

# Groton Daily Independent

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**Postponed to Monday, May 4:** Girls Fast Pitch Softball in Groton: Varsity at 4 p.m. followed by Junior Varsity. (Also Senior Recognition Night)

**Postponed to Wednesday, April 29th** in Warner at 1:00pm.: Pole Vault & Javelin in Warner

## 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.

Pole Vault & Javelin in Warner, 1 p.m.

## Thursday, April 30

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potatoes, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Lasagna bake, green beans.

Grades 3-5 ELA & Math Testing

Girls Golf at Redfield, 10 a.m.

5th Grade Girls Basketball, 4 p.m., Elementary Gym

Pickleball, 6 p.m., Elementary Gym

High School Spring Concert/Awards Night/Art Show, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

**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.**

## A Royal Welcome

King Charles III and Queen Camilla landed in Maryland yesterday for their four-day tour. The visit is the first by a British monarch to the US since 2007 and Charles' first since his 2022 coronation.

The trip honors the 250th anniversary of US independence and reinforces the countries' so-called "special relationship". Experts say the visit could strengthen ties following rifts over Israel, Iran, Palestinian statehood, and the economic impact of US tariffs. The tour comes months after President Donald Trump's unprecedented second state visit to the UK covered similar ground.

First on the agenda was a military reception and tea at the White House before a garden party at the home of the British ambassador. Today, Charles will speak before a joint session of Congress, the second time in history a British royal will do so, after his mother in 1991.

## Data Dragnet Dispute

The Supreme Court yesterday considered whether police can access cellphone location data, potentially shaping how millions of Americans' movements are tracked. A ruling is expected by summer.

After witness interviews and security footage produced no leads in a 2019 Virginia bank robbery, officials obtained a warrant requiring Google to share data on devices within a 150-meter radius of the bank 30 minutes before and after the crime. That led to Okello Chatrie, who is serving nearly 12 years in prison. His lawyers argue the warrant was overly broad, violating Fourth Amendment protections against unreasonable searches. The government, however, says anyone who voluntarily shares their location with tech companies has no expectation of privacy.

About four in five US adults report enabling location sharing on their devices, which companies like Google, Apple, and Uber use to give personalized search results, weather updates, and other location-based services.

## Space Solar Bet

Meta yesterday announced a deal with startup Overview Energy to purchase solar power collected by satellite and beamed back to Earth, an experimental approach that could power data centers at night.

Unlike traditional solar power, which relies on storing daylight, space-based solar power, aims to deliver continuous energy. Overview Energy plans to deploy satellites over 22,000 miles from Earth's equator, where they would collect and transmit infrared energy to solar panels. A test is scheduled for 2028, with a commercial rollout in 2030. Meta is seeking up to 1 gigawatt of power from the project, underscoring its energy needs for AI. In 2024, Meta's data centers consumed 18,000 times the electricity that this deal would deliver in a single hour.

The idea of harvesting solar power from space was first imagined in a 1941 short story and formally proposed by engineer Peter Glasser in 1968, but has remained mostly theoretical due to cost and complexity.

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## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Tyson Fury and Anthony Joshua, both former heavyweight champions, agree to live Netflix fight; date and venue not yet confirmed.

Oprah Winfrey moves podcast, book club, and shows to Amazon under exclusive multiyear deal.

Man pleads guilty to murder in 2002 shooting death of rapper Jam Master Jay of Run-DMC; two other men were convicted in 2024, but one was recently acquitted.

Nedra Talley Ross, the last surviving member of 1960s pop band the Ronettes, dies at age 80.

## Science & Technology

OpenAI and Microsoft end exclusive partnership, allowing the AI company to forge deals with rival cloud providers like Amazon.

China seeks to block Meta's \$2B acquisition of AI startup Manus, founded in China but based in Singapore.

Hundreds of days could be shaved off Earth-to-Mars trips using asteroid orbital data, potentially reducing total mission time to as little as 153 days.

Chaotic laser light can self-organize into a thin beam, enabling 3D imaging of blood-brain barrier 25 times faster than current methods without losing resolution; technology could accelerate drug tests for diseases like ALS and Alzheimer's.

## Business & Markets

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

Joby Aviation shares close up around 6.4% after it completes first electric air taxi flight test between JFK Airport and Manhattan.

Former Google DeepMind researcher's AI startup, Ineffable Intelligence, raises record \$1.1B seed funding to pursue superintelligence.

Oil giant Shell to buy Canada's ARC Resources for \$16.4B, marking Shell's biggest acquisition since 2015.

## Politics & World Affairs

White House Correspondents' Association dinner suspect is charged with attempting to assassinate President Donald Trump, among other charges.

Trump and Melania Trump call on ABC to fire Jimmy Kimmel after his joke last week described the first lady as having "a glow like an expectant widow".

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) unveils proposed congressional maps that could hand Republicans four more House seats; map will be debated today.

Supreme Court clears Texas' map increasing Republican House seats by up to five.

Iran proposes reopening the Strait of Hormuz if the US ends war and removes naval blockade; punts on nuclear negotiations to unspecified later date.



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## Groton Area Elementary Spring Concert

Mr. Landon Brown, Elementary Music

Ms. Sharon Schwan, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Band

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Band

Ode to Joy.....Arr. John Higgins

Hard Rock Blues.....Arr. John Higgins

Banana Boat Song.....Caribbean Folk Song

Power Rock.....Arr. Michael Swenney

### 3rd Grade

Brave

Fifty Nifty United States

### JK/Kindergarten

You Are My Sunshine

We've Got the Whole World

### 1st Grade

Down by the Bay

Puff the Magic Dragon

### 4th Grade

The Climb

Fireflies

### 5th Grade

Travelin' Soldier

Firework

### 2nd Grade

Rainbow

Love Grows Under the Wild Oak Tree



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## BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA GENERAL MEETING

**TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2026, 8:45 A.M.  
COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS**

**COURTHOUSE ANNEX - 25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
  - ❖ *Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes.*
4. Dirk Rogers, Highway Superintendent
  - a. Bid Opening: Cold In-Place
5. Second Reading of Ordinance #323 – Rezone for Darin & Sarah Lowe
6. Karly Winter, States Attorney
  - a. Approve and Authorize Chairman to sign the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant
7. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of Meeting Minutes of April 21, 2026:
    - i. General Meeting
    - ii. Brown County Board of Equalization
    - iii. Consolidated Board of Equalization
  - b. Claims
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Auditor's Report of Accounts for March
  - e. Malt Beverage & SD Farm Wine License Renewals
  - f. Township Bonds
  - g. Travel Requests
  - h. Lease Agreement
  - i. Zoning Ordinance – Set Hearing Date/Authorize Advertising
  - j. Final Plats
    - i. Elsen First Addition
    - ii. Tigh & Adrienne Flichs First Addition
8. Other Business
9. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
10. Adjourn

You can join the Brown County Commission Meeting via **your computer, tablet, or smartphone** at <https://meet.goto.com/BrCoCommission>

**You can also dial in using your phone.** United States: [+1 \(872\) 240-3311](tel:+18722403311) - Access Code: **601-168-909** #

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

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## EQUALIZATION CONSOLIDATED BOARD

### 1:00 PM – CONSOLIDATED BOARD OF EQUALIZATION

- Reconvene
- Stipulated or Corrected Values
- Recess or Adjourn

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## **Groton Area drops two at Lennox triangular**

LENNOX — Groton Area ran into a pair of tough opponents Sunday, falling to Lennox 13-3 and West Central 11-6 in a triangular played at Lennox.

In the opener, the Tigers were unable to slow a potent Lennox lineup that broke the game open early. The Orioles plated a run in the first inning before erupting for six runs in the second, capitalizing on a mix of hits, walks, and a hit batter to build a commanding lead. Lennox added another run in the third and continued to apply pressure at the plate throughout the game.

Groton Area finished with seven hits, getting one apiece from Lincoln Krause, Karsten Fliehs, Braeden Fliehs, TC Schuster, Jordan Schwan, Alex Abeln, and Nick Groeblichhoff. Fliehs, Schuster, and Schwan each drove in a run. Defensively, the Tigers were solid, committing no errors, with Fliehs handling a team-high eight chances.

Abeln took the loss on the mound, working three innings. Lennox's Sam Bambas earned the win, allowing three runs on seven hits over six innings. The Orioles pounded out 13 hits and drew 11 walks while also swiping seven bases in a well-rounded offensive performance.

In the second game, Groton Area showed more offensive punch but couldn't keep pace late in an 11-6 loss to West Central.

The Tigers struck first in the opening inning on a Case Reints single, but West Central answered quickly to even the score. The Trojans surged ahead in the third with three straight run-scoring hits, only to see Groton rally back.

Trailing midway through, Groton Area battled back to tie the game at 5-5 in the fifth inning, highlighted by a run-scoring double from Schwan. However, West Central regained control in the bottom half of the inning, using walks and timely hitting to push across the go-ahead runs and pull away.

Schwan led the Tigers offensively, going 2-for-4 with three RBIs, while Krause also collected two hits. Groeblichhoff added patience at the plate with two walks as Groton drew six free passes as a team.

Karsten Fliehs was charged with the loss after pitching 4 2/3 innings. West Central's Taten Van Overbeke picked up the win in relief, and CJ Den Boer recorded the save. The Trojans totaled 13 hits and added four stolen bases in the victory.

Groton Area will look to bounce back when it travels to face Winner on Wednesday.

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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!



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### **US Supreme Court hears arguments on cancer warning labels for Roundup weedkiller**

**BY: JACOB FISCHLER**

The U.S. Supreme Court could be ready to overturn a Missouri state court verdict that favored a man who sued the manufacturer of the popular herbicide Roundup for lacking any warning that the product carried a risk of cancer after oral arguments in the case Monday.

The arguments focused on whether states could enforce their own labeling requirements of pesticides, or whether federal law preempted any deviation among states. Members of the court's 6-3 conservative majority emphasized the need for uniformity across the country.

The U.S. Department of Justice intervened in the case in favor of Monsanto, the Missouri-based company that manufactures Roundup and has been owned since 2018 by German pharmaceutical company Bayer. The company faces thousands of lawsuits claiming exposure to Roundup increased a risk of cancer and that the company failed to warn consumers when it reasonably should have known of the risk.

Monsanto denies that the product causes cancer, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has consistently agreed.

John Durnell, a St. Louis resident, sued the company in 2019 claiming that exposure to Roundup over two decades led to his developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma, a type of blood cancer. A Missouri trial court awarded him \$1.25 million, and appeals courts affirmed the ruling.

But the Supreme Court, which is the first federal court to hear the case, seemed inclined to protect federal supremacy. The EPA, which regulates labeling requirements for herbicides, does not require the kind of warning the Missouri jury said was appropriate.

Federal law typically trumps state law, which Monsanto and the Justice Department emphasized Monday. Industry groups across the economy tend to support federal supremacy because it saves companies from complying with 50 separate regulatory schemes across states.

'Is that uniformity?'

An exchange between Ashley Keller, the attorney for Durnell, and Justice Brett Kavanaugh, whom President Donald Trump appointed in his first term, may hold the key to the court's ultimate ruling.

Keller argued that Congress in the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, which governs herbicide use, did not include a clause to expressly say that the federal law would preempt any state claims.

There was no issue of a difference between state and federal law, Keller said. Instead, a particular jury decided a single case based on unique facts, he continued. Different juries in other cases may have decided differently.

But Kavanaugh seemed not to accept that argument. He rephrased a similar question several times, and, even as Keller objected, appeared to dismiss the idea that the Missouri verdict was compatible with a national standard.

"You think it's uniformity when each state can require different things?" he asked.

Keller rejected that framing.

"The label's illegal in one state and legal in another state," Kavanaugh responded. "That's uniformity?"

Keller said he didn't agree with that premise either, saying the label is not illegal based on the state but based on the facts presented at trial and the jury's interpretation.

"The label subjects you to liability in one state and does not subject you to liability in another state," Kavanaugh continued. "Is that uniformity?"

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"I don't think it's state by state," Keller said. "I think it's jury by jury."

Paul Clement, a well-known conservative appeals lawyer, represented Monsanto in the case, and described Keller's argument as chaotic. It would not just open up separate regulatory regimes in each state in the country, but subject manufacturers to liability based on the makeup of any particular batch of citizens on a state court jury.

"It's worse than 50 states," he said. "It's every jury is a new day."

A host of agencies in countries across the globe have all done studies on glyphosate, the active ingredient in Roundup, Clement said.

"It's probably the most, like, studied herbicide in the history of man, and they've all reached the conclusion based on more data and the kind of expert analysis they can do that there isn't a risk here," he said. "You shouldn't let a single Missouri jury second-guess that judgment."

Liberal justices seek consumer protections

The court's liberal justices spent more time questioning why states shouldn't be allowed to enforce stricter regulations.

Justice Elena Kagan asked Principal Deputy U.S. Solicitor General Sarah M. Harris, who argued on behalf of the federal government in favor of throwing out the verdict against Monsanto, if she agreed with Clement's argument.

Harris said she largely agreed, noting that 50 states setting up separate regulations on labeling pesticides would cause confusion.

But Kagan asked why uniformity should be a higher goal than safety, saying a certain state government might have a better understanding than the EPA.

"It does undermine uniformity, I appreciate that," Kagan said. "On the other hand, if it turns out that they (state regulators) were right, it might have been good if they had an opportunity to do something to call this danger to the attention of the people while the federal government was going through its process."

Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson also pointed out that the EPA only registers herbicides once every 15 years, meaning that states might have better information than the EPA, especially later in that cycle.

"Lots of things can happen in science in terms of developments about the product," she told Clement. "So if the product can become misbranded because of new information, I guess I'm just wondering why you think that you couldn't have a situation where it would be perfectly rational for either the EPA or the states to bring to the attention of that manufacturer this new information and process a claim related to it."

*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.*

## **City council and town board violated open meeting laws, commission finds**

**BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN**

The Gary City Council and the Hermosa Town Board of Trustees will be reprimanded after failing to follow requirements for public meetings, South Dakota's Open Meetings Commission decided Monday in Pierre.

The Gary City Council failed to allow members of the public to participate in an open meeting by asking three attendees, who are also city employees, to leave the meeting. Gary is a city of 240 people in northeastern South Dakota.

"They are still members of the public," said Austin Hoffman, vice chair of the commission and McPherson County state's attorney. "They certainly would have had the right to be there."

Another complaint alleged the Gary City Council entered an executive session with three non-board members, who were also city employees, without a vote to authorize their being in executive session. Public board members can exclude the public from executive sessions with a majority vote to discuss legal matters, performance of public employees and a limited list of other topics.

The commission will hold off deciding on that complaint until its next meeting, where members anticipate



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hearing from Gary's city attorney as well as the person who filed the complaint.

The commission found the Hermosa Town Board of Trustees violated open meetings laws by discussing city business an hour before the official start of meetings.

The complaint alleged that board members in the town of 382 in western South Dakota were running "work sessions" and not properly alerting the public.

"It's truly worrisome to me if we have a council, committee, commission, whatever it may be, out there that is holding a 'work session' beforehand without any kind of notice and the public not being able to participate," Hoffman said. "I am hopeful it will not happen again."

## **Other complaints and final reprimands**

The commission has fielded a complaint about the City of Egan Board of Trustees, which alleges multiple violations of the state's open meeting laws, including the board's failure to publish agendas 24 hours prior to a public meeting and failure to publish meeting minutes in a timely manner.

The commission delayed action, Hoffman said, because there wasn't enough information in an investigatory file and some of the allegations deal with matters outside of the commission's jurisdiction.

The commission also reviewed written findings and conclusions for a pair of decisions made in November. In one of those decisions, the commission determined that the Rapid City Area School Board did not violate transparency laws in its handling of a former superintendent's contract termination.

In the other decision, the commission reprimanded the Green Valley Sanitary District Board of Trustees for failing to properly cite a legal reason before entering executive session and improperly stopping a citizen from recording a public meeting.

The Open Meetings Commission's five members are county prosecutors, known as state's attorneys, and are appointed to the commission by the state attorney general.

*Meghan O'Brien is the audio reporter for South Dakota Searchlight where she covers the state government and its impact on South Dakotans. She's previously reported in Nebraska with a focus on health care and rural communities across the state.*

## **Suspect in Washington press dinner shooting charged with attempting to assassinate Trump**

**BY: ASHLEY MURRAY**

WASHINGTON — The California man said by federal prosecutors to have opened fire just outside the White House Correspondents' Association dinner, where President Donald Trump was in attendance alongside Cabinet members and lawmakers, was charged Monday with attempting to assassinate the president, administration officials said.

The 31-year-old identified by authorities as Cole Tomas Allen was also arraigned in Washington, D.C., federal court on charges of interstate transportation of a firearm with intent to commit a felony and discharge of a firearm during a crime of violence.

He faces up to life in prison if convicted of attempting to kill the president. Trump, first lady Melania Trump and Cabinet members all safely evacuated the Washington Hilton ballroom.

U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia Jeanine Pirro said, "There will be additional charges as this investigation continues to unfold."

"But make no mistake, this was an attempted assassination of the president of the United States, with the defendant making clear what his intent was, and that intent was to bring down as many of the high-ranking Cabinet officials as he could," Pirro said at a Monday afternoon press conference with acting Attorney General Todd Blanche and FBI Director Kash Patel.

Allen was not charged with assault on a federal officer, as Pirro had said Saturday night he would be.

One Secret Service agent was shot in the chest but was protected by a bulletproof vest. Blanche said that

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particular agent had fired five times at Allen. The suspect was not hit but fell to the ground and scraped his knee, according to Blanche and Pirro.

Blanche would not elaborate further on ballistics, including details about a shot Allen allegedly fired.

"All the evidence is being examined very carefully and expeditiously, and we'll know more soon," Blanche said.

The federal prosecutors' complaint is sealed.

## **Suspect took train from Los Angeles to Washington**

According to a signed affidavit, Allen made a reservation for the Washington Hilton on April 3, for the dates of April 24-26. He left Los Angeles on April 23 and traveled by train to Washington, D.C., via Chicago, according to the court filing, which also includes what investigators and Trump have described as a "manifesto."

Allen arrived at the Washington Hilton around 3 p.m. Eastern Friday, a day ahead of the high-profile correspondents' dinner that annually draws administration officials, lawmakers, celebrities and often the president himself.

Trump, opting to skip the event in previous years, was attending the dinner for the first time. Vice President JD Vance and many of Trump's Cabinet members were in attendance, as was House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La. — several in the presidential line of succession.

According to the affidavit, at 8:40 p.m. Allen "approached and ran through the magnetometer holding a long gun" at a security checkpoint on the hotel's Terrace level leading to the Concourse level, where the dinner was ongoing.

"As he did so, U.S. Secret Service personnel assigned to the checkpoint heard a loud gunshot. U.S. Secret Service Officer V.G. was shot once in the chest; Officer V.G. was wearing a ballistic vest at the time. Officer V.G. drew his service weapon and fired multiple times at ALLEN, who fell to the ground and suffered minor injuries but was not shot. ALLEN was subsequently arrested," according to the affidavit.

Allen was carrying a 12-gauge pump action shotgun and a .38 caliber pistol, according to the court document. Pirro also said the suspect had on him "at least three knives and all kinds of paraphernalia."

When pressed by a journalist on how investigators know that Trump was Allen's primary target, Blanche said he could not share details.

"We're a day-and-a-half into the investigation. As we talked about earlier, we were able to get multiple devices from various locations, the hotel room and also where he lived in California. We have started that process. There's nothing more that would be appropriate to share at this time, until we have thoroughly gone through it, which we're doing," Blanche said.

Trump publicly shared photos of the man identified as Allen, shirtless and handcuffed on the hotel floor, Sunday night.

## **Leavitt blames Dems for political violence**

During Monday's press briefing, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt described Saturday's incident as an attempt on Trump's life, and she denounced political violence while blaming Democrats and the left for "fueling" it.

"This political violence stems from a systemic demonization of him and his supporters by commentators, yes, by elected members of the Democrat Party and even some in the media," Leavitt said.

"Those who constantly falsely label and slander the president as a fascist, as a threat to democracy and compare him to Hitler to score political points, are fueling this kind of violence," she said.

Blanche also decried critics for "calling the president horrible names for no reason and without evidence, without proof."

Republican party campaigners also delivered a similar message Monday, implicating Democrats' "reckless, inflammatory rhetoric against President Trump and Republicans." The committee's chair, Joe Gruters, also accused Democrats in a statement released Monday of not speaking out against the attack.

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Trump routinely namecalls and ridicules his political foes and the press on his social media platform, Truth Social, and in speeches. In a post Friday, the president called Democratic Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries a "Low IQ individual who is not smart enough to be 'running' the Democrat Party."

Upon the death in March of former FBI director and decorated combat veteran Robert Mueller, Trump wrote on social media, "Good, I'm glad he's dead."

During a November press gaggle on Air Force One, Trump told a female reporter from Bloomberg, "Quiet, Piggy," as she asked a question.

## **Homeland Security funding**

Leavitt also blamed Democrats for the monthslong shutdown at the Department of Homeland Security, under which the Secret Service operates.

