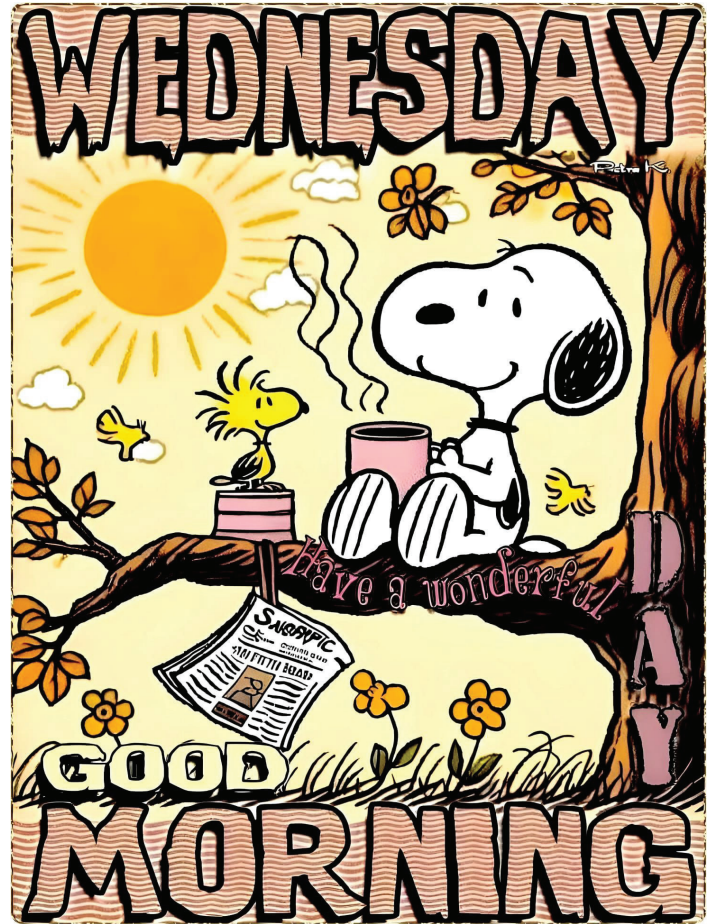


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Wednesday, May 13

Pickleball, 5:30 p.m., elementary gym
JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena
Baseball, Softball and t-ball parent meeting, 6 p.m.
Groton Community Center
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.
High school baseball in Groton vs. Miller Outlaws (Game was tied at 1 - got postponed due to rain, will ne played in Groton today.)

Thursday, May 14

NEC Track Meet at Milbank, 2 p.m.
Fifth grade GBB, 4 p.m., elementary gym
Middle School Track Meet at Warner, 4 p.m.
Pickleball, 6 p.m., elementary gym
Groton Lions Club meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

Friday, May 15

Saturday, May 16

Pickleball, 9:30 a.m., elementary gym
Graduation, 2 p.m., Arena

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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.

Prices Up, Wages Down

Inflation outpaced wage growth in April for the first time in three years, according to a Labor Department report released yesterday. Inflation-adjusted hourly wages fell 0.3% year-over-year, as inflation climbed 3.8%—its fastest increase in three years.

Economists largely attribute rising inflation to the energy chokehold caused by the Iran war's effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a critical shipping route for about one-fifth of the world's oil and natural gas. Energy costs climbed roughly 18% from a year earlier, with gasoline up 28% and airfare up 21%.

Meanwhile, core inflation, which excludes food and energy prices, rose 2.8% year-over-year. The Federal Reserve closely watches this less volatile number when weighing interest rate cuts. Yesterday's report bolstered expert predictions that the central bank will not lower interest rates until mid-next year.

Energy isn't the only culprit: Tomatoes are almost 40% more expensive than last year.

PCOS by Another Name

The disorder long known as polycystic ovary syndrome is getting a name change after years of scientific review in an effort to better help diagnose the condition. Formerly called PCOS, the hormonal imbalance—now known as polyendocrine metabolic ovarian syndrome, or PMOS—affects one in eight women.

The condition was first identified in the 1930s, when doctors operating on women noticed lumps on their ovaries, which they described as cysts. It turns out PMOS patients are not more likely than others to have pathological cysts. Instead, they have a large number of follicles that fail to fully mature. In 2012, the National Institutes of Health recommended a name change; today, up to 70% of PMOS cases are believed to go undiagnosed. The misconception about cysts—and an overemphasis on gynecologic criteria—are believed to play a role.

Some men appear to have PMOS-like symptoms, including insulin resistance, obesity, and early balding.

Lights, Camera, Cannes

The 79th Cannes Film Festival kicked off yesterday, with 22 films competing for the festival's top prize, the Palme d'Or. South Korean director Park Chan-wook will lead the nine-member competition jury, which includes actress Demi Moore.

The festival officially opened with Pierre Salvadori's "The Electric Kiss," following a preopening screening of "Pan's Labyrinth," shown again 20 years after its record 22-minute ovation. Other anticipated films include Pedro Almodóvar's "Amarga Navidad," Ira Sachs' "The Man I Love," and John Travolta's directorial debut, "Propeller One-Way Night Coach." A midnight screening of "The Fast and the Furious" will mark the franchise's 25th anniversary. The festival will also celebrate Barbra Streisand and Peter Jackson as honorary Palme d'Or recipients.

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke dies at age 29; cause of death was not announced as of this writing.

Jason Collins, NBA's first openly gay player, dies at age 47 of brain tumor.

Man receives two years in prison for stealing unreleased Beyoncé music, set lists, and more from a parked car.

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Author Rick Riordan announces four middle-grade novels set between his first and second "Percy Jackson" series novels; first installment comes out Sept. 29.

Film critic Rex Reed, who was known for his scathing takes, dies at age 87.

Science & Technology

FDA Commissioner Marty Makary resigns amid disagreements with the White House over fruit-flavored vapes and the abortion medication mifepristone.

Personalized vaccine appears to extend survival of patients with glioblastoma, an aggressive and incurable brain cancer; one patient is recurrence-free nearly five years after treatment.

Waymo recalls nearly 4,000 robotaxis over dangerous behavior on flooded roads; an unoccupied vehicle was swept away in a San Antonio flood last month.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow +0.1%, Nasdaq -0.7%).

Kevin Warsh wins Senate confirmation to 14-year term as Federal Reserve governor; separate vote ahead on whether he'll replace Jerome Powell as chair when Powell's term ends Friday.

eBay rejects GameStop's \$56B takeover bid amid concerns over financing uncertainty and the debt load the deal would add to the company.

Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump travels to Beijing for meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping; talks expected to cover trade, the war in Iran, energy, and Taiwan.

Federal prosecutors charge two international ship operators and one Indian national employee over the 2024 Francis Scott Key Bridge collision that killed six people.

Fatal collision at Denver International Airport this week is determined to be a suicide.

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Girls Fastpitch JV team picks up win over Milbank, Bulldogs win varsity game

Groton Area picked up a junior varsity victory before falling in the varsity contest during girls fastpitch softball action Tuesday at Milbank.

The Groton Area JV squad earned a 7-3 win after jumping out to an early lead and maintaining control throughout the game. Groton took a 2-0 advantage after the opening inning behind RBI singles from Libby Cole, who continued her strong night with another RBI single in the second inning.

Groton extended its lead to 5-2 after two innings. Rylan Eckern highlighted the second inning with an RBI triple as the Tigers continued to apply pressure offensively. Groton added two more runs in the third inning while Milbank scored once in the bottom half of the inning.

Riley Rose, Arianna Dinger, and Addison Hoffman each contributed singles for Groton in the win.

In the varsity contest, Milbank used a fast start to defeat Groton Area 15-2 in five innings.

Milbank built momentum early, scoring five runs in the first inning, four more in the second, three in the third, and three in the fourth. Paisle Ericcson led Milbank with a two RBI home run and an RBI triple. Groton's best offensive inning came in the second when the Tigers plated two runs on three hits.

Hannah Sandness provided the big hit for Groton with a two-run double. Makenna Krause, Neely Althoff, and Jerica Locke each added singles for the Tigers.

After the game, Groton Area Coach Amanda Bisbee felt the score did not fully reflect how competitive the game was at times.

"It was more competitive than the last time we played them for sure," Bisbee said. "We killed ourselves on errors tonight. We just get in our heads. Milbank is just our mental error team right now, and every softball team has one."

Bisbee said the Tigers will focus on improving confidence and correcting mistakes as they prepare for the final stretch of the regular season.

"We've got three good practices before we go out there and play again," Bisbee said. "We're going to work on a few things we did here tonight, work on getting our confidence back up, and come out ready to play."

The coach also praised the increased energy and communication coming from the dugout during the game.

"There was a lot more chatter tonight," Bisbee said. "You've still got to be up and chattering. It gets in the other team's heads and it helps get your teammates up."

Groton Area will close out the regular season Monday with games at Redfield and Tuesday at Deuel.

The Milbank game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Poet of Groton.

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Superintendent Joe Schwan presents Sue Wattier with the 2025-26 Support Staff of the Year Award. (Photo from Groton Area Facebook Page)

Steady Leadership Behind the Scenes: Sue Wattier Honored for Years of Service to Groton Area Schools

For more than two decades, Sue Wattier has been a steady and familiar presence at the Groton Area School District, serving as the middle/high school secretary since the start of the 2004-2005 school year.

Before coming to Groton, Wattier spent 13 years in the same role at the Bristol School District, bringing years of experience and dedication with her when she joined the Tigers.

Known as one of the first faces students see each day, Wattier has become an essential part of daily life at the school. Whether it's answering questions from students, helping staff members, assisting parents, or keeping the building running smoothly, she handles countless responsibilities with professionalism and a smile.

If a student or staff member needs information, they often turn to Sue first. Parents do the same. And even when she may not immediately have an answer, she is always willing to find one.

Beyond her official duties, Wattier is widely recognized for the care, organization, and leadership she brings to the position every day. Staff members say the school simply would not operate as efficiently without her dedication and commitment behind the scenes.

In recognition of her years of outstanding service and dedication to students, staff, and families, Wattier was named the 2025-26 Support Staff of the Year for the Groton Area School District.

The Groton Area School District expressed deep appreciation for Wattier's years of service, noting how fortunate the school community is to have her as part of their lives.



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Governor candidate's call for state gas tax holiday not endorsed by opponents

Hansen proposes using an economic development fund to cover the cost

BY: MEGHAN O'BRIEN

Republican South Dakota governor candidate Jon Hansen wants to pause the state's gas tax this summer and use an economic development fund to cover the cost, but none of his opponents endorsed the idea, and one called it a gimmick that could imperil the state's federal highway funds.

President Donald Trump has suggested temporarily suspending the federal gas tax as the national average cost per gallon increases — due largely to Trump's war in Iran and its impact on crude oil shipments.

"President Donald Trump is calling for the suspension of the federal gas tax, and South Dakota should do the same thing," Hansen said Tuesday in a press release.

Hansen, the speaker of the state House, said state lawmakers could consider suspending the state gas tax in a special legislative session. A special session can be called by the governor, or lawmakers can petition for it with two-thirds support from both the House and Senate.

South Dakotans pay 28 cents per gallon in state tax, whether they're fueling up with gasoline or diesel. Federal tax is an additional 18.4 cents per gallon on gasoline and 24.4 cents on diesel.

South Dakota's average gas price, \$4.22, which includes taxes, is more than a dollar higher than it was a year ago, according to the AAA motor club. A pause on the state tax would lower the state's current average price to \$3.94 per gallon.

The pause could save taxpayers up to \$50 million, Hansen estimated. He would use the state's Future Fund, a pool of money under the governor's exclusive control, to replace the revenue in the state budget. The state gets money for the Future Fund by charging a fee to employers. They pay the fee when they submit payroll taxes that support unemployment benefits.

In the press release, Hansen's campaign said in reference to the Future Fund that the state "is currently sitting on more than \$60 million in ready reserve dollars which can be used to completely fill any highway funding gap created as a result of the gas tax holiday."



Republican candidate and state House Speaker Jon Hansen participates in the second South Dakota republican primary debate on April 13, 2026, at the SDPB studio in Sioux Falls. (Photo by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

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But after Gov. Larry Rhoden's most recent Future Fund grant to a teacher apprenticeship program, which was announced Monday, the unobligated balance of the Future Fund fell to \$23.9 million, according to a spokesperson for the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

A spokesman for the Hansen campaign told South Dakota Searchlight that the Legislative Research Council "reports that the Future Fund has roughly \$68 million in it," without distinction between obligated and unobligated funds.

Given that employers pay into it routinely, "millions more will continue to pour into it," said Hansen's spokesman, Austin Goss. "Further, the state is reporting higher than expected revenues for the month of April, outpacing legislative estimates by \$12.1 million. As he has throughout his political career, Jon Hansen has one obligation — to South Dakota families and workers. Any and all obligations outside of that are secondary."

Republican candidates respond

Rhoden, who is campaigning to keep his job, has awarded more than \$10 million from the Future Fund since the start of April.

He also signed a bill into law earlier this year that makes reforms to the Future Fund, including the addition of definitions for acceptable uses, requiring more reporting to legislators about awards, stipulating information required of applicants, directing the Governor's Office of Economic Development to formulate rules governing the fund's use, and requiring the office to make recommendations to the governor about potential awards.

Hansen voted in favor of that legislation in the House.

Ian Fury, a spokesman for the Rhoden campaign, told Searchlight that Hansen's gas tax idea "is not ready for primetime," pointing to the current balance of the Future Fund and the new law, which takes effect July 1. Fury said "this use of Future Funds would not be legal" under the new law.

The state could also lose out on federal highway funding if the tax holiday took effect and the state failed to pay its required percentage of matching funds for federal highway projects, Fury said.

"Maybe worst of all — doing this would cost South Dakota taxpayers \$216 million in federal highway funding," Fury said in a statement to Searchlight. "A governor should lead with thoughtful policy, not political gimmicks."

U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, who's led the race in all public polling, sent a statement to Searchlight.

"After voting for a new tax on just about everything South Dakotans buy, I understand why Jon Hansen is looking for a holiday from his record. I agree that gas is too expensive, and that's why I'm working this week to get E15 across the finish line here in Congress. That will save South Dakotans millions of dollars at the pump."

Earlier this year, Hansen voted in favor of a new law that gives counties the option to enact up to a 0.5% sales tax and use the revenue for homeowner property tax relief. He also voted in favor of a new law that will use the revenue from a 0.3-percentage-point increase in the statewide sales tax for homeowner property tax relief. Rhoden signed both bills into law.

From left, Republican South Dakota gubernatorial candidates Toby Doeden, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, Gov. Larry Rhoden and state House Speaker Jon Hansen participate in a debate on April 13, 2026, at the South Dakota Public Broadcasting studio in Sioux Falls. (Photo by Joshua Haiar_South Dakota Searchlight).jpeg

From left, Republican South Dakota gubernatorial candidates Toby Doeden, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, Gov. Larry Rhoden and state House Speaker Jon Hansen participate in a debate on April 13, 2026, at the South Dakota Public Broadcasting studio in Sioux Falls. (Photo by Joshua Haiar/South Dakota Searchlight)

Throughout the campaign, Johnson has criticized Hansen and Rhoden for raising sales taxes, but the two have defended the use of the higher sales taxes for homeowner property tax reduction. A third bill that Hansen opposed but Rhoden signed into law gives cities the option to implement an additional 1% temporary sales tax to pay for special projects, if approved by 60% of a city's voters.

Johnson has been part of an effort to pass a bill that would authorize the sale of 15% ethanol-blended gasoline, known as E15, nationwide and year-round.

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A spokesman for businessman Toby Doeden said the state "should be making cuts that directly benefit our residents."

The summer is "peak visitor season," when out-of-state tourists contribute the most to South Dakota's economy, the spokesman said. "If Speaker Hansen cared to make a real substantive improvement for state residents, why didn't he want to suspend the gas tax during harvest season so that our amazing farmers and ranchers would be able to save more on fuel as their operating costs increase?"

The Republican primary election for governor is June 2, and early voting is underway. The winner of the Republican primary will advance to the November general election to face Democratic candidate Dan Ahlers.

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.

