanted a raise. It made sense. Greenard, one of the better pass rushers in the league, was severely underpaid. He will also be turning 29 years old next May, which meant time was running out for him to get one last big payday.

From a logical standpoint, this move makes sense. Cap space was tight, Greenard was getting older, and they have a recent first-round pick, Dallas Turner, waiting in the wings.

From a football standpoint, this move raises some eyebrows. Greenard was the Vikings' best player on defense. Not only was he their best pass rusher, which is one of the most important roles in football, he was also their highest-graded run defender according to PFF.

What was once the strongest position group on the roster has suddenly become a question mark. Andrew Van Ginkel will be 31 years old on opening day and dealt with a neck injury that limited him to 12 games in 2025. The other starter, Dallas Turner, has shown glimpses of why he was a first-round pick in 2024. But is he ready to take on a bigger role in 2026? What about the depth behind the starters? Are the Vikings comfortable relying on Tyler Batty, Chaz Chambliss, and Bo Richter to play meaningful snaps? We'll have to wait and see.

Looking ahead to next week, we'll continue breaking down the Vikings' draft picks as well as bringing you any news coming out of Minnesota as the offseason marches on.

## "Anesthesia: Biting the Bullet is No Longer Necessary"

Anesthesiology is the branch of medicine committed to pain relief and patient care before, during, and after surgery and other procedures. It has origins in ancient times but made large advances in the last two centuries.

It is one of medicine's greatest achievements that someone can comfortably drift off to sleep, have their knee replaced, or their gallbladder removed, and wake up with minimal pain.

Ancient civilizations used herbal remedies to help numb pain with forms of cannabis, opium, mandrake, or alcohol. Even by the time of the Revolutionary War, these remained the only options, which did little for the pain of an amputation. Survival depended on the speed of the surgeon. Patients would "bite the bullet" and literally clench down on a lead bullet or piece of leather to help endure the pain and protect their teeth. Surgeries were completed in minutes, and most amputees did not survive due to infection or blood loss.

Major advances in anesthesia came in the mid-1800s with the emergence of ether and chloroform. American dentist William Morton was the first to publicly show ether's use as an anesthetic, famously demonstrated at Massachusetts General Hospital in 1846.

During the Civil War, anesthesia became widely adopted in the military and used in the vast majority of surgeries. Typically, ether or chloroform was soaked in a cloth and placed over the patient's face for inhalation. After the war, the physicians with a new understanding of anesthesia were dispersed across the country, and use of anesthesia went from a sporadic, questionable intervention to standard practice.

Epidurals are another major advance in anesthesia, decreasing the pain of childbirth, surgery, and some forms of back pain. Epidurals numb pain by delivering medication near the spinal nerves with an injection in the back. First developed in the early 1900's, epidurals became widely used in the United States by the 1970's. The addition of a catheter allowed continuous pain relief throughout labor, replacing a single injection.

Modern anesthesia has continued to evolve. Propofol, first developed in the 1970s and approved in the United States in 1989, is now commonly used to start and maintain anesthesia. Often called the "milk of amnesia," it works quickly and allows for a smooth, clear-headed recovery.

Anesthesia techniques continue to improve and become safer and more effective. With the expertise and close monitoring of an anesthesiologist or nurse anesthetist, patients can undergo complex procedures with excellent pain control and minimal risk.



Andrew Ellsworth, MD

*Dr. Andrew Ellsworth is a Family Medicine Physician at Avera Medical Group Brookings in Brookings, SD. He serves as one of the Prairie Doc Volunteer Hosts during its 24th Season providing Health Education Based on Science, Built on Trust. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).*

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GROTON AREA  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

## GT OPEN HOUSE TOUR GT

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

• **Tuesday, April 28** •

GROTON AREA HIGH SCHOOL  
502 N 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET



The Groton Area School District Board of Education is considering options for addressing facilities needs at the Groton Area High School and is hosting a public open house event for all patrons on Tuesday, April 28, 2026 from 6PM to 8PM.

The goal of this open house event is to provide the public an opportunity to see first hand some of the challenges posed by our aging classroom buildings and learn why we are working on plans to remedy these issues.

A team from Co-Op Architects will be on hand to discuss the Facilities Master Planning process we've been working through during the 2025-2026 school year.

We hope you are able to stop in and see for yourself!

## EARTHTALK

### Plastic Bag Bans: What Happened After COVID-19? (2026 Update) by Saanvi Doshi

Dear EarthTalk: Why were several new plastic bag bans reversed during COVID? Have they been reinstated (or expanded or forgotten) in the meantime?  
-- Missy G., New York, NY



**Several cities and some countries instituted bans on plastic shopping bags but abandoned them during the COVID-19 crisis.** Credit: Pexels.com.

Plastic bag bans are policies and laws that prohibit or limit the use of single-use plastic bags, part of an attempt to curb and reduce plastic waste and environmental degradation. Before COVID-19, many cities and states had implemented such bans to mitigate pollution, protect wildlife and address the plastic crisis. With the world wasting about 400 million tons of plastic yearly, plastic waste and pollution have become critical issues. These bans aimed to switch customers to reusable alternatives like cloth bags. Plastic bags are among the most common pollutants found in landfills and oceans, taking hundreds of years to fully decompose. Their widespread use aggravates the plastic pollution problem, harming marine life and adding to the global waste crisis.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, public health concerns overshadowed the bans. The fear that reusable bags, which involved repeated handling, would spread the virus led many states to roll back or temporarily suspended the bans. The shift led to an increase in plastic usage, not just in bags but also in other items like containers and other packaging. The plastic industry also advocated for a ban reversal by using the public health crisis to push forward. When speaking with Chemical and Engineering News, Judith Enck, the founder of environmental group Beyond Plastics, said, "Plastic bag lobbyists are attempting to exploit a public health crisis. There is no evidence that reusable bags contribute to the serious problem of COVID-19."

As institutions like the National Institutes of Health confirmed that surface transmission was not the most prominent form of COVID-19 transmission, many places began to reinstate their bans. New York, which had implemented a ban before the pandemic, resumed their ban in 2020. California reinstated its policy and introduced stricter regulations on plastic packaging. Canada and several other countries moved forward with nationwide bans despite the temporary COVID-19 setback. But not all plastic bag bans were reinstated. Some places that had rolled back bans never reinstated them, citing economic concerns from businesses. In places where bans do not exist, plastic use remains high, fostering a cause for concern.

Despite progress after COVID-19 in reinstating bans, several challenges remain. There is consistent pushback from the plastic industry, which continues to rally against bans. Many consumers who reverted to plastic bags have been slow to switch back to alternatives. Individuals can play an important role. We can promote the use of reusable bags and encourage friends and family to make the switch. Individuals can also put pressure on their local representatives.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **1,213 South Dakotans could lose Medicaid as federal work requirements take effect, department says**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER**

The South Dakota Department of Social Services estimates 1,213 people on expanded Medicaid, about 4% of the group, could be disenrolled after federal work requirements are implemented in 2027.

Medicaid is government-funded health insurance for people with low incomes. South Dakotans voted in 2022 to expand Medicaid to adults with incomes up to 138% of the poverty level, a decision that allowed the state to capitalize on a 90% federal funding match.

Congress passed a law, signed by President Donald Trump, last summer to implement federal work requirements for expanded Medicaid.

The federal work requirements will mandate that enrollees from ages 19 to 64 work, volunteer or go to school 80 hours a month. Participants will have to meet those requirements a month before they enroll, and Medicaid renewal will be moved from an annual basis to every six months.

The federal government allows exceptions for people who are disabled, pregnant, eligible for the Indian Health Service, in foster care, were formerly in foster care and are younger than 26, or were released from incarceration in the last 90 days, among others.

Division Chief of Children and Family Services Tiffany Wolfgang shared the assessment and estimate with the Board of Social Services at its Tuesday meeting in Pierre.

Of the 29,504 patients enrolled in expanded Medicaid at the end of 2025, the department identified 6,066 patients, or about 20%, who "could not be determined" as meeting exemptions, work requirements or community engagement requirements outlined by the federal law.

"We do not yet collect information on volunteer service, medical frailty or veteran disability status, as these are not current factors of eligibility," Wolfgang said in an emailed statement.

The assessment found that 39% of participants are already enrolled and compliant with other federal programs with work requirements and another 29% already meet federal work requirements. About 37% meet tribal membership exemptions and 29% meet caretaker exemptions. Recipients could be counted in multiple categories.

Of the remaining 6,066 people, Wolfgang estimates 20% will not meet the requirements by implementation, resulting in possible disenrollment. That estimate is based on what other states experienced after implementing state-level work requirements, she told South Dakota Searchlight. Previous estimates from health policy organization KFF projected 13,000 disenrollments when the One Big Beautiful Bill Act passed the House of Representatives.

Wolfgang told board members the department is working on communicating the change with tribal representatives, the department's Medicaid advisory council, and medical providers to ensure recipients aren't surprised by the change.

Department Secretary Matt Althoff told members of the board that the estimated number of potential disenrollments is "if we do nothing."

"We don't intend to do nothing," Althoff said. "We want to make sure they understand and ultimately help put them in a position to make informed decisions that you can choose not to do the community engagement, but you won't be eligible for Medicaid."

The disenrollment would occur over the course of 2027, as recipients are up for Medicaid renewal.

*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with*



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health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

## Trump uninjured after gunfire at Washington press dinner; suspect in custody

BY: JANE NORMAN AND JACOB FISCHLER

President Donald Trump safely evacuated the White House Correspondents Dinner at a hotel in Washington, D.C., on Saturday night after shots were fired by an alleged lone gunman.

About two hours after the shots were fired, Trump, still wearing his tuxedo, addressed a roomful of reporters also in formalwear at the White House briefing room. Trump said one officer had been shot in the attack, but was saved by "a very good bulletproof vest."

Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser said at a separate press availability that the officer and the suspect had been transported to local hospitals.

The suspect was armed with a shotgun, handgun and multiple knives, Washington Metropolitan Police interim Chief Jeffery Carroll said. As of Saturday night, investigators believed the suspect acted alone, though a full investigation was underway, Carroll said.

He would be prosecuted on two charges, using a firearm during a crime of violence and assault on a federal officer using a dangerous weapon, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeanine Pirro said. He would be arraigned in federal court Monday, she added.

No other casualties were reported, and the U.S. Capitol Police said all members of Congress in attendance were unharmed. The high-profile press dinner intended to honor the First Amendment at the Washington Hilton Hotel, often dubbed "nerd prom," attracts about 2,600 attendees who pay \$480 each for tickets.

### Charged security checkpoint

The suspected shooter, who law enforcement said was a guest at the hotel, was a man from California who charged "a security checkpoint armed with multiple weapons," from about 50 yards away, Trump said.

He posted a photo on his social media platform of what appeared to be the suspect, lying shirtless flat on the floor. Some news media identified the individual but States Newsroom cannot yet confirm those reports.

Anthony Guglielmi, a Secret Service spokesman, said in a statement on social media the incident occurred near the main magnetometer screening area at the dinner.

"He was running full-blast," Trump said.

Federal law enforcement on Saturday night was pursuing warrants to search the man's home, acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said at the briefing with Trump.

Asked if he believed he was the target of the attack, Trump said, "I guess."

Trump said he'd been targeted, now apparently in a third assassination attempt in two years, because of his impactful record as president.

"It comes with the territory," he said. "You take a look at what's happened to some of our greatest presidents, and it doesn't happen to people that don't do anything," he said.

In a social media post before briefing reporters, Trump said he was in "perfect condition."

### Rescheduled dinner

At the White House briefing room podium, Trump praised the law enforcement response and committed to rescheduling the event in the next 30 days. The dinner, an annual celebration of the White House press corps, is "dedicated to freedom of speech," he said.

"And we'll make it bigger and better and even nicer," he said. "I just want to thank everybody that was

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involved. I also want to thank the press, the media. You've been very responsible in your coverage, I will say. I've been seeing what's been out."

An initial press pool report from the hotel after the shooting occurred, sent at 8:39 p.m. Eastern, said "There was several loud bangs and the Secret Service with guns drawn rushed the pool out of the room. (The) Secret Service pushed us back screaming 'Shots fired.'"

Jacqui Heinrich of Fox News said on social media shortly after 9 p.m. Eastern that she was behind the podium with other guests, "in a hold," and Trump was still down the hall and did not want to leave.

Trump himself confirmed that in a post on his social media platform, Truth Social.

"Quite an evening in D.C. Secret Service and Law Enforcement did a fantastic job," he wrote. "They acted quickly and bravely. The shooter has been apprehended, and I have recommended that we 'LET THE SHOW GO ON' but, will entirely be guided by Law Enforcement. They will make a decision shortly. Regardless of that decision, the evening will be much different than planned, and we'll just, plain, have to do it again. President DONALD J. TRUMP"

Frightened reporters seated at tables in the Hilton ballroom dove for the floor. Cabinet members and White House officials were hustled out of the room.

CNN's Wolf Blitzer said on air that he heard "a really loud blasting away" and the next thing he knew he was being pushed to the floor by police. "I was just a few feet away from the gunman, and it was a really scary moment," Blitzer said.

## Reagan shooting

The annual formal dinner is hosted by an organization made up of journalists who cover the White House. Trump's invitation to the event had been controversial given his frequent personal attacks on reporters and the news media in general.

The Hilton was also the site of another attack on a president when on the afternoon of March 30, 1981, gunman John Hinckley Jr. shot and wounded President Ronald Reagan while he was leaving the hotel. Reagan recovered after a stay in the hospital. Reagan's press secretary, James Brady, also was wounded, as were police officer Thomas Delahanty and Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy.

Details of the shooter's motive and plan Saturday were not immediately clear. Trump said the public would know much more about him in the coming days.

Trump was injured in an assassination attempt during a campaign stop in Butler, Pennsylvania, on July 13, 2024. Another suspected assassin was arrested near Trump's home in Florida on Sept. 15 of that year.