"This is a national emergency, and every member of Congress needs to put their country over party and get the Department of Homeland Security funded," Leavitt said. The shutdown occurred after Democrats insisted on new guardrails for federal immigration agents following the deadly shootings of two U.S. citizens in Minnesota.

Leavitt said Trump "continues to have trust in the Secret Service" and "was satisfied with the response."

White House Chief of Staff Susie Wiles will convene a meeting with top DHS leadership, members of the Secret Service and White House operations officials "to ensure safety and the security of the president," Leavitt said.

## **The ballroom**

Leavitt also advocated for the president's proposed ballroom construction, calling it "critical for our national security" during large events where several officials and lawmakers in line for the presidency gather together.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation legally challenged the construction of the ballroom, for which Trump demolished the East Wing in October.

Blanche shared a letter on social media Sunday urging the trust to drop its lawsuit by 9 a.m. Eastern on Monday and blaming it for putting "the lives of the president, his family and his staff at great risk."

The organization responded in a letter that it would not drop the case.

The Trust's President and CEO Carol Quillen said in a statement the organization is "grateful" to law enforcement for keeping Trump and all guests safe over the weekend.

"We are not planning to voluntarily dismiss our lawsuit, which endangers no one and which respectfully asks the administration to follow the law. Ballroom construction is continuing unabated until June 5th at the earliest because the injunction is on hold," Quillen said in a statement provided to States Newsroom.

"We have always acknowledged the utility of a larger meeting space at the White House. Building it lawfully requires the approval of Congress, which the administration could seek at any time."

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

## **Trump's budget would gut local libraries and museums.**

### **Congress is not on board.**

**BY: SHAUNEEN MIRANDA**

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump is looking to eliminate funding in fiscal 2027 for the agency that serves as the primary federal funding source for libraries and museums nationwide.

But congressional appropriators — who rebuffed similar efforts to gut the agency in fiscal 2026 — expressed little enthusiasm for the proposed cut in interviews with States Newsroom. Groups representing museums and libraries across the country also blasted the president's proposal.

The administration is requesting \$6 million in fiscal 2027 for the agency, known as the Institute of Mu-



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seum and Library Services, "for necessary expenses to carry out (its) closure."

U.S. Sen. Shelley Moore Capito, chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies, noted that her panel did not agree to the same Trump request in fiscal 2026 to eliminate funding for the agency.

"I personally have always been a fan of libraries, and it does a lot for local communities," said Capito, a West Virginia Republican whose panel writes the annual bill to fund the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

"So, that's what he does, he proposes, and then we look at it and make our own decisions," she said.

## **Last year's request turned down**

The spending package signed into law by Trump in February provides roughly \$292 million for the agency this fiscal year — a sharp rejection of Trump's efforts.

Capito said that though her committee will consider the president's fiscal 2027 request, "if you look at what we did last year, it shows that we kind of rejected that premise."

Rep. Robert Aderholt, an Alabama Republican and chair of the corresponding Appropriations subcommittee in the House, appeared noncommittal about pursuing Trump's fiscal 2027 request to gut the agency.

In response to States Newsroom's request for a phone interview, Aderholt provided a written statement.

"We are reviewing the request from the Administration and the requests from every member of the House," Aderholt said, adding that "this is a member-driven process, and we look forward to working with our colleagues in putting together a strong bill for the American taxpayers."

## **Legal battles**

The agency was created by Congress in 1996 and has a mission to "advance, support, and empower America's museums, libraries, and related organizations through grantmaking, research, and policy development."

The administration has taken major steps to try to dismantle the agency, including through a March 2025 executive order.

However, Trump's Department of Justice reached a settlement earlier in April with the American Library Association — the nation's largest library association — and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees — the country's largest union of cultural workers — that protects the agency and guarantees it will continue issuing grants and program operations.

In another setback for the administration, the DOJ dropped its appeal this month in a case brought by 21 attorneys general, who challenged the administration's efforts to dismantle the agency and had secured a major court victory in November.

## **'The barbarians are at the door'**

Meanwhile, leading Democrats on the House and Senate appropriations panels dealing with the agency's spending were quick to lambaste Trump's proposal in interviews with States Newsroom.

Sen. Tammy Baldwin, ranking member of the Senate subcommittee and a Wisconsin Democrat, described the agency as "such an incredibly valuable entity" and vowed to fight "tooth and nail" to protect it.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro, ranking member of the full House Appropriations Committee and the spending subcommittee with jurisdiction over the agency, said the administration's request is "just neanderthal."

The Connecticut Democrat said "we'll work to restore like we try to do every time," while adding that Trump's request indicates that "the barbarians are at the door."

## **Library, museum organizations push back**

Leading library and museum organizations fiercely opposed Trump's request and called on Congress to reject the proposal.

In a statement, Sam Helmick, president of the American Library Association, said Trump's "continued

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attack" on the agency in the budget request and the March 2025 executive order to shutter it "shows the extent to which the administration is tone deaf to the needs of millions of Americans who rely on libraries every day: older adults and veterans who use library telehealth spaces; unemployed people who use library resources to find a new job or learn new skills; families who count on story time; and students and faculty who do research in school and academic libraries."

John Chrastka, founder and executive director of EveryLibrary, said Trump's proposal is "a direct threat to the infrastructure that millions of Americans rely on every day," in a statement.

Chrastka, whose organization is dedicated to building support for libraries, said "libraries are not optional," but instead represent "essential public resources that support literacy, workforce development, and community connection in every state."

The American Alliance of Museums blasted the proposal as "misguided and out of step with the American public and Congress," noting that similar efforts in fiscal 2026 and prior budget cycles to yank funding for the agency were rejected due to "strong bipartisan, bicameral support in Congress and sustained advocacy from the museum community."

The Institute of Museum and Library Services declined to comment on Trump's fiscal 2027 budget request.

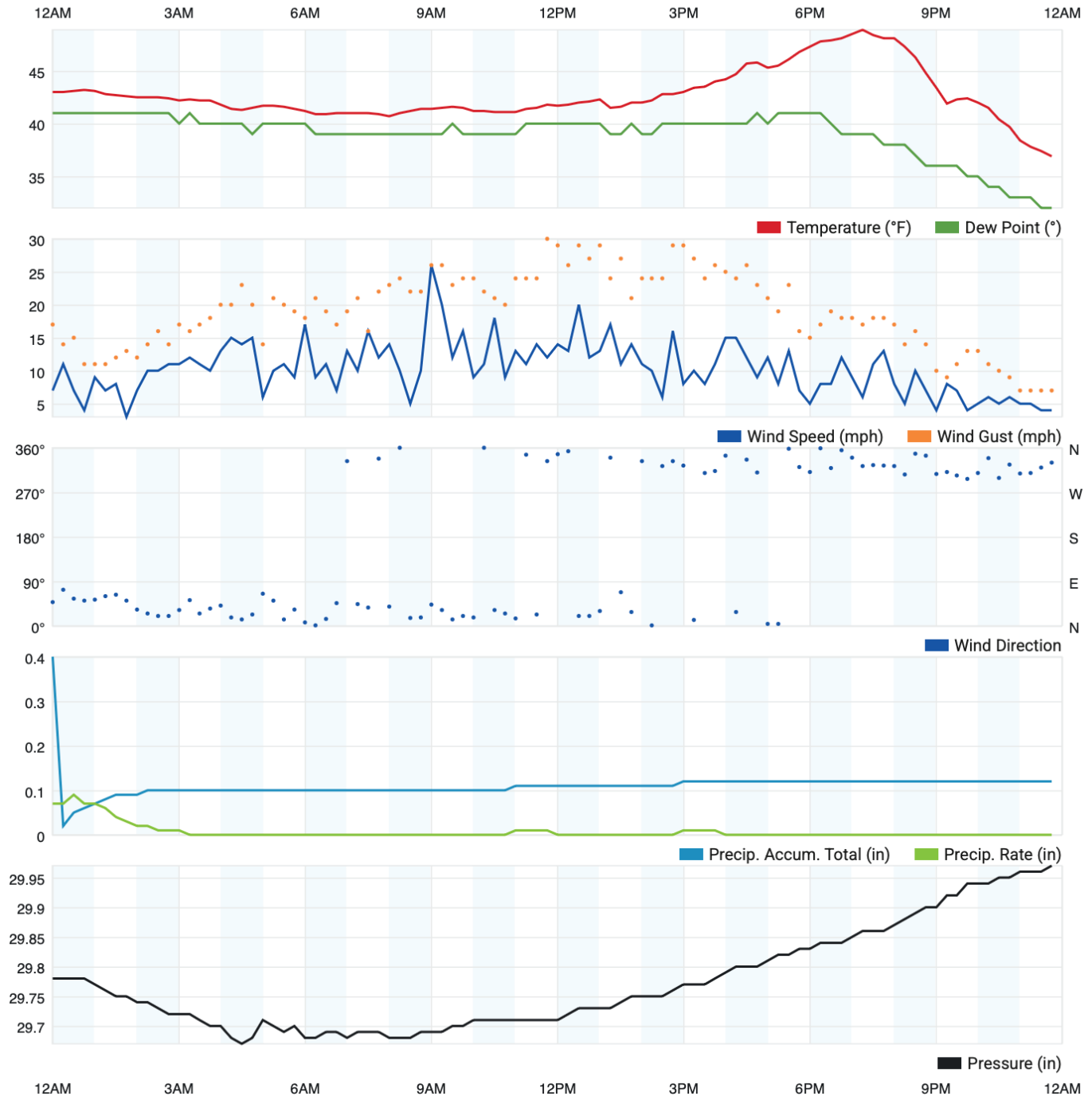
*Shauneen Miranda is a reporter for States Newsroom's Washington bureau. An alumna of the University of Maryland, she previously covered breaking news for Axios.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

April 27, 2026



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Today



High: 53 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 31 °F

Decreasing  
Clouds

Wednesday



High: 56 °F

Chance  
Rain/Freezing  
Rain then  
Chance  
Showers

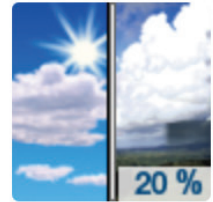
Wednesday  
Night



Low: 30 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 53 °F

Mostly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance  
Showers



## Through The End Of The Week

April 28, 2026  
2:45 AM

Forecast For Central - North Central - Northeast South Dakota & Western Minnesota

Tuesday



Highs:  
45-55°

Grassland Fire Danger

Wednesday



Highs:  
51-61°

Grassland Fire Danger

Thursday



Highs:  
46-57°

Grassland Fire Danger

Friday



Highs:  
51-64°

Grassland Fire Danger



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Limited chances for precipitation show up on Tuesday out across the Interstate 90 corridor of the forecast area, with increased areal coverage potential for showers on Wednesday during afternoon heating hours mainly over portions of central, north central and northeast South Dakota. There may yet be an isolated shower or two around on Thursday, but most of Thursday into Friday should be dry, with Friday holding the greatest potential for extended coverage of sunny skies. Overall, it still looks fairly cool for much of the rest of this week, as April closes out and May kicks off. And, with the recent rainfall, expecting green up this week to help keep the lid on the Grassland Fire Danger Index this week.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 49 °F at 7:08 PM**

**Low Temp: 37 °F at 11:29 PM**

**Wind: 32 mph at 4:21 PM**

**Precip: : 0.12**

## Today's Info

Record High: 90 in 1934

Record Low: 19 in 2008

Average High: 63

Average Low: 36

Average Precip in April.: 1.72

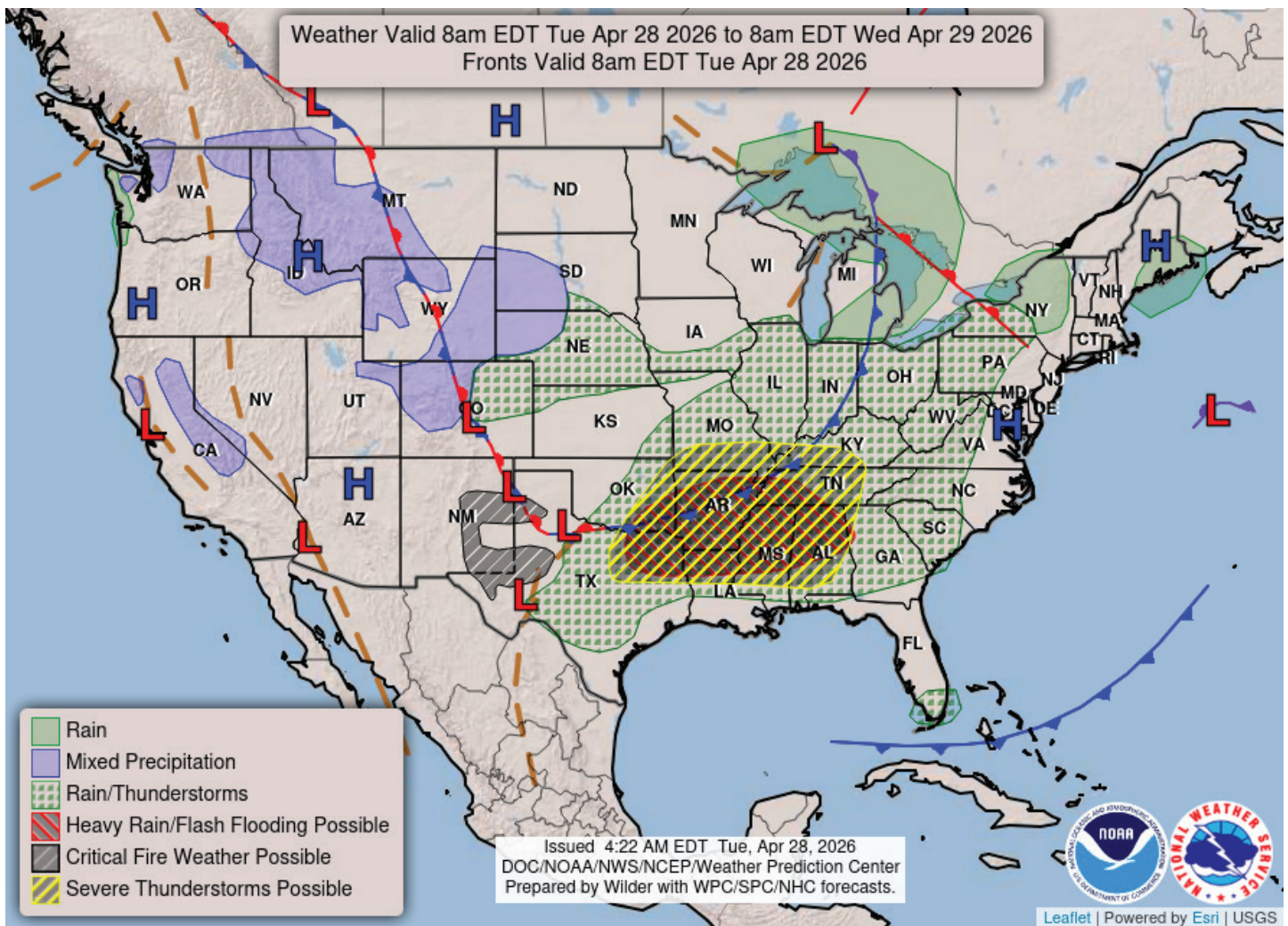
Precip to date in April.: 1.48

Average Precip to date: 3.78

Precip Year to Date: 3.10

Sunset Tonight: 8:34 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:23 am



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## **Today in Weather History**

April 28th, 1994: Snow accumulated 5 to 12 inches over most of the eastern half of South Dakota, with the 12-inch report from Winner. Ten to eleven inches of snow was reported at numerous places, including Sioux Falls and Platte in the southeast and Summit in the northeast. Numerous accidents were caused by snow and ice, including one that killed a man and injured two women on Highway 12 near Bath, South Dakota. There was some undetermined crop damage, and livestock loss was feared as the late-season cold and snow lowered disease resistance.

1921 — A severe hailstorm in Anson County, NC, produced hail the size of baseballs. Gardens, grain fields and trees were destroyed. Pine trees in the storm's path had to be cut for lumber because of the hail damage. (The Weather Channel)

1928 — A coastal storm produced tremendous late season snows in the Central Appalachians, including 35 inches at Bayard WV, 31 inches at Somerset PA, and 30 inches at Grantsville MD. High winds accompanying the heavy wet snow uprooted trees and unroofed a number of homes. The storm caused great damage to fruit trees and wild life. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Twenty cities in the western and central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 95 degrees at Houston TX, 95 degrees at Lake Charles LA, and 94 degrees at Port Arthur TX, were April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Miami, FL, hit 92 degrees, marking a record eight days of 90 degree heat in the month of April. Squalls produced snow in the Washington D.C. area. Belvoir VA reported a temperature reading of 57 degrees at the time the snow began. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Strong northerly winds and heavy snow ushered cold air into the north central U.S. Snowfall totals in Montana ranged up to 20 inches at Miles City. Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Texas to the Southern Appalachians and the southern Ohio Valley. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Keller TX and White Settlement TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the southeastern U.S. during the day. Severe thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes, including one which injured four persons at Inman SC. There were also more than one hundred reports of large hail and damaging winds, with better than half of those reports in Georgia. Strong thunderstorm winds injured four people at Sadler's Creek SC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) Twenty-nine cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 80s and lower 90s. Highs of 88 degrees at Binghamton NY, 94 degrees at Buffalo NY, 89 degrees at Erie PA, 90 degrees at Newark NJ, 93 degrees at Rochester NY and 92 degrees at Syracuse NY, were records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)

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Daily Devotion

## Life's Great Liberator

**Real peace and joy are found when we surrender our life to Jesus and let Him set us free from sin.**

Luke 4:16-21: 16 And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read.

17 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,

18 "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

20 And He closed the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

Many people appear to be happy. Internally, though, many are in bondage. In today's passage, Jesus clarifies His purpose: He has come to set us free.

Jesus breaks the chains of sin. All people have broken God's law (Romans 3:23), and the consequence is to live apart from Him. But Christ's death and resurrection free us when we accept His gift of forgiveness and place our trust in Him.

God also liberates us from persistent sins like jealousy and bitterness. His Spirit resides within each believer and provides the power to resist making wrong choices. Whether by bringing immediate healing or by giving guidance and strength in an ongoing battle, God enables us to do what He desires.

The Creator of mankind made us with a void in our heart that only He can fill. Everything we put there—whether it seems like a good thing or is obviously a bad choice—will ultimately leave us wanting. And we'll remain in bondage until God frees us and provides the only source of true satisfaction: Himself.

Are you one of those people who seem to have life figured out yet still feel uneasy and empty inside? There is a way to change that. Jesus Christ is the only One who can forgive your sins and fill every empty place in your soul.

*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:  
04.27.26

4 15 19 21 31 4

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 50 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.24.26

7 16 32 35 40 12

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 35 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.27.26

20 25 26 31 36 1

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$23,540,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 50 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.25.26

7 14 15 17 19

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

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 5 Mins 0 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.27.26

20 31 33 44 65 19

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

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 33 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
04.27.26

18 31 33 36 62 3

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$143,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 33 Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **'Dances With Wolves' actor Nathan Chasing Horse sentenced to life in prison for sexual assault**

By JESSICA HILL Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A Nevada judge sentenced "Dances With Wolves" actor Nathan Chasing Horse on Monday to life in prison for sexually assaulting Indigenous women and girls.

A jury had previously convicted him of 13 charges, mostly related to sexual assault of three women.

Accusers and their families told Judge Jessica Peterson they continue to suffer from the trauma caused by Chasing Horse, 49, and struggle with their faith after he exploited his position as a spiritual leader.

"There is no way to get back the youth, the childhood loss, my first time, my first kiss, the graduation I never got to have," said Corena Leone-LaCroix, who was 14 when Chasing Horse assaulted her. "The life that little girl could have lived has been taken from me forever."

The Associated Press typically does not use the name of alleged sexual assault victims unless they come forward publicly, as Leone-LaCroix has.

Chasing Horse, wearing his navy blue Clark County Detention Center uniform, stared straight ahead as victims read their statements and remained quiet as he was escorted out of the courtroom. He'll be eligible for parole after serving for 37 years, and has continued to deny the charges against him.

"This is a miscarriage of justice," he told the judge on Monday.

Peterson said she was struck by his continued denial of the charges despite the evidence shown in trial.

"You preyed on these women's trusts and their spirituality, and you manipulated them for your own personal gratification," she said before she announced his sentence. When the hearing adjourned, more than a dozen people in the courtroom clapped.

Other charges in Canada are still pending

The sentencing wraps a yearslong effort to prosecute the former actor after he was first arrested and indicted in 2023. That initial arrest reverberated around Indian Country, with law enforcement in other states and Canada following up with more criminal charges. Those charges are still pending.

The British Columbia Prosecution Service said Chasing Horse was charged with sexual assault in February 2023, though the date of the alleged offense took place in September 2018 near Keremeos, a village about four hours east of Vancouver. In November 2023, the case paused due to Chasing Horse's charges in the United States, but resumed the following year.