New laws result in 1,500 federal-only voter registrations ahead of South Dakota primary election

Requirements target full-time RVers and people without citizenship documentation

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER

Chris Lee will drive hundreds of miles to vote in person.

The truck driver from Cleveland plans his route through South Dakota on Election Day. The Republican has been registered in South Dakota for nearly 10 years and has followed the campaigns for the June 2 primary election closely. He knows who he wants to vote for.

But he's not allowed to vote in state and local races this year. To his surprise, Lee is designated as a federal-only voter in South Dakota.

Since January, a person who lists only the address of a mail forwarding service or post office box without describing the location of their "habitation" must be categorized as a federal-only voter when the person "applies to register as a voter or vote by absentee ballot," according to a new state law. Since March, a person who doesn't provide proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote must also be designated as a federal-only voter. That means the person can only vote in federal contests such as presidential and congressional races — not other statewide, legislative, county, city or local races or ballot questions.

"I took it for granted that I was able to vote in all the elections," Lee said.

South Dakota and Arizona are the two states that have implemented a federal-only voting system.

According to a South Dakota Searchlight analysis of voter registration data from all 66 South Dakota counties, there are over 1,500 federal-only voters in the state — a number that is likely increasing as more people register or request absentee ballots. More than 180 of those federal-only voters are due to a lack



Sioux Falls residents vote in the general election on Nov. 5, 2024, at St. Lambert's Catholic Church. New South Dakota laws are causing some voters to be designated as "federal only" for the June 2026 primary and future elections. (Photo by Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

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of U.S. citizenship documentation upon registration.

Some federal-only voters in South Dakota won't have anything to vote on in June. Many of them are not Republicans, and the only federal races are Republican primaries, which are closed to non-Republican voters.

Of Minnehaha County's 575 federal-only voters, 168 are non-politically affiliated, 148 are Democratic, 97 are independent and two are Libertarian. Of Pennington County's 572 federal-only voters, 122 are Democratic, 106 are non-politically affiliated, 82 are independent, seven are Libertarian and three are listed as "other."

Dispute over federal-voter law implementation

Lee did not know he was a federal-only voter until South Dakota Searchlight informed him.

He registered to vote in 2016, when he was working for a company based in South Dakota. He currently lives in Cleveland with his wife, but he retains his South Dakota driver's license, vehicle registration and voter registration in Minnehaha County.

"I like the state. I might retire there. That's why I haven't changed anything," Lee said. "I stay up to date with the state."

But Lee renewed his driver's license and updated his voter registration simultaneously in January. He uses DakotaPost mail forwarding, and he likely received a card in the mail informing him that he's been switched to a federal-only voter. If he did, he didn't read it.

Voters can use the Voter Information Portal on the South Dakota Secretary of State's website to check their registration status. But it does not tell Lee — or any federal-only voters — of their new status.

Lawrence County Auditor Brenda McGruder said her office changes voters' statuses when they update their registration or request an absentee ballot. Her county had 184 federal-only voters as of April.

Amber Hobert, president of the mail forwarding service DakotaPost in Sioux Falls, said that's not how she remembers the legislation described during the 2025 legislative session.

It was not supposed to be "applied retroactively" to current voters, even if they were updating their address or their political affiliation, Hobert said. She added that changing people to federal-only voters any time they interact with the election system — to update their registration or request an absentee ballot — leads to disenfranchisement.

"If you request an absentee ballot, you're going to be treated differently than someone with the exact same address who manages to vote in person," Hobert said.

Deputy Secretary of State Tom Deadrick told the legislative Rules Review Committee in September that the law was intended to apply to new registrations.

"For those who are already registered, nothing changes," Deadrick said. He did not define whether a new registration includes updated voter registrations that come through the system.

Despite the dispute, state Rep. Tony Kayser, R-Sioux Falls, said he is pleased with how the law is being implemented. Kayser introduced the bill during the 2025 legislative session that changed how full-time RVers' voter registration is handled.

"Keep the local elections local, for people who actually live here," Kayser said, adding, "If you don't qualify, then you should be updated to a federal-only ballot."

RVer: 'We ought to have a say'

Earnest Weaver lives in Virginia. As a member of the military, he moves frequently and chose South Dakota as his home base for vehicle registration, voter registration and mail forwarding.

Since he doesn't live in the state, he planned to vote just for federal races even before learning he has a limited ticket. But he thinks that should be his choice, not a limitation imposed by law.

"My instinct is, if you are accounted for somewhere, then you should have the option to vote in any and all elections that take place there," Weaver said. "I don't do it as a personal choice — I would just vote in federal elections — but I think it should be a choice for anyone accounted for there."

Janet Suffel, a fulltime RVer with her husband, misplaced her driver's license in February and had to request a new one. She said she likely updated her voter registration information on the application, making her a federal-only voter.

If the couple came back to South Dakota to vote in person, her husband — who has not changed or updated his registration — could vote in federal, state and local races, but she could only vote in federal races.

Suffel and her husband, originally from Virginia, chose South Dakota for its lack of income tax and personal property taxes. The 64-year-old last visited three years ago but has paid fees and taxes in South Dakota when renewing her license and registration.

"I'm not driving on the roads, I'm not using any local services, I'm not using Medicaid, and I'm providing jobs for people at America's Mailbox by using that service," Suffel said, referencing the Box Elder-based mail forwarding company. "South Dakota is getting something for nothing."

"I think, at the very least," Suffel added, "we ought to have a say at the state level about who is going to decide on whether we can vote only in federal or state races."

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Supreme Court extends stay allowing telehealth abortion

Mifepristone will remain available to prescribe via telehealth through May 14

BY: SOFIA RESNICK

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday extended a highly anticipated stay blocking an appellate court's pause on telehealth abortion access until May 14.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approved medication-abortion regimen remains available via telehealth until then, following a week of uncertainty among abortion patients and providers.

"With this critical temporary administrative stay extended, we hope that some of the chaos and confusion inflicted on patients and providers last weekend will be abated," said Evan Masingill, CEO of abortion-pill manufacturer GenBioPro, one of the defendants in the case, in a statement.

On May 4, the Supreme Court temporarily stayed the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals' ruling to reinstate the FDA's in-person dispensing requirement for mifepristone that the Biden administration officially lifted in 2023. Over the past week, several doctors groups submitted friend-of-the-court briefs arguing that cutting off access to mifepristone could harm many women seeking abortions and miscarriage management.

Republican attorneys general from 23 states, meanwhile, urged the Supreme Court not to allow providers to send mifepristone through the mail.

People in states with abortion bans or diminished abortion access continue to depend on abortion providers prescribing FDA's approved mifepristone-misoprostol regimen through telemedicine and sending it to patients by mail.

According to new preliminary findings from the Society of Family Planning, telehealth abortion comprised



Mifepristone is one part of a two-drug regimen commonly used to terminate a pregnancy before 10 weeks and for miscarriage treatment.

(Photo by Natalie Behring/Getty Images)

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28% of all abortions at the end of 2025, an increase from 25% at the end of 2024.

Attorneys representing Louisiana have argued that in addition to undermining a state abortion ban, the federal rulemaking process allowing telehealth prescriptions of medication abortion was flawed.

University of Michigan law professor Samuel Bagenstos, who served as general counsel of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services at the time the Biden-era rule was implemented, said the policy was well considered and based on evidence.

"The 2023 update was the result of an incredibly careful, deliberate, time-consuming, painstaking process to make sure that they were following what the evidence was," Bagenstos said. If the plaintiffs were to prevail, he added, ending telehealth access to mifepristone nationwide would have "really harmful effects on women across the country, as well as really destabilizing effects on the drug approval system."

Louisiana's lawsuit against mifepristone has nationwide implications and could threaten residents in states with abortion access and so-called abortion shield laws, such as Maryland.

Regardless of what happens in this case, abortion providers told Stateline they are determined to continue providing telehealth abortions, though potentially without mifepristone. Dr. Angel Foster, a telehealth provider in Massachusetts, a shield law state, said in the past week, about 100 patients have requested pills for future use, compared with 34 in the entire month of April. She said constantly changing rules around abortion access followed by sensational news headlines continue to create confusion for people seeking termination or miscarriage management.

"I live and breathe abortion at this point, and I find it can be hard to keep up with the ever-changing legal environment and the way that things are getting framed and phrased," Foster said. "When you're a patient and what you see are just the headlines, and you've got to figure out what it means for you, it's really complicated."

Stateline reporter Sofia Resnick can be reached at sresnick@stateline.org.

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

Sofia Resnick covers reproductive rights for Stateline. She has been a journalist for 20 years, covering reproductive health policy and politics for more than a decade, specializing in stories about how the religious right has manipulated science to change policy and tracking the long tail of the fall of Roe v. Wade.

Bureau of Land Management cancels bison grazing leases for American Prairie

BY: MICAH DREW

The Bureau of Land Management issued a final decision late last week canceling a series of permits that allowed bison grazing on federal land by the nonprofit conservation organization American Prairie.

The move, which came after American Prairie and multiple other organizations formally protested a preliminary decision earlier this year, was condemned by conservation groups but praised by elected officials in Montana, who have sought the cancellation of bison grazing leases for years.

"This final decision is a victory for the rule of law and the generations of Montanans who have stewarded our lands with care," Gov. Greg Gianforte said in a statement. "For far too long, the Biden administration ignored the clear language of the Taylor Grazing Act in favor of an ideological experiment. I'm proud of our administration for leading the fight to reach this decision and I thank Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum and BLM for putting Montanans first."

American Prairie has a mission to conserve prairie land in Montana to create one of the largest nature reserves in the country, abutting Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge and Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument. The nonprofit owns and leases more than 500,000 acres in the state.

Across some sections of that leased acreage — specifically six allotments comprising around 63,000 acres of federal land, according to the group — American Prairie grazes around 900 bison under the authorization of the BLM, with some leases stretching back two decades.

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"American Prairie has lawfully grazed bison on BLM lands for more than 20 years, complying with every rule, regulation, and permit requirement," said Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie. "BLM lawfully issued these permits and recognized that bison are qualified to graze on federal lands under longstanding practice and law. Reversing course now under political pressure undermines trust in the agency's decision-making and threatens the future of bison restoration across the West."

The decision by BLM focused on the 1934 Taylor Grazing Act, which is the legal framework that created grazing districts and governs leases on federal lands.

According to the BLM decision, the Act allows permits to be issued "to graze livestock," and under a new interpretation of federal statutes, bison do not meet the definition of livestock. Citing a legal dictionary, the decision states that livestock refers to domestic animals "used for production-oriented purposes."

"The BLM lacks statutory authority to issue grazing permits under the TGA where the animals to be grazed are treated as wildlife and intended for conservation purposes and will not be managed for production," the decision states.

It goes on to state that American Prairie's bison operations are not domestic nor production oriented.

"This decision affirms what livestock producers have long argued for in the compliance of governing law," Montana Stockgrowers Association President Lesley Robinson in a statement.

BLM terminated all bison or combined cattle/bison grazing permits for American Prairie and reissued cattle-only grazing permits on six federal allotments. The permit terminations will be effective on Sept. 30, to allow American Prairie to remove its bison herd from the land parcels.

A spokesperson for American Prairie told the Daily Montanan the organization plans to appeal the decision.

"This final decision by the BLM makes it clear that this is an all-out attack on conservation. It is a textbook example of the government moving the goal posts and changing the rules in the middle of the game to reach a predetermined outcome," said Mary Cochenour, attorney for American Prairie. "There have been no grazing violations, and the administrative record contains objective evidence showing that rangeland conditions have improved over the last two decades with bison on the landscape."

In addition to the protest lodged by American Prairie, BLM said that the agency received 34 other protest letters that "contained nearly 200 unique protest points," including many from tribal governments and organizations.

In response to concerns the decision could impact dozens of tribal nations that retaining rights to hunt and manage bison across traditional lands, the BLM notes that its decision is specific to "this particular non-tribal permittee" and the agency is "not adjudicating grazing rights of any tribal governments or representatives."

According to a 2025 BLM infographic about the agency's grazing program, there are 41 grazing permits for bison issued by the bureau, alongside 18,000 permits and leases overall (including eight for reindeer.)

The state of Montana originally protested a series of permits issued to American Prairie in 2022, arguing that replacing production livestock with non-production bison damaged the local economy and ignored the statutory requirements for federal grazing permits.



Bison are pictured through a fence in this 2022 photo.

(USDA photo / Preston Keres)

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Gianforte and the entire federal delegation, all Republicans, had sent letters to the Trump administration urging the repeal of the bison leases.

Members of the state's delegation also praised the decision in statements to the press.

"Nobody makes better beef than Montana ranchers. This decision is a return to the original mission the BLM was created for," said Rep. Ryan Zinke in a statement to the media. "The Taylor Grazing Act made clear these lands play a critical role in feeding our nation and sustaining rural communities, they are not meant to be locked up to satisfy the latest Washington political agenda. In Montana, working lands support ranching families who help put food on America's tables."

Montana's senior Sen. Steve Daines thanked Interior Secretary Doug Burgum and President Donald Trump for "restoring common sense land management."

Attorney General Austin Knudsen, who worked on behalf of the state to cancel the bison leases, called the decision a "huge victory" for Montana farmers and ranchers.

"As someone who grew up farming and ranching in Northeast Montana, I know how important this decision is to protect the hardworking livestock and ranching communities in that region and keep the elitists from destroying their livelihood," Knudsen said.

Montana is also looking to restrict leases on state land for bison grazing, with a recent proposal by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, at the behest of the state Land Board — comprising Gianforte and Montana's five statewide elected officials including Knudsen — seeking to give preference for bidders involved in "production livestock operations."

Friday's decision was signed by Bill Groffy, acting director of the BLM.

A vote to confirm President Donald Trump's nominee to lead the BLM, Steve Pearce, is also expected soon.

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

Micah writes about Montana's environment and state and local politics. He's been known to run long distances around the Flathead Valley and Glacier National Park where he lives, works and plays.

US Senate GOP not sold on \$1B Secret Service ask

BY: JENNIFER SHUTT AND ARIANA FIGUEROA

WASHINGTON — Several Republican U.S. senators left a closed-door lunch with Secret Service Director Sean Curran on Tuesday saying they still have questions about how the agency would spend an additional \$1 billion.

"I've asked for a lot more data," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine. "If there are needs for new training ranges, for example, that should have been in the president's budget."

Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, tucked the significant increase into a larger immigration enforcement bill, leading to concerns from some of his GOP colleagues and criticism from Democrats the money will go toward construction of a White House ballroom.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., said after the lunch meeting the additional funding is predominantly for regular Secret Service activities, not to support the creation of a new ballroom.

"The ballroom is being financed privately but the security associated with it represents about 20% of what this request was," Thune said.

A breakdown of how the new funding would be used by Secret Service, obtained by States Newsroom, showed:

\$220 million would go to "hardening" the East Wing Modernization Project with additional bulletproof glass, drone detection technologies and filtration systems designed to detect chemical or other contaminants.

\$180 million would go toward construction of a "long overdue" White House visitor screening facility.

\$175 million would bolster Secret Service training as well as its training facilities.

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\$175 million would help the agency "secure frequently visited venues facing heightened risk due to their public visibility and static nature."

\$150 million would go to the branch of the Secret Service that focuses on drones, aircraft incursions, biological threats and "other emerging threats through investments in state-of-the-art technologies."

\$100 million for "high-profile national events that require significant planning."

Florida Republican Sen. Rick Scott said he wants the Secret Service to share more information.

"I think the bottom line is, people want to be supportive, right? They want security for the president, but they want more detail," he said.

The \$1 billion for the Secret Service would be in addition to the \$1.17 billion Republicans approved for the agency in their "big, beautiful" law as well as the agency's annual funding level.

The White House released its budget request in early April, asking lawmakers to approve \$3.5 billion for the Secret Service in an annual funding bill, a \$36 million increase.



U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Susan Collins, R-Maine, speaks with reporters inside the U.S. Capitol on Sept. 29, 2025. (Photo by Jennifer Shutt/States Newsroom)

Senators want more specifics

Utah Republican Sen. John Curtis said he wants "more specifics" from the administration in addition to what lawmakers saw during the lunch.

South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds said he's asked for more information from the Secret Service about its needs.