*Jonathan Shorman contributed to this report.*

*As the Washington Bureau Chief of States Newsroom, Jane directs national coverage, managing staff and freelance reporters in the nation's capital and assigning and editing state-specific daily and enterprise stories. Jane is a veteran of more than three decades in journalism.*

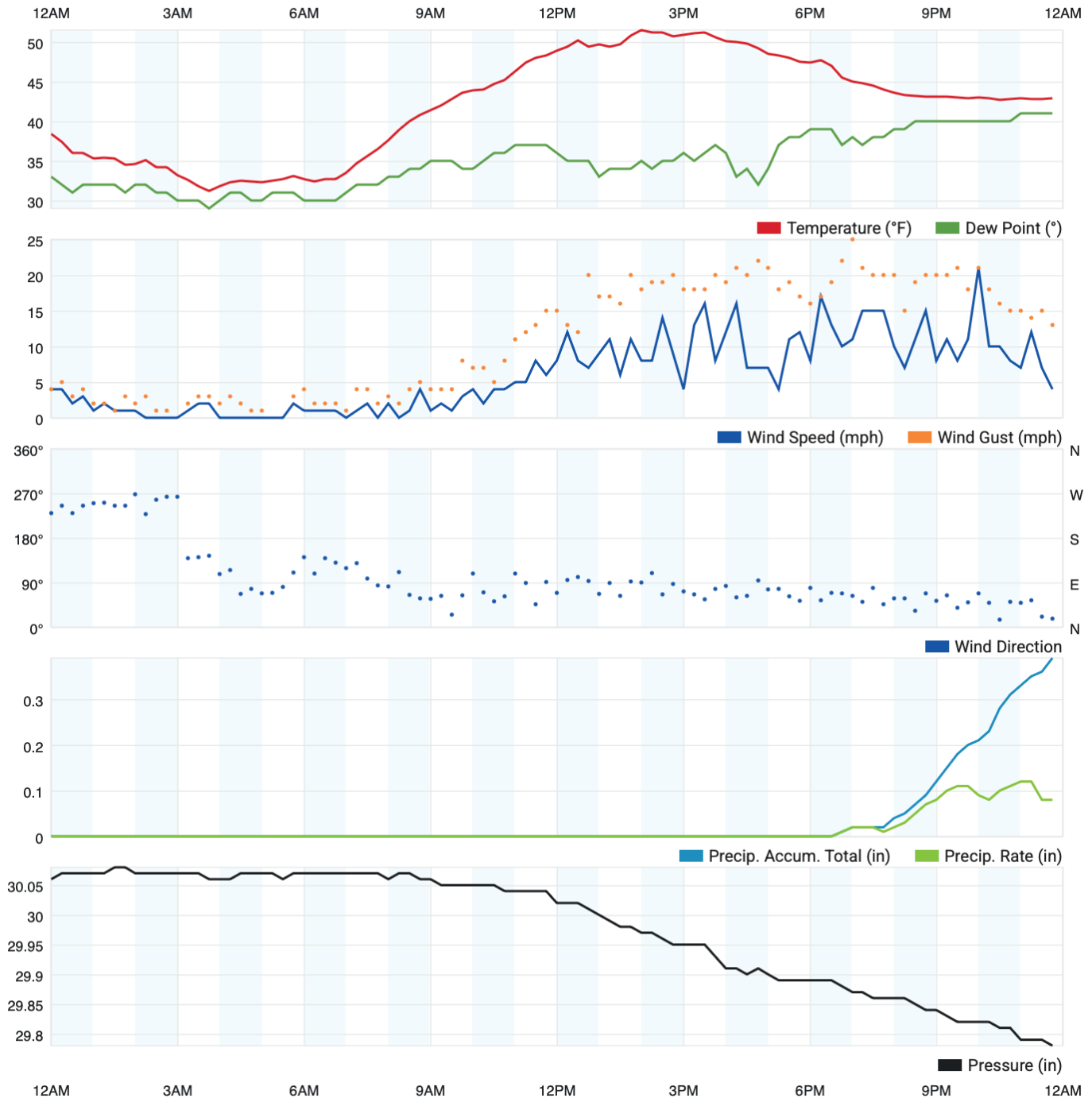
*Jacob covers federal policy and helps direct national coverage as deputy Washington bureau chief for States Newsroom. Based in Oregon, he focuses on Western issues. His coverage areas include climate, energy development, public lands and infrastructure.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

April 26, 2026

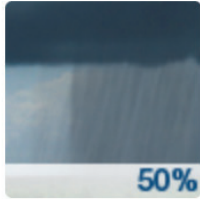




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Today



High: 45 °F

Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy

Tonight



Low: 28 °F

Partly Cloudy  
and Blustery  
then Mostly  
Clear

Tuesday



High: 54 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 33 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 56 °F

Chance  
Showers



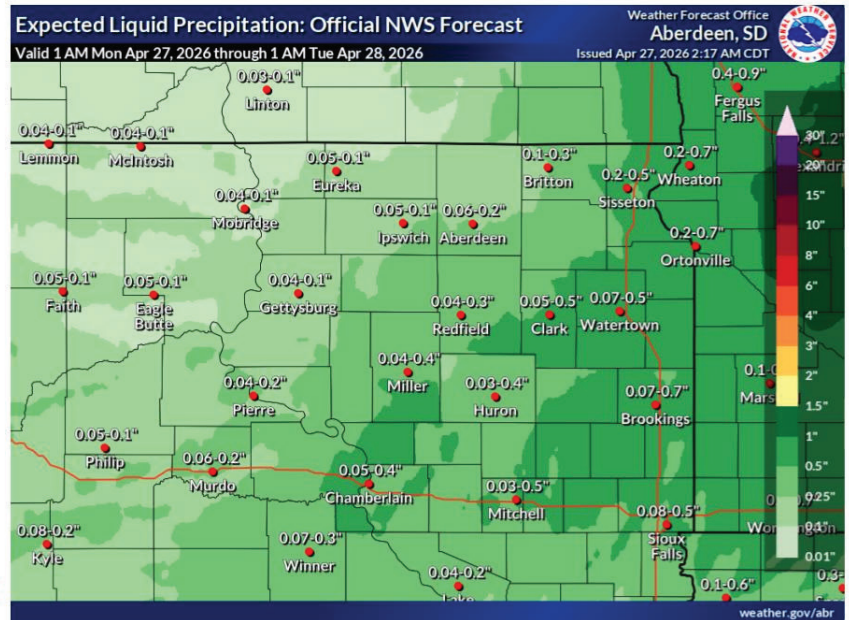
## Rainfall Today - Ending By Early This Evening

April 27, 2026  
3:52 AM

\*\*\*Remaining Precipitation Forecast through 1 AM CDT Tuesday, April 28th\*\*\*

- Precipitation should fill back in, at least partially, today before ending this evening.
- *Just a few more hundredths of an inch possible today throughout north central South Dakota.*
- *0.10-0.50 inches of precipitation possible roughly along and east of a line from Pierre to Aberdeen today, ending from west to east by early this evening.*

For specific precipitation probabilities for your area, check out: <https://www.weather.gov/crh/pqpf?sid=abr>



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Rainfall chances will continue through today. There may be a few breaks in the steady rain throughout the day. Rainfall should be coming to an end this morning out over north central South Dakota. But, portions of central into northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota should see additional precipitation at times today.

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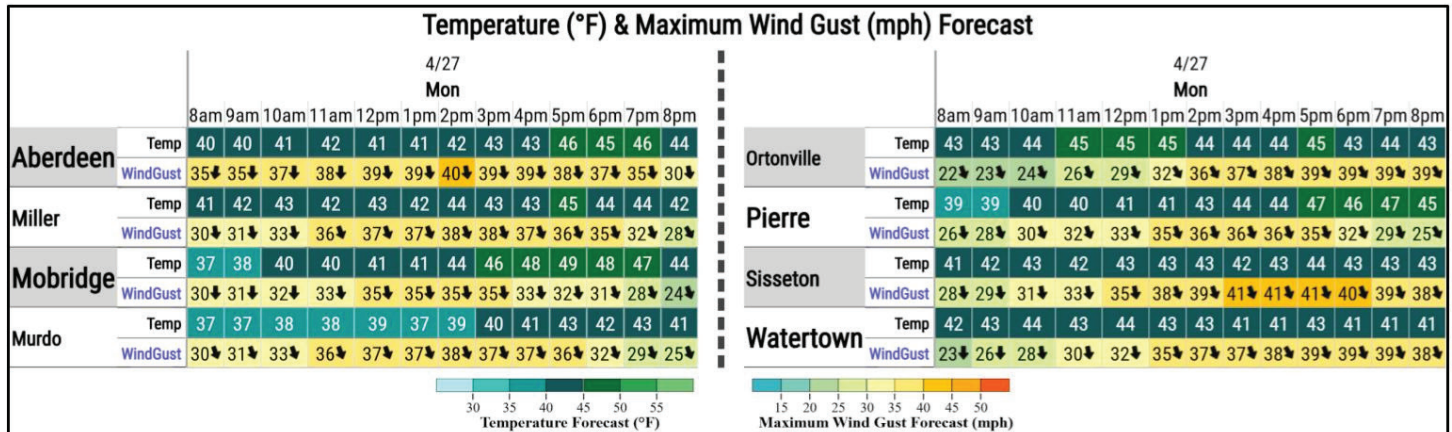
## Cool and Windy Conditions Today

April 27, 2026

4:51 AM CDT

Damp Conditions Expected with a 20-80 Percent Chance for Showers

- Temperatures will remain stuck in the upper 30s to upper 40s, which is 10-20 degrees below normal.
- North to Northwest winds today, increasing through this afternoon with Maximum Wind Gusts of 35-45 mph.



As a low pressure system wraps up over the region today, north winds will increase to 15 to 30 mph, complete with gusts to 35 to 45 mph. With temperatures stuck in the 30s and 40s today under cloudy skies and these scattered to numerous rain showers, it will feel rather damp and cold out.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 52 °F at 1:58 PM**

**Low Temp: 31 °F at 3:42 AM**

**Wind: 27 mph at 6:36 PM**

**Precip: : 0.36 + .10 since midnight**

## Today's Info

Record High: 91 in 1897

Record Low: 17 in 2005

Average High: 63

Average Low: 36

Average Precip in April.: 1.63

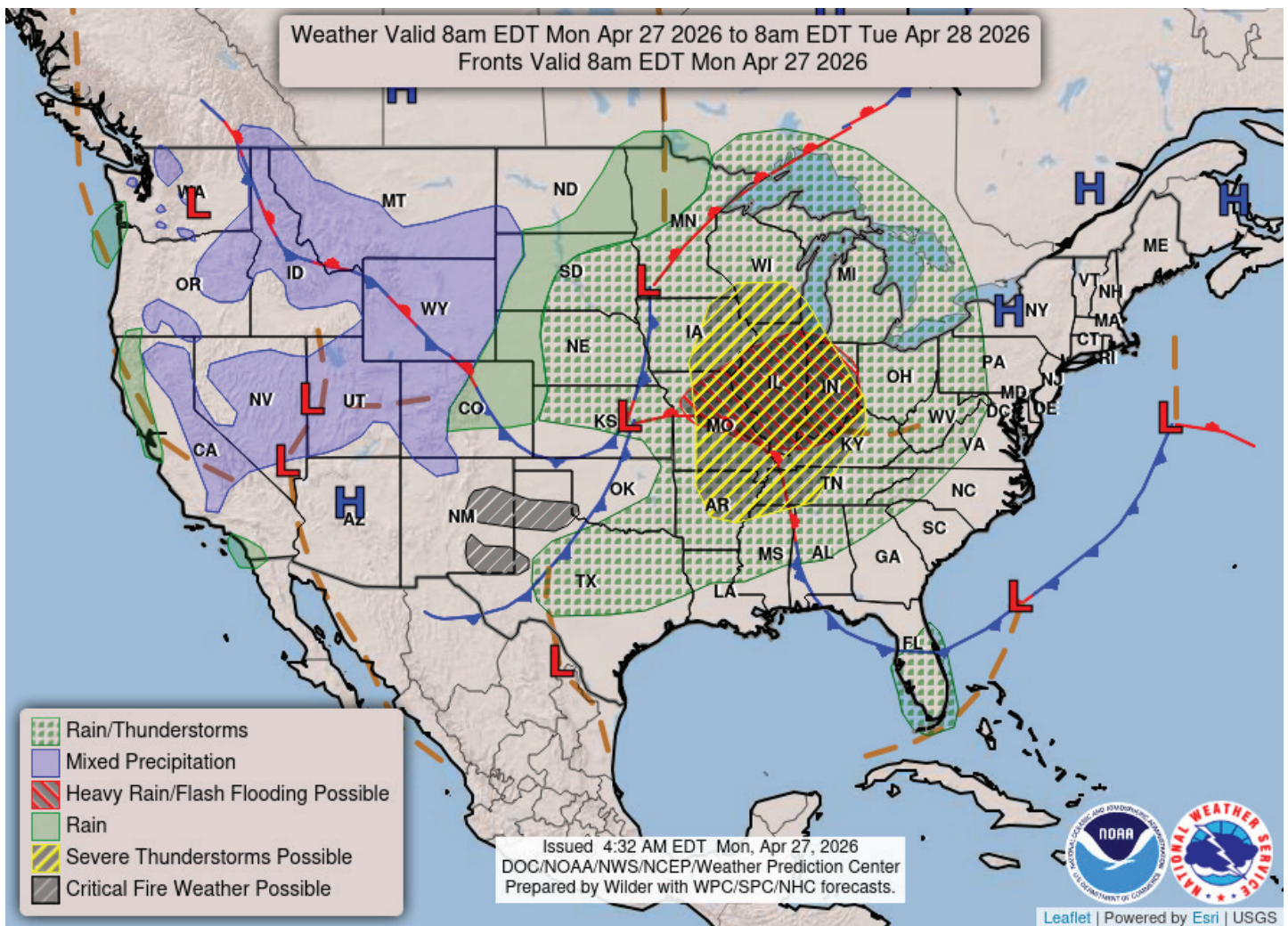
Precip to date in April.: 1.36

Average Precip to date: 3.69

Precip Year to Date: 2.98

Sunset Tonight: 8:33 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:25 am





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## **Today in Weather History**

April 27th, 1968: A significant snowstorm raged over the northern Black Hills, blocking many highways near Gillette and Moorcroft with an estimated three to four feet of snow. Winds in the Sturgis area were nearly 90 mph.