After all of Chasing Horse's appeals have been exhausted, British Columbia prosecutors will assess next steps, Damienne Darby, communications counsel for the British Columbia Prosecution Service, said in an email.

A warrant against Chasing Horse remains outstanding in Alberta, the Tsuut'ina Nation Police Service in Alberta said in a statement following Chasing Horse's conviction in January. The Tsuut'ina Nation Police Service said that it is in contact with the Alberta Crown Prosecutors Office regarding the warrant.

January trial focused on his role as spiritual leader

Chasing Horse was born on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota, which is home to the Sicangu Sioux, one of the seven tribes of the Lakota nation. Following his appearance as the young Sioux tribe member Smiles a Lot in Kevin Costner's Oscar-winning film "Dances With Wolves," Chasing Horse traveled across Indian Country to attend powwows and perform healing ceremonies.

During his trial, Nevada prosecutors said Chasing Horse used his reputation as a Lakota medicine man to prey on Indigenous women and girls.

Deputy District Attorney Bianca Pucci told the jury that for almost 20 years, Chasing Horse "spun a web of abuse" that ensnared many women.

Jurors heard from three women who said Chasing Horse sexually assaulted them. The jury returned guilty verdicts on some charges. He was acquitted on others.

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Needing medical help

Multiple victims described how they participated in his ceremonies or went to Chasing Horse for medical help.

Chasing Horse allegedly told Leone-LaCroix when she was 14 that the spirits wanted her to give up her virginity to save her mother, who was diagnosed with cancer. He then sexually assaulted her and told her that if she told anyone, her mother would die, according to Pucci. The sexual assaults continued for years, Pucci said.

Chasing Horse denied the allegations and his attorney questioned the main accuser's credibility, calling her a "scorned woman." His attorney had filed a motion for a new trial, arguing that a witness was not qualified to talk about grooming and that the statute of limitations had expired. That motion was denied.

Victims and their family members testified that they struggle with their faith as a result of Chasing Horse's actions. The mothers of the victims said Chasing Horse betrayed their trust and abused sacred traditions.

"Even to this day I struggle to regain my faith and spirituality," said Lynnette Adams, the mother of Siera Begaye, one of the other victims.

The AP typically does not use the name of alleged sexual assault victims unless they come forward publicly or approved the use of their names, as Begaye has.

Begaye said she still faces complications after suffering an ectopic pregnancy as a result of the assault and being forced to undergo surgery.

"I am choosing to see this moment as a fresh start," Begaye said. "I will rebuild my life, reclaim my voice and continue fighting for the future I deserve."

## **Some local governments in South Dakota waiting to spend \$9.6M in opioid dollars**

By MOLLY WETSCH/South Dakota News Watch South Dakota News Watch

South Dakota counties and cities that received the first \$9.6 million of national opioid settlement money have spent less than half of it, according to Department of Social Services spending reports through the end of 2025.

While 41 South Dakotans died from opioid overdoses last year – up from 39 in 2024 – some officials from those 53 counties and 13 cities said they haven't yet made plans on how to use the distributions, which began in late 2022.

In 2021, a combined nearly \$50 billion in settlements from opioid manufacturers, distributors and pharmaceutical companies began distributing funds to all 50 states, as part of the national settlement agreement.

South Dakota was allocated just under \$99 million to be distributed through 2038. Funding to each state was determined based on a formula including the number of overdose deaths, number of opioids shipped to the state and number of people with opioid use disorder in the state.

The vast majority of South Dakota's settlement funds will come from the distributor settlement, which includes major drug distributors McKesson, Cardinal Health and Amerisource Bergen.

Of South Dakota's funding, 70% is directed to the state through the Department of Social Services. The other 30%, or around \$29 million, will be divided among local governments in the state: the 53 counties and 13 towns and cities that signed a memorandum of agreement to spend those dollars on specific approved uses.

That relatively slow spending at the local level contrasts sharply with the state.

In December, some lawmakers expressed concerns that the state was not spending its funding quickly enough. In April, DSS secretary Matt Althoff and Gov. Larry Rhoden announced \$7.82 million in grants, leaving the statewide share of unspent disbursements at \$2.9 million of its total \$23 million.

State spending has been varied, with nearly \$500,000 spent for naloxone access statewide, \$797,000 for a prescription drug monitoring program and the \$7.82 million slate of grants provided to organizations across the state, among others.

The national settlement agreement dictates that at least 70% of spending must be directed toward

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opioid remediation efforts.

DSS told News Watch that the department does not dictate how or when local governments choose to spend dollars.

"The Department of Social Services (DSS) does not have oversight or regulatory authority over how local governments spend their share of the funds. Use of the local share is governed by the South Dakota Opioid Settlement Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), which all participating local governments joined in 2022," Althoff said in a statement.

"South Dakota adopted the national settlement's default model-generated percentage shares for local subdivisions as outlined in the MOA. The MOA specifies that recipients must annually report utilization of funds received to DSS."

**Smaller settlement amounts**

While some local governments have spent large portions of, or nearly all of their shares, the general trend is still of slow, metered spending.

Eleven counties had not yet reported any spending to DSS by the end of 2025, and several others had spent just fractions of their settlements.

Potter County auditor Tye Vander Vorst told News Watch that the county hasn't begun allocating dollars because it is not yet clear how much the county will receive in a given year and where the best place to spend the money is. The north-central county, which has a population of 2,400, has received nearly \$18,000 since 2022.

Vander Vorst said that the sporadic nature of settlement funds, often coming unpredictably with low dollar amounts, makes implementing ongoing programming difficult. The county hopes to make more concrete plans when more funding comes in and opens up spending possibilities, he said.

"What do you do? Do you wait and sit on what you can accumulate or do you try to spend \$200 here, \$200 there on stuff?" Vander Vorst said. "You don't want to be the guy who spends it all on something and then it's like, 'No, that was wrong.'"

**Resource gaps are challenges for rural governments**

Face It Together, a nonprofit organization that provides addiction recovery services, was one of 10 recipients of the \$7.82 million in statewide opioid settlement fund grants earlier this month.

The organization will use \$750,000 over the next three years to administer individual peer-to-peer addiction programming at the state penitentiary in Sioux Falls.

Peer-to-peer programming connects those struggling with addiction with coaches who have been through similar experiences, allowing for deeper relationships and problem-solving.

CEO Megan Colwell said that while Face It Together has primarily focused on alcohol abuse rehabilitation, the organization is now seeing a nearly equal number of alcohol addiction and opioid addiction cases.

It is based in Sioux Falls but does work across the state and out of a satellite office in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

The need for help is great in rural areas as well as in the state's two urban centers of Rapid City and Sioux Falls, Colwell said. Face It Together currently provides peer-to-peer coaching in rural prisons in Pierre, Springfield and Yankton and also provides some remote peer-to-peer coaching sessions with people outside of the Sioux Falls metro area.

Colwell cited remote coaching as a potential solution for counties that want to connect residents in need with support.

In low-population and large geographical area counties, there can often be a lack of understanding about where addiction resources are needed, and the visibility of programs that do exist can be low, Colwell said. That's why it's critical that counties are intentional with their spending programs and choose to put dollars in the right places, she said.

"Some of these counties don't have resources, even with the localized funding," Colwell said. "You want it to make a difference. This is the one time we have funding that is specifically for this issue."

Some counties, towns differ in spending strategy



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Even for local governments in the same geographic areas with many of the same leaders, residents and affected communities, differences in spending attitudes are great.

Codington County in eastern South Dakota has so far received \$87,329 and is projected to receive a total of \$255,816. The county has not yet reported any spending of that money to the Department of Social Services.

Representatives from the county told News Watch that grants related to recidivism, as well as a recent \$50,000 grant from the statewide fund for an opioid awareness campaign, mean that the county will be conserving its own share for a while to determine the best strategy for spending.

While a committee has been established to discuss potential funding opportunities, no specific decisions about where those dollars will go have been made.

Codington County's biggest city, though, has taken a very different approach: Watertown has spent the entirety of its \$161,544 share on the Watertown Police Department.

With those dollars, the department hired a part-time social worker who assists the department's full-time mental health officer on mental health, overdose and other drug-related calls.

Some funding has also gone toward education and boxes where people can safely dispose of drugs.

Tim Toomey, Watertown chief of police, told News Watch that the city mostly focused on taking care of its own needs regarding addiction services, with the hope that having a large set of resources in Watertown would benefit the entire population of Codington County.

"We work really closely with the sheriff's office, but with something like this, we really never met with each other," Toomey said. "We probably could have pooled our funds, but we had some needs at the time."

Because of an already-robust resource network in Codington County that includes programs like Codington Connects and Brothers and Sisters Behind Bars, the city was able to be more ambitious with its funding, Toomey said.

"With these extra dollars, we thought, 'How can we attack this crisis as well as enhance our own community engagement activities so that we can continue the reduction of overdoses and how we're responding to them?'" Toomey said.

Nationwide, slow spending is the trend

Karen Scott and Ken Shatzkes, president and program director of the national Foundation for Opioid Response Efforts (FORE), told News Watch that the low spending trend in local governments is not unique.

Scott told News Watch that the organization has seen local governments nationwide have issues with effective spending programs – especially when the funding amounts are low and issues with substance abuse might not be as prevalent.

Prioritizing spending even when issues are not visible can help prevent future problems in a community, she said.

"There's always work that can be done on the upstream, really prevention-oriented in terms of creating stronger and more resilient environments for kids, for families and the community," Scott said. "That's one area that people can think about, even if they don't have a large number of overdoses and a direct overdose response."

States have taken vastly different approaches to localized share amounts.

In Louisiana, 80% of the state's projected \$600 million settlement will go directly to local governments and the other 20% to county sheriff's departments, leaving the dollars entirely out of state hands. In Montana, counties and cities will see 15% of a projected \$75 million.

Shatzkes said South Dakota's approach is relatively similar to many state's distribution models, which see allocations anywhere from 15-50% of funds for local government based on the state's individualized experience with the opioid crisis.

"We know that it's a crisis now, but the crisis may look different 10 years from now. The crisis looks different in different areas across the country," Shatzkes said.

Local agencies focus on law enforcement, corrections and emergency services

Much of South Dakota's local government spending has been directed to law enforcement, correctional

and emergency services provided by the counties themselves.

The Ziebach County auditor's office told News Watch that all of its opioid settlement fund money was going to the sheriff's office for drug tests and other prevention initiatives. The Sanborn County auditor's office, which has spent nearly all of its current \$13,000 allocation, said the dollars have funded existing programs like law enforcement and first responder drug training to free up space in the general fund.

That type of spending is a natural pathway for counties that may not already have existing resource networks. And it provides a logical outlet for the dollars, which have specific spending guidelines set by the state's memorandum of agreement.

Shatzkes said that while the spending can be an effective place for dollars to go, he also recommends that local government officials employ those with knowledge about substance abuse in the area.

He cited a county in North Carolina that hired its local emergency medical services (EMS) responder as the county's opioid settlement coordinator as a successful example of harnessing local expertise.

"For the most part, in most places, states aren't trying to dictate how counties are spending the money," Shatzkes said. "They're only putting out a report on recommendations or just giving the thumbs up on whether (the program) fits. I think having outside expertise, away from government, to help make these decisions is probably the right way to go about it."

Scott said that especially in rural areas, collaborating with neighboring counties or municipalities could help solve many concerns about effective spending.

"Maybe there isn't an organization or expert in their county or their jurisdiction. But maybe there is one in the next county over or the next county over," Scott said.

For smaller counties receiving lower settlement amounts, drawing knowledge and resources from state-wide networks like Face It Together and the charity Emily's Hope, which provides naloxone boxes and substance abuse support across the state, could make all the difference, Colwell said.

"What's out there? What can be brought in? What's an easy lift? What's low hanging fruit?" she asked. "Just understanding the addiction programs that are out there. We're getting better at being less siloed in South Dakota, but the silos are still there."

## Rescuers recover last victims from Indonesia train wreck that killed 14 and injured dozens

By EDNA TARIGAN and ACHMAD IBRAHIM Associated Press

BEKASI, Indonesia (AP) — Rescuers finished removing victims from a damaged commuter train car Tuesday, confirming that the crash outside Indonesia's capital killed 14 people, all of whom were women.

The crash occurred Monday when a long-distance train crashed into the rear car of the stopped commuter train at Bekasi Timur Station outside Jakarta. The car was one designated for women only, a common accommodation to stop harassment.

A total of 84 injured people were taken to hospitals for treatment, said Bobby Rasyidin, CEO of state-owned railway company PT Kereta Api Indonesia. The bodies of the dead were taken to a hospital for further identification.

Rescue teams completed the evacuation of all victims from inside the wreckage about midmorning. "There are no further casualties," said Mohammad Syafii, the head of the National Search and Rescue Agency.

All 240 passengers on the Argo Bromo Anggrek long-distance train were safe, officials said.

Police were investigating the cause of the accident, Jakarta Police Chief Asep Edi Suheri told reporters at the scene.

The Indonesian Ministry of Transportation said in a written statement that authorities believe the incident began when another commuter train hit a stalled taxi near Bekasi Timur Station.

That led staff to stop a second commuter train at the station, where it was struck by a long-distance commuter train.

"As for the chronology of events, we are leaving it to the National Transportation Safety Committee to

investigate the cause of tonight's train accident in greater detail," Rasyidin said.

Accidents are common on Indonesia's aging railroad network. In January 2024, two trains collided in West Java province, killing at least four people.

## **Trial of Austrian man accused of plotting to attack a Taylor Swift concert begins**

By PHILIPP JENNE, MATTHIAS SCHRADER and STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

WIENER NEUSTADT, Austria (AP) — The trial against a man accused of pledging allegiance to the Islamic State group and plotting to attack one of superstar singer Taylor Swift's concerts in Vienna nearly two years ago has begun in Austria.

The plot was thwarted, but Austrian authorities still canceled Swift's three performances in August 2024. The singer's fans, known as Swifties, who had flown to Austria from across the globe to attend a performance of her record-setting Eras Tour were devastated, but rallied to turn Vienna into a citywide trading post for friendship bracelets and singalongs.

The defendant, a 21-year-old Austrian citizen known only as Beran A. in line with Austrian privacy rules, faces charges including terrorist offenses and membership in a terrorist organization. He could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.

He is facing trial alongside Arda K., whose full name also has not been made public. They along, with a third man, planned to carry out simultaneous attacks in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates during Ramadan in 2024 in the name of the Islamic State group. Beran A. and Arda K. never carried out their attacks.

Beran A.'s defense attorney, Anna Mair, on Monday told The Associated Press that her client plans to plead guilty to most of the charges but she did not specify which ones. Only Beran A. is charged in connection with the Taylor Swift plot.

He allegedly planned to target onlookers gathered outside Ernst Happel Stadium — up to 30,000 each night, with another 65,000 inside the venue — with knives or homemade explosives. The suspect hoped to "kill as many people as possible," authorities said in 2024. The U.S. provided intelligence that fed into the decision to cancel the concerts.

Beran A. also allegedly networked with other members of the Islamic State group ahead of the planned attack. Prosecutors say they discussed purchasing weapons and making bombs, and that the defendant also sought to illegally buy weapons in the days ahead of the performance. In addition, he swore allegiance to the militant group.

Authorities searched his apartment on Aug. 7, 2024 and found bomb-making materials. The concerts were scheduled to begin the next day.

"Having our Vienna shows cancelled was devastating," Swift wrote in a statement posted to Instagram two weeks later. "The reason for the cancellations filled me with a new sense of fear, and a tremendous amount of guilt because so many people had planned on coming to those shows."

The trial is being held in Wiener Neustadt, about an hour south of Vienna. The proceedings are set to continue May 12.

Three attacks planned in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE

Prosecutors have also filed terrorism-related charges against Arda K. in the trial in connection with the plan for simultaneous attacks in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.

The third man in that plot, Hasan E., allegedly stabbed a security guard with a knife at the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, on March 11, 2024. He was arrested and remains in pretrial detention in Saudi Arabia, Austrian prosecutors said.

Beran A. and Arda K. did not carry out their plans in Turkey and the UAE. Beran A. returned to Vienna and then allegedly began plotting to attack a Swift concert there.

The Vienna plot drew comparisons to a 2017 attack by a suicide bomber at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England, that killed 22 people. The bomb detonated at the end of Grande's concert as

thousands of young fans were leaving, becoming the deadliest extremist attack in the United Kingdom in recent years.

## **Australia moves to tax Meta, Google and TikTok to fund newsrooms**

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australia has proposed taxing digital giants Meta, Google and TikTok a proportion of their revenue to pay for news reporters.

The government released draft legislation Tuesday it intends to introduce to Parliament by July 2 that would create a financial incentive for the social media companies to strike deals with news organizations to pay for journalism.

The platforms' criticisms included that the proposal was a "digital services tax" that misunderstood the evolving advertising industry and would fail to deliver a sustainable news sector.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said a monetary value needed to be attached to journalists' work.

"It shouldn't just be able to be taken by a large multinational corporation and used to generate profits for that organisation with no compensation appropriate for the people who produce that creative content," Albanese told reporters.

"We think that investment in journalism is critical to a healthy democracy," he added.

It's Australia's second legislative attempt to make the platforms pay for the Australian news text and images that their users view.

Digital platforms had been pressured to strike deals with Australian news publishers to pay for journalism by legislation passed in 2021 that created the country's News Media Bargaining Code.

The platforms chose to reach commercial deals with news creators rather than be forced into arbitration and have a judge set the price.

But they have since avoided renewing those deals by removing news from their services.

The proposed News Bargaining Incentive would charge major platforms that choose not to strike commercial deals with news publishers a 2.25% tax on their Australian revenue.

The platforms would be given offsets and their overall costs would be lowered if they agree to pay publishers for journalism, the government said.

The government expects the incentive would raise between 200 to 250 million Australian dollars (\$144 million-\$179 million) a year. That was about as much as the platforms paid news outlets when the News Media Bargaining Code was working at its peak.

The government would distribute that income among news organizations based on how many journalists each organization employed, Communication Minister Anika Wells said.

The tax would apply to Meta Platforms, which owns Facebook and Instagram, Google, which is owned by Alphabet Inc., and TikTok, which is majority-owned by U.S.-backed investors.

Opposing the proposed legislation, Meta said news organizations "voluntarily post content on our platforms because they receive value from doing so."

"The idea that we take their news content is simply wrong. This proposed legislation, which would apply to platforms regardless of whether news content even appears on our services, is nothing more than a digital services tax," Meta said in a statement.

"A government-mandated transfer of wealth from one industry to another, with no connection to the value exchanged, will not deliver a sustainable or innovative news sector. Instead, it will create a news industry dependent on a government-administered subsidy scheme," Meta added.

Google said "we reject the need for this tax."

"It ignores the fact that Google already has commercial agreements with the news industry, misunderstands how the ad market changed and mandates payments from some companies while arbitrarily excluding platforms like Microsoft, Snapchat and OpenAI -- despite the major shift in how people consume



news," a Google statement said.

TikTok did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

All the targeted platforms are American. U.S. critics have argued that Australia's News Media Bargaining Code had disproportionately cost American corporations.

Albanese was not concerned by potential pushback from the United States.

"We're a sovereign nation and my government will make decisions based upon the Australian national interest," Albanese said.

## **Iran's economy has been battered. Its leaders still think Trump will blink first**

By AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJY, LEE KEATH and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — In the heartland of Iran's famed carpet-making industry, manufacturing has ground to a near halt. Dairies struggle to find packages for milk and butter. Giant steel mills that once drove Iran's economy have gone silent. Hundreds of thousands have lost jobs, and millions more are at risk.

Over more than five weeks of bombardment, U.S. and Israeli strikes hit thousands of factories. The damage is reverberating across Iran's economy, threatening increasing waves of layoffs, even as Iranians face skyrocketing prices. The cost of chicken is up 75% the past month, and beef and lamb jumped 68%. Many dairy products have increased by half.

It could get worse as the United States blockades Iranian ports, choking off many imports and oil exports that bring in billions of dollars. Economic woes sparked the mass protests that were crushed before the war and could again push Iranians into the streets.

Still, Iran has its own weapon pointed at the global economy, with its grip on the Strait of Hormuz. Iran's leaders say they will only reopen the key waterway for global energy if the blockade is lifted and the war ends. They are betting that an economy built to be self-reliant under decades of international sanctions can endure the pain longer than U.S. President Donald Trump.

Iran has lost at least 1 million jobs directly because of the war, Deputy Labor Minister Gholamhossein Mohammadi said, according to state media.

But the ripple effects put some 10 million to 12 million jobs at risk — half of Iran's labor force — warns Hadi Kahalzadeh, an Iranian economist.

Steel and petrochemical production crippled

Israel claimed to have struck the industrial base of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. But the strikes went well beyond, hitting facilities not owned by the force.

Airstrikes damaged 20,000 factories, some 20% of the country's production units, according to Kahalzadeh, a research fellow at Brandeis University. The stricken facilities included Tofigh Daru, Iran's largest pharmaceutical holding, producing anticancer drugs among other things. Optics and chemical developers, and aluminum and cement factories, were also hit.