"They're trying to make it very clear that what they're talking about are the security improvements that should be included if we're making major reconstruction within the White House itself," he said. "So I think as more of the information begins to come out, I think people are going to feel a lot more comfortable with what they're requesting."

Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, said he supported the additional Secret Service funding, arguing that security at the White House can be complex.

"I'm fine with that," he said. "So long as it's used for security purposes."

Alaska Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski said she wanted to see a detailed breakdown of where the \$1 billion would go before committing to supporting the move.

No details from Judiciary chair

Grassley, who included the line item for "security adjustments and upgrades" for the East Wing Modernization Project in his panel's immigration enforcement bill, didn't share details before the lunch about how he landed on the \$1 billion figure.

"It was just kind of a consensus among all of us," he said, later adding the agreement was among Senate GOP lawmakers, not with the White House.

Grassley said he didn't expect to know before the end of the week whether the Secret Service funding

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would stay in the \$72 billion package that is intended to fund immigration activities for the next three years.

The Judiciary Committee bill and one written by the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which will be combined in the coming days, would provide Immigration and Customs Enforcement with \$38.175 billion, Customs and Border Protection with \$26.02 billion, the secretary of Homeland Security's office with \$5 billion and the Department of Justice with \$1.457 billion.

GOP leaders in Congress hope to approve the bill next week, sending it to President Donald Trump before the Memorial Day weekend break.

Opportunity for Dems

Senate floor debate on the package includes a marathon amendment voting session that will give Democrats, or even Republicans, the chance to hold up-or-down votes on the additional spending.

Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, ranking member on the Judiciary Committee, said Democrats "will certainly be able to put our colleagues on record" about the additional Secret Service funding.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said Democrats will "fight this bill tooth and nail."

"We'll offer amendments and we'll force Republicans to vote again and again on one simple question — are you with working families or are you with Trump's ballroom," he said.

Thune said earlier in the day that Republicans "can't have a lot of hiccups right now" and still send Trump the package before the president's June 1 deadline.

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

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

Cost of Iran war rises to \$29B as US gas prices spike

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY



U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth listens to questions during a news conference at the Pentagon on March 2, 2026. (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

WASHINGTON — The cost of the Iran war has increased to \$29 billion to date, Pentagon officials told lawmakers in both chambers Tuesday.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Dan Caine and Department of Defense acting comptroller Jules Hurst faced questions from House and Senate appropriators over several hours of testimony on the administration's Pentagon budget request and the direction of the U.S. operation in Iran and the Strait of Hormuz.

The hearings began just as the Bureau of Labor Statistics released the latest inflation figures that showed skyrocketing fuel costs drove overall inflation to the highest level since 2023.

Rep. Betty McCollum, the top Democrat on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, said she remains skeptical of Pentagon spending, as it has lacked "sufficient transparency

with gas prices and inflation numbers increasing."

"The American people just want to afford the basic necessities for everyday life, but this administration is not doing anything to help them with the cost of living crisis," the Minnesota lawmaker said.

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Inflation

Similarly, Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., who sits on the Senate Appropriations Committee and serves as the top Democrat on the Senate Committee on Armed Services, said "vague generalities are not helping this committee make critical judgments."

"And the tradeoffs are significant. The deficit is increasing dramatically. We have to be conscious of that. We also have to be conscious (of) helping American families just get by, and inflation just hit 3.8% today," Reed said.

The latest Consumer Price Index reached 3.8% over one year ago, according to the Department of Labor, up from 3.3% last month.

Fuel and energy costs largely drove the inflation increase, with gasoline up 28.4% compared to last year.

Oil and gas prices have soared since the U.S. joined Israel in launching strikes against Iran on Feb. 28. The protracted conflict has led to a near standstill in the Strait of Hormuz, a key maritime passageway off the coast of Iran where one-fifth of the world's petroleum crossed prior to the war.

'It comes with cost'

Senate Appropriations Committee Vice Chair Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., questioned the Pentagon's estimate that the war has cost \$29 billion, calling it "suspiciously low."

When pressed, Hurst said the figure does not include the cost of damage to U.S. military bases in the Middle East. Iran launched retaliatory strikes in March on multiple American installations in the region, including a strike on a base in Kuwait that killed six U.S. troops.

"Your acting comptroller suggested that damage to U.S. facilities was not factored into that figure," Murray said to Hegseth. "It is clear that there has been extensive damage to American military assets."

The secretary said he could not divulge details on damage to U.S. assets.

"I think an important point is, considering what the president is undertaking, what is the cost of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon? And the fact that this president's been willing to make a historic and courageous choice to confront that, it comes with cost. And we recognize that," Hegseth said.

Congressional authorization

Despite continued tit-for-tat attacks in the Strait of Hormuz, Hegseth told lawmakers that a ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran is still in effect.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, asked Hegseth whether he believes President Donald Trump will need congressional authorization to continue military activity against the Islamic Republic.

"It doesn't appear that hostilities have ended, and so the question to you is whether or not the administration has considered or had intended to seek an authorization of the use of military force from the Congress?" she asked.

Hegseth replied: "Senator, our view is that should the president make the decision to recommence that we would have all the authorities to do so."

Efforts to pass a War Powers Resolution to rein in Trump's military operations in Iran have failed multiple times in the the Republican-led Senate and House.

A vote is possible this week in the House on a bipartisan War Powers Resolution.

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

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Feds officially cancel conservation rule for public lands

BY: PATRICK LOHMANN

The United States Bureau of Land Management on Monday formally cancelled the so-called "Public Land Rule," which required the agency to consider conservation and development equally in land-use decisions for millions of acres across the West.

The BLM, which manages 13.5 million acres of land in New Mexico, published a notice Monday in the Federal Register finalizing its elimination of the 2024 rule, officially known as the Conservation and Landscape Health Rule. The agency first announced it was considering eliminating the rule in September.

The Biden-era rule provided guidance for ensuring conservation received due consideration along with mining, timber, grazing, recreation or other uses on public lands. It also allowed the BLM to issue leases specifically for conservation, though the agency never issued any.

The BLM's notice Monday said officials had received and responded to nearly 140,000 public comments in response to the proposal. Ultimately, officials said eliminating the 2024 rule was necessary because it "threatened to restrict productive use of the public lands and introduced uncertainty and unnecessary burdens in planning and permitting." The rule's elimination comes alongside executive orders and other actions by the Trump administration to expand drilling, mineral production and other commercial uses of public lands.

Michael Carroll, a campaign director for environmentalist group The Wilderness Society, told Source NM on Monday that the rule's rescission, which officially goes into effect in 30 days, will leave millions of acres across the West newly vulnerable to oil and gas extraction and mining.

"They're effectively saying, 'We're just going to prioritize extraction across BLM lands,' Carroll said. "They're going to be prioritizing industrial-scale development on those public lands. I think we'll see that right away."

He also noted that the BLM determined it did not need to consult with Indigenous tribes in its decision to rescind the rule, which he called "shocking in terms of its disrespect to tribal nations," many of which sit adjacent to federal lands.

The Wilderness Society was among many environmental groups that denounced the end of the "Public Lands Rule" on Wednesday. Several public statements from the groups mentioned the pending U.S. Senate confirmation of Steve Pearce, a former New Mexico Republican congressman, as BLM director.

If the Senate confirms him, Pearce, who has deep ties to the oil and gas industry, will oversee an agency that is no longer required to consider conservation as an acceptable use of public land, Carroll said.

"Today is a bad day for those people who care about public lands and care about the Bureau of Land Management," he said. "But we'll keep fighting and keep pushing back."

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

Patrick Lohmann has been a reporter since 2007, when he wrote stories for \$15 apiece at a now-defunct tabloid in Gallup, his hometown. Since then, he's worked at UNM's Daily Lobo, the Albuquerque Journal and the Syracuse Post-Standard.



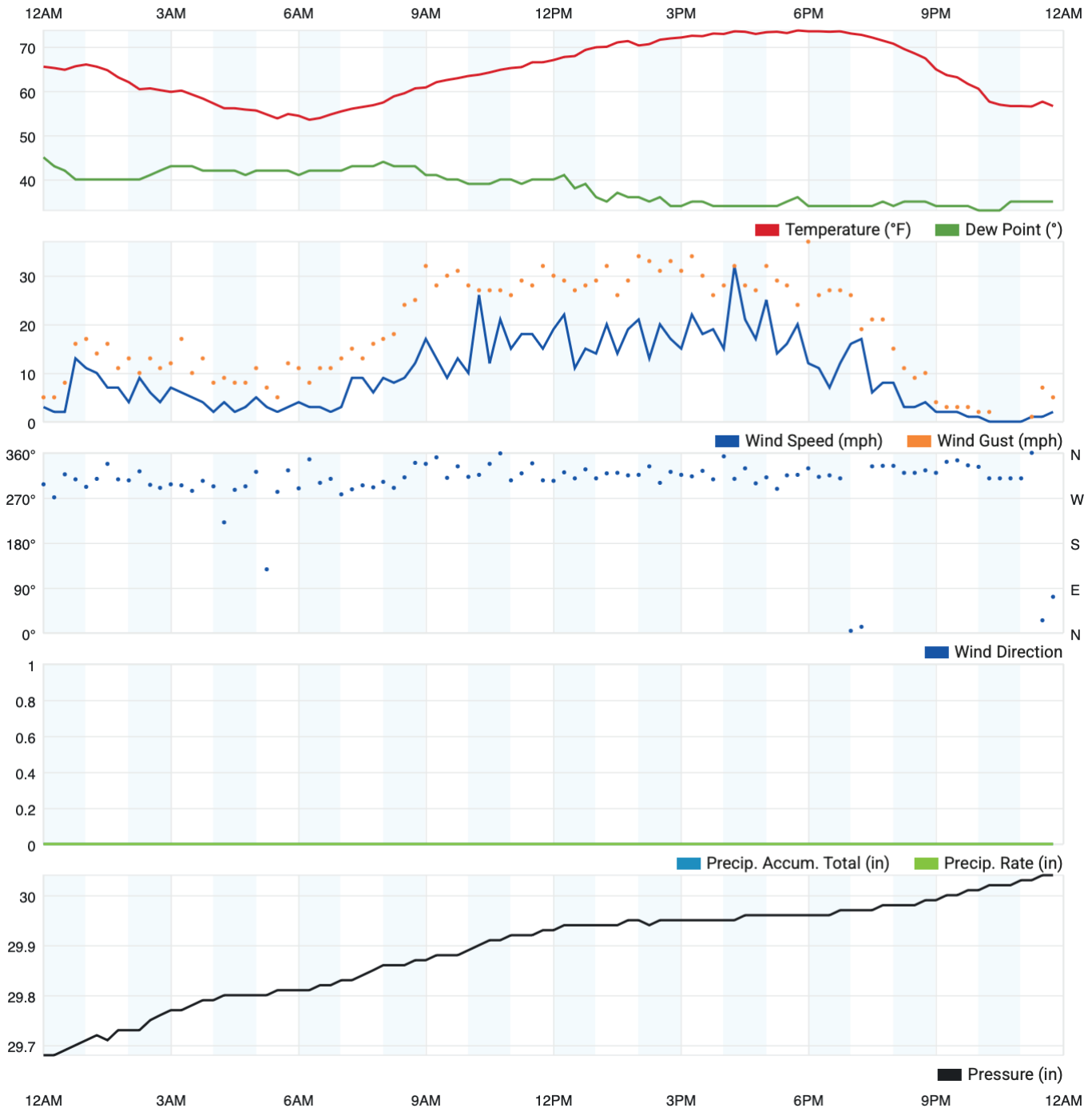
The U.S. Bureau of Land Management on May 11, 2026, officially rescinded a federal rule requiring officials to consider conservation in land management decisions in areas such as the Valley of Fires in south-central New Mexico, pictured above in 2021. (Photo courtesy BLM)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

May 12, 2026



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Fire Weather Watch				
Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
High: 79 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 79 °F
Sunny	Partly Cloudy then Patchy Blowing Dust and Breezy	Patchy Blowing Dust and Windy	Mostly Clear	Breezy. Sunny then Patchy Blowing Dust



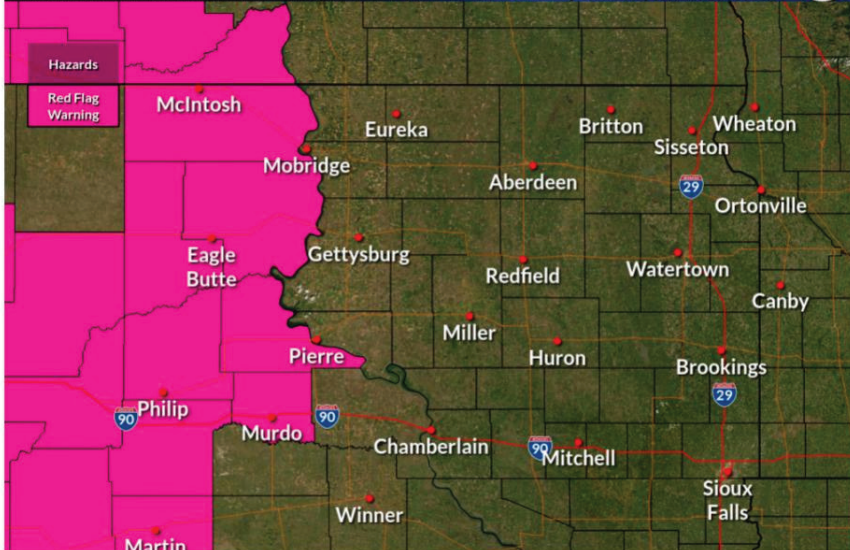
Red Flag Warning Today

May 13, 2026
4:04 AM CDT

Wind and Humidity combine to create elevated fire weather conditions.

Red Flag Warning Wednesday

In effect from 11 AM CDT / 10 AM MDT through 10 PM CDT / 9 PM MDT Wednesday Issued May 12, 2026 2:23 PM CDT



Key Messages

- Another Red Flag Warning is in effect from 10 AM MDT through 9 PM MDT.
- Afternoon Humidity will drop to as low as 20% west of the Missouri River.
- South to southeast winds will gust 30 to 40 mph, strongest north of Eagle Butte.
- Grassland Fire Danger under the warned area reaches the High to Very High category.
- Fires that ignite will spread rapidly and become difficult to control or suppress.



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

South to southeast winds increase today along and west of the Missouri River with gusts of 30 to 40 mph, highest north of Eagle Butte. Combined with humidity between 20 and 25 percent by afternoon, grassland fire danger will be high to very high.

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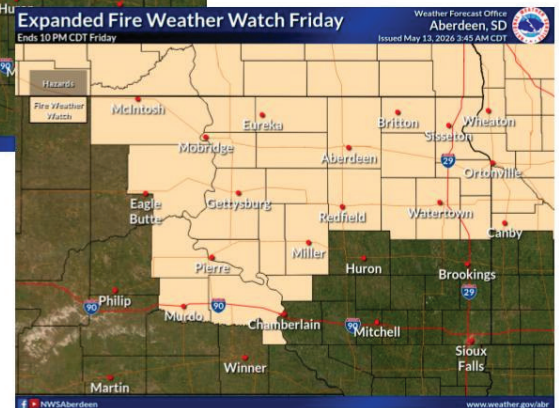
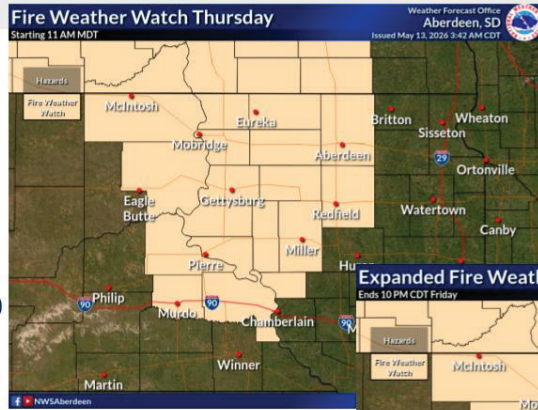


Fire Weather Watches Thurs and Fri

May 13, 2026
4:08 AM CDT

Key Messages

- Fire Weather Watch
 - James Valley west Thursday
 - Expanding east into west central MN Friday
- Humidity between 15 and 25 percent
 - No recovery overnight, max RH 40 to 50 percent
- West to northwest winds gusting 35 to 50 mph
 - Strongest Thursday in north central SD, more widespread on Friday
- High to Very High Grassland Fire Danger Thursday; High to Extreme on Friday
- Fires that ignite will spread rapidly and become difficult to control or suppress.