1899 — A tornado struck Kirksville, MO, killing 34 persons and destroying 300 buildings. (David Ludlum)

1931 — The temperature at Pahala, located on the main island of Hawaii, soared to 100 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1942 — A destructive tornado swept across Rogers County and Mayes County in Oklahoma. The tornado struck the town of Pryor killing 52 persons and causing two million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Forty-two cities in the western and south central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 87 degrees at Olympia WA was an April record, and highs of 92 degrees at Boise ID, 95 degrees at Monroe LA, and 96 degrees at Sacramento CA tied April records. (The National Weather Summary) More than 300 daily temperature records fell by the wayside during a two week long heat wave across thirty-four states in the southern and western U.S. Thirteen cities established records for the month of April. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1988 — Mount Washington NH reported seven feet of snow in ten days, pushing their snowfall total for the month past the previous record of 89.3 inches set in 1975. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower and Middle Mississippi Valley to Virginia and the Carolinas. Hail up to four and a half inches in diameter caused five million dollars damage around Omaha NE. Thunderstorms spawned eleven tornadoes, and there were 160 other reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in eastern Texas and the Lower Mississippi Valley. Severe thunderstorms spawned thirteen tornadoes in Texas and twelve in Louisiana. A tornado southwest of Coolidge TX injured eight persons and caused more than five million dollars damage. There were also eighty-five reports of large hail and damaging winds, with baseball size hail reported at Mexia TX and Shreveport LA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) Forty-three cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Records highs included 94 degrees at Charleston WV, 95 degrees at Baltimore MD and 96 degrees at Richmond VA. (The National Weather Summary)

2011 — An estimated 305 tornados between the 27th and 28th sets a record for the largest outbreak ever recorded, including two EF-5s, four EF-4s and 21 EF-3s. Arkansas through Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, southern Tennessee, Virginia to Pennsylvania and New York were all affected. An estimated 300 died including 210 in Alabama alone. This brought the April total past 600, the most in any month in recorded US weather history.



## God's Purpose for Intimacy

**God doesn't want you to simply know about Him—He wants a genuine relationship with you.**

Psalms 103:1-14: 1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name.  
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits;  
3 Who pardons all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases;  
4 Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion;  
5 Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle.  
6 The LORD performs righteous deeds And judgments for all who are oppressed.  
7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the sons of Israel.  
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.  
9 He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever.  
10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.  
11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His lovingkindness toward those who fear Him.  
12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
13 Just as a father has compassion on his children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.  
14 For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.

In a truly loving relationship, each person wants to know more about the other. As believers, we are sometimes guilty of taking a more self-interested approach and forgetting that God is the rightful center. When that is the case, we may head to church or into quiet time looking for something to inspire, motivate, or help us. But God's purpose for intimacy is to reveal Himself.

Part of the problem is that we would like to practice our faith in the safest way possible. Bible study, prayer, and church are relatively easy compared to stepping out in faith or enduring hardship. To know God intimately is not a purely intellectual pursuit. A truth about the Lord is not really ours until He works it into our lived experience.

The only way to gain such knowledge is by choosing to trust and follow Him daily (Jeremiah 17:7). As we do, we'll learn more about who He is. For example, we can read that the Spirit is the Comforter, but we won't know this truth until we need and experience His comfort firsthand.

The Christian life isn't about feeling good and deriving the greatest personal benefit. Rather, God builds an intimate relationship with each Christian. In this way, He can reveal more about Himself—truth by truth—as a believer needs that knowledge.

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

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## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.26.26

2 3 6 17 56 3

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 42 Mins 36  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.24.26

7 16 32 35 40 12

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$163,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 27  
Mins 36 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.25.26

3 15 23 32 36 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$23,300,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 35  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.25.26

7 14 15 17 19

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$69,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 57  
Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.25.26

3 6 9 51 65 12

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 35  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.25.26

4 30 36 52 57 2

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$130,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 35  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### **Iran offers to end chokehold on Strait of Hormuz and asks US to end blockade, officials say**

By SAMY MAGDY, JON GAMBRELL and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Iran is offering to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz without addressing its nuclear program, two regional officials with knowledge of the proposal said Monday, as the country's foreign minister made a visit to Russia he said was an opportunity to consult with Moscow regarding the war against Israel and the United States.

Iran also wants the U.S. to end its blockade of the country as part of its proposal, said the two officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations.

The new proposal, passed to the United States by Pakistan, likely won't be supported by U.S. President Donald Trump, who wants to end Iran's atomic program as part of an overall deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz and make the ceasefire permanent.

"We have all the cards. If they want to talk, they can come to us, or they can call us," Trump said Sunday to Fox News Channel.

The Axios news outlet first reported Iran's proposal.

Iran's foreign minister visits Russia

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency said Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi landed in St. Petersburg on Monday morning ahead of a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. His trip over the weekend has included two stops in Pakistan and a visit to Oman, which shares the strait with Iran.

Araghchi's visit comes as a standoff between Iran and the U.S. in the crucial Strait of Hormuz persists despite a ceasefire, keeping oil prices high.

"It is a good opportunity for us to consult with our Russian friends about the developments that have occurred in relation to the war during this period and what is happening now," Araghchi said in a video interview posted by IRNA.

Talks had been expected in Islamabad

Pakistan has been seeking to revive stalled talks between Iran and the U.S., and negotiations had been expected in Islamabad over the weekend. But U.S. President Donald Trump has suggested the talks could take place by phone instead.

Araghchi said it was America's approach that "caused the negotiations to be delayed."

"The previous one, despite the progress that had been made, could not achieve its goals," he said, blaming what he called Washington's "excessive demands."

Trump has questioned who is in charge in Iran at the moment and said confusion within its theocracy made it difficult to reach a deal.

The White House last week said it would dispatch envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad to follow up on historic face-to-face talks earlier this month. But Araghchi left the Pakistani capital Saturday, and shortly afterward Trump said he had called off the mission because of a lack of progress with Iran.

"If they want, we can talk but we're not sending people," Trump told Fox News on Sunday. He said earlier on social media: "All they have to do is call!!!"

Araghchi later returned to Islamabad, and also visited Oman's capital of Muscat before heading to Russia. He also spoke by phone with counterparts in Qatar and Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

Strait of Hormuz at center of Iran's discussions in Oman

A standoff remains on the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all traded oil and natural gas normally passes, as Iran has restricted movement through it and the U.S. enforces a blockade of Iranian ports.

The June contract for Brent crude, the international standard, was trading at around \$107 per barrel Monday, compared with \$72 a barrel before the war began.

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Oil prices have risen steadily since the war began and tankers full of crude became stranded in the Persian Gulf, unable to safely transit through the strait and reach global distribution points.

The economic fallout is growing two months into the war as global shipments of not only oil, but also liquefied natural gas, fertilizer and other supplies are disrupted by the near-closure of the strategic strait.

Iran wants to persuade Oman to support a mechanism to collect tolls from vessels passing through the strait, according to a regional official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter.

Oman's response wasn't immediately clear.

The official, who is involved in mediation efforts, also said Iran insisted on ending the U.S. blockade before new talks and that Pakistan-led mediators are trying to bridge significant gaps between the countries.

Trump last week indefinitely extended the ceasefire the U.S. and Iran agreed to on April 7 that has largely halted fighting that began with joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran on Feb. 28. But a permanent settlement remains elusive in the war that has killed thousands of people and shaken the global economy.

Even before Saturday's developments, Iran's Foreign Ministry said any talks would be indirect and Pakistani officials would act as go-betweens, reflecting Tehran's wariness after rounds of indirect talks last year and earlier this year ended with Iran being attacked by the U.S. and Israel.

Trump says Iran has offered a 'much better' proposal

Both sides have continued to make military threats. Iran's joint military command Saturday warned that "if the U.S. continues its aggressive military actions, including naval blockades, banditry, and piracy" it will face a "strong response."

Trump last week ordered the military to "shoot and kill" small boats that could be placing mines in the waterway.

Trump told journalists Saturday that within 10 minutes of him canceling Witkoff and Kushner's trip to Islamabad, Iran sent a "much better" proposal.

He did not elaborate but stressed that one of his conditions is that Iran "will not have a nuclear weapon." The status of Iran's enriched uranium has long been at the center of tensions. Tehran has 440 kilograms (970 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60% purity, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels, according to the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency.

Since the war began, at least 3,375 people have been killed in Iran and at least 2,509 people in Lebanon, where the Israel-Hezbollah fighting resumed two days after the Iran war started. Another 23 people have been killed in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Fifteen Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, 13 U.S. service members in the region and six U.N. peacekeepers in southern Lebanon have been killed.

Another ceasefire — between Israel and the Iranian-backed Lebanese militant Hezbollah group — has been extended by three weeks. Hezbollah has not participated in the Washington-brokered diplomacy.

## **King Charles III heads to Washington on a delicate mission to restore the UK-US relationship**

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two and a half centuries after the American colonies declared independence from Britain under King George III, his descendant King Charles III lands in Washington Monday with trans-Atlantic ties under strain and security in the spotlight.

A shooting at a Washington dinner attended by President Donald Trump on Saturday sparked a last-minute security review of the four-day state visit, intended to celebrate the United States' 250th anniversary, and the U.S.-U.K. "special relationship."

Buckingham Palace said the king "is greatly relieved to hear that the president, first lady and all guests have been unharmed." After a security review, the palace said the trip "will proceed as planned."

Trump praises the king but derides Starmer

A rift between the U.K. government and Trump over issues including the Iran war had already raised the political stakes for the British monarch's visit.

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In recent weeks, Trump has lambasted Prime Minister Keir Starmer over his unwillingness to join U.S. military attacks on Iran, dismissing Britain's leader as "not Winston Churchill" — the World War II prime minister who coined the phrase "special relationship" for the U.K.-U.S. bond.

It's part of a wider rift between Trump and the United States' NATO allies, whom he has called "cowards" and "useless" for not joining action against Iran. A leaked Pentagon email suggested the U.S. could reassess support for the U.K.'s sovereignty over the Falkland Islands in the south Atlantic. Britain and Argentina fought a 1982 war over the islands, also known as the Islas Malvinas.

The president insists the political chill won't affect the royal visit. Charles "has nothing to do with that," Trump said in March, meaning NATO.

The president has spoken in glowing terms about Charles, repeatedly referring to the monarch as his "friend" and a "great guy."

He also continues to mention his "amazing" trip to the U.K. in September with first lady Melania Trump for an unprecedented second state visit. Starmer hand-delivered the invitation from the king in the Oval Office five weeks after the Republican president returned to office, in a very public attempt to woo the president.

The U.K. royal family laid on pomp and pageantry for the Trumps, with scarlet-clad guardsmen, brass bands and a sumptuous banquet at Windsor Castle.

"President Trump has always had great respect for King Charles, and their relationship was further strengthened by the president's historic visit to the United Kingdom last year," White House spokesperson Anna Kelly told The Associated Press. "The president looks forward to a special visit by Their Majesties, which will include a beautiful state dinner and multiple events throughout the week."

Trump, meanwhile, told the BBC that the king's visit could "absolutely" help repair the trans-Atlantic relationship.

"He's fantastic. He's a fantastic man. Absolutely the answer is yes," the president said.

Some have called for the trip to be canceled

Kristofer Allerfeldt, a University of Exeter professor specializing in American history, said the two governments have very different objectives for the trip.

He said that for Charles, the trip is about "reinforcing long-term ties, showcasing the monarchy's soft power and reminding the world that Britain still carries diplomatic weight."

For Trump, it's more about "a media event," with emphasis on the optics of a visit that resembles a meeting of "two gilded monarchs."

Some U.K. politicians worry that the trip is fraught with opportunities for embarrassment. Trump's recent broadsides at Pope Leo XIV have heightened those concerns.

Ed Davey, leader of the U.K. centrist opposition Liberal Democrats party, earlier this month called Trump "a dangerous and corrupt gangster" and implored the government to cancel the trip.

"I really fear for what Trump might say or do while our king is forced to stand by his side," Davey said in the House of Commons. "We cannot put His Majesty in that position."

Starmer defended the visit, saying "the monarchy, through the bonds that it builds, is often able to reach through the decades" and bolster important relationships.

Andrew and Epstein cast a shadow

Raising the stakes is the shadow of the king's younger brother, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, who has been stripped of his royal title of Prince Andrew, exiled from public life and put under police investigation over his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein. He has denied committing any crimes.

Epstein victims have urged the king to meet with them and other sexual abuse survivors. It's unlikely he will do so.

Charles has visited the U.S. 19 times, but this is his first state visit to the country since becoming king in 2022. His mother, Queen Elizabeth II, made four state visits to the U.S.

The king, who is 77 and was diagnosed in early 2024 with an undisclosed form of cancer, will spend four days in the U.S. accompanied by Queen Camilla.



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In Washington, the king and queen will have a private tea with the Trumps and attend a garden party and a formal White House state dinner. The president and the king will also have a one-on-one meeting.

The royal couple will also visit the Sept. 11 memorial in New York and attend a 250th birthday "block party" in Virginia, where Charles will also meet Indigenous leaders involved in nature conservation — a favorite cause of the environmentalist king.

Three centuries after Britain's kings and queens gave up any real political power, the royals remain symbols of soft power, deployed by elected governments to smooth international relationships and send messages about what the U.K. considers important.

A key moment will be the king's speech to the U.S. Congress on Tuesday. It's only the second time, after Queen Elizabeth II in 1991, that a U.K. monarch has addressed a joint meeting of both houses.

Elizabeth praised liberalism on that trip, spoke against the idea that "power grows from the barrel of a gun" and praised the "rich ethnic and cultural diversity of both our societies."

The king's treasured causes, including the environment and harmony among religious faiths, are in contrast to Trump's. He's unlikely to accentuate differences, but Allerfeldt said that, in the monarch's subtle way, the king could use his speech to send a message.

"He does have an unorthodox way of looking at the world, and I think maybe he can actually have something valid to say when he addresses Congress," Allerfeldt said.

## **Tornadoes in northern Texas leave at least 2 dead and destroy multiple homes**

RUNAWAY BAY, Texas (AP) — A tornado-producing thunderstorm left at least two people dead in northern Texas and displaced at least 20 families, with many homes sustaining major damage, authorities said Sunday.

At least one person was killed and numerous homes were damaged Saturday night in the town of Runaway Bay, said Wise County Judge J.D. Clark, who serves as the county's chief executive. Emergency responders worked to clear debris to reach damaged homes and provide medical care where needed, Clark said.

"Access has been difficult due to blocked roadways and downed utilities, but crews have continued pushing forward to reach those in need," Clark said.

The storm also hit Springtown, where Parker County Assistant Fire Chief David Pruitt said in an email that a second person died south of the city limits. There was "significant damage" in the area, Pruitt said.

"One of the most significant ongoing challenges is the widespread power outage affecting many residents," he wrote.

National Weather Service teams confirmed that an EF-2 tornado with peak winds of 135 mph (217 kph) touched down in the Runaway Bay area. An EF-1 tornado with peak winds of 105 mph (169 kph) was confirmed in the Springtown area, the weather service said.

The slow-moving supercell traveled through the area around 10 p.m. Saturday, said meteorologist Patricia Sanchez with the Fort Worth weather service office.