Perhaps most damaging, Israel hit Iran's biggest steelmaking and petrochemical factories, most of them in a wave of strikes just before the April 8 ceasefire. The two biggest steel producers, Mobarakeh Steel and Khuzestan Steel, as well as smaller mills, halted production. More than 50 petrochemical complexes have been shut down, according to Iran's semiofficial Jamaran news agency.

That has crippled Iran's two biggest non-oil exports, and higher prices have affected everything from plastics to pipes, to fabrics and packaging for groceries like milk, butter and cheese.

Strikes are not the only cause of economic woes. The internet has largely been shut down since the protests, gutting small and medium-sized businesses reliant on online sales. Even before the U.S. blockade, Iranian strikes on the United Arab Emirates, on which it relied for around a third of its imports, led that country to cut off trade.

Ripple effects

Around 80% of rug and carpet manufacturers have stopped operations in the industrial zone of the city of Kashan, the center of Iran's rugmaking industry, said the son of a rugmaker. His family factory, which

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employs 20 to 30 people and used to machine-make hundreds of rugs a month, is among those that shut down, though his father still goes to the facility every day.

"Never have I heard my father so upset," said the son, who lives in the United States and spoke on condition of anonymity for his family's security.

Kashan, home to hundreds of carpet manufacturers, "relies on the rug industry and unfortunately it's been crippled," he said. Exports plummeted since the war began, and domestic sales are almost zero. Prices for synthetic fibers have leaped 30%- 50% — partly a downstream effect of hits on petrochemical facilities, he said.

Mehdi Bostanchi owns a ventilation and air conditioning factory, and a second producing household fans, with a total of more than 1,130 employees. Both still operate. But the HVAC factory heavily depends on the construction industry, and "construction is facing a massive shock," he said.

Most new building is on hold, while the price of iron sheeting has more than doubled.

Bostanchi, a member of a council representing Iranian industrialists, said "all the country's industries in some way rely on our petrochemical industry." Even companies that don't directly need steel or petrochemical products have contracts with those that do.

A chemical engineer working at one of Iran's biggest private construction contractors said it laid off half of its 180 headquarters staffers and had to shut down a project with Mobarakeh Steel, costing 1,000 jobs.

A Tehran resident quit his job as a consulting engineer just before the war, and the new job he had lined up is now uncertain.

"I am at the top 1% (of society), and I am without a job. I am super worried about my future," he said, adding that people's savings will start to run out in the coming weeks.

Both he and the chemical engineer spoke on condition of anonymity out of security concerns.

Projecting resilience

Millions took to the streets in January's protests that were triggered by worsening inflation but turned into calls for the end of the Islamic Republic, bringing a bloody crackdown.

Officials are trying to reassure the public that Iran can withstand the economic pain. The government has promised to increase unemployment insurance. But the burden on Iran's social security system is rising even as its funding is gouged, since it depends heavily on its stakes in petrochemical companies and other key industries, Kahalzadeh said.

The U.S. blockade threatens to cut off export revenues: Iran sold some \$98 billion in exports in 2025, just under half of it from oil.

But a complete blockade is difficult; around half of Iran's non-oil trade goes overland or through Caspian Sea ports, according to Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, an economic expert.

Iran has also built up significant resilience and "readiness for worst-case scenarios," Batmanghelidj wrote for the Bourse and Bazaar Foundation, a research group he heads on economic development in West and Central Asia.

Iran maintains large reserves of vital supplies. At the end of 2025, Iran had stored up enough electrical machinery for nearly eight months, cement to last nearly six months and enough steel and iron for four months, he wrote, adding that supplies could be further stretched by rationing.

Bostanchi, the factories owner, said he believes Iran's economy could bounce back once the war ends. But how much depends on whether Iran can win an end to international sanctions.

"If we cannot lift the sanctions in any agreements, then no, the optimistic forecast ... will not happen," he said.

## Iran offers to reopen Strait of Hormuz if US lifts its blockade and the war ends, officials say

By SAMY MAGDY, JON GAMBRELL and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Iran offered to end its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz if the U.S. lifts its blockade on the country and ends the war in a proposal that would postpone discussions on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, two regional officials said Monday.

U.S. President Donald Trump seems unlikely to accept the offer, which was passed to the Americans by Pakistan and would leave unresolved the disagreements that led the U.S. and Israel to go to war on Feb. 28. And U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio appeared to rule out any deal that excludes Iran's nuclear program.

"We can't let them get away with it," Rubio said in a Fox News interview Monday. "We have to ensure that any deal that is made, any agreement that is made, is one that definitively prevents them from sprinting towards a nuclear weapon at any point."

With a fragile ceasefire in place, the U.S. and Iran are locked in a standoff over the strait, through which a fifth of the world's traded oil and gas passes in peacetime. The U.S. blockade is designed to prevent Iran from selling its oil, depriving it of crucial revenue while also potentially creating a situation where Tehran has to shut off production because it has nowhere to store oil.

The strait's closure, meanwhile, has put pressure on Trump, as oil and gasoline prices have skyrocketed ahead of crucial midterm elections, and it has pressured his Gulf allies, which use the waterway to export their oil and gas.

Renewed demands to end blockade

Frustration among many nations is mounting, with renewed demands Monday to end the blockade that has had far-reaching effects throughout the world economy, including raising the price of fertilizer, food and other basic goods.

The Iranian proposal would push negotiations on the country's nuclear program to a later date. Trump said one of the major reasons he went to war was to deny Iran the ability to develop nuclear weapons.

The two officials with knowledge of the proposal spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the closed-door negotiations between Iranian and Pakistani officials this weekend. Iran's proposal was first reported by the Axios news outlet.

The offer emerged as Iran's foreign minister visited Russia, which has long been a key backer of Tehran. It's unclear what, if any, assistance Moscow might offer now.

Iran's ability to choke off traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, has proved one of its biggest strategic advantages in a war that has often boiled down to which side can take more pain.

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

On Monday, the spot price of Brent crude, the international standard, closed above \$108 per barrel, about 50% higher than when the war began.

Dozens of nations push for reopening of strait

Dozens of nations repeated calls to open the critical waterway in a joint statement led by Bahrain.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres told the Security Council on Monday that the humanitarian toll is mounting.

"These pressures are cascading into empty fuel tanks, empty shelves — and empty plates," he said.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz criticized the U.S. for going into the war with what he said was no strategy. "The problem with conflicts like these is always the same: It's not just about getting in. You also have to get out," Merz said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot blasted all sides. He said the crisis began after the U.S. and Israel struck Iran without clear goals "in a manner that flouts international law."

But he said Iran is responsible for closing the passageway. "Straits are the arteries of the world. They

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are not the property of any individual," he said.

Top Iranian diplomat meets Putin in Russia

Trump last week indefinitely extended the ceasefire the U.S. and Iran agreed to on April 7 that has largely halted fighting. But a permanent settlement remains elusive.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi met Monday with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg, Russian state news agency Tass said. Putin praised the Iranian people as "bravely and heroically fighting for their sovereignty," and he said Russia would do everything possible to bring peace to the Middle East, Tass reported.

Araghchi told a Russian state TV reporter that the U.S. and its leaders "have achieved none of their goals" in the war. "That's why they ask for negotiation," he said. "We are now considering it."

The meeting came as Pakistan has been seeking to revive stalled talks between Iran and the U.S., and negotiations had been expected in Islamabad over the weekend. Instead, Trump called off a trip by his envoys and suggested the talks could take place by phone instead.

Iran wants to persuade Oman, which shares the strait with Iran, 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 was not 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 says Iran offered a 'much better' proposal

Trump told journalists Saturday that after he called off a trip by his envoys to Pakistan, 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." Iran insists its program is peaceful, but the U.S. wants to remove Tehran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium, which could be used to build a bomb, should Tehran choose to pursue one.

Since the war began, at least 3,375 people have been killed in Iran and at least 2,521 people in Lebanon, where fighting between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group 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.

The ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah has been extended by three weeks. Despite the truce, both sides continue to strike each other.

Hezbollah has not participated in the Washington-brokered diplomacy.

## US energy blockade leaves Cuban farmers struggling to feed a nation

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

LAS MINAS, Cuba (AP) — Eduardo Obiols Sobredo struggles to feed Cubans young and old, a task even harder now because of a U.S. energy blockade that has caused sweeping water and power outages along with severe gas shortages.

"I feel like crying," the 58-year-old farmer said. "It's so sad to see crops grown with so much effort go to waste, especially when you know there are so many who need them."

Farming equipment is falling silent across Cuba, with no fuel to power it. Farmers like Obiols Sobredo are turning to animal and manual labor, but not everyone can afford it, and resources are limited.

As a result, poverty is deepening and hunger is increasing across Cuba, a country of nearly 10 million people. The quality and quantity of fruit and vegetables is diminishing, and prices are surging even further beyond the means of many across the island nation.

While the Iran war pinches energy supplies around the world, Cuba is the rare place blaming the Trump



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administration's targeted actions instead.

A spiraling crisis affects Cuba's most vulnerable

Cuba spent three months without a fuel shipment after the U.S. attacked Venezuela, a key supplier, and threatened tariffs on any country that sells or supplies oil to Cuba.

The island was already suffocating under a sharp increase in longtime U.S. sanctions, which prevent it from importing certain goods. The Trump administration demands that Cuba's socialist government release political prisoners, implement major economic reforms and change its way of governance to avoid becoming a national security threat. Cuba has repeatedly said it poses no threat to the U.S.

As tensions remain high, top-ranking officials are visiting farmers across Cuba, urging them to step up production so the country can be even more self-sufficient.

But the effects of the U.S. energy blockade are stark in the town of Las Minas, which has 65 farmers and only 18 oxen.

Obiols Sobredo rents the animals and their handlers when they're available, but he relies on manual labor for smaller jobs on his farm. He grows tomatoes, sorghum, cassava and other crops. He also raises goats, whose milk is served at schools.

He and others farmers are part of a network that supports Cuba's most vulnerable, including people in orphanages and nursing homes.

Clearing his land once took 15 minutes with farm equipment. It now takes at least three days. January was the last time he received the usual monthly supply of gasoline from the government.

"It has forced us to take other kinds of actions in order to survive," Obiols Sobredo said.

The lack of petroleum also means the delivery truck doesn't always arrive, forcing farmers to use what little gas they have to transport milk to a location where they freeze it, in the hope it won't spoil before being picked up.

Power outages also prevent Obiols Sobredo from grinding food for his goats, which produce less milk because of insufficient nutrition.

He also can't water his crops enough. A nonprofit last year financed a solar irrigation system for his farm, but he needs gasoline to set it up. He relies on rain that hasn't fallen in nearly two months.

'They know things are bad'

Suppliers are relying more often on horse-drawn carts to transport produce, which becomes bruised during long trips to markets.

At a state market in Havana, where prices are relatively lower, 68-year-old shopper Juan Lázaro lamented the state of some fruits and vegetables.

"Look," he said, pointing to a pile of small, greenish tomatoes. "They're lacking fertilizer, you can tell they're lacking water. Look at their color."

Lázaro is a retired industrial mechanic but was forced to start working at a small convenience store to make ends meet. On a recent afternoon, he bought six potatoes as a rare treat.

"I've had to cut back. I either buy bread or I buy potatoes," he said.

He added that Cuba's current crises are much worse than the so-called "Special Period" in the 1990s, when cuts in aid following the dismantling of the Soviet Union sparked deprivation. "We've been hitting rock bottom for a while."

Another shopper, 64-year-old Griselle Guillot, now wavers about buying rice.

"I need to see how much I can buy, because I also need onions," she said.

Anthony Batista Guerra, a 47-year-old produce vendor, said there's no need to explain the change in quality and supply to customers: "They know things are bad right now."

As the state market began to close, one vendor threw a tomato into the gutter. Shoppers had found it unfit to buy.

'My goal is to survive'

On a humid morning, 82-year-old Argelio González Juvier used a hoe to fight weeds around cassava plants on the farm where he works.

An official with Cuba's interior ministry who retired in 1995, he now has been forced to work again to

boost his income and chose farming.

"The earth provides everything. That's what we should focus on," he said. "We have no other alternative."

He criticized the U.S. energy blockade, calling it a crime.

"Cuba doesn't deserve what they're doing to us," he said. "The Americans think they're the owners of the world."

Working alongside González Juvier was 36-year-old Jordanis Ríos. He used to be a truck driver hauling sand, gravel and stone, but the lack of gasoline left him without a job.

He now wields a machete to clear farmland, hacking at yellowing grass every morning for \$4 a day. He longs to return to his truck.

"My job is there. Just waiting for the country to improve," he said.

Ríos did not want to speculate about recent talks between the U.S. and Cuba, with American diplomats flying to the island earlier this month for the first time since 2016. Details remain secret, although Cuba has said its priority is for the U.S. to lift the blockade.

Ríos said it's all in the hands of officials: "My goal is to survive here and see what happens."

## **Florida's redistricting fight puts Ron DeSantis back in the Republican spotlight**

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Ron DeSantis was once the future of the Republican Party, a battle-tested conservative twice elected as governor of Florida. Then Donald Trump steamrolled him on his way back to the White House.

Now, more than two years after DeSantis ended his presidential campaign and endorsed Trump, the governor is returning to the national spotlight — at least for this week. He's pushing state lawmakers to redraw Florida's congressional map as part of a coast-to-coast redistricting battle ahead of November's midterm elections. His proposal would make it easier for Republicans to win four more seats, equivalent to Democrats' potential gains from last week's referendum in Virginia.

With DeSantis' second term coming to a close, the special legislative session that starts Tuesday is one of his final opportunities to remind Republicans that he could lead the party one day. But there are also plenty of risks ahead for the 47-year-old governor.

Some Republicans are worried that a new map will backfire and make it easier for Democrats to pick up seats. In addition, DeSantis wants lawmakers to increase regulations for artificial intelligence and loosen vaccine requirements, two proposals that have previously stalled in Tallahassee.

Trump may be constitutionally barred from running for a third term in 2028, but that doesn't mean there's a clear path for DeSantis, who would likely have Vice President JD Vance or Secretary of State Marco Rubio to contend with in a Republican primary.

"The window for Ron looks reasonably narrow at this point," said Whit Ayres, who served as DeSantis' pollster in his first campaign for governor in 2018.

DeSantis, for his part, is embracing the national fight. When House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, D-N.Y., last week dared Florida Republicans to go ahead with their special session, the governor punched back with the kind of aggressiveness he showed in the early days of his failed White House bid.

"I will pay for you to come down to Florida and campaign," DeSantis said of Jeffries. "I'll put you up in the Florida governor's mansion. We'll take you fishing."

DeSantis wants four more Republican seats

DeSantis unveiled his proposed map to Fox News on Monday even before it had been widely circulated among lawmakers. He argued that the 2020 census shortchanged the state's population, making it necessary to redraw the lines.

The governor's map, if approved, would reshape districts in Democratic areas around Orlando and Tampa Bay, while also condensing Democratic voters into fewer South Florida districts. The changes could cost

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Reps. Jared Moskowitz and Debbie Wasserman Schultz, among others, their seats.

The current maps yielded a 20 to 8 Republican tilt in 2024. DeSantis' version would aim for an advantage of 24 to 4.

DeSantis first announced the special session back in January, months after Trump started pushing Republican-run states to redraw their congressional boundaries. What followed has been a tit-for-tat re-districting battle, with each party looking for an edge in the midterms.

There's no guarantee that new maps would play out the way parties hope. For example, Texas based its revised lines largely on Trump's performance in 2024, theoretically redistributing the president's voters across more districts to pull them into the Republican column. But Trump's popularity has waned since his reelection, including among Latino voters that figure prominently in the state.

Florida could face a similar conundrum. If the state creates more majority-Republican districts but with thinner margins, it could dilute their advantage and give Democrats more opportunities to win seats, especially if there's an anti-Trump backlash at the polls this year.

"If Florida moves like it can, the Republicans will at least be even," said Karl Rove, a former top political adviser to President George W. Bush. If Republicans get too aggressive, "they may lose a seat or two."

Brian Ballard, an influential Florida lobbyist who has been DeSantis' top fundraiser, said it's worth remembering that DeSantis was the muscle behind the 2021 map that expanded Republicans' advantage in the state to its current levels.

"He's incredibly smart and capable," Ballard said. "And he doesn't get enough credit for that map. He's done this before."

Florida legislative leaders appear hesitant

Still, DeSantis will be testing his relationships with lawmakers, especially in a state House chamber that has grown more willing to buck the governor in recent sessions. House Speaker Daniel Perez and Senate President Ben Albritton made clear for weeks that they were not drawing their own proposals and would react only to what DeSantis put forward.

Albritton has sent multiple memos to senators reminding them of Florida's state constitutional limits on redistricting and the requirement that it not be done as a blatantly partisan act. Perez, who convened a redistricting panel last year, has said in recent weeks that he expects something to get done, but he's been circumspect in his public statements.

"We're ready to have that conversation," he recently told WPLG in South Florida, before DeSantis released his proposal.

Besides redistricting, other topics won't be much easier. DeSantis wants to require tech companies to ensure children cannot interact with chatbots without parental permission. He also wants to prevent AI from generating harmful material for minors. The proposal will put DeSantis at odds with Trump, who wants the federal government to be the regulatory arbitrator of AI technology.

On vaccines, DeSantis wants to add a conscience-based exemption to public school vaccine requirements, similar to the existing religious exemption. The push aligns him with the anti-vaccine portion of the Trump base that was instrumental in pushing the president to tap Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as his health secretary.

Versions of DeSantis' proposals have passed the state Senate previously but did not advance in the state House, where Perez has been skeptical.

Ballard downplayed concerns. What may seem to some as strained relations with certain Republican legislative leaders, he said, is simply measuring DeSantis against the opening years of his tenure.

"I mean, he went from batting a thousand to maybe batting .600," Ballard said, using a baseball analogy for the governor who played the sport while attending Yale. "That isn't failure."

The White House is watching

It's hard to say how the session will affect DeSantis' relationship with Trump or the president's supporters.

Trump grew frustrated at DeSantis when they were competing for the Republican presidential nomination, calling him "Ron DeSanctimonious" on the campaign trail. The governor, at least initially, gave conservative establishment figures and key donors an option other than the then-former president.

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But Trump seemingly forgave DeSantis when he dropped out of the race and endorsed Trump following his victory in the Iowa caucuses. He even promised to call DeSantis by his actual name.

There's more bad blood within the White House, though. Chief of Staff Susie Wiles, a Floridian, managed DeSantis' razor-thin 2018 victory, only for the governor to have a falling out with her.

Wiles did not respond to a request for comment. But Ayres said he's certain she's paying attention.

"Donald Trump has a long memory, and Susie Wiles has a longer one," he said. "And that doesn't bode well for Gov. DeSantis to be Donald Trump's Republican successor."

## **King Charles III to meet Trump and address Congress in bid to spotlight UK-US ties**

By STEVEN SLOAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — King Charles III will embrace some of Washington's most formal ceremonial trappings on Tuesday as he tries to emphasize a bond between the United Kingdom and the United States that is so strong it can withstand the political turmoil of the moment.

He will become the first British monarch to address the U.S. Congress since his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, in 1991. Her speech highlighted the shared history of both countries and the importance of their democratic values, themes Charles will likely reinforce on Tuesday.

Such addresses are an opportunity afforded to only the most prominent world leaders, including Pope Francis, Václav Havel and Winston Churchill. It will likely mark the most extensive public remarks Charles will deliver during a four-day visit to the U.S. that's intended to celebrate the country's 250th anniversary of independence from Britain.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., became the first sitting leader of his chamber to address the U.K. Parliament earlier this year. He attended a garden party with the king in Washington on Monday and said he told him he would be "well received" in Congress.

The king, accompanied by Queen Camilla, will begin his day with a meeting at the White House with President Donald Trump. The Oval Office encounter offers the potential for the freewheeling, sometimes controversial meetings with foreign leaders that have become routine during Trump's second term.

But given the expressly apolitical nature of the British monarch and Trump's fondness for the royal family, the likelihood of an awkward meeting may be reduced. Trump will host Charles on Tuesday evening for a state banquet at the White House.

The visit comes at a challenging moment for U.S.-U.K. relations. Trump's up-and-down relationship with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer has taken a particularly sour turn over the past several months as the president has sought to rally international support for the war in Iran. Trump criticized Starmer, who has largely resisted his overtures, by saying "this is not Winston Churchill that we're dealing with."

Trump has also imposed tariffs on the U.K. and warned of additional levies despite a Supreme Court ruling earlier this year that has made such unilateral moves more challenging. Trump threatened just last week to slap a "big tariff" on the U.K. if it doesn't scrap a digital services tax on U.S. technology companies.

Trump has more broadly challenged the traditional transatlantic alliance with efforts to annex Greenland and threats to walk away from NATO. He has repeatedly imposed tariffs on and taunted Canada, a member of the British Commonwealth.

Meanwhile, Charles has faced some calls on Capitol Hill to meet with victims of Jeffrey Epstein while he is in the U.S. There's no indication that he will do so even as the scandal involving the convicted sex offender has ensnared his brother, who was arrested in February over misconduct allegations, which he denies.

Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., urged the king over the weekend to at least address the issue during his congressional speech.

House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries blamed Republican policies on Monday for straining the U.S.-U.K. relationship.

"Hopefully, the king's visit is going to go a long way toward repairing the damage that this administration has done to one of our most important allies in the world," Jeffries said.



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Charles and Camilla arrived at the nation's capital on Monday and held a tea with the president and first lady Melania Trump. The royal couple will continue their U.S. trip later this week with stops in New York City and Virginia.

## **Trumps call for ABC to fire Jimmy Kimmel — again — after morbid joke about first lady**

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

Donald and Melania Trump both called for ABC to fire Jimmy Kimmel on Monday after a joke last week in which the late-night comic described the first lady as having "the glow of an expectant widow."

The remark about the president's wife was part of a routine on Thursday's "Jimmy Kimmel Live" where the host pretended to deliver a comedy routine at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner. That event two nights later was cut short when a man armed with guns and knives tried to enter the Washington ballroom where the Trumps and much of the nation's political leadership had gathered.

"People like Kimmel shouldn't have the opportunity to enter our homes each evening to spread hate," Melania Trump said in a social media post later echoed by her husband.

Kimmel described the joke during his Monday night monologue as a light roast about the first couple's age difference and "not, by any stretch of the definition, a call to assassination."

He said he was sorry that the president and everyone at the event went through that traumatic and scary experience.

"I agree that hateful and violent rhetoric is something we should reject," Kimmel said. "I do, and I think a great place to start to dial that back would be to have a conversation with your husband about it."

There was no comment Monday from ABC.

Trump has long been on receiving end of Kimmel's routines

Kimmel has long targeted the president in his comedy, and he doubled down after a run-in with the administration last fall. Kimmel was suspended by ABC and some of the network's affiliates said they would take him off the air following a comment made about assassinated conservative leader Charlie Kirk, moves encouraged by Trump's FCC chairman, Brendan Carr. ABC and the stations later brought Kimmel back.

Upon his return, Kimmel said that by saying that "many in MAGA land are working very hard to capitalize on the murder of Charlie Kirk," he was not trying to make light of Kirk's killing and didn't want to leave that impression. He did not apologize, however, and he criticized station owners who took him off the air before later relenting.

Shortly after the incident, ABC signed Kimmel to a one-year contract extension that is due to keep him on the air until May 2027. His show has aired on the network since January 2003.

His late-night competitor Stephen Colbert — another frequent Trump critic — is seeing his CBS show end next month.

Dressed in a tux and standing behind a podium Thursday, Kimmel pretended to deliver a comic routine for the WHCA dinner. His speech had false "cutaways" to the Trumps and others, taken from video clips.

He noted Melania in the "audience," saying, "Mrs. Trump, you have a glow like an expectant widow."

"I appreciate that so many people are incensed by Kimmel's despicable call to violence, and normally would not be responsive to anything that he said but, this is something far beyond the pale," the president said on his Truth Social platform. "Jimmy Kimmel should be immediately fired" by ABC and its parent Walt Disney Co., he said.

His wife said Kimmel's "hateful and violent rhetoric" is intended to divide the country. "A coward, Kimmel hides behind ABC because he knows the network will keep running cover to protect him," Melania Trump wrote. "Enough is enough. It is time for ABC to take a stand."

White House press secretary also weighs in

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said it was part of a campaign of rhetoric from Democrats and some in the media that "has helped to legitimize this violence."

"Who in their right mind says a wife would be glowing over the potential murder of her beloved husband?"

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Leavitt said. There was no indication that Kimmel was referring to violence.

The National Religious Broadcasters association filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission, asking the agency to investigate ABC.

"We're seeing a pattern of violence in this country that didn't appear overnight," said Troy Miller, NRB's president and CEO. "When influential voices joke about death or treat political opponents as disposable, it contributes to a culture where violence feels thinkable to the already unstable."

During his routine, Kimmel noted Melania Trump's birthday Sunday, saying, "She's planning to celebrate at home the same way she always does — looking out a window and whispering, 'What have I done?'"

He also said: "Before we go any further, Melania, this is Donald. Donald, this is Melania. That was my impression of Jeffrey Epstein."

Cole Tomas Allen, the California man arrested after attempting to rush into the correspondents' dinner on Saturday, was charged Monday with the attempted assassination of the president.

## **OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma's criminal sentence could be the last step before company dissolves**

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma could be dissolved and replaced by a company focused on the public good by the end of the week, as a massive legal settlement resolving thousands of lawsuits is set to take effect.

A federal judge on Tuesday is expected to deliver a criminal sentence to the company to resolve a U.S. Department of Justice probe — a last necessary step to clear the way for the settlement.

But some people who have been addicted to opioids or lost loved ones to the drugs are expected to try to persuade the judge to reject the negotiated sentence, arguing it doesn't provide them with real justice.

Here's a look at the situation.

The sentence would call for money, but no individual punishment

Purdue reached a deal with the Justice Department in 2020 to resolve criminal and civil probes the company was facing.

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

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

Only the company was charged — not individuals.

The guilty plea and civil settlement with the federal government included \$8.3 billion in forfeitures, fines and penalties. But the federal government agreed in a negotiated settlement to collect just \$225 million in exchange for the company reaching a separate settlement of the thousands of lawsuits it faced from state, local and Native American tribal governments, along with other groups.

After years of legal twists and turns — and \$1 billion and counting in legal and professional fees for the parties — the broader sentence was approved by a bankruptcy judge in November.

It can't take effect until the criminal sentence is given. U.S. District Judge Madeline Cox Arleo is scheduled to consider it Tuesday in a Newark, New Jersey, courtroom.

The judge delayed the hearing to ensure victims had a voice

Arleo had previously scheduled the sentencing to be by video conference only last week.

Some victims of the opioid crisis, which has been linked to more than 900,000 deaths in the U.S. since 1999, were scheduled to give impact statements.

The judge delayed the hearing after a group of a few dozen people — some of whom have been addicted to opioids and others who lost loved ones — protested outside the courthouse. She said she wanted to give them a voice and that she would delay the sentencing by a week — and give people the option of attending in person.

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More than 54,000 people with personal injury claims voted to accept the lawsuits settlement; around 200 said no.

The opponents have been vocal and persistent.

Michele Wagner, whose son died of an overdose, said outside the courthouse last week that she wanted to see members of the Sackler family who own Purdue criminally charged. "Justice to me looks like more than just money," she said.

Kara Trainor, who is in recovery from an addiction that began with an OxyContin prescription in 2002 and served on a committee involved in the settlement talks, wants the sentence approved because she believes that it can lead to closure.

"For me to be the best version of myself in my own recovery, I had to start healing and gravitate away from the anger I felt," she said. "The anger itself was poisonous to me. It was destroying my mental health."

Sackler family members to pay up to \$7 billion

Purdue says that if the judge issues the criminal sentence Tuesday, the settlement could take effect as soon as Friday.

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

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

Payments to individual victims are expected to range from about \$8,000 to about \$16,000.

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

Under the Purdue deal, members of the Sackler family would be shielded from lawsuits over opioids from those who agree to the payments. Family members received payments from the company totaling about \$10.7 billion from 2008 through 2018, but said nearly half that amount was used to pay taxes on behalf of the business.

As part of the settlement, Purdue itself would cease to exist and be replaced by a new company, Kinoa Pharma, with a board appointed by the states and an aim of combating the opioid crisis. Millions of internal Purdue documents are to be made public.

Members of the Sackler family also have agreed not to object if their names are taken off museums and other institutions they've supported.

## **Will Powell stay or go? Fed chair may reveal next steps after central bank meeting Wednesday**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve will meet this week ahead of a looming leadership transition that remains fuzzy, and Wednesday's news conference will be closely watched for any clarification.

Also Wednesday, the Senate Banking Committee will vote on whether to confirm President Trump's nominee, Kevin Warsh, to succeed Fed Chair Jerome Powell. The committee is expected to approve Warsh, sending his nomination to the full Senate.

At a news conference later that afternoon, Powell may indicate whether he will remain on the Fed's board of governors after his term as chair ends May 15. Powell serves a separate term as a governor that lasts until January 2028. Chairs typically leave the board when their leadership terms end, but Powell has signaled he could stay on. It would be the first time a former chair remained on the board since 1948.

If Powell, who has made protecting Fed independence a key part of his legacy, chooses to stay, he would deprive Trump of the opportunity to pick his replacement and fill another seat on the Fed's seven-member board. Three of the seven current governors are Trump appointees. At the same time, it could worsen tensions with the Trump administration and would create what some analysts refer to as a "two Popes" scenario, with a chair and former chair both on the Fed's board, which could increase divisions among policymakers.

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At the same time, it might not affect the trajectory of interest rates much. Powell has generally supported reducing interest rates and would likely do so again once a spike in inflation, stemming from the Iran war's increase in gas prices, fades.

Warsh argued for rate cuts last year, but is unlikely to be able to reduce rates anytime soon, given that most policymakers have signaled they would prefer to wait and evaluate the war's impact on the economy.

Warsh's path to the chair was cleared Sunday when Sen. Thom Tillis, a North Carolina Republican, said he would support him. Tillis had said he would block Warsh's nomination until a Justice Department investigation into Powell was dropped. On Friday, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia, Jeanine Pirro, said she was closing the investigation.

Powell said at a news conference in March that he wouldn't leave the Fed's board until the Trump administration's investigation was dropped, "with transparency and finality." Pirro said her office could reopen the investigation if "the facts warrant doing so." In addition, the Justice Department has said it would appeal a court ruling that threw out subpoenas it issued in its Fed investigation.

But on Sunday, Tillis said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that he had been assured the appeal was just to challenge the principle behind the ruling, rather than to continue the investigation. Justice Department officials also said the investigation would only reopen if an ongoing probe by the Fed's inspector general found evidence of criminal conduct.

"We worked a lot over the weekend to make sure that we were very clear that we had the assurances from the DOJ that I needed to feel like they were not using the DOJ as a weapon to threaten the independence of the Fed," Tillis said.

Tillis even suggested, however, that Powell could remain on the board for some time after May 15: "I suspect Mr. Powell wants to see what happens with the appeal and to make sure that it is fully settled," Tillis said on Sunday.

On Monday, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt was asked if Trump would oppose Powell remaining on the Fed board. She responded, "I think the president will be satisfied once Kevin Warsh is confirmed as the Fed chair," suggesting he wouldn't seek to fire Powell, as he has previously threatened.

Powell, meanwhile, said last month that even if the investigation was dropped he wouldn't necessarily leave the board.

"I will make that decision based on what I think is best for the institution and for the people we serve," Powell said.

The leadership turmoil comes while the economy remains unusually murky, putting the Fed in an difficult spot. Inflation has jumped to 3.3%, a two-year high, as the Iran war has sharply raised gas prices. That makes it harder for the central bank to reduce rates. The Fed typically leaves rates unchanged, or even raises them, if inflation is worsening. Fed policymakers are nearly certain to leave their key rate unchanged at about 3.6% on Wednesday.

At the same time, the unemployment rate declined in March and the number of people seeking unemployment benefits remains low, evidence that the job market may be stabilizing after signs of weakness earlier this year. Stable hiring would lessen the urgency for any rate cuts, which the Fed usually implements to boost borrowing, spending and job gains.

In a notable shift earlier this month, Christopher Waller, a key member of the Fed's board, voiced concerns that rising inflation could mean the Fed would have to stand pat this week. He also suggested that with the unemployment rate a still-low 4.3%, rate cuts might not be necessary anytime soon. Waller had dissented in favor of a rate cut in January.

A key change economists will look for is whether the Fed alters the statement it issues after each meeting to signal that it is possible that their next move could be either a rate cut or a hike. Right now, the statement indicates that any change to its key rate would be a cut. According to minutes of its last meeting in March, many of the 19 participants on the Fed's rate-setting committee support considering a hike, but it's unlikely to be a majority.



## Trump pursues new import taxes to replace the tariffs the Supreme Court rejected

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — When the Supreme Court killed his favorite tariffs in February, President Donald Trump promptly rolled out temporary import taxes to replace them. But those stopgap levies expire in less than three months.

Now the administration is scrambling to put more durable tariffs in place to keep revenue flowing into the U.S. Treasury and to shore up the president's protectionist wall around the American economy.

Starting this week, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative will begin hearings in two investigations that are expected to lead to a new round of U.S. tariffs — taxes paid by importers in the United States and usually passed on via higher prices to consumers who are already fed up with the high cost of living.

Trump's newest tariff push is sure to face more challenges in court but is likely to prove sturdier than the one the Supreme Court tossed out.

First up is a hearing Tuesday and Wednesday into whether 60 economies — from Nigeria to Norway and accounting for 99% of U.S. imports — do enough to prohibit the trade in products created by forced labor.

"For too long, American workers and firms have been forced to compete against foreign producers who may have an artificial cost advantage gained from the scourge of forced labor," U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in March. The administration could punish scofflaws with new tariffs.

Then, next week, the administration will hold hearings on whether 16 U.S. trading partners — including China, the European Union and Japan — are overproducing goods, driving down prices and putting U.S. manufacturers at a disadvantage. The economies being investigated account for 70% of U.S. imports, according to Erica York of the Tax Foundation. Again, the probe could result in new tariffs.

Most major economies, including China, the EU and Japan, are on both lists.

Trump's top trade official insists he won't prejudge the investigations

The administration has brought the cases under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which authorizes tariffs and other sanctions against countries found to engage in "unjustifiable," "unreasonable" or "discriminatory" trade practices.

U.S. Trade Representative Greer, who is overseeing the investigations, has insisted he won't prejudge them.

But importers and foreign countries have doubts the process will be fair. After all, Trump's Treasury secretary, Scott Bessent, did not wait for the investigations to be completed to proclaim that the U.S. government will replace its original tariff revenues with new import taxes, including ones to be imposed under Section 301. The president himself has said that new tariffs "are going to get us more money."

"If you believe the Treasury secretary and the president, then the cake is already baked," said Scott Lincicome of the libertarian Cato Institute's Center for Trade Policy Studies. "These investigations will result in tariffs that approximate what the Supreme Court overruled in February."

On Feb. 20, the high court ruled that Trump had overstepped his authority by invoking the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) to impose double-digit tariffs on almost every country on Earth. Trump had used the act to plaster taxes on imports with eager abandon. For example, he conjured up a new tariff on Canada (though he never actually imposed it) because he didn't like a Canadian television ad criticizing his trade policies.

He used the threat of IEEPA tariffs to strong-arm top U.S. trading partners — including the EU, Japan and South Korea — into accepting lopsided trade agreements. The levies also brought in a lot of revenue — \$166 billion — before the Supreme Court shut them down, ruling that IEEPA couldn't be used to impose tariffs. Now the federal government must refund money to importers who paid those tariffs.

Tariffs remain Trump's go-to

Trump had a handy way to quickly recoup some of the lost revenue — which had been expected to hit \$1.6 trillion over the next decade — at least temporarily. Section 122, also of Trade Act of 1974, allows the president to impose global tariffs as high as 15% for up to 150 days.

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The administration wasted no time. Two days after the Supreme Court decision, it slapped 10% Section 122 tariffs on imports. Trump said he'd raise the levies to the maximum 15% but hasn't.

The clock runs out on those tariffs July 24. Congress could extend them. But lawmakers have little enthusiasm for approving what amounts to a big tax as November's midterm elections approach: American voters are already furious about the high prices, for which tariffs are at least partly to blame.

Section 301 offers another opportunity to replicate the the protectionist impact of the IEEPA tariffs. There are no limits on the size of Section 301 tariffs. They expire after four years but can be extended.

Perhaps best of all, from the Trump administration's perspective after its Supreme Court defeat, Section 301 tariffs withstood legal challenges when the president used them in his first term to pound China in a dispute over Beijing's sharp-elbowed policies to promote its own tech companies.

Any new 301 tariffs are sure to be challenged again in court. But judges might not throw them out.

"Even if it is a veiled — or less-than-veiled — attempt to reinstate the IEEPA tariffs, he still has the cover of the process itself," said trade lawyer Joyce Adetutu, a partner at law firm Vinson & Elkins.

Importer calls investigation a "sham"

Critics have latched onto the speed with which Trump's latest investigations are proceeding. Imposing the Section 301 tariffs against China in the president's first term took nearly a year of investigation and public comment. If the latest investigations produce new tariffs in time to replace the expiring Section 122 levies, the process will have taken less than half that long.

"It's such a short timeframe," said Kenya Davis, a partner at the law firm Boies Schiller Flexner who has done pro bono work on human trafficking and forced labor. "It's so condensed that it doesn't make a lot of sense that they can do it that quickly."

Importers bracing for the return of painful tariffs can take some comfort in knowing that Trump's Section 301 tariffs likely won't be as erratic as his IEEPA levies. He has to follow procedures before imposing them.

"One of the reasons Trump used IEEPA is because it was just a complete blank slate" — or seemed to be before the Supreme Court ruling, Cato's Lincicome said, describing it as "a little tariff switch in the Oval Office that Trump could flip on and off anytime he wants; he wakes up in the morning and he doesn't like a Canadian television commercial, he flips the switch ... You really can't do that with 301."

## **Fast-moving storms batter the Midwest, flooding streets and stranding commuters**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Fast-moving storms pummeled parts of the Midwest with hail, strong wind and heavy rain Monday, flooding streets, stranding commuters and downing many trees, including one in western Michigan that landed on a man and killed him.

More than 56 million people in the Midwest and parts of the South were at risk of severe storms, with tornado warnings posted in southeastern Missouri, southern Illinois and northern Arkansas, the National Weather Service said.

A thunderstorm that whipped through Kent County, Michigan, with powerful winds caused a tree to fall and kill a 39-year-old man who had been outside with friends, the sheriff's office said in a statement.

The friends said "the man warned them to move just before the tree came down, actions they believe likely prevented more of them from being struck," according to the sheriff's office. The storm resulted in dozens of downed trees and wires.

Across Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, Wisconsin and Michigan more than 250,000 people were without power Monday night.

We Energies in Wisconsin said it had restored power for more than 35,000 customers but thousands more remained without electricity. Milwaukee said it had nearly 100 emergency calls for downed trees and branches. Trees uprooted by strong winds blocked streets.

In Kansas City, Missouri, the fire department responded to 11 water rescues from vehicles starting at shortly before 6 a.m., Battalion Chief Riley Nolan said in an email.

He said most "were in our typical 'high-water' areas following heavy rains." Nolan said no boats were

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required and no injuries were reported.

The weather service reported that 3.2 inches (8.1 centimeters) of rain fell in a six-hour period ending shortly before 7 a.m. at the Kansas City International Airport.

Hundreds of schools in the St. Louis area closed early, and many after-school activities were canceled.

Temperatures near 80 degrees Fahrenheit (26 degrees Celsius) and other factors were contributing to "atmospheric instability," said Evan Bentley, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

The storms followed rounds of violent weather over the weekend.

In northern Texas, a tornado-producing thunderstorm left at least two people dead and displaced at least 20 families, with many homes sustaining major damage, authorities said Sunday.

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 on Saturday. An EF-1 tornado with peak winds of 105 mph (169 kph) was confirmed in the Springtown area, the weather service said.

## **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

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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 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



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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.

## **Man charged with attempted assassination of Trump in White House correspondents' dinner shooting**

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — The man who authorities say tried to storm the White House Correspondents' Association dinner with guns and knives was charged Monday with the attempted assassination of President Donald Trump as federal authorities suggested an attack that disrupted one of Washington's glitziest events had been planned for at least several weeks.

Cole Tomas Allen appeared in court to face federal charges after the chaotic encounter Saturday that resulted in shots being fired, Trump being hurried off the stage unharmed and guests ducking for cover underneath their tables. He was ordered to remain jailed pending additional court hearings, and faces up to life in prison if convicted of the assassination count alone.

An FBI affidavit filed in the case Monday revealed additional details about the planning behind the assault, with authorities alleging that Allen on April 6 reserved a room for himself at the Washington hotel where the event would be held weeks later under its typical tight security. He traveled by train cross-country from California last week, checking himself into the Washington Hilton one day before the dinner with a room reserved for the weekend.

The dinner had barely begun when officials say the 31-year-old Torrance, California, man tried to race past a security barricade near the cavernous ballroom holding hundreds of journalists and their guests, prompting an exchange of gunfire with Secret Service agents tasked with safeguarding the event. Allen carried with him a 12-gauge pump action shotgun he bought last year and a .38 caliber semi-automatic pistol he purchased in 2023, authorities said.

"Violence has no place in civic life," acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said at a news conference. "It cannot and will not be used to disrupt democratic institutions or intimidate those who serve them, and it certainly cannot continue to be used against the president of the United States."

He added: "We are investigating this matter fully, we will apply the law fairly and we will ensure that accountability is swift and certain."

Allen was injured during the attack but was not shot. A Secret Service officer was shot but was wearing a bullet-resistant vest and survived, officials say.

Questions remain about how many shots Allen fired and how many officers discharged their weapons.