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Winds shift to the west to northwest Thursday afternoon and increase with gusts 35 to 50 mph. On Thursday, winds will be strongest across north central SD, but the gusty winds spread east on Friday. As humidity falls to 15 to 25 percent each day, fire conditions will become critical. Blowing dust may also be an issue each day with the strongest winds.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 74 °F at 6:36 PM

Low Temp: 53 °F at 6:14 AM

Wind: 37 mph at 5:55 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 1932

Record Low: 24 in 1899

Average High: 69

Average Low: 43

Average Precip in May.: 1.43

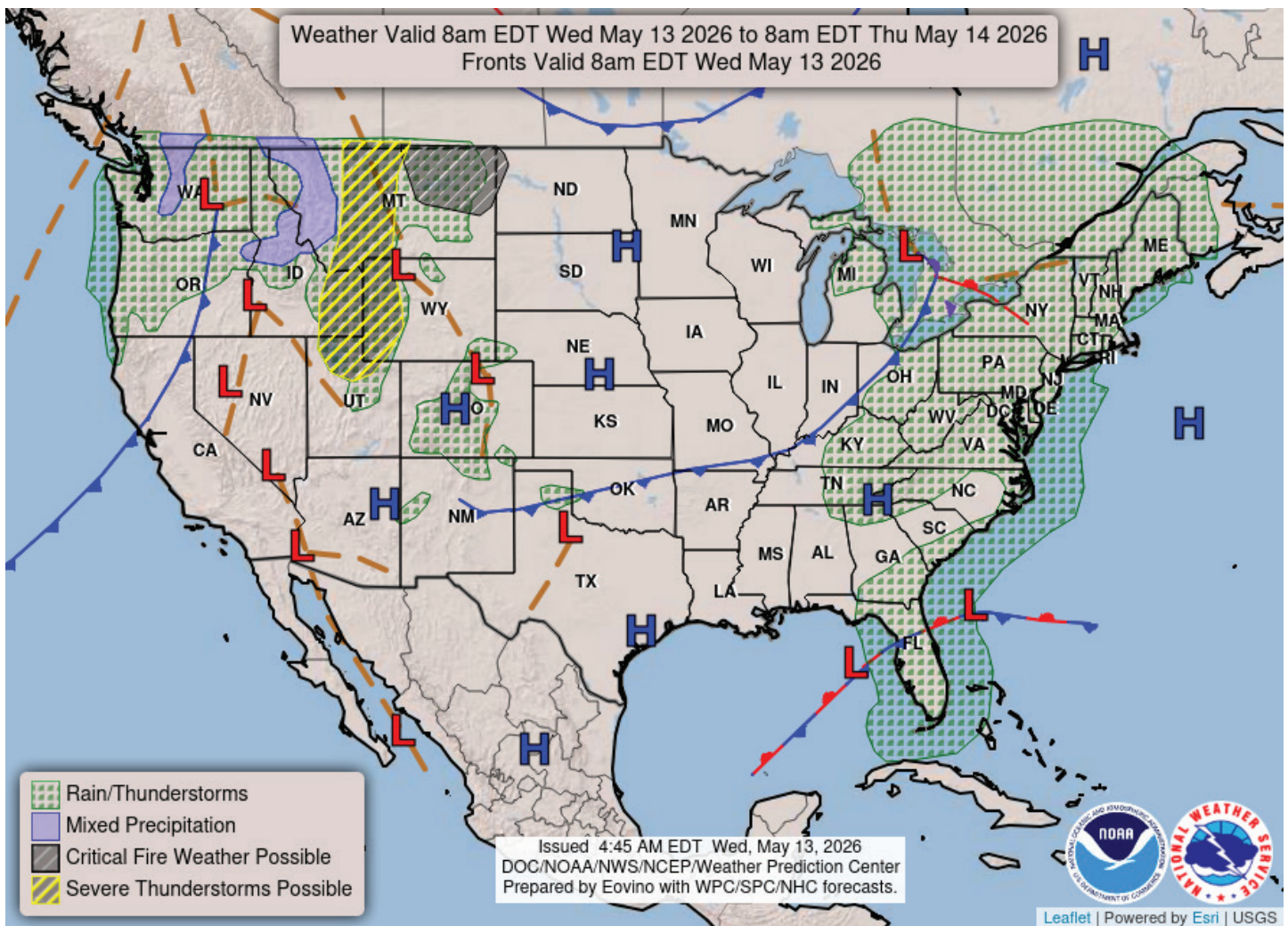
Precip to date in May.: 0.03

Average Precip to date: 5.40

Precip Year to Date: 3.15

Sunset Tonight: 8:53 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03 am



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Today in Weather History

May 13th, 2005: Runoff from heavy rain resulted in minor flooding along the White River from south of Belvidere to Oacoma, mainly affecting agricultural land. The river rose over its banks and briefly flooded U.S. Highway 83 south of Murdo. No property damage was reported.

1930 — A man was killed when caught in an open field during a hailstorm northwest of Lubbock TX. It was the first, and perhaps the only, authentic death by hail in U.S. weather records. (David Ludlum)

1981 — A tornado 450 yards in width destroyed ninety percent of Emberson TX. People did not see a tornado, but rather a wall of debris. Homes were leveled, a man in a bathtub was hurled a quarter of a mile, and a 1500 pound recreational vehicle was hurled 500 yards. Miraculously no deaths occurred in the tornado. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A cold front brought an end to the early season warm spell in the north central U.S., but not before the temperature at Sioux City IA soared to a record warm 95 degrees. Strong southwesterly winds ahead of the cold front gusted to 52 mph at Marais MI. Evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail at Rockford MN, and wind gusts to 75 mph at Belmond IA. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Strong winds along a cold front ushering cold air into the northwestern U.S. gusted to 69 mph at Myton UT. Temperatures warmed into the 80s ahead of the cold front, as far north as Montana. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms developing along a warm front produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region during the afternoon and night. A thunderstorm at Killeen TX produced wind gusts to 95 mph damaging 200 helicopters at Fort Hood causing nearly 500 million dollars damage. Another thunderstorm produced softball size hail at Hodges TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front spawned ten tornadoes from eastern Wyoming to northern Kansas, including seven in western Nebraska. Thunderstorms forming ahead of a cold front in the eastern U.S. spawned five tornadoes from northeastern North Carolina to southern Pennsylvania. Thunderstorms over southeast Louisiana deluged the New Orleans area with four to eight inches of rain between 7 AM and Noon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Why We Hesitate to Trust

At times when God's instructions don't make sense, will you obey anyway?

Luke 5:1-11: 1 Now it happened that while the crowd was pressing around Him and listening to the word of God, He was standing by the lake of Gennesaret;

2 and He saw two boats lying at the edge of the lake; but the fishermen had gotten out of them and were washing their nets.

3 And He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little way from the land. And He sat down and began teaching the people from the boat.

4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch."

5 Simon answered and said, "Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing, but I will do as You say and let down the nets."

6 When they had done this, they enclosed a great quantity of fish, and their nets began to break;

7 so they signaled to their partners in the other boat for them to come and help them. And they came and filled both of the boats, so that they began to sink.

8 But when Simon Peter saw that, he fell down at Jesus' feet, saying, "Go away from me Lord, for I am a sinful man!"

9 For amazement had seized him and all his companions because of the catch of fish which they had taken;

10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men."

11 When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

Today's passage takes place on the Sea of Galilee after the optimal time of the day for fishing has passed. The fishermen are cleaning their nets along the shore. But at Jesus' request, one lowers his into the water. All of Peter's expertise tells him that fishing at such an hour will be useless, but he does what Jesus asked. And the reward for his trust is a record-breaking (and net-breaking) catch.

As believers, we want to be like the disciple, overcoming our doubts and courageously following God. But sometimes, if what He's asking of us seems unreasonable, we might rely on human logic to decide whether to trust Him. There could also be a tendency to hesitate in situations for which our knowledge or experience seems to contradict His plan.

There is a time for seeking knowledge and godly counsel, but when the Lord makes His will clear, we are meant to act (Psalm 119:60). No opinion matters except that of the Lord, who promises to always be working for our good (Romans 8:28)—and who never makes mistakes.

The next time you find yourself doubting, think about what is causing you to hesitate. Then you can pray specifically to overcome the faith hurdle, knowing that God blesses the steps we take to follow Him.

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

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WINNING NUMBERS

MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.12.26

19 21 35 38 53 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$1,000,000/year

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 28 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.12.26

17 32 35 40 47 17

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$251,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 13 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.11.26

16 19 22 34 46 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$25,420,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 28 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.09.26

1 2 4 8 18

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$86,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 43 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.11.26

9 13 34 42 59 1

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.11.26

24 30 37 56 64 7

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$69,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 12 Mins 34 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

News from the **AP** Associated Press

Global shares trade mixed as AI excitement fades and war worries persist

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Global shares traded mixed Wednesday, as fading enthusiasm over AI and other technology stocks gradually put the brakes on Wall Street's record-setting run.

France's CAC 40 was little changed, inching down less than 0.1% in early trading to 7,975.77, while the German DAX added 0.8% to 24,153.10. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.4% to 10,308.30. U.S. shares were set to trade mixed with Dow futures down 0.2% at 49,769.00. S&P 500 futures rose 0.2% to 7,442.00.

In Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 edged up 0.8% to finish at 63,272.11.

South Korea's Kospi index surged 2.6% to 7,844.01, recouping recent losses. The Kospi sank 2.3% earlier in the week from an all-time high after a senior figure in the administration suggested the government may redistribute windfall AI profits from companies to citizens. Analysts said some investors were snatching the shares that got sold as the actual impact of the remarks was still unclear.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.5% to 8,630.40. The Hang Seng gained 0.2% to 26,388.44, while the Shanghai Composite rose 0.7% to 4,242.57.

"Corporate earnings and AI momentum are acting as the market's primary shock absorbers, but the road is getting significantly rougher," said Tim Waterer, chief market analyst at KCM Trade.

"With oil prices becoming entrenched at elevated levels and a diplomatic breakthrough between the U.S. and Iran remaining elusive, the easy bullish narrative is becoming much harder to maintain."

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude fell \$1.30 to \$100.88 a barrel. Brent crude lost \$1.33 to \$106.44 a barrel.

Those prices are still way above what they were before the war with Iran, which threatens to drag on, the ceasefire looking more tenuous. Brent has surged from roughly \$70 per barrel before the war. The war has essentially shut the Strait of Hormuz to oil tankers.

In currency trading, the U.S. dollar rose to 157.83 Japanese yen from 157.59 yen. The euro cost \$1.1704, down from \$1.1744.

King Charles III will lay out UK government agenda as Starmer's job hangs in the balance

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — King Charles III on Wednesday will deliver the government's legislative program for the coming year to lawmakers with all the pomp and historic trappings that accompany the ceremonial opening of Britain's Parliament.

The question is whether Prime Minister Keir Starmer will be around to implement it and, even if he survives the latest government crisis, whether he will have the authority to push his proposals through Parliament.

The King's Speech will be Starmer's second attempt to save his premiership after his Labour Party suffered huge losses in local and regional elections last week. That weakened his already tenuous grip on power and fueled calls for him to step down from members of his own party who believe Starmer has been too timid in attacking the rising cost of living, wealth inequality and the country's creaking public services.

The pressure on Starmer has only increased since a Monday speech to party supporters, promoted as the first leg of his fight back. But it was criticized as "tone deaf" and lacking the bold policies needed to tackle Britain's problems. Former Safeguarding Minister Jess Phillips resigned from the Cabinet on Tuesday, saying the government needed to "have a row, push back, make arguments, bring people along."

Historic power collides with modern reality

The King's Speech will be a moment when the historic power and grandeur of Britain will collide with the

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reality of the modern United Kingdom, a mid-sized country with an underfunded military, rising debt and waning international influence. It's a country struggling to control immigration and pay for public services such as health care and education.

The speech is just one element of the state opening of Parliament, a traditional set piece of the political calendar that uses carefully choreographed pageantry to showcase Britain's evolution from an absolute monarchy to a parliamentary democracy where real power is vested in the elected House of Commons.

This year's edition will be closely watched because of Starmer's precarious position.

The speech is likely to take on cost of living crisis

The speech is expected to include proposals to address the cost of living crisis, create a national wealth fund to stimulate private investment in public infrastructure and tighten rules for asylum seekers. It may also include the government's controversial proposal to abolish jury trials for some cases in England and Wales, lower the voting age to 16 and introduce a "duty of candor" for public officials, requiring them to tell the truth and cooperate with investigations.

The problem for Starmer is that many of the proposals expected to appear in the speech have been announced previously. That raises the question of whether he will be able to win over his doubters.

Even so, the speech is the focal point of a day of ceremony and tradition that has been followed since 1852, with elements of the program dating to the 16th century.

King Charles III visits the Commons

The monarch traditionally travels from Buckingham Palace to the Houses of Parliament, a distance of less than a mile, in a horse-drawn carriage. He then dons the Imperial State Crown and robe of state before leading a procession into the chamber of the unelected House of Lords.

A Lords official called Black Rod, named for the ebony rod he or she carries, then goes to the House of Commons to summon the chamber's members to a joint sitting of Parliament. The doors to the Commons chamber are slammed in Black Rod's face to symbolize the chamber's independence from the monarchy, and they aren't opened until Black Rod strikes the doors three times.

Once members of the Commons have crowded into the Lords' chamber, the king delivers a speech written by the government and laying out its legislative program for the coming session of Parliament.

After the speech is read and the king leaves, the two houses of Parliament begin several days of debate on its contents.

US grocery prices rose in April, but gas spikes weren't the only reason

By DEE-ANN DURBIN AP Business Writer

Americans paid more for their groceries last month, but high gasoline prices resulting from the Iran war were only one of the reasons why.

Prices for food eaten at home rose 2.9% in April compared to the same month a year earlier, according to government figures released Tuesday. That was the highest year-over-year inflation rate for the category since August 2023.

Prices at restaurants, fast-food chains and other places to get prepared meals also increased, putting overall food prices up 3.2% in the last year, the Labor Department's consumer price index showed.

Fuel prices have soared while the Iran war prevents cargo ships from passing through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital corridor for global oil supplies. Diesel fuel powers fishing boats, tractors and the trucks that ship 83% of U.S. agricultural products. As of Tuesday, the average price per gallon was up 61% from a year ago, according to AAA.

The meat, produce and dry goods vendors that supply Sparrow Market, a small independent grocer in Ann Arbor, Michigan, all added fuel surcharges to their deliveries in recent weeks, owner Raymond Campise said. Wholesale prices for meat, produce and some other products also have gone up, he said.

"For independent markets operating on narrow margins, even small increases can have a major impact," Campise said.

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The full impact of rising energy costs on food likely has not hit retail grocery prices yet in the U.S., according to Purdue University economists Ken Foster and Bernhard Dalheimer. Higher costs to produce, process, store and transport food can take three to six months to show up on supermarket shelves, where prices typically fall slowly once increased, they said.

"Most of what we're seeing now in the food price chain probably predates the conflict," Foster, a professor of agricultural economics, said. "We're cautiously waiting to see what the June numbers and the May numbers might show as they come out in terms of ... the extent to which energy shocks in the Strait of Hormuz and shipping blockades and so forth are going to impact food prices."

The consumer price index measures changes in what people in U.S. cities paid at retail stores for meat, bread, milk, produce and other grocery staples. Over the last 20 years, grocery prices increased an average of 2.6%, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Prices for perishable and refrigerated products tend to increase faster than prices for packaged goods when energy is an issue. Consumers paid 6.5% more for fresh fruit and vegetables in U.S. cities last month than they did in April 2025, and 8.8% more for meat, the Labor Department reported.

But U.S. trade policies and extreme weather also have weighed on U.S. food prices in the last year. In July 2025, the Trump administration imposed a 17% duty on fresh tomatoes imported from Mexico; consumer prices rose 40% in the 12 months before April.