It moved southeast from around Wichita Falls, near the Oklahoma border, passing just west of Fort Worth. Runaway Bay is about 45 miles (72 kilometers) northwest of Fort Worth on Lake Bridgeport. Springtown is about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northwest of Fort Worth.

Weather service radar picked up a "potentially large and extremely dangerous" tornado near Azle at 10:14 p.m. Saturday. That's about another 10 miles (16 kilometers) southeast of Springtown.

## **World shares are mostly higher and oil gains \$2.50 as Iran talks remain in flux**

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

World shares mostly gained and the price of Brent crude oil jumped \$2.50 a barrel early Monday as talks on ending the war with Iran stayed snagged.

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Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index hit a fresh record Monday after U.S. stocks ended last week with new highs. Two Middle Eastern officials said Iran was offering to end its chokehold over the Strait of Hormuz without addressing its nuclear program, while requesting that the U.S. end its blockade of Iran. President Donald Trump is unlikely to support the proposal, which was conveyed to the U.S. through Pakistan, as he wants Iran's nuclear program closed down as part of a broader deal to end the war.

Disruptions to shipping through the strait have pushed oil prices sharply higher since the war began. The price for a barrel of Brent crude, to be delivered in July, rose \$2.46 to \$101.59. U.S. benchmark crude oil added \$2.20 to \$96.60.

This week will bring decisions on interest rates by top central banks, including the Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, the Bank of Japan and the Bank of England.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX picked up 0.3% to 24,193.27, while the CAC 40 in Paris edged 0.1% higher, to 8,165.07. Britain's FTSE 100 lost 0.1% to 10,374.51.

The future for the S&P 500 lost 0.1% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 0.2%. In Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 surged 1.4% to 60,537.36 after touching a new intraday high of 60,903.95. The Kospi in South Korea jumped 2% to 6,615.03.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng index shed 0.1% to 25,964.27 and the Shanghai Composite index gained 0.2% to 4,086.34.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slipped 0.2% to 8,766.40. Taiwan's Taiex rallied 1.8%, helped by a revival of buying of tech shares driven by the boom in artificial intelligence. India's Sensex added 0.8%.

On Friday, the S&P 500 climbed 0.8% and topped its prior all-time high, which was set on Wednesday. It closed at 7,165.08.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 0.2% to 49,230.71, while the Nasdaq composite rallied 1.6% to its own record thanks to strong gains for the tech sector, closing at 24,836.60.

A survey by the University of Michigan found consumer sentiment soured in April across political party, income, age, and education, though it improved a bit after the ceasefire in the war with Iran was announced earlier in the month.

The S&P 500 has leaped nearly 13% in a little under a month. Hopes have also built in financial markets that the United States and Iran can find a way to avoid a worst-case scenario for the global economy because of their war.

A tenuous ceasefire remains, but tensions between the U.S. and Iran are keeping oil tankers from passing through the Strait of Hormuz to deliver crude from the Persian Gulf to customers worldwide.

In Wall Street trading Friday, Intel roared past its peak in 2000 during the dot-com boom to an all-time high. It soared 23.6% for its best day since 1987 after reporting much stronger results for the first three months of the year than analysts expected. CEO Lip-Bu Tan said the next wave of artificial-intelligence technology is increasing the need for Intel's chips and products, and the company's forecast for profit in the spring topped analysts' estimates.

In other dealings early Monday, the dollar fell to 159.24 Japanese yen from 159.59. The euro climbed to \$1.1741 from \$1.1701.

## Elon Musk and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman head to court in high-stakes showdown over AI

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writers

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Technology tycoons Elon Musk and Sam Altman are poised to face off in a high-stakes trial revolving around the alleged betrayal, deceit and unbridled ambition that blurred the bickering billionaires' once-shared vision for the development of artificial intelligence.

The trial, which is scheduled to begin Monday with jury selection, centers on the 2015 birth of ChatGPT maker OpenAI as a nonprofit startup primarily funded by Musk before evolving into a capitalistic venture

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now valued at \$852 billion.

The trial's outcome could sway the balance of power in AI — breakthrough technology that is increasingly being feared as a potential job killer and an existential threat to humanity's survival.

Those perceived risks are among the reasons that Musk, the world's richest person, cites for filing an August 2024 lawsuit that will now be decided by a jury and U.S. District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers in Oakland, California.

The civil lawsuit accuses Altman, OpenAI's CEO, and his top lieutenant, Greg Brockman, of double-crossing Musk by straying from the San Francisco company's founding mission to be an altruistic steward of a revolutionary technology. The lawsuit alleges they shifted into a moneymaking mode behind his back.

OpenAI has brushed off Musk's allegations as an unfounded case of sour grapes that's aimed at undercutting its rapid growth and bolstering Musk's own xAI, which he launched in 2023 as a competitor.

Trial promises clashing testimony from two tech titans

Musk, who invested about \$38 million in OpenAI from December 2015 through May 2017, initially was seeking more than \$100 billion in damages.

But any damages now are likely to be much smaller after a series of pre-trial rulings that went against Musk. Musk has since abandoned a bid for damages for himself and instead is seeking an unspecified amount of money to be paid to fund the altruistic efforts of OpenAI's charitable arm. The money would be paid primarily by OpenAI's for-profit operations, and Microsoft, which became the company's biggest investor after Musk cut off his funding.

Musk's lawsuit also seeks Altman's ouster from OpenAI's board. Musk's decision to stop funding the company contributed to a bitter falling out between the former allies. Musk says he was responding to deceptive conduct that OpenAI's board picked up on when it fired Altman as CEO in 2023 before he got his job back days later.

But the trial also carries risks for Musk, who last month was held liable by another jury for defrauding investors during his \$44 billion takeover of Twitter in 2022. Any damaging details about Musk and his business tactics could be particularly hurtful now because his rocket ship maker, SpaceX, plans to go public this summer in an initial public offering that could make him the world's first trillionaire.

However it turns out, the trial is expected to provide riveting theater, with contrasting testimony from two of technology's most influential and polarizing figures in the 54-year-old Musk and the 41-year-old Altman.

"Part of this is about whether a jury believes the people who will testify and whether they are credible," Gonzalez Rogers said during a court hearing earlier this year while explaining why she believe the case merited a trial. The judge will make the final decision on the case, with the jury serving in an advisory role.

Evidence has included glimpses of the AI race's early days

Musk, whose estimated fortune stands at about \$780 billion, has long been hailed as a visionary for his roles creating digital payment pioneer PayPal, electric automaker Tesla and rocket ship maker SpaceX. But he has also provoked backlashes with his social media commentary, unfulfilled promises about Tesla's self-driving technology and his cost-cutting role last year in President Donald Trump's administration.

Some of Musk's erratic behavior has been tied to allegations of taking hallucinogenic drugs, but Gonzalez Rogers ruled that he can't be asked during the trial about his suspected use of ketamine. But the judge is allowing Musk to be questioned about his attendance at the 2017 Burning Man festival in Nevada, a free-wheeling celebration known for widespread drug use. The judge is also allowing Musk to be questioned about his relationship with former OpenAI board member Shimon Zilis, the mother of several of his children.

Altman, currently sitting on a roughly \$3 billion fortune, didn't emerge in the public consciousness until the late 2022 release of ChatGPT. The tech boom triggered by that conversational chatbot has led some to liken Altman to a 21st-century version of the nuclear bomb inventor, J. Robert Oppenheimer.

Although Altman was initially hailed as trailblazer he is now facing blowback amid worries about AI's potential dangers. Earlier this month, the New Yorker magazine published a profile that painted him as an unscrupulous executive. Days later, a 20-year-old man worried about AI's effect on humanity was arrested on attempted murder charges after throwing a Molotov cocktail at Altman's San Francisco home.

The dueling testimonies of Altman and Musk are expected to open a window into some of the thinking

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that helped trigger the AI race, as well as the unraveling of their friendship. The kinship was forged in 2015 when they agreed to build AI in a more responsible and safer way than the profit-driven companies controlled by Google co-founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, according to evidence submitted ahead of the trial.

Details of the bitter break between the two men were captured in a February 2023 email exchange that surfaced as part of the evidence leading up to the trial.

After letting Musk know "you're my hero," Altman tells him: "I am tremendously thankful for everything you've done to help —I don't think OpenAI would have happened without you — and it really (expletive) hurts when you publicly attack OpenAI."

Musk's response: "I hear you and it is certainly not my intention to be hurtful, for which I apologize, but the fate of civilization is at stake."

## Tired and worried, seafarers have been stranded in the Persian Gulf for weeks

By CHAN HO-HIM, SHEIKH SAALIQ and NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — For about eight weeks, Indian Capt. Rahul Dhar and his crew have been stranded on their tanker in the Persian Gulf, sometimes watching drones and missiles explode as the Strait of Hormuz remained effectively shut while the Iran war dragged on.

The crew's morale, he said, is holding as they carry on with their routines, but the strain is beginning to show.

A shaky ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran has brought "a careful sense of hope" for the crew, but there is still no clear end to the war. "Day to day, we try to keep things normal with open conversations and small team activities that help lift everyone's spirits."

The crew sighted drones and missile interceptions several times, both near the ship and along the horizon during their watches. "Those moments were difficult and created real tension for the crew," Dhar told The Associated Press.

"None of us expected the warlike situation," he said, noting that reliable internet has helped them stay in touch with families. "Those calls and messages really keep us grounded and give us strength."

About 20,000 seafarers are stranded in the Gulf

Around 20,000 seafarers on hundreds of vessels, including oil and gas tankers and cargo ships, have been stuck in the Gulf, unable to cross the Strait of Hormuz. Normally about a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas transits the waterway.

Roughly 80 vessels passed through the strait in the week of April 13-19, according to the maritime data firm Lloyd's List Intelligence, compared to approximately 130 or more transits per day before the war. Dozens of ships have come under attack since the war started, and the U.N. says at least 10 seafarers were killed.

Even as U.S. President Donald Trump last week extended the ceasefire indefinitely, the U.S. kept the blockade of Iranian ports. In response, Iran fired on ships in the strait and seized two.

"Seafarers are the backbone of global trade, yet we are often the most affected by regional geopolitical conflicts," said Capt. ArunKumar Rajendran, who also has been stranded with his tanker crew for around eight weeks.

Some 'watched blasts from decks'

Manoj Kumar Yadav of the Forward Seamen's Union of India said thousands of Indian sailors were aboard the stranded vessels, enduring days of fear and isolation as ships lay anchored near Iranian ports such as Bandar Abbas and Khorramshahr. Explosions sometimes occurred just a few hundred meters (yards) away.

"They were watching blasts from their decks," he said, adding that his union has been fielding daily distress calls from crews and their families. "Many of them were on board a ship for the first time, and you can imagine what mental state they have gone through."

India, one of the world's largest suppliers of maritime labor, has more than 20,000 nationals working on



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foreign-flagged ships in the region, many of them beyond the reach of coordinated evacuation efforts. India's shipping ministry said last week that at least 2,680 sailors had been evacuated since the conflict began.

Yadav said many sailors reported acute shortages of food and drinking water, with some vessels forced to ration supplies. Communication with families in India was sporadic due to internet disruptions and signal jamming. When contact was possible, sailors often paid high roaming charges for just a few minutes of conversation, he said.

Sailors' families are growing increasingly anxious, demanding the safe return of their loved ones.

Mohamed Arrachedi, the International Transport Workers' Federation's network coordinator for the Middle East, said earlier this month it had received hundreds of requests for assistance, including for food, from seafarers.

Crew faces drones and uncertainty

Stranded off Oman for more than a month, Reza Muhammad Saleh, an Indonesian chief officer aboard a Greek-owned cargo ship, said a drone exploded near the port shortly after they arrived March 3. At least two more incidents followed, forcing repeated evacuations of the crew to bunkers, he said. No one was harmed.

"The biggest problem is the uncertainty. We don't know when Hormuz will be open again," Saleh told the AP.

The vessel with 24 crew members from Indonesia, Arab countries, India and Ethiopia typically transports iron ore across Gulf states, transiting Hormuz once or twice a month. It now requires written clearance from Iran. "No company wants to take the risk without it," he said.

Though experienced in conflict zones, the crew has been rattled by missile strikes and GPS disruptions that forced it to use manual navigation, he said.

"Sometimes we think it's safe, then suddenly it's not. Today we're safe. Tomorrow, nobody knows," he said.

Crew changes are difficult

Fleet Management Limited usually communicates multiple times a day with dozens of stranded ships that are staffed by more than 400 seafarers, its CEO Capt. Rajalingam Subramaniam said.

Stock checks are regularly maintained for food supply, and pickups have been arranged to ensure availability by moving vessels to the nearest points where they can pick up fresh and dry provisions, he said.

Some crew changes were still happening, but in limited numbers. "Who wants to go on the ship?" Subramaniam said. "The inbound crew has the right to refuse and we respect (that)."

Most of the stranded mariners have been in the Gulf since the war began. "(For) mariners who did not sign up to be in warlike area, they also (need) to be respected so that they do not become the unintended collateral," he said.

Among the vessels attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz during the ceasefire, several were fired upon and others turned back. Vessels managed by Fleet Management did not attempt to cross, Subramaniam said.

Germany's largest shipping company, Hapag-Lloyd, has had around 150 sailors stranded near the strait, on six vessels. "These are difficult days and weeks," Hapag Lloyd spokesman Nils Haupt told the AP earlier this month. He said Hapag-Lloyd was in contact with the captains and crews at least once a day.

"We've been able to rotate some of them (crew) in the meantime, but you can easily imagine that after such a long time, monotony naturally sets in on board," he said.

Shortages of global seafarers to worsen

The International Maritime Organization, the U.N.'s shipping agency, and others have called for a safe corridor for commercial vessels in the strait. Most ships are still unable to pass through, even though Iran had said the strait was open to vessels it perceived as non-hostile and demanded to collect tolls for passage.

Iran was said to have placed mines in the waterway, and Trump said last week that the U.S. was clearing Iranian mines and would "shoot and kill" boats laying mines in the area. Under heightened risks of mines and attacks on ships, "there is no safe transit anywhere in the Strait of Hormuz," said IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez.

Multiple crises in recent years have left many seafarers stranded at sea. That includes the COVID-19

pandemic, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and attacks by Yemen's Houthi rebels on ships in the Red Sea. Subramaniam said he worries that even after the Iran war ends, fewer people will be willing to sign up at a time when there is already a shortage of skilled seafarers.

## How a surgeon kept a Sudan hospital functioning on the war's front line

By SAM MEDNICK and FAY ABUEL GASIM Associated Press

OMDURMAN, Sudan (AP) — For three years, Dr. Jamal Eltaeb made excruciating choices. Who should live and potentially die? Should he operate without the right medicines if it might save someone's life? How would he find fuel to keep the hospital's lights on?