Blanche said investigators believe that a Secret Service agent fired five shots and that Allen discharged his shotgun at least once. But Blanche didn't say whether authorities have confirmed it was Allen's bullet that struck the agent in the vest, or whether any other officers used their weapons. Blanche said ballistics experts are still examining evidence to provide more clarity on those questions.

The Justice Department charged Allen with two additional firearms counts, including discharging a weapon during a crime of violence, but the affidavit does not allege that Allen was responsible for shooting the agent.

Suspect's email sheds light on motive

The shooting resulted in the cancellation of the dinner, the first Trump had attended as president.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt on Monday said the night was supposed to be one of joy but instead was "hijacked by a crazed anti-Trump individual who traveled across the country to assassinate the president and as many administration officials as possible."

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Allen invoked his constitutional right to remain silent after his arrest, but authorities say an email he sent to family members and a former employer just before the attack helps shed light on a motive.

In the message, a copy of which was included in the affidavit, Allen referred to himself as a "Friendly Federal Assassin" and alluded obliquely to grievances over a range of Trump administration actions. The rambling text moves between confession, grievance and farewell, with Allen apologizing to family members, co-workers and even strangers he feared could be caught in the violence while at the same time seeking to explain the attack.

A magistrate judge granted a prosecutor's request to keep Allen locked up pending additional hearings. A detention hearing is set for Thursday.

Allen did not speak at length during the quick appearance, as is customary. One of his lawyers, Tezira Abe, noted that he has no criminal record.

"He also is presumed innocent at this time," she said.

Records reveal that Allen is a highly educated tutor and amateur video game developer. A social media profile for a man with the same name and a photo that appears to match that of the suspect show he worked part-time for the last six years at a company that offers admissions counseling and test preparation services to aspiring college students.

Voter registration records from California lists Allen's home address as his parent's house on a tree-lined street in one of the most historic neighborhoods in Torrance, a city within the Los Angeles metro area. No one answered the door Sunday when an Associated Press reporter knocked. By the afternoon, several people who appeared to be law enforcement agents were canvassing the neighborhood, with one wearing an FBI sweatshirt.

A yard sign displayed at the family home supported a local candidate for judge who was endorsed by the Los Angeles County Democratic Party. Federal campaign finance records show Cole Allen contributed \$25 to a Democratic Party political action committee in support of Kamala Harris for president in 2024 and listed his employer as C2 Education, which said in a statement Monday that it was shocked to learn of the shooting and was cooperating with law enforcement.

Allen is registered to vote without a party affiliation in California and voted in the last three general elections, according to the Los Angeles County Registrar of Voters.

He earned a bachelor's degree in 2017 in mechanical engineering from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, according to his profile on the social networking site LinkedIn. The small university is academically prestigious with a very low acceptance rate. He also listed his involvement there in a campus group that battled with Nerf guns and a Christian student fellowship.

Allen's profile photo on LinkedIn shows him wearing a cap and gown when graduating with a master's degree in computer science from California State University, Dominguez Hills. The photo appears to have been taken May 2025.

## **Republicans in Congress push for Trump's White House ballroom after shooting at media dinner**

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans in Congress launched new efforts Monday to approve and pay for President Donald Trump's proposed ballroom at the White House, arguing that it would help avert security breaches like the shooting at Saturday's White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

A new bill introduced by Republican senators would authorize \$400 million — roughly the cost of the project — for construction and security infrastructure underneath. Trump has said that private money would pay for the ballroom, but Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, one of the sponsors, said Monday that he believes those private dollars should only pay for "buying china and stuff like that."

Graham said at a news conference that some people may think the ballroom was Trump's "vanity project," but said it is necessary to allow the president to hold events safely and avoid much less secure venues like the Washington Hilton, where Saturday's event was held. The man who authorities say tried

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to storm the dinner with guns and knives had reserved a room in the hotel, according to an FBI affidavit filed in the case.

"It would be insane" to hold the dinner there again, Graham said, adding that he would advise any president not to do it, even as Trump has said he would like the dinner to be rescheduled.

Cole Tomas Allen appeared in court Monday to face federal charges of attempting to assassinate Trump after the encounter Saturday in which shots were fired outside the ballroom. The president was evacuated off the stage as thousands of guests dived under tables and ducked for cover.

Other lawmakers said they would push their own measures to approve the ballroom, including Rep. Lauren Boebert, R-Colo., and Republican Sens. Rand Paul of Kentucky and Tim Sheehy of Montana.

"It is an embarrassment to the strongest nation on earth that we cannot host gatherings in our nation's capital, including ones attended by our president, without the threat of violence and attempted assassinations," Sheehy posted on X.

It is unclear, though, whether the effort could get enough support. Democrats have opposed the ballroom's construction since Trump demolished part of the White House to make way for it without permission from Congress, and as it has faced lawsuits. House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries told reporters that the president should be focused on ending the war with Iran, healthcare and other measures to drive down living costs.

"These are the things that we should actually be focused on," Jeffries said.

Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer said Monday that Trump wants to seclude himself in a "walled palace, literally."

He said Republicans should instead pass a spending bill that includes money for the U.S. Secret Service, which is part of the Homeland Security Department and has been shut down for more than two months. The House has yet to act on two spending bills for the department that were approved by the Senate.

"If Republicans truly want to improve security, they should join Democrats in funding the Secret Service, not Donald Trump's luxury ballroom," Schumer said.

Republicans also used the incident to call for the Homeland Security funding, blaming Democrats who have blocked money for immigration enforcement agencies since mid-February.

The chaos at the annual dinner came after Trump has faced two attempts on his life and as members of Congress in both parties have received an increasing number of death threats in recent years.

Graham said the times are unusual.

"I've been up here a while now, and I've never felt the sense of threat that exists today," he said.

Alabama Sen. Katie Britt, who sponsored the legislation with Graham, said the bill is not just about Trump.

"This will not be done until the end of his term," she said. "This is about future presidents. This is about our nation having a place to gather."

## **King Charles III arrives at the White House 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 arrived at the White House on Monday with trans-Atlantic ties under strain and security in the spotlight.

Trump and first lady Melania Trump greeted Charles and Queen Camilla as they arrived, posing for photos and exchanging small talk before they went inside for tea in the Green Room. Afterward, the couples went down to the south grounds to see a new beehive in the shape of the White House that the first lady had installed last week.

Charles and Camilla both support beekeeping. He keeps at least three beehives at his private residence in England as part of his support for the environment and sustainability.

After the White House visit, the royal couple attended a garden party at the British Embassy.

Trump praises the king but derides Starmer

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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.

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 Melania Trump for an unprecedented second state visit. Starmer hand-delivered the invitation from the king in the Oval Office five weeks after Trump returned to office, in a very public attempt to woo the Republican 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 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



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days in the U.S. accompanied by Queen Camilla.

In Washington on Tuesday, the king and queen will attend a formal White House state dinner.

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.

## **Man pleads guilty in the 2002 killing of Jam Master Jay of rap pioneers Run-DMC**

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly a quarter-century after rap star Jam Master Jay of Run-DMC was shot to death, a man admitted in court Monday to a role in a killing that stymied investigators for decades.

Jay Bryant pleaded guilty to a federal murder charge, telling a judge that he helped other people get into a recording studio to ambush the DJ, born Jason Mizell.

"I knew a gun was going to be used to shoot Jason Mizell," Bryant told a federal magistrate. "I knew that what I was doing was wrong and a crime."

Bryant's admission brings some closure — but also adds complexity — to a knotty case.

Bryant didn't name the other people with whom he acted. But a jury in 2024 convicted two other men, Karl Jordan Jr. and Ronald Washington, yet a judge subsequently cleared Jordan.

Washington has also challenged his conviction. His lawyer, Susan Kellman, noted Monday that evidence against Bryant included his DNA on a hat at the crime scene and witness testimony that Bryant once claimed he fired the gun himself. Jordan's lawyers declined to comment.

Bryant, 52, is expected to face a sentence somewhere between 15 and 20 years in prison for the killing plus unrelated drug and gun charges, to which he pleaded guilty earlier. No sentencing date has been set.

He gave a thumbs-up to someone in the audience before leaving court. The person declined to comment afterward, as did Bryant's attorneys.

Prosecutors had no immediate comment.

Mizell handled the turntables in Run-DMC, a pathbreaking trio he formed with friends Darryl "DMC" McDaniels and Joseph Simmons, known as DJ Run and Rev. Run.

With such 1980s hits as "It's Tricky," "My Adidas," and a version of Aerosmith's "Walk This Way," they helped rap climb the ladder from an urban genre into mainstream popularity. Run-DMC was the first rap group with gold- and platinum-selling albums, a Rolling Stone cover, and a video on MTV. The trio was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2009. Mizell also mentored other hip-hop artists, including a young 50 Cent.

At 37, Mizell was gunned down in his studio in the Queens neighborhood where he'd grown up. His October 2002 death followed the late 1990s killings of two other hip-hop greats, Tupac Shakur and the Notorious B.I.G. Authorities struggled with all three cases for years.

Jordan and Washington — Mizell's godson and old friend, respectively — were arrested in 2020. Pros-

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ecutors said the men were bitter about losing out on a piece of a failed cocaine deal that Mizell had tried to line up. Though Run-DMC was known for its anti-drug message, prosecutors and a trial witness said the DJ moonlighted in the cocaine trade in his later years to cover his bills and keep being generous to friends after music money dried up somewhat.

According to prosecutors and trial witnesses, Jordan shot Mizell while Washington blocked the door during the shooting and ordered one of Mizell's aides to get on the ground. Both men denied the allegations. Jordan's attorneys said he was at his girlfriend's home when the DJ was shot, and Washington's lawyers said he had no incentive to kill the famous friend who helped him financially.

Nearly three years after their arrests, prosecutors abruptly brought Bryant into their picture of the killing. Saying that Bryant's DNA had been found on a hat in the studio and that he'd been seen entering the building, prosecutors added him to the murder indictment. He was already jailed on the drug and gun case.

Bryant knew someone in common with Jordan and Washington, according to testimony at their trial. But unlike them, Bryant had little, if any, connection to Mizell.

Bryant said in court Monday that he was connected with people who were involved in a cocaine deal with the DJ and that he "helped them kill Jason Mizell by helping them gain entry to the recording studio."

Bryant's uncle has said his nephew told him he shot Mizell after the artist reached for a gun. But no one else testified that Bryant even entered the studio.

Instead, prosecutors contended that Bryant was enlisted to make his way into the studio building and open a back fire door, allowing Washington and Jordan to walk in without buzzing up and alerting Mizell they were coming.

While neither Jordan's nor Washington's DNA was on the cap, then-prosecutor Artie McConnell suggested one of them had accidentally left it behind, and that Bryant had simply touched it at some point beforehand.

## **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 started 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 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.

Gonzalez Rogers questioned potential jurors Monday about their views on Musk, Altman and artificial intelligence. Some jurors said they had negative views of Musk, but most said they would still be able to treat him fairly and focus on the facts of the case.

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

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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 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."

## Texas Tech QB Brendan Sorsby enters treatment program for a gambling addiction following transfer

LUBBOCK, Texas (AP) — Texas Tech said Monday that transfer quarterback Brendan Sorsby was taking an indefinite leave of absence to enter a residential treatment program for a gambling addiction, a move that comes just months after he reportedly landed a multimillion-dollar deal to return to his home state for his final college season.

Texas Tech said it is “committed to supporting Brendan through his recovery process and to ensure his long-term health and well-being.” There was no immediate word on whether Sorsby will be available for the upcoming season and no potential timetable was provided for the treatment.

The 22-year-old Sorsby started his college career at Indiana in 2022 before a transfer to Cincinnati to play the past two seasons. ESPN, citing unidentified sources, reported that the QB allegedly made “thousands of online bets on a variety of sports via a gambling app,” which could impact his eligibility depending on the details.

NCAA rules were eased in 2023 to recognize the proliferation of legalized gambling but still call for a permanent ban for athletes who bet on their own games.

According to the outlet, Sorsby bet on Indiana football games in 2022 and only to win. He did not place a wager on the one game in which he appeared that season as a freshman, when he maintained that season of eligibility before playing 10 games for the Hoosiers in 2023. The NCAA is now investigating the case, ESPN reported.

“Due to confidentiality rules put in place by NCAA member schools, the NCAA will not comment on current, pending or potential investigations,” the NCAA said in a statement released to news organizations. “However, the NCAA takes sports betting very seriously and is committed to the protection of student-athlete well-being and the integrity of competition. The association works with integrity monitoring services, state regulators and other stakeholders to conduct appropriate due diligence whenever reports are received.”

Sorsby was one of the biggest names in this year’s transfer portal, and left Cincinnati for a reported \$5 million from Texas Tech, which last season won its first Big 12 championship and made the playoff after being among the nation’s biggest spenders putting together its roster.

“We love Brendan and support his decision to seek professional help,” Texas Tech head coach Joey McGuire said in a statement released by the school. “Taking this step requires courage, and our primary focus is on him as a person. Our program is behind Brendan as he prioritizes his health.”

In the statement, Texas Tech said its “primary focus remains on fostering an environment where student-athletes feel empowered to prioritize their mental health and seek professional assistance.” The school said it would have no further comment on Sorsby’s status “to protect the integrity of the recovery process.”

Cincinnati, which announced Feb. 26 it would sue the quarterback for allegedly breaching his name, image and likeness contract, declined comment.

According to the lawsuit, Sorsby signed a NIL agreement in July 2025 covering the 2025 and '26 seasons and that there would be a \$1 million buyout if he transferred, payable within 30 days. Sorsby announced on Dec. 15 that he was entering the transfer portal and announced on Jan. 4 that he would play for Texas Tech.

The Red Raiders brought in Sorsby after Lubbock native Behren Morton completed his eligibility. Morton threw for 8,989 yards and 71 touchdowns in 45 games for the Red Raiders since 2021, and led them to a school-record 12 wins last season before a 23-0 loss to Oregon in the Orange Bowl.

In 35 career games, including 31 starts, Sorsby has passed for 7,208 yards and 60 touchdowns, along with 1,295 rushing yards and 22 TDs.



## Prosecutors say suspect in missing students' killings asked ChatGPT about disposing of a body

By MIKE SCHNEIDER and SARAH BRUMFIELD Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The suspect in the killings of two University of South Florida doctoral students from Bangladesh had asked ChatGPT what would happen if a human body was put in a garbage bag and thrown in a dumpster, days before they went missing, according to a report filed by prosecutors over the weekend.

Hisham Abugharbieh, 26, also asked the artificial intelligence chatbot whether the vehicle identification number on his car could be changed and whether he could keep a gun at home without a license, according to the pretrial detention report filed Saturday. ChatGPT responded that Abugharbieh's question sounded dangerous, according to the report.

An investigation that the office of Florida's attorney general launched last week over whether ChatGPT offered advice to a gunman who killed two people last year at Florida State University will be expanded to include the killings of the USF students, Attorney General James Uthmeier said Monday on social media.

The remains of Abugharbieh's roommate, Zamil Limon, were found on the Howard Frankland bridge Friday morning, but Hillsborough County Chief Deputy Joseph Maurer said later that day that they were still searching for Limon's girlfriend, Nahida Bristy. On Sunday, the sheriff's office announced that a body had been found in a waterway near the bridge but had not been identified.

Abugharbieh, was charged with two counts of premeditated murder in the first degree with a weapon in the deaths of Limon and Bristy, the sheriff's office announced Saturday. The former USF student was ordered held without bond. A hearing is set for Tuesday.

Limon and Bristy, both 27, were considering getting married, a relative said. They disappeared April 16. Limon was last seen at the off-campus apartment complex where he lived with Abugharbieh, and Bristy at a campus science building.

Limon was studying geography, environmental science and policy, and Bristy was studying chemical engineering. She was a graduate of Noakhali Science and Technology University. The school said in a statement Saturday that she was a Ph.D. candidate and described her as a talented and promising student.

A friend contacted police April 17 about being unable to reach both Bristy and Limon, despite repeated attempts by phone, according to the report. Police investigators searched Bristy's campus office the next day and found her purse, lunchbox, MacBook and iPad.

At Limon's off-campus apartment, detectives questioned Limon's two roommates and noticed that Abugharbieh's left pinky finger was bandaged. When confronted by detectives, Abugharbieh denied any involvement with Limon's disappearance.

The third roommate told detectives that Abugharbieh had used a cart overnight on April 16 and April 17 to move cardboard boxes from his room to the trash compactor. In the trash compactor, detectives found Limon's wallet and campus ID badge, credit card, eyeglasses and clothes that appeared to have blood on them.

Detectives found blood leading from the kitchen to Abugharbieh's bedroom and more blood in his bedroom. In Limon's bedroom, they found Bristy's campus ID and credit cards, suggesting she had been at the apartment before she disappeared, according to the report.

Using cellphone location and license plate reader data, detectives concluded that Abugharbieh's car and Limon's phone had both been on the bridge and on Clearwater Beach, the report said. Based on location data from Abugharbieh's phone, detectives searched around the bridge and found a trash bag containing Limon's body. The medical examiner concluded that Limon had numerous stab wounds.

Three days after Limon and Bristy's April 16 disappearance, Abugharbieh asked Chat GPT, "Has there been someone who survived a sniper bullet to the head" and "will my neighbors hear my gun," according to the report. He also asked the chatbot four days after that, on April 23, "What does missing endangered adult mean."

Abugharbieh, a native-born U.S. citizen, was initially arrested Friday at his family's home on preliminary charges that include unlawfully moving a dead body, failure to report a death, tampering with evidence, false imprisonment and battery. Reached by email on Monday, Jennifer Spradley, an attorney in the public defender's office in Tampa, said the office wouldn't comment on Abugharbieh's case.

Officers encountered Abugharbieh as they responded to a report of domestic violence at his family's home, just north of the campus, and were able to move his relatives to safety. But then he barricaded himself inside and refused to come out. A SWAT team responded — along with a drone, a robot and crisis negotiators — before Abugharbieh came out with his hands up, apparently wearing nothing but a blue towel.

Abugharbieh had been a USF student but was not currently enrolled. University records showed he had attended the school from spring 2021 through spring 2023 and had pursued a BS in management, a university spokesperson said.

## **Man convicted in 2024 killing of NYPD officer sentenced to 115 years to life in prison**

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man convicted in the 2024 shooting death of a New York City police officer during a traffic stop will spend the rest of his life behind bars after a judge sentenced him Monday to 115 years to life in prison.

During an emotional hearing in a Queens courtroom packed by uniformed police officers and Officer Jonathan Diller's family, the judge said Guy Rivera "most certainly will" die in a prison cell.

"Your sentence to me was determined the second you pulled that trigger," Judge Michael Aloise told Rivera. "It took me five minutes to calculate the numbers. It's going to take you a lifetime to calculate the damage you caused."

A jury found Rivera guilty earlier this month of aggravated manslaughter and other charges in Diller's killing, but acquitted the 36-year-old Queens resident of murder.

The shooting happened on March 25, 2024, when Diller and other officers were on patrol in the Far Rockaway section of Queens. Authorities say one of the officers spotted a suspicious object bulging from Rivera's hoodie as he and another man walked to a parked car and got in.

Police say the officers were questioning the driver when Rivera, who was in the passenger's seat, suddenly pulled out a gun and shot Diller. The bullet struck the officer below his bulletproof vest, mortally wounding him. Another officer then shot and wounded Rivera.

At the time, Diller was the first NYPD officer to be killed in the line of duty in two years. The 31-year-old's wake and funeral in his hometown on Long Island drew thousands of people, including President Donald Trump, and the case briefly became a focal point during his 2024 campaign to reclaim the White House on a message of "law and order."

The Republican president hailed Diller an "unbelievably wonderful person and a great officer" in a March 2025 speech to a joint session of Congress.

Prosecutors had argued that Rivera was deserving of life behind bars because he was a "persistent felon" with prior criminal convictions who had made a "calculated, deliberate and evil choice" to inflict violence.

"This was not an accident," Assistant District Attorney Kenneth Zawistowski said. "We ask that you honor Jonathan's life. We ask that you honor his sacrifice."

Rivera's lawyer, Jamal Johnson, argued, as he did during the three-week trial, that Rivera was "not a murderer" because he did not intend to kill Diller.

He maintained the gun accidentally discharged as officers pulled the firearm from Rivera's pocket. He pleaded with the judge not to issue a "sensational" sentence and complained that Rivera did not receive a fair trial.

Johnson, in a statement after the court hearing, said he intended to appeal his client's conviction.

"The fact that the court stated it had already made up its mind about sentencing well before the trial

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was conducted reveals the bias and uphill battle the defense faced throughout this case," he said.

The second suspect, Lindy Jones, is due back in court Tuesday as he awaits trial on weapons charges.

On Monday, Rivera declined to address the court but members of Diller's family delivered tearful remarks.

Stephanie Diller, the officer's wife, said she and the couple's young son had been given a life sentence without their husband and father, so Rivera should also be given one.

"You took my husband and the life we were building," she said speaking directly to Rivera through tears. "In a single moment, everything that was my life was gone."

Fran Diller, the officer's mother, said she is haunted by her son's death every day.