Dry weather in the Western U.S. has been one of many factors pushing up beef prices, which in April were 15% higher year-over-year. Coffee prices were up 18.5%, partly due to drought and other weather conditions that have hurt global coffee production in recent years.

"Today's CPI showed that food prices have been rising 3.2 percent in the past year, but the story behind that number is more complicated than just an energy shock," said Dalheimer, an assistant professor of macroeconomics and trade in Purdue's Department of Agricultural Economics.

Prices for some foods remained more or less flat or declined over 12 months. Milk and chicken dipped slightly. Butter cost 5.8% less in April than it did a year earlier. Egg prices fell 39% as farmers rebuilt flocks that were decimated by an ongoing bird flu outbreak.

Food prices and broader inflation are likely to feature prominently in November's midterm elections. During his 2024 campaign, President Donald Trump often cited the prices of bacon, cereal, crackers and other groceries as reasons why voters should return him to the White House.

Some food producers say they're struggling now because of higher fuel costs. The Southern Shrimp Alliance, which represents shrimpers in eight states, said some boats haven't left the dock this spring because they can't catch enough shrimp to compensate for the cost of diesel.

Fuel typically makes up 30% to 50% of the costs for U.S. shrimpers, but because they supply only 6% of the shrimp that Americans consume, they have limited ability to raise prices or add surcharges for fuel, the organization said.

Higher fuel prices may also be impacting food costs in other ways. Part of April's 5% annual increase in prices for nonalcoholic beverages may be due to the petroleum derivative that goes into making plastic bottles, Foster said.

"It's possible some of that's starting to seep down the supply chain and get into those prices," he said. Over the next year or more, Americans could also see higher food prices due to spiking fertilizer costs, since around 30% of the world's fertilizer travels through the Strait of Hormuz.

Fertilizer costs are less of an issue for U.S. farmers this year, since many already had fertilizer supplies in place before the war began, according to Foster. But the effects could become more noticeable next year if the war drags on, he said.

"I expect the Iran conflict to impact the coming years' food prices through a couple of channels. One, the energy costs and transportation handling. The other would be through packaging costs," Foster said. "If the conflict were to last longer, then we might see more coming online as fertilizer prices start to impact longer-term planting decisions and cropping decisions."

Soaring inflation and plummeting economy test Iran's ability to withstand war and US blockade

By MEHDI FATTAHI and AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJY Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's grip on the Strait of Hormuz is throttling the world's energy supplies and inflicting global economic pain, but the struggles of the Islamic Republic's own economy are testing its ability to withstand the war and defy Washington's demands.

Iranians have been hit by spiraling prices for food, medicine and other goods. At the same time, the country has seen mass job losses and business closures caused by strike damage to key industries and the government's monthslong shutdown of the internet.

The economic cost of the war and the U.S. naval blockade "has been very substantial and unprecedented for Iran," said Hadi Kahalzadeh, an Iranian economist and research fellow at Brandeis University.

But Iran has withstood decades of economic pressure and sanctions and its capacity to adapt has not been dismantled, Kahalzadeh said.

"Iran can probably avoid a complete economic collapse or total shortage of essential goods, but at a very high cost," he said. "The main cost will be passed to ordinary Iranians through higher inflation, more poverty, weaker services and a much harder daily life."

The International Monetary Fund has predicted the Iranian economy will shrink by about 6 percentage points in the next year. Iran's official statistics center reported in mid-April that annual inflation was 53.7%, while inflation for food breached 115% compared with the same period last year.

Meanwhile, Iran's rial currency has lost over half its value in the past year, falling to a record low of 1.9 million to the dollar at the end of last month. The economic woes helped fuel massive protests that spread across the country in January.

Steep prices on staples

Parked beneath an overpass in central Tehran, 56-year-old Hossein Farmani was idling alongside other taxi drivers waiting for customers. He popped open the trunk of his car to take out a kettle before pouring himself a glass of tea. He reflected on the wild price increases in the past year. Alongside items such as milk, the price of tea has risen over 50% since the war began.

"If things keep heading in this direction, we're going to suffer a lot more," Farmani said.

Prices had already climbed steadily over the past two years, but an Associated Press tour of grocery stores in Tehran found large jumps from February, before the war began: Chicken and lamb were up 45%, rice 31% and eggs 60%.

Iranian authorities have announced measures to help Iranians bear the crippling prices. But many of these policies — including a 60% hike in the minimum wage and coupon programs for essential goods — are stoking inflation, Taymur Rahmani, an economist at the University of Tehran, wrote recently in a leading business newspaper, *Dunya-ye Eqtesad*.

Since the war began, free bus and metro fares in the capital are also not helping the city's struggling taxi drivers.

Another driver waiting nearby, Mohammad Deljoo, 73, said he was supporting his family of two children on a daily income of \$4. He said there was no shortage of goods in shops and instead blamed the problem on "price gouging."

"We only buy what's absolutely necessary, things like bread and potatoes. Even eggs have become too expensive for us," Deljoo said. He said the price for tires and other car parts rose fivefold in less than a year.

"One price today, another tomorrow. How is that possible?" he said.

Amid job losses, many Iranians are scrambling to find new ways to make money. Ali Asghar Nahardani, 32, said the ride-hailing app he works for had not paid him in over a month. He turned to street vending to cover his living expenses.

"We're just living day by day, trying to get through this situation while the war conditions continue," he said.

War contributes to collapse of Iranian middle class

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The closure of the strait has hiked energy prices across the world. But in Iran, the war has marked another step in the ruin of a once large and prosperous middle class following decades of sanctions.

By 2019, Iran's middle class had already shrunk to around 55% of the population, explained Mohammad Farzanegan, a professor of Middle Eastern economics at the University of Marburg. New rounds of sanctions as well as wars, corruption and economic mismanagement have further cut that number, he said.

The war will likely push several million Iranians below the poverty line, according to a report published by the U.N.'s development agency in late March.

A physical trainer who lives in downtown Tehran described the economic crisis as a mental health crisis for Iranian society. She said many of her clients could no longer afford her fees and training sessions. The few clients she has left have turned to discussing ways to handle signs of depression.

"The system is just collapsing. The layoffs are in factories, in companies, in startups, in whatever your work is," she said in a voice note by Telegram. She spoke on condition of anonymity out of security fears.

The trainer said she had severely cut back on groceries.

"The last time I bought meat was about two months ago." She has also given up paying for therapy sessions that she began after divorcing her spouse a year ago. "I am pursuing a master's in psychology so it's given me the tools to handle my anxieties," she said.

A resident of Karaj, near the capital, said his insurance company had seen plummeting sales for car and home policies. Families are being dragged down into poverty, he said, also speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear of reprisal.

The Karaj resident, who joined the mass anti-government protests in January, blamed the yearslong decline on "severe systemic corruption" and the Islamic Republic's costly support for militant groups in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq.

"Most people blame the government and its ambitions," he wrote by WhatsApp message.

Leaders urge public to endure

Iran's leaders have been trying to shore up the homefront by showing sympathy while also urging the public to endure the economic pain for the sake of the war effort.

In a series of messages on his official Telegram channel Friday, the new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, described the current phase of the conflict as an "economic battlefield" and asked employers to "avoid layoffs as much as possible." Khamenei is believed to have been wounded early in the war by Israeli strikes and has yet to appear in public.

Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf — who has emerged as a key player in the war effort and U.S. talks — urged Iranians to "be frugal" in their spending. He said on his official Telegram account that government administrators and the public "have a duty to help each other" to ease economic effects.

The U.S. blockade has restricted Iran's critical Gulf trade. Over 90% of Iranian trade, particularly the oil exports that bring in billions of dollars, flows through its southern ports, Farzanegan estimated.

Farmani, the taxi driver, said he did not want to accept what he called a "humiliating" peace with the U.S. and Israel.

"A country that has sacrificed so many martyrs and has so many people willing to give their lives cannot simply let others from across the world dictate terms to us."

Price shocks from the Iran war power solar sales in energy-hungry Asia

By ANTON L. DELGADO Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Soaring costs for fuel due to the Iran war are leading panicked consumers in hard-hit Asia toward rooftop solar power, a likely windfall for China as the world's largest provider of solar technology.

In the Philippines, which is in a national energy emergency, a survey of 20 local solar companies found a 70% increase in weekly installations and a six-fold jump in customer inquirers since the conflict began.

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"This crisis is a driving force for solar," said Brenda Valerio of the nonprofit New Energy Nexus, which ran the survey. "People want solar and people want solar now."

China is poised to profit from demand caused by the war. Chinese clean technology equipment exports hit a record high in March, according to energy think tank Ember, and worldwide interest in solar is increasing.

"China really is, by far, leading this race," said Li Shuo, director of the Asia Society Policy Institute's China Climate Hub, who called the renewable industry "a one-man show."

Iran war drives solar sales

The Philippines, which relies heavily on Middle Eastern crude oil and liquefied natural gas, is among the most impacted Southeast Asian nations by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Local airlines are weighing fuel rationing. Public transport workers are receiving cash handouts. Gas and diesel prices also have shot up. To conserve energy, government offices have shifted to a four-day work week and been told to keep air conditioning no lower than 24 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit).

Oil and gas spikes during the first 60 days of the Iran war cost Filipino consumers, businesses and public institutions more than \$600 million, the climate nonprofit 350.org estimates.

"When we got our energy bill after the Iran war broke out, we were very shocked. It was wow. It was a significant increase," said Jaime Quemado, who recently bought a rooftop solar system in Manila.

There also have been growing concerns about potential power outages, Quemado said, which led him to look for an alternative energy source like "solar, which is very abundant here in the Philippines."

Customer interest in rooftop solar jumped from around 115 inquiries in February, before the start of the Iran war on Feb. 28, to more than 450 by mid-April, according to the New Energy Nexus survey.

Solar groups must "ride this wave and take advantage of this momentum," Valerio said.

On two blisteringly hot days in Manila, EcoSolutions installers sweated through the set up of an 18-kilo-watt rooftop solar system, which included 28 panels from major Chinese manufacturer LONGi and four batteries from Suzhou-based battery group Dyness.

The war has "helped the solar industry really get its footing," EcoSolutions president Richmond Reyes said.

Joel Remegio of the Association of Solar Installers of the Philippines said the energy crisis is a "game changer" for the nation's nascent solar industry.

Clean technology, like rooftop solar, is quickly scalable because it is "accessible to all of us," according to Marissa Cerezo of the Department of Energy's Renewable Energy Management Bureau.

This "gives us the power to choose them," she said.

Solar interest rises globally

Solar is being embraced across Southeast Asia.

Indonesia set an ambitious target to install 100 gigawatts of rooftop solar by 2034, a leap from its current 1.3 gigawatts. Vietnam wants to install rooftop solar on at least 10% of public offices and homes nationwide by 2030. Thailand is considering new policies to give rooftop solar users a bigger bang for their buck by increasing the amount of surplus energy the national grid can buy.

The energy crisis is incentivizing these decisions, according to Yu Sun Chin of the research group Zero Carbon Analytics.

"It totally makes sense for policymakers to take another look at rooftop solar and see ways that they can save costs," she said.

Online marketplaces and utility companies in the U.S. and across Europe also have recorded jumps in solar sales and inquiries since the Iran war began.

"Solar is definitely one of the easiest things people can do" to cut monthly electricity bills, said Jan Rosenow, a professor of energy and climate policy at Oxford University.

The availability and affordability of rooftop solar make it the easiest clean technology solution given the higher expense for buying an electric vehicle or installing a heat pump, Rosenow said.

China supplies solar demand

Ember, the energy think tank, noted China exported 68 gigawatts worth of clean technology products in March, equivalent to Spain's entire solar capacity and double its February output. The Iran war is accelerating the world's energy transition, Ember found.

Exports to Africa hit 10 gigawatts, a 176% jump from February, with rapid growth in Nigeria, Kenya and Ethiopia. Exports to other Asian nations doubled to 39 gigawatts, including major increases to India, Malaysia and Laos.

Ramnath Iyer of the U.S.-based Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis said the speed of the transition depends on if world leaders "decide to go ahead with electrification and move away from fossil fuels."

Li of the China Climate Hub said Chinese companies had an oversupply of solar panels and other equipment before the war, putting them in a prime position to capitalize on current demand.

"When it comes to the clean tech sector, China at this point in time is already so far ahead," Li said. "The current situation in Iran will help China cement its dominance."

Drug counselor who delivered the fatal dose of ketamine to actor Matthew Perry is up for sentencing

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A licensed drug addiction counselor who delivered "Friends" star Matthew Perry the doses of ketamine that killed him is set to be sentenced on Wednesday.

Prosecutors are asking for 2 1/2 years in prison for 56-year-old Erik Fleming, one of five people who pleaded guilty in connection with the actor's 2023 death in the Jacuzzi of his Los Angeles home. Fleming connected Perry to Jasveen Sangha, the convicted drug dealer who prosecutors called "The Ketamine Queen." She was sentenced last month to 15 years in prison.

Defense lawyers are asking for a sentence of three months in prison and nine months in a residential drug treatment facility, saying in a sentencing memo that Fleming "has gone to extreme lengths to atone for his criminal conduct."

Fleming gave up Sangha to investigators as soon as they contacted him and in August 2024 became the first defendant to plead guilty, admitting to one count of distribution of ketamine resulting in death. That was before arrests in the case were even announced.

He will be the fourth defendant in the case to be sentenced in the Los Angeles federal courtroom of Judge Sherilyn Peace Garnett. It will be his first court appearance since his role became public knowledge.

Prosecutors said in their sentencing memo that while Fleming's exceptional cooperation should bring a lighter sentence, his role as a drug counselor who "deliberately undertook to sell illegal street drugs to a victim who had a public, well-documented battle with drug addiction" should count against him, even if Perry wasn't one of his regular clients.

Perry had been receiving ketamine treatments for depression — an increasingly common off-label use.

A few weeks before his death, Perry was seeking more of the drug than he could get through doctors and asked a friend to help him get more. She was in a treatment facility, so introduced Perry to Fleming. He was a former film and television producer whose career had been ravaged by addiction. He got sober and became a drug counselor, but had relapsed after the 2023 death of a beloved stepmother who had rescued him from a traumatic childhood, his lawyers said.

Fleming would get ketamine from Sangha, mark up the price to make a profit, and deliver it to Perry's house where he sold it to the actor's live-in personal assistant Kenneth Iwamasa.

"I procured ketamine for Matthew Perry because I wanted the money and because I thought I was doing a favor for a friend," Fleming said in a letter to the court. "I never contemplated the worst possible outcome. This grievous failure will haunt me forever."

His deliveries included 25 vials for \$6,000 four days before Perry's death.

Iwamasa would inject Perry from that batch on Oct. 28, 2023, and hours later he found the actor dead. A medical examiner's report found that Perry died from the acute effects of ketamine, a surgical anesthetic, and drowning was a secondary cause.

Fleming can technically get 25 years in prison, but it's very unlikely it will be anywhere near that much.

His lawyers say he has undergone a "transformative" rehabilitation since Perry's death.

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"I will accept my punishment with humility and spend the rest of my life working to become worthy of forgiveness," Fleming's letter said.

Iwamasa is the last defendant to be sentenced in two weeks.

Perry, who died at 54, became one of the biggest stars of his generation as Chandler Bing on "Friends," NBC's culture-changing sitcom that ran from 1994 to 2004.

An auction of his valuables including "Friends" memorabilia will go to benefit the foundation founded in his name soon after his death.

French hantavirus patient is critically ill and on an artificial lung as outbreak grows to 11

By THOMAS ADAMSON and RUSS BYNUM Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A French woman infected in the deadly hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship is critically ill and being treated with an artificial lung, a doctor at the Paris hospital caring for the sickened passenger said Tuesday. The outbreak has now reached 11 total reported cases, 9 of which have been confirmed.

Three people on the cruise died, including a Dutch couple that health officials believe were the first exposed to the virus while visiting South America.

The French passenger hospitalized in Paris has a severe form of the disease that has caused life-threatening lung and heart problems, said Dr. Xavier Lescure, an infectious disease specialist at Bichat Hospital.