As Sudan's war raged around him, only one decision was easy: Keep working.

The orthopedic surgeon was leading Al Nao hospital in Omdurman, just outside the capital, Khartoum, as control of the urban area shifted between Sudan's army and paramilitary fighters. As the front line moved closer and the hospital overflowed with patients, some colleagues lost their nerve and left.

The soft-spoken Eltaeb was a rare surgeon who remained. Even as the hospital was bombed more than once. Even as most medical supplies ran out.

"I weighed the options of staying here, and taking care of your patients and helping other people that need you as a skilled surgeon, rather than choose your own safety," he told The Associated Press in an interview.

He is one of countless Sudanese who have pitched in to help as the world largely looks elsewhere, distracted by conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine. He has seen the bodies behind the estimates of tens of thousands of people killed, and what it means — day to excruciating day — when the United Nations warns his country's health system is near collapse.

Nearly 40% of Sudan's hospitals no longer function. Many have been stripped for parts or used by armed groups as bases. Sudan's army has since retaken the capital, and Al Nao remains one of the area's only functioning health centers.

Some operations were done on the hospital floor

Walking through the complex, the 54-year-old showed AP journalists the remnants of some of the hardest months of his life.

Over there was a window that was struck, killing the relative of a patient. And there in the courtyard was the last tent standing of the many erected during the peak of the conflict to accommodate mass casualties.

"We were working everywhere, in tents, outside, on the floor, doing everything to save patients' lives," he said.

The work earned Eltaeb the \$1 million Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity, which honors individuals who risk their lives to save others. He gave some of the money to medical and humanitarian groups around the world.

Before the war, staffers said, Al Nao was a quiet hospital with its nearly 100 beds empty much of the time. But when fighting began in Khartoum and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces captured swaths of the city, patients hurried in.

Eltaeb's own hospital elsewhere closed shortly after the war began in April 2023, and he moved to Al Nao. By July, most of the staff had fled, leaving him in charge.

He and a handful of employees and volunteers struggled to keep the place running. Electricity was out for weeks as the facility relied on the army to supply fuel for generators. Medicines like antibiotics and painkillers ran out.

'From that moment, we knew that we are a target'

In August, a month after Eltaeb took charge, the hospital was hit for the first time.

"From that moment, we knew that we are a target ... And from that time, they didn't stop targeting us," he said. The RSF later struck the hospital three more times.

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Normality had crumbled. A father of three, Eltaeb sat in his office and handed out sweets to a steady stream of patients and staff vying for his attention.

Decisions were nearly impossible. On a particularly harrowing day in late 2024, he and his team scrambled to triage over 100 wounded people after a strike hit a nearby market. Eight of them died.

"You choose ... as if you can choose who is going to live and who is going to die," he said.

The day only got worse. Eltaeb had to decide whether to amputate on children without full anesthetic because they were bleeding heavily and he didn't have time to transport them to the operating room.

Using local anesthetic, he removed an arm and leg of a 9-year-old boy and a leg of his 11 year-old sister.

He now scrolls through photos of such surgeries on his phone, attempting to explain to the world a horror few can grasp.

A member of the military media accompanied the AP during the visit, including during interviews. The AP retains full editorial control of its content.

Volunteers delivered supplies by bicycle

The hospital relied on volunteers to keep supplies coming. They would post what they needed on social media, and pharmacists would provide the keys for their long-closed shops and allow volunteers to take medicines and other items for free.

One volunteer, Nazar Mohamed, spent months riding around Omdurman, often on a bicycle, delivering supplies while explosions echoed.

Other donations came from organizations and individuals abroad. A network of Sudanese doctors overseas provided remote advice on coping with mass casualties or what to do when antibiotics or anesthesia ran low.

The hospital's remaining staffers got creative, making beds and crutches out of wood and using clothes instead of gauze for makeshift splints.

The war moves on and support does, too

Fighting has shifted away from the Khartoum area. Some funding-strained organizations that supported Eltaeb's hospital now assist places more in need.

He said there is enough money until June to pay salaries and keep generators running, but they will need some \$40,000 a month for the hospital to function.

While some countries have pledged support to help Sudan's reconstruction, there's concern the war with Iran might divert attention and resources, especially from Gulf countries who have vowed to help the country recover.

Hospitals that were hit harder than Al Nao lie in ruins and need much more.

Across town, Dr. Osman Ismail Osman, director of Al Shaabi hospital, said the several hundred thousand dollars the government has provided is a drop in the bucket.

The RSF occupied his hospital during the war. Dusty, broken medical equipment worth millions of dollars is piled up, and chunks of concrete are scattered with metal beds.

The goal of opening the badly damaged hospital for emergency referrals within weeks is ambitious, but medical workers like Eltaeb have learned how to approach the impossible.

"I believe I did my best as a doctor as a Sudanese," the surgeon said.

## **Latest US military strike on alleged drug boat kills 3 in eastern Pacific**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The latest U.S. military strike on a boat accused of ferrying drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean killed three people Sunday, according to a social media post by U.S. Southern Command.

The Trump administration's campaign of blowing up alleged drug-trafficking vessels in Latin American waters has gone on since early September and killed at least 186 people in total. Other strikes have taken place in the Caribbean Sea.

The military has not provided evidence that any of the vessels were carrying drugs.

After Sunday's attack, Southern Command posted a video on X showing a boat moving swiftly in the

water before an explosion left it in flames. It repeated previous statements by saying it had targeted the alleged drug traffickers along known smuggling routes.

The attacks began as the U.S. built up its largest military presence in the region in generations and came months ahead of the raid in January that captured then-Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. He was brought to New York to face drug trafficking charges and has pleaded not guilty.

President Donald Trump has said the U.S. is in "armed conflict" with cartels in Latin America and has justified the attacks as a necessary escalation to stem the flow of drugs into the United States.

Critics, meanwhile, have questioned the overall legality of the boat strikes.

## **Virginia Supreme Court considers whether to block voter-approved US House map favoring Democrats**

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

The Virginia Supreme Court on Monday will hear arguments in a Republican challenge to the redrawn congressional map that was approved by voters last week and could net Democrats four additional U.S. House seats.

The case contends that the Democratic-led General Assembly violated procedural requirements by placing the constitutional amendment before voters to authorize mid-decade redistricting. If the court agrees that lawmakers broke the rules, it could invalidate the amendment and render last week's statewide vote meaningless.

The Virginia court proceedings mark the latest twist in a national redistricting battle between Republicans and Democrats seeking an advantage in a November election that will determine whether Republicans maintain their narrow majority in the U.S. House.

President Donald Trump urged Texas Republicans to redraw districts to their favor last year in an attempt to win several additional House seats. That set off a chain reaction of similar moves in other states, leading to the voter approval last week of Virginia's new map.

Next up is Florida, where Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis has included congressional redistricting on the agenda for a special session of the GOP-controlled Legislature beginning Tuesday.

On Sunday, Trump said he was in favor of the Florida attempt and criticized the Virginia amendment that was pushed by Democrats.

"It's a very bad thing for our country. Very, very bad," he told Fox News Channel's "The Sunday Briefing."

So far, the two major parties have battled to a near draw. Republicans think they could win up to nine more seats under revised districts in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio. Democrats think they could win as many as 10 additional seats under new districts in California, Utah and Virginia. But legal challenges remain in both Virginia and Missouri.

Virginia currently is represented in the U.S. House by six Democrats and five Republicans who were elected from districts imposed by a court after a bipartisan redistricting commission failed to agree on a map after the 2020 census. The new districts, which narrowly won voter approval last Tuesday, could give Democrats an improved chance to win 10 districts.

At issue before the state Supreme Court is whether those districts should be invalidated because of the process used by lawmakers.

Because the state's redistricting commission was established by a voter-approved constitutional amendment, lawmakers had to propose a new constitutional amendment to redraw districts themselves. That required approval of a resolution in two separate legislative sessions, with a state election sandwiched in between, to place an amendment on the ballot.

In January, a judge in rural Tazewell County, in southwestern Virginia, ruled that lawmakers failed to follow their own rules for adding the redistricting amendment to a special session last fall. Circuit Judge Jack Hurley Jr. also ruled that lawmakers failed to initially approve the amendment before the public began voting in last year's general election and that the state had failed to publish the amendment three months



before the election, as required by law. As a result, he said, the amendment is invalid and void.

The Virginia Supreme Court placed Hurley's order on hold and allowed the redistricting vote to proceed before hearing arguments on the case. Republicans have filed at least two additional legal challenges, which also are winding their way through the courts.

## **Iran's top diplomat briefly returns to Pakistan but Trump says the sides can talk by phone**

By MUNIR AHMED, SAMY MAGDY and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Iran's foreign minister briefly visited Islamabad again on Sunday as Pakistan's political and military leadership scrambled to reignite ceasefire negotiations between Tehran and Washington, but U.S. President Donald Trump said they could talk by phone instead.

Abbas Araghchi had left Pakistan's capital late the previous day, creating confusion around an expected second round of talks there, but he returned before continuing on to Moscow on Sunday, Iranian state media said. He had been in Oman, which previously mediated talks and is on the other side of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

The White House last week said it would dispatch envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad to follow up on historic face-to-face talks earlier this month. But shortly after Araghchi's departure Saturday, Trump said he had called off the mission because of a lack of progress with Iran.

"If they want, we can talk but we're not sending people," Trump told Fox News on Sunday. He said earlier on social media: "All they have to do is call!!!"

Indirect talks between the two sides were ongoing, two Pakistani officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to the media.

Trump last week indefinitely extended the ceasefire the U.S. and Iran agreed to on April 7 that has largely halted the fighting that began with joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Feb. 28. But a permanent settlement remains elusive in the war that has killed thousands of people and shaken the global economy.

Strait of Hormuz at center of Iran's discussions in Oman

A standoff remained on in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all traded oil and natural gas passes, as Iran has restricted movement through it and the U.S. enforces a blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran wants to persuade Oman to support a mechanism to collect tolls from vessels passing through the strait according to a regional official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter.

Oman's response wasn't immediately clear.

The official, who is involved in mediation efforts, also said Iran insists on ending the U.S. blockade before a new round of talks and that Pakistan-led mediators are trying to bridge significant gaps between the countries.

Araghchi also spoke by phone with counterparts in Qatar and Saudi Arabia on Sunday.

Even before Saturday's developments, Iran's Foreign Ministry said any talks would be indirect and Pakistani officials would act as go-betweens, reflecting Tehran's wariness after rounds of indirect talks last year and earlier this year ended with Iran being attacked by the U.S. and Israel.

Trump said Iran has offered a 'much better' proposal

The economic fallout is growing two months into the war as global shipments of oil, liquefied natural gas, fertilizer and other supplies are disrupted by the near-closure of the strategic strait.

Both sides have continued to make military threats. Iran's joint military command Saturday warned that "if the U.S. continues its aggressive military actions, including naval blockades, banditry, and piracy" it will face a "strong response."

Trump last week ordered the military to "shoot and kill" small boats that could be placing mines in the waterway.

Trump told journalists on Saturday, before a security incident at the White House Correspondents' Din-

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ner, that within 10 minutes of him canceling Witkoff and Kushner's trip to Islamabad, Iran sent a "much better" proposal.

He did not elaborate but stressed that one of his conditions is that Iran "will not have a nuclear weapon." The status of Iran's enriched uranium has long been at the center of tensions. Tehran has 440 kilograms (970 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60% purity, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels, according to the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency.

Syed Mohammad Ali, an independent political analyst in Pakistan, said the delay in the talks must not be seen as a setback and that indirect talks were progressing. He said tensions between Washington and Tehran cannot be eased overnight and the negotiation process requires patience.

"But the good thing is that the ceasefire is holding, and both sides have a desire to end the conflict in a way that does not backfire at home," Ali said.

A growing toll even as fragile ceasefires hold

Since the war began, at least 3,375 people have been killed in Iran and at least 2,509 people in Lebanon, where the Israel-Hezbollah fighting resumed two days after the Iran war started.

Also, 23 people have been killed in Israel and more than a dozen in Gulf Arab states. Fifteen Israeli soldiers in Lebanon, 13 U.S. service members in the region and six U.N. peacekeepers in southern Lebanon have been killed.

Another ceasefire — between Israel and the Iranian-backed Lebanese militant Hezbollah group — has been extended by three weeks. Hezbollah has not participated in the Washington-brokered diplomacy.

Oil prices rise again as Pakistan talks fail to materialize

Oil prices rose when the market opened Sunday as traders absorbed the news of the stalled ceasefire talks.

West Texas Intermediate, the U.S.-produced light, sweet crude, was selling for \$96.50 a barrel Sunday, up 2% since the market closed on Friday. The price was 44% higher than before the start of the Iran war, when oil was selling for about \$67 a barrel.

Brent crude, the international standard, was trading at \$107.75 per barrel Sunday, up about 3% since Friday and 48% since the war began, when oil was selling for \$72 a barrel.

Oil prices have risen steadily since the war began and tankers full of crude became stranded in the Persian Gulf, unable to safely transit through the Strait of Hormuz.

## DC gala shooting suspect aired grievances against Trump in writings to family

By ERIC TUCKER, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man accused of opening fire at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner railed against Trump administration policies and referred to himself as a "Friendly Federal Assassin" in writings sent to family members minutes before an attack that authorities increasingly believe was politically motivated, according to a message reviewed by The Associated Press.

The writings, sent shortly before shots were fired Saturday night at the Washington Hilton, made repeated references to President Donald Trump without naming him directly and alluded to grievances over a range of administration actions, including U.S. strikes on boats accused of smuggling drugs in the eastern Pacific Ocean.

Investigators are treating the writings, along with a trail of social media posts and interviews with family members, as some of the clearest evidence yet of the suspect's mindset and possible motives.

Authorities uncovered what one law enforcement official described as numerous anti-Trump social media posts linked to the suspect, Cole Tomas Allen, a 31-year-old California man accused of trying to breach a security checkpoint at the dinner while armed with multiple guns and knives.

Suspect's brother reached out to Connecticut police

Allen's brother contacted police in New London, Connecticut, after receiving the writings, according to

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the law enforcement official, who was not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The New London Police Department said in a statement it was contacted at 10:49 p.m., about two hours after the shooting, by an individual who wanted to share information related to it. The police department said it then immediately notified federal law enforcement.

Allen's sister, who lives in Maryland, told investigators her brother had legally purchased several weapons from a California gun store and kept them at their parents' home in Torrance without their knowledge, according to the official. She described her brother as prone to making radical statements, the official said.