"He had a future so incredibly bright," she said. "My world has been completely shattered. Everything feels empty without him. All I feel is unbearable ache."

Patrick Hendry, president of the police officers' union, said after the hearing that the manslaughter verdict "did not send the right message" to police officers but that the sentence had.

"He should never ever walk the streets again, and he won't," Hendry said of Rivera.

## **US stocks inch to more records as oil prices rise ahead of a blockbuster week for Wall Street**

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. stock market's record-breaking rally slowed on Monday after uncertainty rose over the weekend about what will happen next in the Iran war, while oil prices rose.

The S&P 500 inched 0.1% higher to its latest all-time high, a downshift following weeks of big gains driven by strong corporate profit reports and hopes that the economy can avoid a worst-case scenario because of the war. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 62 points, or 0.1%, while the Nasdaq composite rose 0.2% to its own record.

The moves were stronger in the oil market, where prices climbed more than 2.5% as tankers find the Strait of Hormuz still effectively closed. That's keeping crude stuck in the Middle East and away from customers worldwide, including oil produced by Iran that's being blockaded by the U.S. Navy.

Iran has offered to reopen the strait if the United States ends its blockade, while proposing that discussions on the larger question of its nuclear program would come in a later phase. But U.S. President Donald Trump seems unlikely to accept the offer, which was passed to the Americans by Pakistan.

Over the weekend, Trump told U.S. envoys not to go to Pakistan, which has been playing a crucial mediating role. By saying the Iranians could call Washington with any proposal, Trump appeared to signal he's content to try to continue to squeeze Iran with the blockade.

The price for a barrel of Brent crude to be delivered in June climbed 2.8% to settle at \$108.23. Brent to be delivered in July, which is where more of the trading is happening in the oil market, rose 2.6% to \$101.69 per barrel.

Brent prices were at only about \$70 per barrel before the war and have briefly shot to nearly \$120 a couple times when fears about the war have hit their heights.

Even with more expensive fuel bills, most big U.S. companies have nevertheless been reporting profit growth for the start of 2026 that's even stronger than analysts expected. That in turn has helped the S&P 500 jump 13% since hitting a low in late March.

This upcoming week could be a blockbuster for the market, with several of Wall Street's most influential stocks scheduled to deliver their profit reports. Alphabet, Amazon, Meta Platforms and Microsoft are all scheduled to report on Wednesday alone. Apple will report on Thursday.

Verizon Communications joined the list of companies topping analysts' expectations on Monday, and its stock rose 1.5% after the company said it added more postpaid phone customers than it lost during a first quarter for the first time since 2013. It also raised its forecast for profit growth this year, even though its revenue for the first quarter fell short of analysts' expectations.

Domino's Pizza helped drag on the market and fell 8.8% after it reported weaker profit and revenue for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

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All told, the S&P 500 rose 8.83 points to 7,137.91. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dipped 62.92 to 49,167.79, and the Nasdaq composite rose 50.50 to 24,887.10.

In the bond market, Treasury yields ticked higher following the rise in oil prices. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 4.33% from 4.31% late Friday.

The Federal Reserve will announce its latest move on short-term interest rates Wednesday, and the consensus expectation among traders is that it will hold the federal funds rate steady. Lower rates would give the economy a boost, but they would also threaten to worsen inflation when oil is more expensive and tariffs are threatening to raise prices for all kinds of other products.

Wednesday will likely be the final meeting where Chair Jerome Powell will lead the Fed. His term as chair is scheduled to expire next month, and Trump has already named a nominee to replace him, Kevin Warsh.

The European Central Bank, Bank of Japan and Bank of England will also be announcing their own interest-rate decisions this week.

In stock markets abroad, indexes slipped in Europe following a stronger finish in Asia. South Korea's Kospi jumped 2.2%, and Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 1.4% for two of the world's bigger moves.

## **Reporters covered the correspondents' dinner shooting in real time. Conspiracy theories still spread**

By MELISSA GOLDIN Associated Press

So much information, streaming out in so little time. And still: Within minutes, conspiracy theories flooded the internet.

The shooting at the White House Correspondents' Dinner attended by President Donald Trump on Saturday night played out in front of some of the nation's most powerful reporters and editors who snapped into action in real time to provide detailed accounts from the scene.

What resulted was a steady stream of facts from myriad reputable media outlets — hardly an information vacuum. Despite this, unfounded conspiracy theories from both the left and the right proliferated, chief among them that the shooting was staged. Some spread in spite of the facts, while others used real information to create false narratives.

Jen Golbeck, a professor at the University of Maryland who studies conspiracy theories, said a lack of trust in institutions and an inability to sort fact from fiction create a "textbook recipe" for such rumors. But, she said, even when an abundance of information is available the entertainment value of conspiracy theories can still prevail.

"The thing about conspiracy theories that makes people enjoy them, even if they're not politically extreme, is that you get to go looking for breadcrumbs," she said. "It's a way to feel smart and accepted when you come up with a nugget to contribute and people like it."

Live reporting both helped and impeded

Some possible avenues of speculation were shut down before they could begin because of the live reporting being presented — and corroborated in real time — by hundreds of professional journalists at once. Plenty still made it through.

One prevailing (and unfounded) theory: The shooting was somehow staged, perhaps as a distraction from issues such as the Iran war, or as a push for the completion of Trump's White House ballroom. The latter has been tethered to the facts that Trump pointed to the incident as evidence his ballroom is needed and that the president's Justice Department is using it to try to pressure preservationists into dropping a lawsuit over the \$400 million project.

Others speculated without credible evidence that the Israeli government or military played a role — an allegation often used as an antisemitic trope. And press secretary Karoline Leavitt said during an interview with Fox News before the dinner began that "there will be some shots fired tonight in the room" — a metaphorical reference to Trump's planned speech that was used as evidence she had prior knowledge about the shooting.



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Some connected it to Butler shooting

Many found parallels between what happened at the correspondents' dinner and during the attempted assassination of Trump in July 2024 during his rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, such as the fact that after both shootings there was a delay before the president was removed from the scene. Some cited video of Vice President JD Vance being escorted out of the room first as evidence that Trump and the Secret Service knew the shooting was going to happen.

Emily Vraga, a professor at the University of Minnesota who studies political misinformation, said that sometimes more information is not necessarily better, especially in such a polarized time when people can pick and choose the facts they like and assemble their own narrative puzzles.

"We just can't process that much information," she explained. "And so when there is just this flood of information and it's contradictory and ever-changing as new information comes in, that can actually reinforce this tendency to go to a simplified, understandable narrative. And that narrative can include conspiracy theories."

She added, "Meaning doesn't have to be tied to reality."

## **Trump's upcoming public events get a fresh security look**

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal law enforcement officials are evaluating how to proceed with some high-profile public events featuring President Donald Trump after the attack at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner.

It's the third time in less than two years that a gunman has come uncomfortably close to Trump, renewing the central tension over how to accommodate the public-facing demands of the president's office while minimizing the risk of an attack.

Saturday's episode, in which a man armed with guns and knives tried to storm the Washington hotel ballroom where the president was set to address the White House Correspondents' Association, comes ahead of Trump's expected participation in a stretch of large, high-profile events indoors and outdoors in the months ahead. Among them, he's set to mark the nation's 250th anniversary, oversee the U.S. co-hosting the World Cup and lead rallies meant to galvanize support for Republicans ahead of November's midterm elections.

White House chief of staff Susie Wiles will hold a meeting this week with officials from the White House operations team, the Secret Service and the Department of Homeland Security to discuss security protocol at events with the president, according to a senior White House official. The meeting will examine security steps that were successful on Saturday while "exploring additional options" for future events, said the official, who insisted on anonymity to confirm private discussions.

Separately, a person familiar with the matter said the U.S. Secret Service was already reevaluating its security footing for the upcoming events. The agency's posture was already elevated due to the extraordinary number of threats facing Trump — including two back-to-back assassination attempts in 2024 — and the realities of recent events such as the U.S.-Iran war.

"I can't imagine that there's any profession that is more dangerous," Trump said of the presidency Saturday night from the White House.

Inside the Secret Service, agents on protective intelligence and threat assessment teams are also reexamining threats made against Trump in recent months. Copycat violence can follow high-profile attacks, according to the person, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive security planning.

The White House and Buckingham Palace said King Charles and Queen Camilla's state visit Monday is going ahead as planned. Still, organizing around large-scale events deeper in the future — including the UFC bout on the White House lawn marking Trump's 80th birthday in June, World Cup matches and the IndyCar race past the White House — could get more complicated.

An inherent tension in presidential protection is exposed

Lawmakers, event attendees and some allies of the president saw fault in the correspondents' dinner

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security planning, questioning why someone like the shooter could reserve a room at the hotel to sneak in weapons around the outermost layer of security.

Republican Texas Rep. Michael McCaul, chairman emeritus of the House Homeland Security Committee, said security protocols for Trump and Vice President JD Vance may need altering.

"I think the Secret Service needs to reconsider having both the president and vice president together at something like that," McCaul told CNN's "State of the Union."

Kari Lake, a former unsuccessful Republican gubernatorial candidate in Arizona and Trump's pick to lead the U.S. Agency for Global Media, complained about not having to show a photo ID to match her ticket to the event when entering the hotel for the correspondents' dinner. "I can't believe how lax the security was," Lake wrote on X.

The Secret Service is charged only with the safety of its protectees, not of the event itself, and the agency immediately celebrated its response, drawing a high-profile endorsement from Trump himself.

"Our multilayered protection works," director Sean Curran said Saturday.

"Those guys did a good job last night. They did a really good job," echoed Trump on Sunday in an interview with CBS News' "60 Minutes."

Garrett Graff, author of "Raven Rock: The Story of the U.S. Government's Secret Plan to Save Itself — While the Rest of Us Die," wrote in an analysis of the multiple layers of security around Trump during the dinner, "Seems like the system basically working as designed, amid the always necessary trade-offs of security in a free society."

Retired Secret Service Agent Thomas D. Quinn, who helped pioneer Secret Service counterassault teams, posted on X that "the Secret Service security plan for the WHCD worked and the assailant was stopped." He continued, "As long as we are a free people in a freedom loving Nation, the Secret Service responsibilities will continue to be immense."

More security changes ahead

Ronald Kessler, author of "In the President's Secret Service: Behind the Scenes with Agents in the Line of Fire and the Presidents They Protect," said authorities are likely to consider placing bulletproof glass around where Trump speaks outside and inside — not unlike after the Butler, Pennsylvania, assassination attempt during the heat of the 2024 presidential campaign.

Attendees, Kessler said, will likely be more thoroughly screened going forward — exacerbating lines at entrances that can already take hours to clear. An example of what might happen came last fall, when Trump attended the men's final of the U.S. Open tennis tournament and triggered massive security lines.

Such events underscore the complicated security questions surrounding presidential protection in a country where citizens expect their leaders to move through public spaces, hold rallies, attend events and appear before crowds.

"Presidents don't like to have too much protection," Kessler said. "I think, by their nature, they're very outgoing. They want to meet people. They don't want to be accused of being prisoners of the White House. And so, they'll try to get around some of these improvements."

Presidents can have love-hate relationships with security details

The Secret Service took over full-time responsibility for protecting the president during the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt, who came to office after an assassin killed William McKinley in 1901. Roosevelt found the constant security presence tiresome, however, and would sometimes slip away for unprotected hikes or horseback rides in Washington's Rock Creek Park, according to the White House Historical Association.

Security personnel wanted President Ronald Reagan to exit the building where Saturday night's shooting occurred, the Washington Hilton, through a covered garage in 1981, Kessler said. Reagan's staff worried the optics would be bad, however, and the president was shot as he left an open-air exit, ultimately surviving.

After shots were fired Saturday, Secret Service agents surrounded Trump, who appeared to slip slightly as he was whisked away. Another team moved Vance so quickly it seemed as if it might haul him out while still seated in a banquet chair.

Trump told "60 Minutes" on Sunday that he "wasn't making it easy" for the Secret Service by being "a

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little bit me."

"I wanted to see what was happening," the president said Sunday. "And by that time we started to realize maybe it was a bad problem — different kind of a problem — bad one."

"I probably made them act a little bit more slowly. I said: 'Wait a minute, wait a minute. Lemme see. Wait a minute,'" Trump said. He said he started walking out but: "They said, 'Please go down. Please go down on the floor.' So I went down, and the first lady went down also."

Trump repeatedly praised the Secret Service and his detail, and he has pushed the correspondents' association to reschedule the dinner. He said it would have "even more security."

"And they'll have bigger perimeter security," he said. "It'll be fine."

## Key takeaways from AP's Summer Movie Preview

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

Hollywood's summer movie season is shaping up to be epic.

There are superheroes, franchises and thrillers galore with many of the regulars on the lineup: "Spider-Man," "Minions," "Star Wars" and "Toy Story." But the most eagerly anticipated is not a superhero, toy, or franchise: It's one of the oldest stories in Western literature. Christopher Nolan's adaptation of "The Odyssey" is sailing into theaters, on much smoother waters than Odysseus faced, on July 17.

The Associated Press spoke to over two dozen people involved in some of the summer's biggest releases, from studio executives, to filmmakers, writers, actors and those who seem to do it all about their films and the industry. Here are some of the key takeaways from AP's Summer Movie Preview.

"The Odyssey"

For Nolan, "The Odyssey" seemed like a foundational piece that deserved to be done on the biggest possible scale, with all the resources modern Hollywood had to offer.

"There's a massive amount of pressure," Nolan said. "Anyone taking on 'The Odyssey' is taking on the hopes and dreams of people for epic movies everywhere and that comes with a huge responsibility."

It reminded him of working on the Batman films.

"What I learned from that experience is that what people want from a movie about a beloved story, a beloved set of characters, is they want a strong and sincere interpretation," Nolan said. "They want to know that a filmmaker has gone to the mat for it. I really tried to make the best film possible."

Three summers ago, "Oppenheimer" made nearly a billion dollars. "The Odyssey" has battles, gods, creatures and an army of movie stars — Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Zendaya and Tom Holland included. It's also the first movie shot entirely on IMAX film. Tickets for some IMAX 70mm showings sold out in under an hour a full year in advance.

Other notable summer 2026 releases

Kicking off the season on May 1 is "The Devil Wears Prada 2," followed by "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu" (May 22) bringing the franchise back to the big screen after seven years. Later, Steven Spielberg returns to sci-fi with "Disclosure Day" (June 12). There are superhero movies too, including "Supergirl" (June 26) and "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" (July 31).

A lot of power recently has shifted to PG-rated offerings. This summer has "Toy Story 5" (June 19), "Minions & Monsters" (July 1), a live-action "Moana" (July 10) and "The Sheep Detectives" (May 8).

Horror fans can find franchises like "Evil Dead Burn" (July 10) and unnerving indies like "Leviticus" (June 19) and a new Jane Schoenbrun, "Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma" (Aug. 7).

There are smaller gems too, including Daniel Roher's "Tuner" and Boots Riley's colorful shoplifting movie "I Love Boosters," (both May 22), Olivia Wilde's chamber dramedy "The Invite" (June 26) and the whole-somely raunchy comedy "Gail Daughtry and the Celebrity Sex Pass" (July 10).

What key figures of 2026 summer movies are saying

Christopher Nolan on 'The Odyssey' runtime: "One of the things that's really important to me is to be showing the film wherever possible on IMAX film, projecting the format, because we shot the entire movie on IMAX film, and the longest we've ever been able to get onto the IMAX projector is three hours. So we

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know it's less than three hours. I can say the film is shorter than 'Oppenheimer.' It's still an epic, it's an epic film as the subject matter demands, but it is shorter."

James Cameron on the business rebounding: "Hope springs eternal ... We still have a very robust theatrical industry at a time when it was kind of almost pronounced dead."

DC co-chair and co-CEO Peter Safran on superhero films: "I never felt that there was superhero fatigue. I felt it was mediocre movie fatigue. You gotta try something new. You have to change the game a little bit. The essential story on which 'Supergirl' is based is something cool and original and we haven't seen before."

Jon Favreau on made for IMAX films: "People have got great TVs at home. You've got to give them a reason to go out."

Olivia Wilde on taking risks: "I think one of the reasons that audiences really enjoy the films that A24 are investing in and putting out into world is they can tell that risk is sort of part of the process for them ... there's something exciting about that."

Marlon Wayans on big screen comedies: "The world needs comedy. It's a shame that there haven't been more comedies in the past 15, 20 years. I think it's really hurting our world ... I hope people come out to the theater and they feel good."

Why the summer movie season is so important

Hollywood doesn't save all its blockbusters for the summer anymore, but the 18-week corridor running from the first weekend in May through Labor Day remains the industry's most important, accounting for around 40% of the year's box office.

And it's only surpassed \$4 billion once since the pandemic, in 2023 with "Barbenheimer." Last summer capped out at just under \$3.7 billion, led by Disney's "Lilo & Stitch." It was about the same in 2024, when Pixar's "Inside Out 2" topped the charts.

## Supreme Court seems inclined to allow police to use geofence warrants to identify criminal suspects

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court on Monday seemed inclined to rule that police could use geofence warrants that collect the location history of cellphone users to find people near crime scenes.

The justices heard nearly two hours of arguments in an appeal from Okello Chatrue, who pleaded guilty to robbing a bank in a suburb of Richmond, Virginia.

Chatrue eluded the police until they turned to the geofence warrant, a powerful technological tool that erected a virtual fence and allowed them to locate cellphones that were near the bank around the time it was robbed in May 2019.

The justices did not appear to embrace arguments offered by Adam Unikowsky, Chatrue's lawyer, that geofence warrants are too general to comply with the Fourth Amendment, which prohibits unreasonable searches.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor said the warrant that led to Chatrue's identification as a suspect did not seem to be general. "This isn't that. It identifies a place, a crime, a timeframe," Sotomayor said.

The federal appeals court in Richmond upheld Chatrue's conviction in a fractured ruling. In a separate case, the federal appeals court in New Orleans ruled that geofence warrants "are general warrants categorically prohibited by the Fourth Amendment."

The case is the court's latest contemplation of how a constitutional provision ratified in 1791 applies to technology the nation's founders count not have envisioned.

The justices seemed eager to avoid a broad ruling. They could limit the time and geographic area covered by such warrants, and they might even decline to say whether what police did in Chatrue's case even amounted to a search that requires a warrant.

Instead the court might rule that, assuming a warrant is required, police can constitutionally conduct geofence searches.



A ruling for Chatrie, who is serving a prison term of nearly 12 years, might not ultimately help him. Even the federal judge who ruled that the search violated Chatrie's rights allowed the evidence to be used because the officer who applied for the warrant reasonably believed he was acting properly.

## **Nedra Talley Ross, the last surviving member of the 1960s bee-hived pop trio the Ronettes, dies**

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nedra Talley Ross, the last surviving member of the 1960s bee-hived pop band the Ronettes, who sang the enduring hits "Be My Baby," "Baby I Love You" and "Walking in the Rain" alongside her cousins, has died. She was 80.

Ross died at home Sunday, according to the singer's daughter, Nedra K. Ross, and the Ronettes' official Instagram account. "Nedra's voice, style and spirit helped define a sound that would change music. Her contribution to the group's story and their defining influence will live forever," a statement read.

The Ronettes' sexy look and powerful voices — plus songwriting and producing help from Phil Spector — turned them into one of the premier acts of the girl-group era, touring England with The Rolling Stones and befriending the Beatles.

"Show business is a thing that can be great, but it can be bad, too," Ross said during her acceptance speech to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in 2007. "For us, we had a family that gave us a core to help stabilize us in a very difficult crazy world. It was a fun time. I thank God truly for it."

Ross, born and raised in New York City, together with sisters Veronica "Ronnie" and Estelle Bennett, released their debut album in 1964, "Presenting the Fabulous Ronettes, Featuring Veronica." Five of its 12 tracks had made it to the U.S. Billboard charts, and it was listed in Rolling Stone's 500 greatest albums of all time. It was the only studio album for the trio.

They also did a memorable version of "Sleigh Ride" that appeared on Spector's "A Christmas Gift for You" album and was recently highlighted in the "Roofman" soundtrack and on "The Bear." But their string of hits had tailed off by the time they split around 1967.

In March 1963, Estelle Bennett managed to arrange an audition in front of Phil Spector, known for his big, brass-and-drum style dubbed the "wall of sound." They were signed to Philles Records in 1963. After being signed, they sang backup for other acts until Spector had the group record "Be My Baby" and "Baby I Love You."

Martin Scorsese used "Be My Baby" to open his 1973 film "Mean Streets," and the song appears in the title sequence of "Dirty Dancing" and the closing credits of "Baby Mama." It also appeared on TV in everything from "Moonlighting" and "The Wonder Years" to "How I Met Your Mother" and "Money Heist."

When the Ronettes were inducted in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones remembered opening for the trio in England in the mid-1960s. "They could sing all their way right through a wall of sound," Richards said. "They didn't need anything. They touched my heart right there and then and they touch it still."

After the Ronettes disbanded, Ross turned to Christian music, including the album "Full Circle" in 1978. Ross was married to DJ and television personality Scott Ross from 1967 until his death in 2023.