He said the woman is on a life-support device that pumps blood through an artificial lung, providing it with oxygen and returning it to the body. The hope is that the device relieves enough pressure on the lungs and heart to give them some time to recover. Lescure called it "the final stage of supportive care."

With the evacuation of all passengers and many crew members completed, the MV Hondius is now sailing back to the Netherlands, where it will be cleaned and disinfected.

The director of the World Health Organization said confirmed and suspected cases have only been reported among the cruise ship's passengers or crew.

"At the moment, there is no sign that we are seeing the start of a larger outbreak," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the WHO director general. He added: "But of course the situation could change, and given the long incubation period of the virus, it's possible we might see more cases in the coming weeks."

The latest person confirmed to be infected is a Spanish passenger who tested positive for hantavirus after being evacuated from the ship, Spain's health ministry said Tuesday. The passenger was in quarantine at a military hospital in Madrid.

Health authorities say it is the first hantavirus outbreak on a cruise ship. While there is no cure or vaccine for hantavirus, the WHO says early detection and treatment improves survival rates.

Argentina sending experts to investigate source of outbreak

Argentina's health ministry said Tuesday a team of scientific experts will be dispatched in the coming days to investigate the origin of outbreak.

A Dutch couple, identified by the WHO as the first cruise passengers infected with hantavirus, spent several months in Argentina and neighboring South American countries before boarding the cruise ship. The husband and wife later died.

Argentine officials have said the couple took a bird-watching tour that included a stop at a garbage dump where they may have been exposed to rodents carrying the infection. The health ministry said its team will investigate the landfill and other locations the couple visited where rats known to carry the virus are found, although local officials in the province where the cruise departed have challenged the theory it began there.

The evacuation of the MV Hondius is complete

A total of 87 passengers and 35 crew were escorted from the ship to shore in Tenerife by personnel in full-body protective gear and breathing masks in a carefully choreographed effort that ended Monday night.

Two aircraft arrived in the southern Dutch city of Eindhoven overnight carrying Dutch nationals as well as passengers from Australia and New Zealand and crew members from the Philippines. All were placed

into quarantine, according to the Dutch government.

Some crew stayed aboard the ship and set course for the Dutch port city of Rotterdam, said ship operator Oceanwide Expeditions.

Hantavirus usually spreads from rodent droppings and is not easily transmitted between people. But the Andes virus detected in the cruise ship outbreak may be able to spread between people in rare cases. Symptoms — which can include fever, chills and muscle aches — usually show between one and eight weeks after exposure.

WHO chief Tedros has advised that returning passengers should stay in quarantine, either in their homes or in other facilities, for 42 days. He added that WHO cannot enforce its guidance, and that different countries may handle the monitoring of passengers without symptoms in different ways.

Dutch hospital staff quarantined

Twelve employees at a Dutch hospital where a passenger from the Hondius is being treated have to quarantine for six weeks after improperly handling bodily fluids, Radboud University Medical Center said in a statement Monday night.

The “risk of infection is low” the hospital said, but it was requiring the dozen employees to go into preventive quarantine as a “precaution.”

The hospital in the eastern city of Nijmegen received a passenger last week from one of the evacuation flights that landed in the Netherlands and the person has since tested positive for hantavirus.

Blood and urine from the patient should have been handled “according to a stricter procedure,” the hospital said.

Utah woman who published a book on grief after husband’s death to be sentenced for his murder

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

PARK CITY, Utah (AP) — A Utah mother who published a children’s book about grief after the death of her husband and was later found guilty of killing him finds out Wednesday how long she will spend in prison.

Kouri Richins was convicted in March of aggravated murder for lacing her husband’s cocktail with five times the lethal dose of fentanyl at their home near Park City in 2022.

Prosecutors said Richins, a 35-year-old real estate agent with a house-flipping business, was millions in debt and planning a future with another man. She had opened numerous life insurance policies on her husband Eric Richins without his knowledge and falsely believed she would inherit his estate worth more than \$4 million after he died.

Jurors in Park City also found Richins guilty of four other felonies, including attempted murder for trying to poison her husband weeks earlier on Valentine’s Day with a fentanyl-laced sandwich.

Her case captivated true-crime enthusiasts when she was arrested in 2023 while promoting her children’s book “Are You with Me?” about a boy coping with the death of his father.

Richins faces several decades to life in prison at her sentencing hearing Wednesday, which falls on the day her husband would have turned 44. Her lawyers declined to comment before the hearing.

Eric Richins’ sister, Amy Richins, said after the verdict that she was “just very happy that we got justice for my brother” and could now focus solely on supporting his sons, who were ages 9, 7 and 5 when their father died.

Richins’ sons say they are afraid of their mother

In a memo filed by prosecutors ahead of the hearing, the sons told the judge they would feel unsafe if their mother was ever released from prison.

“I’m afraid if she gets out, she will come after me and my brothers, my whole family,” said the oldest boy, who is now 13. “I think she would come and take us and not do good things to us, like hurt us.”

The middle child, now 11, said he is sad that his dad won’t be present for major milestones. With his mother behind bars, he said he can “live a happy and successful life without fear of (her) hurting me or

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anyone I love.”

The youngest said he would be “so scared” if his mother was released.

Possible sentences by charge

Judges in Utah typically impose sentences as a broad range rather than a fixed number of years.

The most serious charge, aggravated murder, is punishable by 25 years to life in prison, or a life sentence without parole. Prosecutors did not push for the death penalty.

Prison time for the attempted aggravated murder charge depends on the severity of the bodily injury that occurred. After taking a bite of the sandwich his wife left for him, Eric Richins broke out in hives, injected himself with his son’s EpiPen, drank a bottle of Benadryl and passed out, prosecutors said. Depending on the judge’s assessment, Kouri Richins could face 15 years to life, 6 years to life or 5 years to life for that charge.

Two counts of insurance fraud, second-degree felonies, each carry a 1-15 year sentence, and a third-degree felony forgery charge is punishable by 0-5 years in prison.

Judge Richard Mrazik has discretion to decide whether Richins’ prison sentences for each count will overlap or stack up. Prosecutors have asked for no overlap and urged the judge to give her life without parole.

Richins also faces more than two dozen money-related criminal charges in a separate case that has not yet gone to trial.

Trial cut short by defense team

The trial was scheduled for five weeks but ended early when Richins waived her right to testify, and her legal team rested its case without calling any witnesses. Her attorneys said they were confident that prosecutors had not produced enough evidence to convict her of murder.

The jury deliberated for just under three hours before finding her guilty of all counts.

Throughout the trial, prosecutors portrayed the mother of three as a money-hungry killer. They showed the jury text messages between Richins and her lover in which she fantasized about leaving her husband and gaining millions in a divorce. Prosecutors also displayed the internet search history from Richins’ phone, which included queries about the lethal dose of fentanyl, luxury prisons and how poisoning is marked on a death certificate.

The defense argued that Eric Richins was addicted to painkillers. Prosecutors countered by showing police body camera footage from the night of his death in which Kouri Richins tells an officer that her husband had no history of illicit drug use.

Defense attorneys also argued that the prosecution’s star witness, a housekeeper who claimed to have sold Kouri Richins fentanyl on multiple occasions, was motivated to lie for legal protection. The housekeeper was granted immunity for her cooperation in the case.

Kids are in a ‘reading recession,’ as test scores continue to decline

By SHARON LURYE and JOCELYN GECKER of The Associated Press, LILY ALTAVENA of Chalkbeat and RUTH SERVEN SMITH of AL.com undefined

MODESTO, Calif. (AP) — Before every important test, teacher Nancy Barajas dims the lights, turns on a disco ball and blasts music from her playlist. Her sixth graders dance together as a “pre-celebration” to boost their confidence, then take their exam.

Lately, there’s been a lot to celebrate in elementary schools in Modesto, California. Both reading and math scores have increased consistently over the past several years.

But across the country, results are gloomier. Researchers warn that the U.S. is experiencing a reading recession — a slide predating the pandemic’s disruptions in schooling.

Scholars at Harvard, Stanford and Dartmouth analyzed state test scores from third to eighth grade for over 5,000 school districts in 38 states, allowing comparisons across school districts and states in a national Education Scorecard.

What they found was sobering: Only five states plus the District of Columbia had meaningful growth in reading test scores from 2022 to 2025. Nationally, students remain nearly half a grade level behind pre-

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pandemic reading scores and only slightly better in math.

While schools have focused on catching kids up since the COVID-19 pandemic upended education, reading test scores have been falling since 2013 for eighth graders and 2015 for fourth graders, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

"The pandemic was the mudslide that had followed seven years of steady erosion in achievement," said Thomas Kane, a Harvard professor who helped create the Education Scorecard.

Still, some states and school districts are making progress — largely by shifting toward phonics-based instruction and providing extra support for struggling readers.

The picture is also brighter in math.

Almost every state in the analysis saw improvements in math test scores from 2022 to 2025. Student absenteeism also declined in most states. In over 400 U.S. school districts, including Modesto, reading or math growth outpaced demographically similar districts in the same state.

A shift toward phonics and extra reading support

Researchers are still debating the reading recession's causes.

One possible factor, researchers say, is the rise of social media on smartphones and corresponding declines in kids' recreational reading. States have also backed off on strict consequences for schools whose students fail to make progress on standardized tests, Kane said.

But the states that improved reading scores — notably Louisiana, Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky and Indiana — all had one thing in common: They ordered schools to teach with a phonics-based approach known as the "science of reading."

For years, schools taught reading using approaches that de-emphasized phonics and encouraged strategies such as guessing words based on context clues. As reading scores tumbled over the past decade, parents, scholars and literacy advocates pushed for teaching methods that align with decades of research about how kids learn to read — largely by sounding out words.

Along with reforming teaching methods, states have also required schools to screen for learning disabilities such as dyslexia and hire coaches to help teachers improve their reading instruction.

That said, "science of reading" reforms did not guarantee success. Some states, including Florida, Arizona and Nebraska, changed parts of their reading instruction but still saw test scores fall.

In Modesto, reading instruction was revamped during the pandemic, and math a couple years earlier. The district created a new department to help students who are still learning English. Schools also ramped up teacher training, paying educators \$5,000 to complete an extensive "science of reading" program called LETRS, or Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling.

Modesto's test scores grew enough to represent an extra 18 weeks of learning in math and 13 weeks in reading. Nevertheless, the district still has a way to go: Overall scores remain far below grade level.

Getting kids 'consistently in the seat' key to Detroit's success

A focus on reading has also improved scores in Detroit — but so have efforts to get kids in school more consistently. For years, the large urban district struggled with deplorable school conditions, leading to a 2016 lawsuit in which students argued they'd been denied the "right to read."

The lawsuit ended in a settlement of over \$94 million, money that helped move the needle. While the district is still far below the national average, student test scores have grown faster than in similar urban districts in Michigan.

"It took a lot to rebuild systems, and now kids are learning at higher levels, but I'm still not satisfied. And I think that's the next challenge: continuing to motivate, inspire and change things," said Detroit Superintendent Nikolai Vitti.

The money has helped Munger Elementary-Middle School, located in a largely Latino neighborhood in Detroit, to employ 18 educators who give kids extra support in small groups. An attendance agent also makes calls to the homes of absent students, even showing up at their doors.

Just a few years ago, says first grade teacher Samantha Ciaffone, it was normal for about seven or eight kids to be absent from her class every day. Now it's usually only one or two.

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"It allows us to be better educators to see kids consistently in the seat instead of once or twice a week," said Ciaffone. "It makes such a difference."

A bright spot in the South

For the last decade, the South has stood out as a region leading the way on education reforms — bucking an established trend of landing at the bottom of education rankings. Southern states were quick to change to research-based teaching methods, and states have paid to train and coach teachers.

It's paid off. Louisiana and Alabama were the only states where math scores were higher in 2025 than pre-pandemic. Louisiana is also the only state that beat its pre-pandemic average in reading, with 87% of traditional public school students attending a district where scores are higher than in 2019.

Alabama had standout gains in reading following the pandemic, driven by a state law requiring every school to use phonics-based instruction. The Legislature modeled math reforms in 2022 off Alabama's reading successes. The state's Numeracy Act standardized math instruction, required regular testing and mandated intervention for kids who lacked adequate math skills.

Oxmoor Valley Elementary in Birmingham hired a full-time math specialist this year to help struggling kids. The school, which made the state's "failing" list in 2016, has steadily improved math and reading scores, although a majority of kids still test below proficient in both subjects.

"We can provide all of these supports, but at the same time, hold kids to high expectations," Birmingham Superintendent Mark Sullivan said.

Researchers stress such progress is possible across the U.S., because it's been done before. Starting in the 1990s, the country saw decades of growth in test scores and graduation rates, while racial disparities declined. That progress continued until the mid-2010s.

"We made enormous progress as a country in terms of educational success from over a 30-year period. Test scores went up dramatically," said Stanford professor Sean Reardon. "And so I think that says, as a country, we can improve education and educational opportunity."

At Modesto's Fairview Elementary, where Barajas teaches, students now practice their reading speed and fluency every day. After a dance break, the class reads a one-page text together in unison for one minute, then students split into pairs to read again. Students learning English are paired with native English speakers, and each child gets a turn reading with Barajas.

"Eventually, you get through the word like it's water," one boy said. "You just say it smooth."

Peter Jackson receives honorary Palme D'Or as Cannes flaunts star power despite Hollywood's retreat

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — The 79th Cannes Film Festival opened Tuesday with politics, artificial intelligence and the shifting priorities of Hollywood taking center stage at the film gathering on the French Riviera.

The festival launched with a tribute to director Peter Jackson, handing the "Lord of the Rings" filmmaker an honorary Palme d'Or. He was introduced by actor Elijah Wood, who played Frodo Baggins in Jackson's fantasy franchise, one of many notable faces on the Cannes red carpet, including Bong Joon Ho, Joan Collins, Heidi Klum and James Franco.

"I've never figured out why I'm getting a Palme d'Or. I'm not a Palme d'Or sorta guy," said the shaggy haired New Zealand filmmaker.

Jackson was then serenaded with a rendition of the song "Get Back," a nod to his lauded 2021 documentary about The Beatles. The director sat stage right mouthing the lyrics.

Jane Fonda and Gong Li officially opened the festival, with Fonda declaring: "Cinema has always been an act of resistance."

It was a fitting observation for a film festival that has already seen politics take center stage. At the introduction of the jury that will decide the Palme d'Or, Cannes' top honor, jury members spoke bluntly about holding a film festival during a time of geopolitical conflict.

The Palme d'Or jury weighs politics in film

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Paul Laverty, the Scottish screenwriter known for his films with director Ken Loach, pointed toward this year's Cannes poster, of "Thelma and Louise," while discussing attending Cannes during what he called "genocide in Gaza." Quoting "King Lear," he said: "Madmen lead the blind."

"Cannes has a wonderful poster," said Laverty. "Isn't it fascinating to see some of them like Susan Sarandon, Javier Bardem and Mark Ruffalo blacklisted because of their views in opposing the murder of women and children in Gaza? Shame on Hollywood people who do that."

The nine-member jury is being presided over by Park Chan-wook, the South Korean filmmaker of "Old-boy" and "No Other Choice," who said that politics and cinema go hand in hand.

"Art and politics are not concepts that are in conflict with each other," said Park. "One cannot disqualify a film on the pretext that it has a political message. Just as one cannot reject a film because it would not be political enough."

Other jury members include Chloé Zhao, Stellan Skarsgård, Ruth Negga and Demi Moore, who two years ago was celebrated in Cannes for her comeback performance in "The Substance."

Moore spoke about a topic that's already dominated conversation at this year's festival.

"AI is here, and so to fight it is to, in a sense, to fight something that is a battle that we will lose," she said. "So to find ways in which we can work with it, I think, is a more valuable path," she said. "Are we doing enough to protect ourselves? I don't know. My inclination would be to say probably not."

Hollywood takes a hiatus

What isn't at Cannes has been as buzzed about as much as what is. Hollywood is largely absent this year.

While recent blockbusters like "Top Gun: Maverick" and "Elvis" have touched down at previous incarnations, studio films this year have been either scared away by the possibility of a rocky reception or by the high cost of flying in A-listers to the Cote d'Azur. The closest thing in Cannes' slate is an anniversary celebration for "Fast & Furious."