The writings examined by the AP ran more than 1,000 words and read as a rambling, deeply personal message, opening almost jarringly with a casual "hello everybody!" before shifting into apologies to family members, co-workers and even strangers he feared could be caught in the violence. The note moved between confession, grievance and farewell, with Allen thanking people in his life even as he sought to explain the attack.

Elsewhere, he veered between political anger, religious justifications and rebuttals to imagined critics. He also made a taunting critique of security at the Washington Hilton, mocking what he described as lax precautions and expressing surprise he was able to enter the hotel armed without detection.

The AP limits the use of attackers' writings and social media posts to avoid amplifying their views or encouraging copycat actions. The AP chooses to summarize their words and focus mainly on the victims and investigations.

Allen legally bought a .38-caliber semiautomatic pistol in October 2023 and a 12-gauge shotgun two years later, according to the law enforcement official and another one who also spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation.

Acting head of Justice Dept. says Trump officials were targets

Allen is believed to have traveled by train from California to Chicago and then onto Washington, where he checked himself in as a guest at the hotel where the gala dinner was held with its typically tight security, said acting Attorney General Todd Blanche. He is believed to have acted alone and is set to face criminal charges Monday.

Authorities say Allen attempted to charge toward the cavernous ballroom at the Washington Hilton but was tackled to the ground in a violent scene that resulted in shots being fired, Trump being hurried off the stage unharmed and guests ducking for cover beneath their tables.

"It does appear that he did in fact set out to target folks who work in the administration, likely including the president," Blanche told NBC's "Meet the Press."

A profile of the shooting suspect emerges

Social media posts that appear to match the suspect show he is a highly educated tutor and amateur video game developer.

A May 2025 profile photo of Allen appears to match the appearance of the man in a photo of the alleged attacker being taken into custody that was posted Saturday night by Trump. The photo, posted to the social networking site LinkedIn, shows him in a cap and gown after graduating with a master's degree in computer science from California State University, Dominguez Hills.

Allen earned a bachelor's degree in 2017 in mechanical engineering from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. He listed his involvement there in a Christian student fellowship and a campus group that battled with Nerf guns.

A local ABC station in Los Angeles included an interview with Allen during his senior year of college as part of a story about new technologies to help people as they age. He had developed a prototype for a new type of emergency brake for wheelchairs.

Allen contributed \$25 to a Democratic Party political action committee in support of Kamala Harris for president in 2024, according to federal campaign finance records.

Chaotic scene unfolded minutes after gala began

The shooting at the security barricades happened minutes after the event got underway.

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The Secret Service and other authorities swarmed the room as guests ducked under tables by the hundreds. Gasps echoed through the ballroom as guests realized something was happening. Hundreds of journalists immediately got on phones to call in information.

"Out of the way, sir!" someone yelled. Others yelled to duck. From one corner, a "God Bless America" chant began as the president was escorted offstage. Outside the hotel, members of the National Guard and other authorities flooded the area as helicopters circled overhead.

After an initial attempt to resume the event, it was scrapped for the night and will be rescheduled.

Trump was unusually conciliatory after what he saw as a third attempt on his life in less than two years. He suggested that his personal politics had made him a repeated target, but he also called for unity and bipartisan healing in an increasingly violent world.

"It's always shocking when something like this happens. Happened to me, a little bit. And that never changes," Trump told reporters in a hastily organized news conference at the White House late Saturday.

## Justice Department cites dinner shooting to press preservationists to drop Trump ballroom suit

By MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's Justice Department is using the shooting at the White House Correspondents' Dinner on Saturday to try to pressure preservationists to drop their lawsuit over his planned \$400 million ballroom on the site of the former East Wing of the White House.

"It's time to build the ballroom," acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said plainly Sunday on X, posting a letter in which Assistant Attorney General Brett Shumate gave the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has sued to block construction, until 9 a.m. Monday to dismiss its lawsuit.

If it doesn't do so, Shumate wrote, the government would ask a court to do so "in light of last night's extraordinary events," calling the Washington Hilton — the site of Saturday's gala — "demonstrably unsafe" for events with the president "because its size presents extraordinary security challenges for the Secret Service."

The White House ballroom, Shumate wrote, "will ensure the safety and security of the President for decades to come and prevent future assassination attempts on the President at the Washington Hilton."

Asked about the letter, Elliot Carter, spokesperson for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said Sunday the group would review it with legal counsel.

The preservation group sued in December, a week after the White House finished demolishing the East Wing to make way for a ballroom that Trump said would fit 999 people. Trump says the project is funded by private donations, although public money is paying for the bunker construction and security upgrades.

A crowd of 2,300 attended Saturday night's event at the Hilton, home to one of the few rooms in Washington large enough for the event. It packs in attendees at round tables whose chairs are back to back, and room to move around is tight. The dinner is not a White House event — it is run by the White House Correspondents' Association, a nonprofit organization of journalists from media outlets that cover the president.

Republicans amp up their push for White House ballroom

For months, Trump has mentioned the ballroom project at nearly every chance, often talking about the lawsuit or his desire to construct the space during events on a number of other topics. As he addressed tuxedo- and ball gown-clad reporters who scurried from the Washington Hilton to the White House for a Saturday night news conference, Trump called for tougher security measures and pointed to the incident as a reason his ballroom is needed.

In the wake of the shooting, Trump, Blanche and a number of supporters of the administration have taken the opportunity to push for the project across social media platforms and news programs. Republican Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan said he agreed with Trump "100%" on the massive White House construction project, which Jordan said on Fox News Channel "obviously would be much safer location for these type of events."



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Sunday morning on X, Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said he agreed with Trump that the White House ballroom "is a national security necessity" that would give the Secret Service "immense control over the security environment of future events with a very hardened facility."

Even some Democrats agreed. Pennsylvania Sen. John Fetterman, who attended Saturday's dinner, said on X that the proposed White House space should be used "for events exactly like these." On CNN later Sunday, Fetterman said attendees and Americans overall were in a "vulnerable" position during Saturday's event, in part because many in the presidential line of succession were present and could have been harmed.

Fetterman responded, "I certainly hope so" when asked if the incident would spark more support for the White House project.

Gate crashers, party crashers, a plane — security breaches at the White House

In the century-plus since its grounds were largely closed to the public, dozens of events are evidence that even the White House complex is not impervious to intrusion.

There have been a number of documented incidents in which people have scaled security barriers around the White House. One of them, a disturbed Army veteran carrying a knife, jumped the fence in 2014 and raced into the White House, making his way into the East Room before heading back down a hallway on the State Floor deep within the mansion.

A Homeland Security Department review of the case determined that lack of training, poor staffing decisions and communication problems contributed to the embarrassing failure that ultimately led to the resignation of the head of the Secret Service.

In 1994, a pilot died when he crashed a small stolen plane on the South Lawn, hitting a tree and a first-floor corner of the building. And in 2009, uninvited guests Tareq and Michael Salahi crashed a state dinner, passing through security checkpoints and meeting President Barack Obama in an incident that sparked security investigations.

How is the White House ballroom project going?

In litigation since December, work is ongoing, although there have been recent hiccups.

Trump tore down the East Wing last fall to build the massive ballroom in that space. In its lawsuit, the National Trust for Historic Preservation argued that Trump had overstepped his authority by moving forward with the project without first getting approval from key federal agencies and Congress.

Earlier this month, a federal appeals court allowed Trump to continue construction of the \$400 million project, ruling a day after a lower court judge continued to block above-ground construction on the site and scheduling a June 5 hearing to review the case. U.S. District Judge Richard Leon's ruling had blocked above-ground construction of the 90,000-square-foot (8,400-square-meter) ballroom addition, while allowing only below-ground work to continue on a bunker and other "national security facilities" at the site.

On Fox News Channel on Sunday, Trump forecast that, by the end of his current term, his project would be complete.

"In the year '28 you're going to have something, you're going to have a ballroom, the top of the line, security," Trump said. "You're not going to have problems."

## Chicago police officer killed in hospital shooting identified, second officer in critical condition

CHICAGO (AP) — A Chicago officer who was fatally shot by a man receiving treatment at a hospital while in police custody has been identified as 38-year-old John Bartholomew, authorities said.

Bartholomew, a 10-year veteran of the force, was pronounced dead just before 1 p.m. Saturday after being shot at Endeavor Health Swedish Hospital, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

A second officer was wounded in the Saturday morning shooting and remained in critical condition Sunday, police said.

His name and the name of the suspect in the shooting have not yet been released by police. Chicago police Superintendent Larry Snelling told reporters Saturday that the wounded officer, 57 years old with 21 years of service, was "fighting for his life."

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The officers had transported the suspect, who had been arrested for suspicion of robbery, to the hospital for observation. The suspect fled from the hospital after the shooting and was later taken into custody, where a weapon was recovered, the police department said. Police have not said how he was able to get a gun.

A surveillance photo obtained by the Sun-Times appeared to show him running naked, with electrodes on his chest.

The hospital said in a Facebook posting Saturday that an individual in custody of law enforcement was brought to the emergency department for treatment and was "wanded upon arrival," following protocol. He was escorted by law enforcement at all times, the hospital said.

It said that the man later fired shots at the law enforcement officers and exited the hospital building. Snelling said police investigating the shooting had recovered three weapons.

The other is a 57-year-old officer with 21 years of service, Snelling said.

## Trump calls for unity and bipartisan healing after another violent incident. But will it last?

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump was somberly contemplative and unusually conciliatory after confronting what he saw as a third attempt on his life in less than two years. He suggested that his personal politics had made him a repeated target, but he also called for unity and bipartisan healing in an increasingly violent world.

"It's always shocking when something like this happens. Happened to me, a little bit. And that never changes," a subdued Trump told reporters in a hastily organized news conference at the White House late Saturday.

Only a short time before, a man with guns and knives tried to rush past the security perimeter inside the Washington hotel where the Republican president was about to address the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

Authorities are trying to determine what happened and why. A suspect was taken into custody and identified as Cole Tomas Allen, 31, of Torrance, California.

Trump said he himself was undoubtedly the target. The presidency is "a dangerous profession," he said, noting that violence associated with politics had escalated in the U.S. and around the world. "No country is immune."

Trump suggested it was a sign of how successful his presidency has been.

"I've studied assassinations, and I must tell you the most impactful people — the people who do the most, take a look at Abraham Lincoln," Trump said. He added: "The people that make the biggest impact, they're the ones that they go after. They don't go after the ones that don't do much."

The president called for Americans to put aside their differences and unite — a break from his usual gleefully combative political tack.

"We have to, we have to resolve our differences," Trump said. "I will say, you had Republicans, Democrats, independents, conservatives, liberals and progressives. Those words are interchangeable, perhaps, but maybe they're not. But yet everybody in that room, big crowd, record-setting crowd, there was a record-setting group of people, and there was a tremendous amount of love and coming together. I watched, I watched, and I was very, very impressed by that."

Trump says he would have changed course and made 'a speech of love'

The president kept up a similar tone during a Sunday interview with Fox News Channel, calling the dinner "an evening where a lot of people got together."

"I saw some Democrats, as we were leaving — and they were generally hostile — and last night they were waving to me. Politicians, congressmen, senators. They were waving and saying, 'Great going' and 'Hello,'" Trump said. "The place was just coming together. It was very nice to see."

He also said he had originally planned to give a speech blistering the media. "I was gonna really rip it

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last night," Trump said of his initial plan.

But immediately after the incident, when there was some thought that the event would carry on, Trump said he wanted to change course with remarks that were "gonna be much different. It'll be a speech of love."

"But I didn't get a chance to do that," Trump said. "Probably I was better off, if I didn't. I don't know."

There was still some of his old edge, especially when he spoke about the suspect: "I hated a guy like this — a sick, bad person — I hated somebody like that changing the course of our country."

Echoes of what Trump said after 2024 incidents

Trump has called for national unity before, only to quickly pivot.

He told Fox News that what happened Saturday proved the necessity of the White House ballroom he's building. Trump also wrote on social media that the attack "would never have happened with the Militarily Top Secret Ballroom currently under construction at the White House. It cannot be built fast enough!" And he scoffed at a legal challenge against the construction that led to the demolition of the White House's East Wing, calling it the "ridiculous ballroom lawsuit."

After the shooting in 2024 during a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, when Trump was wounded in the ear and a supporter was killed, the president strode into the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee two days later. That same week, he gave a speech featured a softer and deeply personal message, drawing directly from his brush with death.

"The discord and division in our society must be healed. We must heal it quickly," Trump said then. "As Americans, we are bound together by a single fate and a shared destiny. We rise together. Or we fall apart."

Such calls proved to be very short lived.

Trump later in that same speech veered back into his trademark combativeness. He repeated false claims about the 2020 election was stolen from him and assertions that Democratic President Joe Biden had done "unthinkable" damage to the nation.

The pattern played out anew in September 2024, when Secret Service agents fired at a man who was armed with a rifle as Trump played golf at his resort club in West Palm Beach, Florida.

Steve Witkoff, Trump's golf partner when the second incident occurred, described Trump's initial reaction as "courageous and stoic." It was not long before Trump was talking constantly about "radical" Democrats and "left-wing lunatics." He branded Ryan Routh, the man sentenced to life in prison for trying to kill him, a "sick" individual.

This time, the first lady was with Trump

Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said increasingly polarizing rhetoric was partly to blame for so many violent incidents around Trump.

"There have been threats against leadership for a very long time. Years and years and years. That's not new," Blanche said on ABC's "This Week." "There is something unique about the threats against President Trump and his Cabinet that is disgusting."

Unlike the first two incidents, however, the latest one occurred with first lady Melania Trump by his side. The president said on Sunday that his wife "was doing great."

That followed the previous evening, when Trump described the first lady as being rattled but also "very cognizant, I think, of what happened."

"I think she knew immediately," Trump said. "She was saying 'It's a bad noise.'"

He added, "It was a rather traumatic experience for her."

No change to British monarch's upcoming American trip

Buckingham Palace said Sunday that the U.S. visit by King Charles III will go ahead as planned despite the incident at the correspondents' dinner.

The announcement came after discussions between American and British officials on questions of security. The trip, an intricately planned affair, is meant to showcase the strength of the trans-Atlantic "special relationship."

"Following discussions on both sides of the Atlantic through the day, and acting on advice of government, we can confirm the state visit by their majesties will proceed as planned," Buckingham Palace said in a

statement. "The king and queen are most grateful to all those who have worked at pace to ensure this remains the case and are looking forward to the visit getting underway tomorrow."