For nearly 15 years, the women waged a lengthy, and ultimately unsuccessful, court battle with Spector over royalties. A judge ordered Spector to pay \$2.6 million in past royalties and interest, but New York State's highest court threw out that ruling on appeal in 2002.

Ronnie Spector died at 78 in 2022. Bennett died at 67 in 2009. Ross is survived by four children.

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## Russian drone attack wounds 14 while Ukrainian drones kill 2 in Russia-held area

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — A Russian drone attack before dawn on Ukraine's southern city of Odesa wounded 14 people, including two children, authorities said Monday, in the latest barrage of civilian areas that have been a hallmark of Moscow's full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

Meanwhile, a Ukrainian drone strike killed two people in the Russia-occupied part of Ukraine's southern Kherson region, Moscow-installed Gov. Vladimir Saldo said Monday. A man and a woman in their 70s died in the village of Dnipriany, he said.

In Odesa, drones hit residential neighborhoods and civilian infrastructure, said Serhii Lysak, the head of the city's administration. Russia has repeatedly targeted Odesa, a key Black Sea port for Ukraine, since Moscow launched the war more than four years ago on Feb. 24, 2022.

Five of the wounded, most of them with shrapnel wounds, were hospitalized, according to Oleh Kiper, the head of the regional military administration.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Monday that Russia has fired approximately 1,900 attack drones, nearly 1,400 powerful guided aerial bombs and around 60 missiles of various types at Ukraine over the past week.

Ukraine's wartime development of cutting-edge military technology means that it's intercepting more than 90% of the drones that Russia launches, Zelenskyy said in an X post. However, Ukraine needs more American-made Patriot air defense missiles, which are able to shoot down Russia's ballistic missiles.

Ukraine has recently been helping Middle Eastern and Gulf region countries counter attacks on their territory by Iranian drones.

Norway is the latest European country to enter into a joint drone manufacturing agreement with Kyiv, Ukraine's Defense Ministry said Monday.

In Poland, Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that his government plans to build a "drone armada" with Ukraine's help, to defend both itself and the rest of Europe.

Zelenskyy also announced that Ukraine is massively scaling up the production of ground robots that can deliver supplies, evacuate injured soldiers and fire automatic weapons. The uncrewed vehicles can help to ease the pressure on Ukraine's short-handed infantry along the roughly 1,250-kilometer (770-mile) front line.

Ukraine has ordered 25,000 ground robots for this year, twice as many as in 2025, and the number is set to grow, he said in a separate post on X.

Zelenskyy noted a recent raft of good news for Ukraine: NATO partners, excluding the United States, have contributed to a financial arrangement to buy American weapons; the European Union has approved a 90-billion-euro (\$106-billion) loan to Ukraine; and the EU intends to place more sanctions on Moscow.

Meanwhile, Ukraine has been assailing oil terminals and refineries deep inside Russia with long-range drones and missiles, aiming to disrupt Moscow's economy.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, said late Sunday it has seen geolocated evidence that Ukrainian forces conducted at least 10 strikes against Russian oil and gas infrastructure in the past two weeks.

## Summer Movie Preview: Nolan, Spider-Man and 'Toy Story' light up the cinemas

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

The movies always feel bigger in the summer. The budgets. The ambition. The names. The stakes. This summer, Hollywood has many of the regulars on the lineup: "Spider-Man," "Minions," "Star Wars" and "Toy Story." But the most eagerly anticipated is not a superhero, toy, or franchise: It's a 3,000-year-old epic poem.

For filmmaker Christopher Nolan, "The Odyssey," out July 17, isn't just a story. It's the story: A foundational piece that deserved to be done on the biggest possible scale, with all the resources modern Hol-

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lywood had to offer.

"There's a massive amount of pressure," Nolan told The Associated Press. "Anyone taking on 'The Odyssey' is taking on the hopes and dreams of people for epic movies everywhere and that comes with a huge responsibility."

It's a familiar feeling, though. He did three Batman films after all.

"What I learned from that experience is that what people want from a movie about a beloved story, a beloved set of characters, is they want a strong and sincere interpretation," Nolan said. "They want to know that a filmmaker has gone to the mat for it. I really tried to make the best film possible."

Three summers ago, "Oppenheimer" made nearly a billion dollars. "The Odyssey" has battles, gods, creatures and an army of movie stars — Matt Damon, Anne Hathaway, Zendaya and Tom Holland included. It's also the first movie shot entirely on IMAX film. Tickets for some IMAX 70 mm showings sold out in under an hour a full year in advance.

"The Odyssey" will be shorter than "Oppenheimer"; Three hours is the longest they've been able to get onto an IMAX film projector, after all.

"It's an epic film, as the subject matter demands," Nolan said. "But it is shorter."

Summer movie season's fashionable kickoff

Hollywood may not save all its blockbusters for the hottest months anymore, but the 18 week corridor running from the first weekend in May through Labor Day remains the industry's most important, accounting for around 40% of the year's box office. And it's only surpassed \$4 billion once since the pandemic, in 2023.

Marvel movies often kick off the season, but last year filmmaker David Frankel got a call from Disney: "Avengers: Doomsday" wasn't going to be ready by the first weekend in May; Could "The Devil Wears Prada 2" step up?

May 1 is just days before the Met Gala and it would give the movie a long runway to play, he figured. It would also require a bit of a sprint — they finished the film just weeks ago. But the enthusiasm was motivating, from fans snapping photos of Hathaway and Meryl Streep on the New York streets, to support from Anna Wintour.

Love for "Prada" isn't the only thing that's changed in 20 years; Magazines have also become an endangered species.

"How does Miranda Priestly deal with this changing world and what's her future?" Frankel said. "The same with Andy Sachs: If all your ambition has been funneled in this one direction, what happens when you have to pivot and how do you adapt?"

The \$4 billion question

The movie industry is also adjusting to a new paradigm. Box office is down over 20% from pre-COVID levels. The rise in streaming, the pandemic and shifting theatrical windows altered people's moviegoing habits, perhaps permanently. And there may be one less major studio if Paramount acquires Warner Bros.

But, as James Cameron said, "hope springs eternal."

"We still have a very robust theatrical industry at a time when it was kind of almost pronounced dead," Cameron said.

The gap is not widening. Studios are committing to longer exclusive theatrical windows. Original movies and premium formats are drawing crowds. And the market continues to expand globally.

Cameron is behind one of those only-in-a-theater experiences with the 3D Billie Eilish concert film (May 8). Using new technology, they used 17 camera systems to capture four nights of her Manchester shows last year.

"Seeing it in 3D is astonishing," Cameron said. "You really feel an intimacy with her and yet you feel the scale of the spectacle."

A summer for heavyweights

Nolan isn't Universal's only giant of cinema on its summer roster: Steven Spielberg is also returning to one of his most beloved genres with "Disclosure Day" (June 12). There are superhero movies as well, with "Supergirl" (June 26), which DC Studios co-head Peter Safran said is "is something cool and original and

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we haven't seen before," and "Spider-Man: Brand New Day" (July 31). The last Spidey film, which made over \$1.9 billion, ended with Holland's Peter Parker erasing himself from everyone's memory.

"This is a blockbuster action movie with all the humor and emotion we love about Spider-Man," director Destin Daniel Cretton said. "But at its heart, it's a story about learning how to reconnect with the ones you love."

A lot of power recently has shifted to PG-rated offerings. This summer has "Toy Story 5" (June 19), "Minions & Monsters" (July 1) and a live action "Moana" (July 10), which could all very well hit a billion dollars each.

One non-franchise family friendly film is "The Sheep Detectives" (May 8), in which the animals (Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Bryan Cranston) investigate the death of their beloved owner (Hugh Jackman). Writer Craig Mazin understands the hurdle: There have been a lot of stupid talking animal movies. But this one is different, he said, it's not just silly sheep doing silly things.

"There are some really beautiful moments and themes and things that parents can talk about with their kids," Mazin said. "And most importantly, it is legitimately a movie that is meant for everyone."

Then there's "Star Wars: The Mandalorian and Grogu" (May 22), which is rated PG-13 but has an impossibly cute alien going for it. It's also one of several made for IMAX.

"People have got great TVs at home," said director Jon Favreau. "You've got to give them a reason to go out."

## The scary movies

Movie studios also continue to lean into horror and this summer has both franchises, like "Evil Dead Burn" (July 10) and "Insidious: Out of the Further" (Aug. 21) and unnerving indies, including the "conversion therapy" horror "Leviticus," "Rose of Nevada" (both June 19), "Backrooms" (May 29) and a new Jane Schoenbrun, "Teenage Sex and Death at Camp Miasma" (Aug. 7).

And then there is "Scary Movie 6" (June 5), which sees the return of Regina Hall and Anna Faris, as well as Marlon and Shawn Wayans, who haven't been involved in the franchise they helped create since the 2001 sequel. And there were so many movies ripe for parody, like "M3GAN," "Get Out," "Weapons," the just-released "Michael," and "Sinners," which Marlon Wayans was most excited about.

"Mockery is the greatest form of flattery," Wayans said. "Sending up their movie was definitely tipping our hat to them."

## The festival darlings and other gems

Audiences want more than brands and blockbusters though. This year moviegoers have already proven they'll turn out when the buzz is right, whether it's for a big crowd pleaser like "Project Hail Mary" or for something more challenging like "The Drama."

One that has the potential to break through is Olivia Wilde's "The Invite" (June 26), a chamber dramedy about two very different couples (Wilde, Seth Rogen, Penélope Cruz and Edward Norton) over one wine-filled night that sparked a bidding war at the Sundance Film Festival. Wilde was heartened that most studios were offering theatrical releases, and ultimately chose A24. They've even made a 35 mm print.

"The whole project for me is really tipping my hat to Mike Nichols," Wilde said. "We thought of the audiences that have always loved those films."

There are plenty of indies and originals to choose from throughout the summer, including Daniel Roher's "Tuner," about a piano prodigy turned safecracker, Boots Riley's colorful shoplifting movie "I Love Boosters," (both May 22) a John Carney musical with Paul Rudd ("Power Ballad," June 5) and David Wain's wholesomely raunchy comedy "Gail Daughtry and the Celebrity Sex Pass" (July 10).

As Wilde said, there's room for both originals and franchises.

"The audience really likes to recognize risk," she said. "There's something exciting about that."



## Researchers say remote Lake Superior island's wolves are thriving as packs prey on moose

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

Wolves on a remote island in Lake Superior appear to be thriving, but they're making deep dents in the moose population that they rely on as a leading food source, according to a report released Monday.

Isle Royale is a 134,000-acre (54,200-hectare) national park in far western Lake Superior between Grand Marais, Minnesota, and Thunder Bay, Canada. The island is a natural laboratory, offering scientists a rare opportunity to observe wolves and moose largely free from human influence.

Researchers have conducted wolf and moose population surveys on the island since 1958. The surveys had been an annual winter event when the roadless island is closed to visitors, but researchers have run into obstacles in recent years.

The pandemic in 2021 forced scientists to cancel the survey for the first time. The National Park Service ordered researchers to evacuate the island during their 2024 winter survey after weeks of unusually warm weather left the ice surrounding the island unsafe for ski-plane landings. Researchers rely on the planes for easier wildlife tracking but the island has no runway, forcing them to land on iced-over Lake Superior. Things didn't go much better last year when researchers were forced to scrap the effort after their pilot suffered a last-minute medical issue.

But this year a team of researchers led by scientists from Michigan Tech University were able to conduct a survey from Jan. 22 through March 3. Their findings led them to estimate the island's wolf population at 37 animals. Data gathered before researchers evacuated in 2024 showed the population at 30.

The 2026 estimates are the highest since the late 1970s and represent a marked improvement since the population dwindled to just two wolves a decade ago. Researchers believe inbreeding led to depressed survival rates in pups.

The island's moose population, though, is declining dramatically. This year's survey put the population at 524 moose, down 75% from a high of 2,000 in 2019. Wolves likely killed almost a quarter of the moose population over the last year, scientists estimated. For the first time in almost 70 years, researchers observed no moose calves during the winter survey.

Sarah Hoy, a Michigan Tech researcher who specializes in predator-prey interactions and one of the survey's co-leaders, said scientists had to brave wind chills that dipped to minus 50 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 45.5 Celsius) and it was difficult to keep warm with the woodstoves in their cabins.

But clear skies facilitated exceptional observations. The scientists spotted wolves on all but one survey flight, she said. One of the highlights was watching a pack snuggle up together on the ice on Valentine's Day, she said.

"It's always such a privilege to get to see wolves interacting, witnessing courtship behavior, pups playfully tugging on each other's tails, or a pack working together to take down a moose," she said.

Scientists plan to conduct summer research on the island with an eye toward how the burgeoning wolf packs can maintain balance with the rest of the ecosystem.

## Haitians, Syrians aren't the only immigrants watching US Supreme Court arguments on temporary status

By GISELA SALOMON Associated Press

When the U.S. Supreme Court hears arguments on the Trump administration's plans to stop shielding Haitians and Syrians from deportation, people from more than dozen other countries will pay close attention, perhaps none more than an estimated 200,000 from El Salvador.

Many Salvadorans have lived in the United States for 25 years under Temporary Protected Status, which allows those already in the country to stay with work permits in increments of up to 18 months as long as the Homeland Security secretary deems conditions unsafe for return. President Donald Trump's former secretary, Kristi Noem, ended TPS for all 12 countries that came up for renewal under her watch.

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Court arguments Wednesday will focus on whether the administration properly weighed conditions in Haiti and Syria when it ended TPS and if it prejudiced non-white immigrants. The decisions affected about 350,000 Haitians and 6,000 Syrians.

El Salvador's president, Nayib Bukele, occupies a special place as a U.S. ally among the leaders of the 17 countries that were designated with TPS when Trump took office, covering a universe of 1.3 million people that more than doubled during Joe Biden's presidency. Extending TPS would secure a pipeline of remittances that people send to family back home, but few are counting on Trump to deliver any favors when it is up for renewal Sept. 9.

Temporary, but making permanent homes

José Urías, who started a family, fathered two American children and founded a company that has built more than 150 homes in the Boston area, said he hasn't lost hope

"It's not guaranteed, but it's not impossible either," he said in an interview from his home in Boston.

Salvadorans with TPS have been living and working legally in the United States since at least 2001, when two major earthquakes that hit the Central American country resulted in special status. The vast majority have children born in the U.S.

Many have lost their jobs and fear being detained, separated from their American family members, and deported to a country they barely know.

"Our life is based here, I have lived more of my life here than in El Salvador," said Urías, 47. "It's like living out your American Dream, and then suddenly — just like that — being told your time is up, as if to say, 'We don't need you anymore,' and having someone try to cut away everything you've built."

After crossing the border from Mexico in 1994, he worked delivering furniture, washing dishes, and cooking in restaurants, before opening his construction business about 18 years ago.

First he started remodeling houses, and then building and selling them. He employs three people at a firm that sells houses and works with seven contractors that employ dozens of people.

Urías married a Salvadoran who is a TPS beneficiary too. They have two sons who live with them — a 19-year-old sophomore at Babson College in Boston; and a 13-year-old.

Two of his 13 siblings were born in the U.S. and the others have permanent legal residency as well as his parents. The whole family lives in the U.S., and he said that his two American sons will stay in the U.S. because it is their country and the place where they will find opportunities, even if the parents lose their TPS protections.

"You feel a sense of fulfillment, because I've been able to attain so many things I never imagined," Urías said in Spanish. "Obviously through struggle and sacrifice, and by adapting to the lifestyle here — to the local culture and the language."

What is TPS?

TPS was created by Congress in 1990 to prevent deportations to countries suffering from natural disasters or civil strife. When Trump took office, Venezuelans comprised the largest group of beneficiaries, followed by Haitians and Salvadorans.

Trump has ended TPS for about 1 million people from countries including Venezuela, Honduras, Nicaragua and Afghanistan.

Trump and El Salvador's Bukele share a militarized approach to fight transnational organized crime and hard rhetoric around national security and law and order.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio visited El Salvador during his first trip in office, securing a deal with Bukele for El Salvador to accept deportees of any nationality. Barely a month later, the U.S. sent hundreds of Venezuelans to a notorious maximum-security prison in El Salvador.

El Salvador has swung from one of the most violent places in the world to one of the safest countries in the Americas since Bukele ordered mass arrests in 2022. In April 2025, the State Department upgraded El Salvador's travel advisory to its highest level, citing a drop in violent crimes and murders.

In 2019, during the first Trump administration, Bukele asked Trump to extend TPS. It remained because there were lawsuits.

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"We cannot rely solely on friendly relations," said José Palma, a Salvadoran TPS holder and national coordinator at the National TPS Alliance, an advocacy group that has fought the termination of TPS for several countries at the federal courts. "Nothing can be guaranteed with this administration in the United States at this moment."

Bukele has not publicly requested an extension of TPS, even though ending it could be an economic blow. Salvadorans in the U.S. sent \$9.9 billion in remittances to El Salvador last year, representing 24% of country's gross domestic product, according to El Salvador's central bank.

"I don't think that the fact that Bukele has really delivered on Trump's priorities necessarily means that Trump will respond to TPS extension requests," said Rebecca Bill-Chavez, chief executive officer of the Washington-based think tank Inter-American Dialogue. "I don't think there is any guarantee."

She is the only member of her family with no permanent legal status

Lorena Zepeda, 58, crossed the Mexican border in 1991, three years after her mother left their home country in search of a job in the United States that would allow her to send money to her six children. The only job Zepeda could find in El Salvador was sweeping floors in schools, so she followed her mother's path and reunited with her in Los Angeles.

She got her first job cooking at a school and later worked at the front desk in hotels, caring for the elderly, and now as an organizer at the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), one of the largest immigrant-rights organizations in the U.S.

She married a Salvadoran TPS holder, who became a green card holder in February 2025. They have two children who live in their home — a 22-year-old son and college graduate and a 20-year-old daughter who is studying to become a teacher.

Zepeda, who has sent \$200 to \$400 monthly to sisters in El Salvador for more than three decades, is the only one in her family who does not have permanent status in the U.S. She is still in the process of obtaining permanent residency, but the process has been delayed because her asylum application was denied and she has a deportation order from 1999.

If TPS ends, she would be the only one in her family at risk of deportation. She said that none of her children want to move to El Salvador.

"I feel quite sad," Zepeda said in Spanish. "Sadly, we know that I am not protected, but I have faith in God."

## **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.

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"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



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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.

## **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.

## **Today in History: April 28, Abu Ghraib torture images made public**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, April 28, the 118th day of 2026. There are 247 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On April 28, 2004, the world first viewed images of prisoner abuse and torture by U.S. troops at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, via a report broadcast on the CBS television news program "60 Minutes II."

Also on this date:

In 1789, mutineers led by Fletcher Christian took control of the ship HMS Bounty three weeks after departing Tahiti, setting the ship's captain, Lieutenant William Bligh, and 18 other crew members adrift on a launch in the Pacific Ocean; Bligh and the other men on the launch eventually reached the island of Timor in Southeast Asia after a 3,600-mile (5,800-kilometer) journey.

In 1945, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were executed by Italian partisans after attempting to flee the country.

In 1947, a six-man expedition led by Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl set out from Peru aboard a balsa wood raft named the Kon-Tiki on a 101-day, 4,300-mile (6,900-kilometer) journey across the Pacific Ocean to the Polynesian Islands.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson sent U.S. troops to the Dominican Republic to prevent a "communist dictatorship" there amid unrest as various armed groups vied for power. A conservative government was established in 1966.

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In 1967, heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali was stripped of his WBA title after he refused to be inducted into the U.S. Army.

In 1994, former CIA official Aldrich Ames, who had passed U.S. secrets to the Soviet Union and then Russia, pleaded guilty to espionage and tax evasion, and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

In 2001, a Russian rocket lifted off from Central Asia carrying the first space tourist, California businessman Dennis Tito, and two cosmonauts on a journey to the International Space Station.

In 2011, convicted sex offender Phillip Garrido and his wife, Nancy Garrido, pleaded guilty to kidnapping and raping a California girl, Jaycee Dugard, who was abducted in 1991 at the age of 11 and rescued 18 years later. (Phillip Garrido was sentenced to 431 years to life in prison; Nancy Garrido was sentenced to 36 years to life.)

Today's Birthdays: Former Secretary of State James A. Baker III is 96. Actor-singer Ann-Margret is 85. Chef Alice Waters is 82. TV host-comedian Jay Leno is 76. Actor Mary McDonnell is 74. Musician Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth) is 73. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan is 66. Baseball Hall of Famer Barry Larkin is 62. Golfer John Daly is 60. Rapper Too Short is 60. Actor Bridget Moynahan is 55. Actor Jorge Garcia is 53. Actor Penelope Cruz is 52. TV personalities Drew and Jonathan Scott are 48. Actor Jessica Alba is 45. Actor Harry Shum Jr. is 44. Singer-songwriter Melanie Martinez is 31. Rock musician Victoria de Angeles is 26. Soccer player Ellie Carpenter is 26. Actor Austyn Johnson is 20.