Cannes artistic director Thierry Frémaux said Hollywood "is reshaping" in the midst of Paramount Skydance's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery.

"I hope the studio films will come back," Frémaux told reporters on Monday.

Oscar season starts early

Cannes has become better known for its lengthy standing ovations than its boos.

This year, a long list of big-name filmmakers will have center stage. Among the filmmakers set to unveil new movies are Pedro Almodovar ("Bitter Christmas"), James Gray ("Paper Tiger"), Na Hong-jin ("Hope"), Pawel Pawlikowski ("Fatherland") and Ryusuke Hamaguchi ("All of a Sudden").

If Cannes has waned as a global launchpad for studio releases, it has grown as a breeding ground for Oscar contenders.

Two years ago, Sean Baker's "Anora" won the Palme before winning best picture. Last year, Cannes selections like "Sentimental Value," "The Secret Agent" and "It Was Just an Accident" went on to play prominent roles in awards season.

More often than not, the specialty distributor Neon has been at the forefront of the Cannes-to-Oscars pipeline. Neon has backed the past six Palme d'Or winners, an unprecedented streak that it may be poised to extend. The company is attached to more than a quarter of the 22 films in competition for the Palme d'Or.

While Cannes may be light on big Hollywood movies, it isn't lacking in stars. Set to appear over the next two weeks are Kristen Stewart, Barbra Streisand, Adam Driver, Javier Bardem, Michael Fassbender, Cate Blanchett, Rami Malek, Sebastian Stan, Sandra Hüller and many others.

How much any of this will serve as backdrop for "The White Lotus" remains to be seen. The fourth season of Mike White's acclaimed HBO series is based around a trip to Cannes. Last month, the show began shooting on the French Riviera.

Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke, a veteran of 7 NBA seasons, dies at 29

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke has died, the NBA team and his agents announced Tuesday, and a person familiar with the terms of the ongoing investigation said an autopsy was planned to determine the exact cause.

The 29-year-old Clarke was found dead Monday at a home in the Los Angeles area and emergency personnel who responded to the scene found drug paraphernalia in the home, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because those details were not released publicly.

Neither the Grizzlies nor Clarke's agency, Priority Sports, provided any details about the cause of Clarke's death.

"We are heartbroken by the tragic loss of Brandon Clarke. Brandon was an outstanding teammate and an even better person whose impact on the organization and the greater Memphis community will not be forgotten," read a statement from the Grizzlies.

His agents wrote on social media that they were "beyond devastated."

"He was so loved by all of us here and everyone whose life he touched," read the statement from Priority Sports. "He was the gentlest soul who was the first to be there for all of his friends and family."

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver expressed sympathies to Clarke's family and friends and the Grizzlies organization.

"We are devastated to learn of the passing of Brandon Clarke," Silver said. "As one of the longest-tenured members of the Grizzlies, Brandon was a beloved teammate and leader who played the game with enormous passion and grit."

Clarke was the 21st overall pick out of Gonzaga in the 2019 NBA draft by Oklahoma City, which dealt his rights to the Grizzlies.

He was fourth in the 2019-20 Rookie of the Year balloting — his Grizzlies' teammate Ja Morant was the overwhelming winner of that award — and also was 11th in the NBA's Sixth Man of the Year voting for the 2021-22 season.

Clarke averaged 10.2 points and 5.5 rebounds in 309 career NBA games.

He averaged 16.9 points in his one season at Gonzaga, transferring there after starting his college career at San Jose State. At Gonzaga, he was a huge part of a team that also had Rui Hachimura — now with the Los Angeles Lakers — and went 33-4.

"He had such a kind, gentle and warm soul, and I will remember the great smile he had on his face whenever you were around him," read a statement from Gonzaga and its coach, Mark Few. "BC was one of the most easygoing players we have ever had, and he was part of one of the greatest teams in our program's history."

Clarke was arrested April 1 in Arkansas for speeding and possession of a controlled substance that was reportedly kratom, an herbal supplement promoted as an alternative pain remedy that becomes illegal in Tennessee as of July 1. He was released on bond a day later.

Health officials have been warning about the risks of an opioid-related chemical known as 7-hydroxymisragynine and a component of kratom. The plant native to Southeast Asia has gained popularity in the U.S. as an unapproved treatment for pain, anxiety and drug dependence.

A federal report in 2019 found overdose deaths involving the herbal supplement kratom were more common than previously reported. Most who died had also taken heroin, fentanyl or others, though officials counted a few instances in which kratom was the only substance listed.

"love you broski. gone way too soon," Morant wrote in an Instagram post Tuesday.

Clarke joined Morant on the NBA's All-Rookie team in 2020, and the Grizzlies gave him a multiyear contract extension in October 2022.

But injuries dogged him for more than three years. He tore his left Achilles tendon on March 3, 2023,

in a loss to the Denver Nuggets in a showdown of what were then the top two teams in the Western Conference. Injuries limited him to 72 of a possible 246 games over the past three seasons, including only two this season.

"This is an incredible loss for the brotherhood," the National Basketball Players Association said. "We will remember Brandon not only for the immense joy he brought to so many throughout his career, but for the genuine friendships he built far beyond basketball."

Clarke was under contract for the 2026-27 season with Memphis, which went 25-57 this season. The San Antonio Spurs paid tribute to Clarke with a moment of silence — both for him and former NBA player Jason Collins, whose death was announced Tuesday — before a playoff game Tuesday night.

Clarke's "leadership and passion earned him respect throughout the Memphis community and around the league," the Spurs said.

Trump's redistricting push fizzles in South Carolina Senate but wins in Missouri's top court

By DAVID A. LIEB, JEFFREY COLLINS, JACK BROOK and KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

President Donald Trump's push to redraw the nation's U.S. House districts received mixed results Tuesday as South Carolina senators defied his desires but Missouri's top court upheld a new map that could help Republicans win an additional seat in the November midterm elections.

Rather than waning, a national redistricting battle that began 10 months ago has intensified — inflamed by a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that weakened the federal Voting Rights Act and provided grounds for states to try to eliminate voting districts with large minority populations.

Republican lawmakers in Louisiana are wrestling with how politically aggressive to be when redrawing House districts after the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated a majority-Black district as an illegal racial gerrymander.

The ripples of the Louisiana ruling already have led to new U.S. House districts in Tennessee and have extended to Alabama, where Republican Gov. Kay Ivey announced an Aug. 11 special primary for four of the state's seven congressional districts. That came after the U.S. Supreme Court on Monday overturned an order mandating use of a map with two largely Black districts. The state plans to switch to a map passed in 2023 that has only one majority-Black district, giving Republicans a chance to win an additional seat.

Republicans think they could gain as many as 14 seats from new House maps enacted so far in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida and Tennessee. Democrats, meanwhile, think they could gain six seats from new maps in California and Utah. The Virginia Supreme Court last week struck down a redistricting effort that could have yielded four more winnable seats for Democrats.

Missouri court upholds split of Kansas City

Missouri was the second Republican state, after Texas, to redraw its congressional districts at Trump's urging last year.

Tuesday's two unanimous state Supreme Court decisions, delivered just hours after arguments, "are a complete victory for Missouri and for the people's elected representatives," Republican Attorney General Catherine Hanaway said in a statement.

The rulings sided "against voters in every respect," the ACLU and Campaign Legal Center, which represented suing voters, said in a joint statement. "This state — and our democracy — are worse off for this outcome."

Attorneys challenging Missouri's new map had focused on changes to a Kansas City-based district long represented by Democratic U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, who previously was the city's first Black mayor.

The new map takes a compact urban district that covered 20 miles (32 kilometers) and two counties and stretches it 200 miles (322 kilometers) over 15 counties, distorting it "into a sprawling behemoth that cuts clear across the state to unite territories that share nothing in common," said Abha Khanna, a partner in the Elias Law Group, a Democratic firm.

But the Supreme Court upheld a March decision by a lower court, which found the map as a whole sat-

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ified the compactness requirement even though the Kansas City district looks less compact. No Missouri court has ever struck down a congressional map for not being compact, said attorney John Gore, who defended the districts on behalf of the Republican Party.

A second case heard by the high court centered on whether the new map took effect in December, as asserted by Hanaway and Republican Secretary of State Denny Hoskins, or whether it should have been suspended when referendum signatures were submitted.

To suspend the map before validating the signatures would let activists temporarily undercut laws by submitting boxes of fraudulent signatures, Missouri Solicitor General Lou Capozzi argued.

But to not immediately suspend the map "would dilute the referendum right, if not destroy it altogether," said attorney Jonathan Hawley, arguing for voters who sued.

The Supreme Court agreed with Republican officials, who contend the new districts can be suspended only after Hoskins determines the petition meets constitutional requirements and has enough valid signatures. Hoskins has until Aug. 4, the day of Missouri's primary elections, to make that determination.

South Carolina senator sees risk in redistricting

Trump urged South Carolina to redraw its congressional districts ahead of the November elections in an attempt to help Republicans win another seat.

A House committee endorsed a map Tuesday that could eliminate the state's only Democratic-held seat, and the chamber voted previously to let lawmakers return after their regular work ends Thursday to further consider redistricting.

But the Senate had to give permission too. The 29-17 vote failed, coming just two votes short of the two-thirds needed, as five Republicans joined all Democrats in opposition.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Shane Massey said he expects redistricting to come up again in some way before the June 9 primary.

Trump had said on social media that he was closely watching the redistricting vote, urging South Carolina senators to "be bold and courageous" and to delay the congressional primaries so new districts can be drawn.

Although Republicans have a supermajority in the chamber, some GOP senators weren't sure the proposed map would guarantee the party could unseat longtime Democratic U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn. They also said it could push enough Democrats into other districts to backfire, resulting in a 5-2 or even a 4-3 Republican split.

Massey acknowledged the pressure from Trump but said he doesn't like being asked to bend to someone's will instead of doing what's best for his state.

"I got too much Southern in my blood," Massey said. "I've got too much resistance in my heritage."

Louisiana teen recounts family's fight

A state Senate committee was considering how to reshape congressional districts — currently represented by four Republicans and two Democrats — in response to the Supreme Court ruling.

Republican-backed options aimed to eliminate either one or both of those Democratic seats.

But Democrats backed a map that still would allow for two majority-Black districts centered on Baton Rouge and New Orleans. They argued that would comply with the Supreme Court's ruling while retaining fairness.

As a hearing stretched late into Tuesday night, Josiah Hardy, a high school sophomore, told lawmakers that his great-grandfather fought for civil rights and equal representation in Louisiana when Black voters were disenfranchised.

"Why are we still fighting the same fight decades later," Hardy said. "My great-grandfather believed democracy is stronger when more people are included, not excluded. Further generations should not have to keep fighting the same battles for fairness and voting rights that leaders before us have already fought."

In diplomacy, pomp and protocol matter, especially when Trump goes to China

By DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — From the moment President Donald Trump lands in Beijing on Wednesday, all eyes will be on how much of a spectacle the Chinese government rolls out, such as who lines up to greet him, what music is played and whether Chinese and American children wave flowers and flags.

In China's rigidly hierarchical world of diplomacy, protocol and ceremony carry weight. The reception of Trump is shaping up to be warm and designed to flatter him, indicative of Beijing's tactical approach to a U.S. leader known for his love for pomp, but it is unlikely to top the "state visit plus" extravaganza President Xi Jinping extended to Trump in 2017.

"That reflects greater Chinese confidence in their position, greater skepticism of Trump, and the awkwardness of the current relationship," said Rush Doshi, C.V. Starr senior fellow for Asia studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and an assistant professor of security studies at Georgetown University.

In the past nine years, the China-U.S. relationship has shifted from engagement to competition and has dipped to a low point during the COVID-19 pandemic and trade wars.

Experts say China's economic clout and its ability to leverage its dominance in the global supply chain have allowed the Chinese leadership to negotiate from a position of strength and led to a more pragmatic China policy by the Trump administration. And now the war with Iran, which has left the Strait of Hormuz blocked and rattled the global economy, has given Xi an upper hand coming into the summit.

The war, which began with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Feb. 28, delayed Trump's visit, initially scheduled for the end of March. Now, Trump is going to Beijing for a shorter stay than in 2017, and without first lady Melania Trump.

"The context for this visit is wholly different," said Danny Russel, a former senior U.S. diplomat, who does not expect Beijing to outdo itself this time in receiving Trump. "The schedule has been compressed to basically one day and stripped down to the basics."

China will roll out the red carpet

But the U.S. holds a special place in China's foreign relations, and China will shower Trump with plenty of ceremonial pomp because Beijing sees it as a diplomatic tool, Russel said.

If the 2017 trip is any indication, Trump can expect to walk down from Air Force One along a red-carpet stairway with golden edging and be greeted by a warm crowd.

At a formal welcome ceremony the next day, he will be greeted by Xi and other Chinese officials, whose rank could be telling. Trump is then expected to inspect military honor guards, lined up precisely by height, their eyes closely tracking him and Xi as the two leaders walk down the red carpet. And he will likely receive a 21-gun salute.

"It's no secret to any government that President Trump responds positively to flattery and spectacle," Russel said. "The pomp and pageantry is designed both to flatter Trump and to pacify him, making him more amenable to Chinese asks and reducing the risk of an embarrassing public confrontation."

Xi also will offer something extra, as he did during past visits by American presidents. In 2014, it was an evening stroll with former President Barack Obama in the leadership compound of Zhongnanhai. In 2017, he hosted a private dinner for Trump at the Palace Museum, on the grounds of the former imperial palace.

This time, the special relationship between the Chinese and American leaders will play out at the Temple of Heaven, a former imperial site, in front of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests, an iconic, blue-tiled building known for its circular design and a triple-gabled roof. The White House says Xi will accompany Trump on a tour of the World Heritage site, where Chinese emperors once prayed for bumper harvests.

The entire park is closed on Wednesday and Thursday, while the main attractions, including the hall and the Echo Wall, were closed on Tuesday for "the maintenance of ancient architecture," park management said.

This is unusual. The park was not closed for the prime ministers of Britain or Spain when they visited the Palace Museum and the Summer Palace in Beijing, respectively, earlier this year. And Xi didn't accompany

them.

But it is not 2017 anymore

Beijing declared Trump's first presidential trip to China to be a "state visit plus," and it is the only one China has held for any foreign leader. The trip was full of unprecedented arrangements.

Xi and his wife, Peng Liyuan, gave Trump and the first lady a tour of the Palace Museum, where they chatted over afternoon tea and watched a traditional opera performance at a royal theater that had not seen a show for a century. They also dined there — a first for any foreign leader.

During the formal welcome ceremony the next day, "The Stars and Stripes Forever" was played as the presidents inspected Chinese military guards, an unusual choice intended to impress Trump.

Trump, who often boasts of his good relationship with Xi, still harkens back to that visit nearly nine years ago.

"You know, last time I went to China, President Xi, he treated me so well, he gave me a display," Trump said in February. "I never saw so many soldiers, all the same height, exactly the same height within a quarter of an inch."

How China treats Trump this time will offer clues about the dynamics of the relationship, said Doshi, who served on former President Joe Biden's National Security Council and helped plan his summits with Xi in 2022 and 2023.

"China uses diplomatic protocol as a method of signaling favor or disfavor. That is why we should pay close attention to how President Trump is received," Doshi said.

Jason Collins, NBA's first openly gay player, dies at 47 of brain cancer

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

Jason Collins, the NBA's first openly gay player who went on to become a pioneer for inclusion and an ambassador for the league, has died after an eight-month battle with an aggressive form of brain cancer, his family announced Tuesday.

Collins spent 13 years as a player in the league for six different franchises. He revealed in 2013 that he was gay, an announcement that came toward the end of his playing career.

Collins had been diagnosed with Stage 4 glioblastoma, which has an extremely low survival rate. He was 47.

"Jason changed lives in unexpected ways and was an inspiration to all who knew him and to those who admired him from afar," Collins' family said in a statement released through the NBA. "We are grateful for the outpouring of love and prayers over the past eight months and for the exceptional medical care Jason received from his doctors and nurses. Our family will miss him dearly."