Charles and Queen Camilla are scheduled to begin their four-day trip on Monday, when they will have tea with the president and first lady Melania Trump.

Trump told Fox News Channel's "The Sunday Briefing" that "we're going to have a great time and he represents his nation like nobody else can do it."

## Marathon milestone shattered: Sabastian Sawe breaks the fabled 2-hour barrier by 30 seconds

LONDON (AP) — A pair of African distance runners took down what was once among the most unthinkable records in sports on Sunday, shattering the long-unapproachable two-hour barrier in the 26.2-mile (42.2-kilometer) marathon.

Sabastian Sawe of Kenya won the London Marathon in 1 hour, 59 minutes and 30 seconds, bettering the previous men's world record by an astonishing 65 seconds. He beat Ethiopia's Yomif Kejelcha, who was running his first marathon and finished in 1:59:41.

"What comes today is not for me alone," Sawe said, "but for all of us today in London."

Jacob Kiplimo of Uganda came in third, finishing in 2:00:28. That was seven seconds better than the previous world record held by Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum and completed a podium in which all three men broke Kiptum's three-year-old mark.

Legend has it that the marathon's distance is the same as the run a Greek soldier made from Marathon to Athens to announce a military victory in ancient times.

On a relatively flat London course on a mostly sunny day in the low 60s (15 Celsius) — ideal for running — Sawe ran a faster second half, covering the second half of the race in 59:01.

He and Kejelcha pulled clear after 18.5 miles (30 kilometers), then Sawe made his solo break in the final two kilometers. Fans showered him with loud cheers as he sprinted to the finish on The Mall.

"I think they help a lot," Sawe said, "because if it was not for them you don't feel like you are so loved ... with them calling, you feel so happy and strong."

Sawe, who came in as the defending champion in London, said it was a "day to remember for me" and thanked the huge crowds who lined the streets of the British capital to witness one of the greatest performances in a sport that asks a simple question: How fast can a person run?

Under two hours has been done before — unofficially

After Roger Bannister broke the 4-minute mile in 1954, the mark was lowered 18 more times until it reached the current world record: 3:43.13, by Morocco's great runner, Hicham El Guerrouj.

The mile has been largely replaced by the 1,500 meters as the main four-lap race in major events. The marathon, however, remains a staple of world-class running and the 2-hour barrier — a nice, even number at a distance that has been around since ancient times — has been in the sights of the world's greatest runners (and shoe companies) for about the last 20 years.

Kenyan long-distance great Eliud Kipchoge did, in fact, break 2 hours in 2019, but it did not go into the record books, as it was a specially tailored race — the "1:59 Challenge" — run in favorable conditions on a 6-mile track with a stable of 41 rotating pacemakers. Kipchoge finished in 1:59:40.

Sawe beat that time by 10 seconds on one of the world's less-taxing marathon courses.

"The goalposts have literally just moved for marathon running," Paula Radcliffe, a former winner of the London Marathon, said during commentary of the race for the BBC.

The first sub-2:30 marathon came in 1925 and the 2:15 barrier was broken 38 years after that. At the turn of the century, the world's best time for the men's marathon was 2:05:42, set by Khalid Khannouchi in Chicago in 1999.

Khannouchi broke his own record by four seconds in 2002 — the previous last time the fastest men's marathon was run in London — and it has been whittled down gradually over the last 24 years by a succession of Kenyan and Ethiopian runners, including Haile Gebrselassie, Wilson Kipsang, Kipchoge and,



most recently, Kiptum.

Now that the 2-hour mark has been broken, a few other iconic track-and-field records to watch include Usain Bolt's 9.58 seconds in the 100 meters (2009), Mike Powell's 8.95 meters in the long jump (1991) and Marita Koch's 47.60 in the women's 400 meters (1985).

Lightweight shoes with cutting-edge technology help fuel the speed

Part of the lowering of the times is about improvements in training, nutrition and technique.

Another key element is the streamlining of shoes, defined through a battle of shoe companies who use carbon-fiber plates and other materials as part of an effort to make shoes lighter and springier.

There's been ongoing debate about whether the advances in shoes amount to "technology doping." Seven years ago, Kipchoge wore Nike in his controlled run at sub-2 hours. On Sunday, Sawe was in Adidas, which is making a men's size 9 shoe that weighs 3.4 ounces — less than half the weight of an average running shoe, according to the Wall Street Journal.

"When you give them the box, they think it's a joke," Patrick Nava, general manager of Adidas running, told WSJ. "They think the box is empty."

Assefa wins fastest-ever women's-only marathon

A record also went down in the women's race, with Ethiopia's Tigst Assefa pulling away with about 500 meters remaining to win in 2:15:41 and defend the title in the fastest-ever time in a women's-only marathon.

However, it was 16 seconds slower than the course record set by Radcliffe in 2003 when it was a mixed race.

Kenya's Hellen Obiri was 12 seconds back in second place in a personal-best time on her London debut and compatriot Joyciline Jepkosgei was third, a further two seconds adrift. It was the first time three women have run under 2 hours, 16 minutes in a marathon.

"I screamed when I finished because I knew I was breaking the world record," Assefa said.

"I felt much healthier today and have worked really hard on my speed and all my training has paid off."

Swiss double in wheelchair races

In the wheelchair races, there was a Swiss double with Marcel Hug powering to a sixth straight men's title — and eighth in total — and Catherine Debrunner beating Tatyana McFadden in a close finish to defend the title.

## Ohio GOP primary for governor shows potential headwinds for Ramaswamy as he looks to fall campaign

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio has a contested Republican primary for governor fast approaching, but there are few signs that the top candidate sees it as a competitive race.

Vivek Ramaswamy has parlayed his national name recognition, tech industry connections and alliance with President Donald Trump into a record fundraising haul that he is tapping for advertising spots aimed at the November election. He is using campaign rallies and advertising to criticize his would-be general election opponent, Democrat Amy Acton, the state's former public health director.

Ramaswamy feels so assured of gliding through the May 5 primary that his campaign has all but ignored his GOP opponent so far.

"I believe this year we face the single greatest contrast between two candidates in the history of governor's races in Ohio," he told Republicans at a recent party fundraising dinner, referencing the general election. "We face the most consequential election for governor in the history of our state."

Nonetheless, the primary season has exposed potential vulnerabilities for the 2024 presidential candidate.

Ramaswamy faces growing headwinds within a GOP base disgruntled over the rising cost of living, the disjointed release of the Jeffrey Epstein files, the burgeoning demands of data centers and the war with Iran. Ramaswamy is also under criticism for some of his proposals, such as consolidating the state's university system and raising the voting age to 25. Critics say those ideas suggest the Ivy League-educated

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biotech billionaire is out of touch with average Ohioans.

The criticism has veered into the personal, surfacing as ethnic and racial animosity toward Ramaswamy, a child of Indian immigrants.

If Ramaswamy is the nominee, his supporters worry less that Republicans will switch sides and vote for a Democrat than about the factors that could depress conservative turnout. If enough voters stay home in the fall, Ohio could see its first Democratic governor in 20 years.

"We have three opponents right now in this race," Ramaswamy's running mate, state Senate President Rob McColley, said in remarks to Republicans in rural Marion County that were shared by WGH Talk. "We have Amy Acton, we have the national political environment and then we have complacency. I would argue the third opponent is the most dangerous opponent we possibly have."

'He's a guy like me'

Discontent among a segment of Ohio's conservative voters is being funneled into curiosity about Casey Putsch's campaign.

An engineer and vehicle designer who calls himself "The Car Guy," Putsch has attracted fans with provocative YouTube videos that troll Ramaswamy and criticize national Republicans over their handling of the Epstein files, positions on energy-guzzling data centers and support for Israel.

His events are sparsely attended and his campaign has raised only \$123,000, but Putsch has won over some conservative voters. Tyler Morris, an ambulance manufacturing worker from central Ohio, is among them.

"When I hear people like Casey speak, he's a guy like me," Morris, 32, said as he was on his way to see Putsch speak at a Columbus park. "He's just a guy that got pissed off one day. He's not a politician. He's like, do you know what -- I want to speak for the average, everyday Ohioan."

Morris said he used to support Trump, but has since soured on him and will not back a candidate endorsed by the president, as Ramaswamy is.

"I say I'm politically cynical, because it's just like regardless of who I vote for, I feel like as an average Ohioan, it seems like things are just getting worse and worse for everyone," he said.

A campaign that has exposed racial animosity

Putsch's messaging has gone beyond the pitch to make life better for working-class Ohioans. He has been accused of contributing to the spread of ethnic hatred toward Ramaswamy, including repeatedly taking issue with the candidate's Indian heritage and Hindu faith.

As he was beginning his campaign, Putsch said Ramaswamy had contempt for "American cultural values." In one online video, he called for Ramaswamy to "be destroyed."

The day after Putsch's launch, a Ramaswamy opinion piece in The New York Times asked Republicans to reject the far-right, white nationalist element within the Republican Party in favor of a vision of American identity "based on ideals."

"No matter your ancestry, if you wait your turn and obtain citizenship, you are every bit as American as a Mayflower descendant as long as you subscribe to the creed of the American founding and the culture that was born of it," he wrote. "This is what makes American exceptionalism possible."

Ramaswamy, who was born and raised in Cincinnati, followed up the column by rebuking racism and antisemitism within Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement during a speech at Turning Point USA's AmericaFest, angering some members of his party.

Amid the fallout from that speech, Ramaswamy's social media posts were drawing increasingly ugly and racist reactions. Putsch also has pushed racial epithets, including depicting Ramaswamy as a stink bug he is spraying with insecticide and challenging him to a game of "cowboys and Indians."

In January, Ramaswamy announced he was getting off Instagram and the social media site X.

"Leaders who depend on social media to gauge public opinion are looking through a broken mirror," he wrote in a Wall Street Journal column.

Putsch mocked Ramaswamy for the decision, posting to X that his rival "can't take the heat."

National star power, but will it be enough?

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The Ohio Republican Party chairman, Alex Triantafilou, dismisses Putsch's attacks as typical for a primary election.

"The online right these days, it's meaningless to the message of where we are as a party on the ground," Triantafilou said.

He cited Ramaswamy's national profile, his political skills and his fundraising prowess — a record \$50 million in total contributions, though roughly half is from Ramaswamy's own fortune.

"In every possible category of what we want in a candidate, he has it," Triantafilou said.

Aaron Baer, president of the Columbus-based Center for Christian Virtue, also rejects Putsch's disparagement of Ramaswamy's background, including questioning Ramaswamy's ability to lead "a Christian state."

"The bottom line is Vivek Ramaswamy, while he doesn't share the Christian faith with me and millions of other Ohioans, he very much shares our values," Baer said.

Ramaswamy has been running what looks like a general election campaign, drawing impressive crowds during visits to each of Ohio's 88 counties. His strategy appears to be working for voters like Pam Koch, a 70-year-old pharmacy worker who attended a Lincoln Reagan Day dinner where Ramaswamy was the featured speaker.

Koch described herself as a "pro-life Christian" and said she came to the event "just to see where he stands, you know, spiritually and (on) everything that we value." Afterward, she said she was delighted with what she heard.

"I think he lines up with all of our values, so I'm excited about that," she said.

Ron Eckles, a retired communications worker, is sticking with Putsch, partly for qualities the candidate shares with Ramaswamy, such as being a native Ohioan and building his own business. But he believes Putsch is stronger on gun rights and likes that Putsch is an Ohio State University alumnus; Ramaswamy attended Harvard and Yale.

Putsch's stark financial disadvantage in the primary doesn't bother him.

"I believe in miracles," Eckles said.

## With goals of Iran war unfulfilled, Netanyahu's government faces unhappy public as elections loom

By JULIA FRANKEL Associated Press

Iran's government is still in power. Hezbollah and Hamas haven't been defeated. U.S. President Donald Trump's interests may be diverging from Israel's.

Wars with Iran and its proxies haven't gone according to plan for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and that could mean trouble for Israel's longest-serving prime minister in elections scheduled for later this year. Many Israelis are dissatisfied with the Netanyahu government's wartime leadership, according to a recent poll.

At the start of the U.S.-Israeli campaign against Iran in late February, Netanyahu said the goal was to degrade the Islamic Republic's military, eradicate its nuclear and ballistic missile programs and create the conditions for its overthrow. While Iran's military has been badly damaged, it is still a threat to neighbors and ships in the Strait of Hormuz — and Netanyahu's other goals remained unfulfilled when a ceasefire was announced earlier this month.

Israel's latest war with Hezbollah in Lebanon has also been cut short. Netanyahu said he agreed to a truce at the request of Trump but that Israel was "not finished yet" with the Iran-backed militant group; Israeli forces are still occupying a 10-kilometer- (6-mile-) deep swath of southern Lebanon.

The recent poll showing Israelis' dissatisfaction comes on top of the unresolved war in Gaza — another instance in which Trump pressured Netanyahu to wind down military operations. More than two years after Hamas' October 2023 attack on Israel that triggered the war, the Iran-backed militant group is weakened but still standing.

"After 925 days of fighting since October 7, Israel has failed to achieve decisive victory on any front," wrote Yoav Limor, a prominent military affairs commentator. "At the end of yet another war, it is perceived

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as a country whose decisions are not made in Jerusalem, but in Washington.”

For his part, Netanyahu has cast the war with Iran as a success, a preemptive strike against an “existential” threat. “We crushed the Iranian regime’s destruction machine in advance,” he recently said.

Frustrations with Netanyahu’s government have persisted

Trust in Netanyahu’s government nose-dived after the deadly 2023 Hamas attack. He spent the next two years waging a fierce retaliatory campaign against Hamas and its allies and secured the release of dozens of hostages from Gaza as part of a ceasefire deal.

Israel has also enjoyed a number of military successes against Iran and its Lebanese proxy, the Hezbollah militant group. But these gains do not appear to have benefited Netanyahu personally. While the latest wars against Iran and Hezbollah were widely supported, the inconclusive outcomes have left many Israelis feeling fatigued and disappointed.

“People were disappointed because it hadn’t achieved the goals,” said Dahlia Scheindlin, a political analyst in Tel Aviv.

A poll by the Israel Democracy Institute, a centrist think tank in Jerusalem, during the first week of the war against Iran found a solid majority of respondents, 64%, trusted Netanyahu to direct the campaign. But a second poll in the days after the April 8 ceasefire found that Israelis rated the management of the war by the government — not just Netanyahu — more negatively than positively.

The poll, which was conducted before the U.S. brokered and extended the ceasefire in Lebanon, also found that a majority of Israelis thought the fighting in Lebanon against Hezbollah should continue.

Pushed into two ceasefires, back to back

Since the ceasefires with Iran and Hezbollah, Israelis have begun to question whether the relationship between Netanyahu and Trump — and Israel and the United States — is as strong as it was before the wars began.

Though Trump’s interests have at times diverged from those of Netanyahu, the U.S. president has continued to publicly laud Israel. He wrote on Truth Social recently that “whether people like Israel or not, they have proven to be a GREAT Ally of the United States of America.”

He said Thursday that he’d host Netanyahu and Lebanese President Joseph Aoun at the White House in the “near future” for talks on the truce, describing it as an honor.

Israelis have their doubts.

In the Israel Democracy Institute’s poll, most Israelis said there was a “fairly” or “very” low likelihood that the agreement reached between the U.S. and Iran would take Israel’s security into account to an appropriate degree.

Asked about the leaders’ relationship, Netanyahu’s office declined to comment. But an Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations said Trump and Netanyahu still speak every day.

Late last year, Netanyahu announced he would award the Israel Prize, one of the country’s highest honors, to Trump, making him the first foreign leader to receive it. Israel invited Trump to formally accept the award in Jerusalem on April 22, as part of the country’s 78th celebration of its independence.

The day came and went without a Trump visit.

In northern Israel, anger and fear are palpable

The ceasefire with Lebanon has stoked deep disappointment in Israeli towns near the border that have endured a month and a half of missile fire from Hezbollah.

“I live 100 meters from the border,” said Asaf Oakil, a resident of Kiryat Shmona. “The ceasefire? It’s a mistake.”

Shops are still closed and protests have broken out in recent days, with much of the anger directed at Netanyahu.

“I really hope that the residents of the north will learn from this and vote for someone who can help us here, not someone who brings us down and buries us,” said Shosh Tsaoula, another resident of Kiryat Shmona.

Netanyahu’s government is in the final months of its four-year term and is required to hold elections by



the end of October.

Two opposition politicians — Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid — announced Sunday that they would join forces in the next election. Another popular opposition figure, former military chief Gadi Eisenkot, is also expected to team up with the two men.

Nadav Eyal, a commentator with the Israeli Yediot Ahronoth daily newspaper, said that Netanyahu is in “big trouble” if he cannot convince Israelis that the wars with Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas have led to lasting security gains.

“With unstable ceasefires that can lapse at any given point, voters will be not happy about it.”

## **‘Michael’ moonwalks to \$97 million opening, shattering record for music biopics**

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — “Michael,” the big-budget Michael Jackson spectacle, shrugged off bad reviews and a troubled production to launch with \$97 million in U.S. and Canada theaters, according to studio estimates Sunday, shattering a record debut for music biopics.

A highly authorized portrayal of the King of Pop, co-produced by the Jackson estate, Lionsgate’s “Michael” far surpassed previous biopic top performers like “Straight Outta Compton” (a \$60.2 million debut in 2015) and “Bohemian Rhapsody” (\$51 million in 2018).

International sales were also strong. “Michael” collected \$120.4 million overseas, to give it a \$217.4 million global opening — a new high for a music biopic. Universal picked up distribution in most international markets.

A few weeks back, estimates for “Michael” were closer to \$50 million. Going into the weekend, the studio estimated closer to \$70 million. But it wildly overperformed.

“From the beginning, all of the signals were that something like this was possible,” said Adam Fogelson, Lionsgate chairman. “We were seeing massive engagement with every conceivable audience segment that you could identify.”

Even in the lucrative market of music biopics, “Michael” was an audacious bet by Lionsgate on an extraordinarily popular but controversial figure. The reputation of Jackson, who died in 2009 at the age of 50, has been repeatedly tarnished by allegations of sexual abuse of children. Jackson and his estate have maintained his innocence, though the pop star acknowledged sharing a bedroom with other people’s children. He was acquitted in his sole criminal trial in 2005.

Some Jackson family members opposed the film. Janet Jackson was uninvolved and doesn’t appear in it. Jackson’s daughter, Paris, called it “fantasy land.” But three years after “Leaving Neverland,” the 2009 documentary about Jackson’s alleged sexual abuse of children, “Bohemian Rhapsody” producer Graham King announced plans for the biopic. Jackson’s nephew, Jaafar Jackson, was cast to star.

“Michael” had an unusually rocky production. After shooting was completed, producers realized they had made a costly mistake. The third act focused on the accusations of Jordan Chandler, then 13 years old, whom Jackson paid \$23 million to in a 1994 settlement. The terms of that settlement barred the Jackson estate from ever mentioning Chandler in a movie.

A huge chunk of the film had to be cut. Reshoots for as much as \$50 million were done at the estate’s expense. Director Antoine Fuqua and screenwriter John Logan reworked the movie to conclude in 1988, before any accusations were made.

“I would take issue with the idea that we as a studio or as filmmakers were running around in a panic,” said Fogelson. “It was definitely a unique and challenging circumstance to figure out how to work through. But it created an opportunity to tell more story than any one film could possibly contain.”

Yet as bad as things once looked for “Michael,” the movie turned into a huge hit. The film’s total production cost came close to \$200 million. To defray costs, Lionsgate sold international distribution rights to Universal. A sequel is in development. A third film after that, Fogelson said, is “not inconceivable.”

“The audience spoke loud and clear,” Fogelson said. “The portion of Michael’s life that this story tells

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couldn't have gotten into those allegations because the allegations themselves hadn't happened in the period this movie existed. I think the audience is judging it on those terms. We'll see what happens as we move into the possibility of subsequent films."

Critics slammed the film for glossing over some of the less convenient aspects of Jackson's life. It scored a paltry 38% on Rotten Tomatoes. But audiences were far more enthusiastic. "Michael" earned an "A-" CinemaScore.

"It's only human nature to enjoy yourself at the movie theater," said Paul Dergarabedian, head of market-place trends for Comscore. "The movie was perfectly positioned ahead of the start of the summer movie season which launches later this week with the 'The Devil Wears Prada 2' that is also poised to outpace even the most generous opening weekend projections."

The opening for "Michael" added to a strong spring for Hollywood boosted by box-office hits like Amazon MGM's "Project Hail Mary" and Universal's "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie." After three weeks atop the box office, the "Mario" sequel slid to second place, with \$21.2 million. In four weeks, it's collected \$386.5 million domestically and \$445 million internationally.

Meanwhile, "Project Hail Mary" surged past \$600 million worldwide in its sixth weekend of release. The film's total haul for Amazon MGM stands at \$305.3 million domestic and \$613.3 million globally.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures being released Monday, this list factors in the estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "Michael," \$97 million.
2. "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie," \$21.2 million.
3. "Project Hail Mary," \$13.2 million.
4. "Lee Cronin's The Mummy," \$5.6 million.
5. "The Drama," \$2.6 million.
6. "Hoppers," \$1.9 million.
7. "You, Me & Tuscany," \$1.5 million.
8. "Over Your Dead Body," \$1.4 million.
9. "Mother Mary," \$1.2 million.
10. "American Youngboy," \$1.2 million.

## Car bomb explodes outside Northern Ireland police station

LONDON (AP) — Police in Northern Ireland have condemned a car-bomb attack on a police station as an attempt to undermine the 1998 agreement that brought peace to the region.

The bomb, fashioned from a compressed gas cylinder, exploded as police were evacuating nearby residents in Dunmurry, on the outskirts of Belfast, on Saturday night, Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton told reporters on Sunday.

"This clearly demonstrates that what this type of device may have lacked in terms of its sophistication and scale, it more than made up for in its reckless unpredictability," Singleton said. "For a device like this to have been deployed against police and in such proximity to the public was idiotic. It was absolute madness."

The incident took place at about 10:30 p.m. after the attackers stopped a delivery driver, placed an improvised bomb in his vehicle and ordered him to drive to the police station, Singleton said.

Brendan Mullan, chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, said the device "was sent to kill officers and cause maximum harm in an attack which was in the heart of a residential area."

"The people have spoken when they overwhelmingly endorsed the Good Friday Agreement" in 1998, Mullan said.

"Such acts of violence have no place in a society committed to peace. We stand united in condemnation of those responsible for this terror, and in voicing support for the work of the officers and staff of the PSNI."

It was the second incident at a police station in recent weeks.

On March 30, police foiled a similar attack on a police station in Lurgan, about 20 miles (32 kilometers)

southwest of Dunmurry. Two masked men stopped a delivery driver, placed an explosive device in the trunk of his vehicle and forced him at gunpoint to take the device to the police station, according to authorities. Police carried out a controlled explosion after about 100 homes were evacuated.

The Lurgan attack was probably carried out by dissident Republican groups in a "pathetic attempt to remain relevant and provoke fear," police said.

The Good Friday Agreement largely ended decades of violence involving Republican groups opposed to British rule and others who wanted to maintain the region's ties to the United Kingdom. Dissident groups that oppose the peace process still carry out sporadic attacks.

## Despite Russia's war, one Ukrainian city still gathers for midnight Chernobyl vigil

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

SLAVUTYCH, Ukraine (AP) — People streamed into the central square of Slavutych in the early hours of Sunday, placing candles on a large radiation hazard symbol laid out on the ground as a midnight commemoration began for those killed in the Chernobyl disaster 40 years ago and the thousands who risked deadly radiation exposure to contain its aftermath.

Residents show up for the vigil each year despite wartime curfews and official warnings against large gatherings during Russia's war on Ukraine.

The April 26, 1986 disaster shone a spotlight on lax safety standards and government secrecy in what was then the Soviet Union. The explosion was not reported by Soviet authorities for two days, only after winds had carried the fallout across Europe and Swedish experts had gone public with their concerns.

About 600,000 people, often referred to as Chernobyl's "liquidators," were sent in to fight the fire at the nuclear plant and clean up the worst of its contamination. Thirty workers died within months from either the explosion or acute radiation sickness. The accident exposed millions in the region to dangerous levels of radiation and forced a wide-scale, permanent evacuation of hundreds of towns and villages in Ukraine and Belarus.

The city of Slavutych, around 50 kilometers (32 miles) from the former plant, dates to this period. While most evacuees were resettled across nearby districts in Kyiv region, in late 1986 Soviet authorities began building what would become the city to house workers from the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and their families. The first residents moved in around 1988.

Since then, the city has endured a brief Russian occupation during Moscow's failed push to seize the Ukrainian capital in early days of the war, as well as harsh winters — especially the last one, when blackouts forced some residents to cook meals over open fires in the streets.

People of all ages gathered in the square, some arriving as families carrying spring tulips and daffodils. They lined up in a broad plaza framed by Soviet-era apartment blocks, where a memorial stands near a row of posters honoring local residents killed in the war.

Liudmyla Liubyva, 71, came to the ceremony with a friend. She used to attend with her husband, who worked at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant but later developed a disability linked to radiation exposure, and lost the ability to walk, she said.

Liubyva said it was important to honor those who sacrificed their health in the aftermath of the disaster, but Russia's war has revived fears that the danger was never fully left behind.

"When the drone struck the arch, it felt like the world could return to 1986," she said, referring to a Russian drone strike in 2025 that damaged the New Safe Confinement structure, the massive dome built to contain radiation from the destroyed reactor. "We all — young and old alike — must protect our land, because it is so vulnerable."

Soft music played in the background as poetry about the disaster drifted over loudspeakers. "Years pass, generations change, but the pain of Chernobyl does not fade," a woman's voice recited. As the words echoed across the square, people dressed in white protective suits and face masks, symbolizing the liquidators, stood in silence holding candles.

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Larysa Panova, 67, often recalls the day of the accident that forced her to leave her native hometown of Chernobyl, which transliterate as Chornobyl, and begin a new life in Slavutych. Though the new city has long since become home, she still thinks of the forests and rich nature of the place she left behind.

Before Russia's full-scale invasion, she regularly travelled back to visit relatives who remained there or simply to spend time in the land where she grew up. But with the war, access to the exclusion zone became restricted.

"I never stop thinking of Chernobyl as my homeland," she said. "You remember your school, your childhood, your youth — everything happened there, in Chernobyl."

## **Today in History: April 27, deadly tornadoes strike the Southeast**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, April 27, the 117th day of 2026. There are 248 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 27, 2011, during the four-day Super Outbreak, 112 tornadoes touched down across the southeastern United States, killing 319 people in the deadliest day of tornadoes in the U.S. since 1925.

Also on this date:

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan was killed in the Battle of Mactan in the Philippines as he attempted to expand Spanish colonization in the region.

In 1813, the Battle of York took place in Upper Canada (modern-day Ontario) during the War of 1812 as U.S. forces defeated the British garrison in present-day Toronto; U.S. Brigadier General Zebulon Pike and 37 other American soldiers were killed near the end of the battle when retreating British forces exploded the ammunition magazine of Fort York as the Americans approached.

In 1865, the steamer Sultana, carrying freed Union prisoners of war, exploded on the Mississippi River near Memphis, Tennessee; as many as 1,800 were killed in the worst maritime disaster in U.S. history.

In 1994, former President Richard M. Nixon was interred following a funeral service attended by all five of his successors, at the Nixon Presidential Library and Museum in Yorba Linda, California.

In 2010, former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega arrived in France after being extradited from the United States; he was later convicted in a French court of laundering drug money and received a seven-year sentence.

In 2012, the space shuttle Enterprise, mounted atop a jumbo jet, sailed over the New York City skyline on its final flight before going on display as part of the USS Intrepid Museum.

In 2015, rioters plunged part of Baltimore into chaos, torching a pharmacy, setting police cars ablaze and throwing bricks at officers hours after thousands attended a funeral service for Freddie Gray, a Black man who died from a severe spinal injury he'd suffered in police custody.

In 2018, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made history by crossing over to South Korea to meet with President Moon Jae-in; it was the first time a member of the Kim dynasty had set foot on southern soil since the end of the Korean War in 1953.

In 2019, a gunman opened fire inside a synagogue near San Diego as worshippers celebrated the last day of Passover, killing a woman and wounding a rabbi and two others. (John Earnest, a white supremacist, was sentenced to both federal and state life prison terms for the shootings.)

Today's Birthdays: Singer Kate Pierson (The B-52's) is 78. Republican Sen. Jim Justice of West Virginia is 75. Basketball Hall of Famer George Gervin is 74. Singer Sheena Easton is 67. Democratic Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey is 57. Actor Sally Hawkins is 50. Musician Patrick Stump (Fall Out Boy) is 42. Actor William Moseley is 39. Singer Lizzo is 38. Tennis player Nick Kyrgios is 31. Actor Froy Gutierrez is 28. University of Texas quarterback Arch Manning is 22.