Just last week, Collins received the inaugural Bill Walton Global Champion Award at the Green Sports Alliance Summit. He was too ill to attend and his twin brother, former NBA player Jarron Collins, accepted for him.

"I told my brother this before I came here: He's the bravest, strongest man I've ever known," Jarron Collins said while accepting that award.

Jason Collins averaged 3.6 points and 3.7 rebounds in his career. He helped the New Jersey Nets reach two NBA Finals and in his best season averaged 6.4 points and 6.1 rebounds for them in 2004-05.

"Jason Collins' impact and influence extended far beyond basketball as he helped make the NBA, WNBA and larger sports community more inclusive and welcoming for future generations," NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said. "He exemplified outstanding leadership and professionalism throughout his 13-year NBA career and in his dedicated work as an NBA Cares Ambassador. Jason will be remembered not only for breaking barriers, but also for the kindness and humanity that defined his life and touched so many others.

"On behalf of the NBA, I send my heartfelt condolences to Jason's husband, Brunson, and his family, friends and colleagues across our leagues."

Jason Collins spent the bulk of his career with the Nets, and also played for Atlanta, Boston, Memphis,

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Minnesota and Washington.

"This one hurts," Dallas coach Jason Kidd, a former teammate and coach of Collins, wrote on X. "Jason Collins was a pioneer. He had courage like you've never seen. He was an incredible teammate. And having him in Brooklyn at the start of my coaching journey meant so much. Those who knew him were blessed to call him a friend. You are already missed my brother. Rest in power."

Jason Collins revealed his sexuality in a first-person account for Sports Illustrated in April 2013. He was a free agent at the time, said he wanted to keep playing, and went on to play in 22 games with Brooklyn the following season.

"If I had my way, someone else would have already done this," he wrote at that time. "Nobody has, which is why I'm raising my hand."

His decision was widely lauded, with star players such as Kobe Bryant quickly speaking out in support of Collins. There was even support from the White House and then-former President Bill Clinton — whose daughter, Chelsea, went to Stanford with Collins. At Stanford, Collins was roommates with someone who was part of another American political dynasty, that being Joe Kennedy III, who spent eight years in Congress representing Massachusetts.

Collins, in the piece for Sports Illustrated, wrote that he realized he needed to go public about his sexuality when Kennedy walked in Boston's gay pride parade in 2012 — but Collins couldn't do the same.

Until then, Collins kept his feelings about gay rights close to the vest. He wore jersey No. 98 for the majority of his final three playing stints with Boston, Washington and Brooklyn — a nod to the year that Matthew Shepard, a gay college student in Wyoming, was killed. He also wore 46 in one game for the Nets, since it was the only jersey the team had available when he signed.

Tributes poured in Tuesday from around basketball and beyond. The Human Rights Campaign, a civil rights advocacy group, released a statement that said in part, "stepping forward as he did boldly changed the conversation. He was and will always be a legend for the LGBTQ+ community."

Added Arn Tellem, the agent who represented Collins: "Representing Jason Collins was one of the great honors and privileges of my life — not only as an agent, but as a counselor and confidant. ... The courage he showed changed lives and transcended our game. His impact reached far beyond basketball."

A moment of silence was held Tuesday before the Minnesota at San Antonio playoff game, in tribute to both Collins and Memphis Grizzlies forward Brandon Clarke — whose death was announced Tuesday as well. The Spurs lauded Collins not just for breaking barriers, but for "his bravery and kindness."

Collins made nearly 61% of his shots in his career at Stanford, which remains a school record. He was an honorable mention selection for The Associated Press' All-America team in 2001, a few months before the Houston Rockets took him with the 18th pick in that year's NBA draft.

"It's a sad day for all of us associated with Stanford basketball when we lose one of the program's greats," former Stanford coach Mike Montgomery said. "We all have great memories of Jason and the kind of person he was. It's hard to separate Jarron and Jason because they thought so alike, but even though he was an identical twin, Jason was unique in his own way. The impact he had on Stanford was immense, as he could match up against anyone in the country because he was big, smart, strong and skilled, all while being a very bright and nice person."

Denver airport security missed trespasser who was killed by plane on runway

By MEAD GRUVER and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (AP) — Workers at Denver airport missed a security breach by a man who scaled a perimeter fence and crossed a runway where he was hit and killed in a fiery collision by a plane with 231 people on board, authorities said Tuesday.

The runway fatality underscores the longstanding challenge of keeping intruders out of major airports. Denver International Airport sprawls across 53 square miles (138 square kilometers) — twice the size of Manhattan — on open prairie northeast of the city center.

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The 41-year-old trespasser triggered an alarm as he crossed into the airport in a remote area about 2 miles (3.2 kilometers) from the terminal late Friday night. But security personnel mistakenly attributed that alarm to a herd of deer that was nearby and the airport did not find out about the intruder until after the fact, when the pilot notified the control tower that the plane had hit somebody.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988. There is also an online chat at 988lifeline.org

Authorities said the man died by suicide. However, no note from the victim was immediately recovered. The manner of death was determined based on the investigation at the scene, a records review and a postmortem examination, said Sterling McLaren, chief medical examiner for the city and county of Denver.

The collision involving the Frontier Airlines plane as it was taking off for Los Angeles sparked an engine fire that forced passengers to evacuate via slides. Twelve people sustained minor injuries and five were taken to hospitals. Four have since been released, said airport Chief Executive Officer Phillip Washington.

A black-and-white video released by the airport shows, from a distance, a figure walking toward the runway with arms swaying. The person crosses onto the runway at a slight angle and seconds later the plane is seen speeding past. It strikes the person with its right engine, which bursts into flame.

Federal officials notified the airport

A few minutes before the man scaled the 8-foot (2.4-meter) fence, a ground-based radar system activated in the area, triggering an alarm. A worker at the city-owned airport checked a surveillance camera and saw a herd of deer in the same area but did not initially see the trespasser, Washington said.

"The camera view was alternating between the wildlife and the individual. There are some ditches in the area, so the person was out of view for a bit as well," Washington said.

The man crossed about 650 feet (200 meters) from the fence to the runway and was inside the perimeter for only two minutes before being struck by the Frontier Airlines plane that was traveling at 150 mph (240 kph), he said.

Emergency personnel were dispatched to the scene after air traffic controllers were notified by the pilot about the collision, airport representatives said in response to questions from The Associated Press.

The airport declined to provide details on their procedures for dealing with trespassers or how often they enter its grounds.

The plane's engine caused the man's death, McLaren said. She described it as "a purposeful act with a foreseeable fatal outcome."

Denver police Chief Ron Thomas said investigators were contacting the man's family and those who knew him to seek more information about his motivations.

Trespassers breaching airport perimeters is a regular problem, with perhaps dozens annually nationwide, said security expert Jeff Price, who was assistant director of security at the Denver airport in the 1990s. The airport is surrounded by about 36 miles (58 kilometers) of perimeter fence, which airport officials say is continuously inspected.

The vast majority of airport trespassers are intoxicated or simply "messing around just to see if they could do it," said Price, adding that they typically don't pose a real threat. Denver also gets the rare individual who will jump the fence seeking to prove a long-running conspiracy theory about there being a UFO base at the airport, he said.

The Transportation Security Administration oversees airport security programs, including perimeter security requirements.

"It's really not that difficult to jump an airport perimeter fence," Price said. "They meet the standards for TSA, but the standards are not that robust."

The fences are typically 6 to 8 feet (1.8 to 2.4 meters) tall with barbed wire at the top, he said. They must be approved by federal inspectors, but there are no set rules on their construction. Major airports

such as Denver typically also have intrusion detection systems that include cameras and motion sensors, he said. Some systems detect the seismic impact of people dropping to the ground, Price said.

Evacuation under scrutiny

The person was killed on the airport's easternmost north-south runway and at least 1.25 miles (2 kilometers) from any airport buildings. Empty fields and croplands surround Denver International Airport in most directions. Distant trees and structures in the video showed that the person was headed toward the airport when they crossed the runway.

The National Transportation Safety Board on Sunday said it is gathering information about the plane's evacuation.

An agency spokesperson said an investigation would be launched if it's determined the injuries meet the agency's definition for "serious." That can include a person requiring hospitalization for more than 48 hours, suffering a broken bone, or second- or third-degree burns affecting more than 5% of their body.

Trump's FDA chief is out after angering pharma CEOs, vaping lobbyists and anti-abortion activists

By MATTHEW PERRONE and SEUNG MIN KIM AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The head of the Food and Drug Administration, Dr. Marty Makary, is resigning after a rocky tenure that drew months of complaints from health industry executives, anti-abortion activists, vaping lobbyists and other allies of President Donald Trump.

News of Makary's departure Tuesday came just 13 months after he was confirmed to lead the powerful regulatory agency.

A surgeon and health researcher, Makary came to prominence among Republicans as an outspoken critic of public health measures during the COVID-19 pandemic, when he frequently appeared on Fox News Channel. But he struggled to manage the FDA's bureaucracy and failed to win the confidence of its staff after mass layoffs, leadership upheavals and a series of controversies in which the agency's scientific principles appeared to be overridden by political interests, including those of Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

"He's a great doctor, and he was having some difficulty," Trump told reporters outside the White House. "But he's going to go on and he's going to do well."

Trump later confirmed in a social media post that Kyle Diamantas, the agency's chief for foods, is expected to take over as acting commissioner. Diamantas is an attorney with personal ties to Donald Trump Jr.

In that post, the president included what appeared to be a text message from Makary submitting his resignation. In it, he noted: "I announced 50 major FDA reforms. Joe Biden's FDA had none." He thanked Trump for the chance to serve.

The FDA commissioner, as the leader of an agency that regulates billions of dollars in consumer goods and medicines, is often required to juggle competing priorities that straddle science and politics.

Makary faced a unique challenge in balancing calls by Trump and other Republicans to cut red tape at the FDA, while also tending to Kennedy's interest in scrutinizing the safety of vaccines, drugs and food additives. The decision to get rid of Makary was made by Kennedy, and then the White House signed off on it, according to an administration official who was granted anonymity because they were not authorized to describe internal dynamics.

Virtually all of the FDA's senior career officials resigned, retired or were forced out in the first year of the second-term Trump administration, leading to a steady stream of leaks and negative stories in the media cataloging low morale, dysfunction and frustration among staff.

Makary's handpicked deputy, Dr. Vinay Prasad, was pushed out of the agency twice in less than a year for running afoul of specialty drugmakers and groups for patients with rare diseases. Makary appeared poised to weather the controversy, despite an ongoing pressure campaign calling on Trump to fire him.

Recent weeks brought fresh criticisms from other interest groups that the White House considers key to Republican chances in November elections.

Anti-abortion groups have accused Makary of slow-walking an internal review of the abortion pill mife-

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pristone, which has been on the market for 25 years but remains a target for conservative activists. They are seeking to roll back FDA rules that currently allow the pill to be sent through the mail.

"We look forward to a new FDA commissioner who will put an end to the mail-order abortion drug regime," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America.

Vaping executives told Trump that Makary was blocking approval of their products, including new flavored e-cigarettes seen as crucial to the industry's survival.

Last week, the agency abruptly changed course, authorizing the first fruit-flavored e-cigarettes and issuing guidelines that loosened marketing for major manufacturers. But it wasn't enough to keep Makary in the job.

A permanent replacement for the FDA job will need to be nominated by Trump and confirmed by the Senate.

Faster drug reviews are overshadowed

As a former regular on Fox News, Makary was aggressive about promoting his accomplishments on cable television and podcasts and in online opinion pieces.

A string of initiatives from Makary aimed to speed up or streamline FDA drug reviews, including dropping certain study requirements, incorporating artificial intelligence into drug evaluations and offering expedited reviews to medicines that support "national interests."

But pharmaceutical executives rely on the predictability and consistency of FDA decisions, even more than speedy reviews. Makary's efforts on drug reviews were overshadowed by internal conflicts and disputes that created headaches for drugmakers, investors and patients.

More than a half-dozen drugmakers studying therapies for rare or hard-to-treat diseases said they received rejection letters or requests to run additional studies for drugs that had previously been given the go-ahead by FDA staff. Those drugs were primarily overseen by Prasad, who stepped down for a second time from his role as the FDA's vaccine and biotech chief in April.

Vaccine moves denounced

Prasad repeatedly overruled vaccine staffers to restrict eligibility for new coronavirus shots. In February, Prasad initially refused to even consider Moderna's mRNA shot for flu. The FDA was forced to reverse itself after Moderna pledged to formally challenge the decision and called for intervention by the White House.

Some of Makary and Prasad's most controversial vaccine proposals never came to fruition, despite stoking confusion and anxiety within the FDA and beyond.

In an internal memo in November, Prasad claimed — without publishing evidence — that the FDA had linked COVID-19 shots to the deaths of 10 children. Prasad used that to justify a planned overhaul of the agency's approach to approving vaccines.

A dozen former FDA commissioners issued a scathing denunciation of the plan, warning it would "undermine the public interest" and decimate vaccine development. The FDA has not released its analysis of the deaths or its plan for the vaccine overhaul.

FDA's drug center had a revolving door

In the FDA's drug center, which is the agency's largest division, Makary oversaw a revolving door of leadership changes. Six people served as director over the course of one year.

Makary's initial pick for the job, Dr. George Tidmarsh, was forced to resign after allegations that he used his FDA position to pursue a personal vendetta against a former business partner.

His replacement, longtime FDA cancer specialist Dr. Rick Pazdur, announced he would retire after just three weeks on the job, after clashing with Makary on multiple issues surrounding drug reviews.

With Makary's departure, the fate of many of his fledgling initiatives is uncertain.

Most of the programs Makary introduced have not gone through federal rulemaking required to enshrine them in U.S. law. Democrats in Congress have questioned the legality of some of those efforts, including a program that offers drugmakers expedited reviews for innovative medicines.

Hegseth gets bipartisan grilling on rising costs of the Iran war and Trump's end game

By BEN FINLEY, KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, BILL BARROW and STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth faced tough questions Tuesday from Republican and Democratic lawmakers about the Trump administration's end game for the Iran war, the conflict's rising \$29 billion cost and its impact on diminishing U.S. weapons stockpiles.

While the Pentagon chief softened his tone from hearings before Congress nearly two weeks ago, notably avoiding the same pointed criticism of lawmakers, he got far more pushback from members of his own Republican Party about the levels of U.S. munitions used in the Iran war and President Donald Trump's intense criticism of traditional allies for not taking part in the conflict.

"I take issue with the characterization that munitions are depleted in a public forum," Hegseth said. "That's not true."

Even as he insisted that the U.S. military has plenty of missile defense systems and other munitions for the Iran war or future conflicts, Hegseth told House and Senate lawmakers overseeing defense spending that the Trump administration is working to ramp up production of weapons.

Pentagon officials also told lawmakers that the cost of the Iran war has risen to about \$29 billion, the vast bulk of which — roughly \$24 billion — is related to replacing munitions and repairing equipment but also includes operational costs to keep forces deployed. That is up from the overall total of \$25 billion that Pentagon comptroller Jay Hurst revealed nearly two weeks ago. He said the updated estimate does not include the cost to repair or rebuild U.S. military sites damaged in the region.

Republicans tout the importance of American allies

Hegseth faced notable pushback from Republicans on the Trump administration's straining of relations with longtime allies, with Kentucky Sen. Mitch McConnell telling Hegseth, "NATO is the most important military alliance in world history."

"It seems to me that a lot of the European countries think that we're reducing our influence there, they're sort of on their own," said McConnell, the GOP chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on defense.

Trump has assailed NATO allies and others for not helping reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global shipping corridor, or otherwise offering more support, saying he plans to pull thousands of troops out of Germany in the coming months.

Oklahoma Rep. Tom Cole, the Republican chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, voiced his concerns in a separate hearing, saying, "America First has never meant American alone."

"American power is most effective when it's exercised in concert with like-minded nations who share our interests and our values," Cole said.

Hegseth gets bipartisan pushback on munition stockpiles

The hearings before the powerful House and Senate Appropriations defense subcommittees spanned four hours as they reviewed the Trump administration's 2027 military budget proposal, which calls for a historic allocation of \$1.5 trillion.

The discussions quickly veered into the handling of a war that appears locked in a stalemate as higher fuel prices pose political problems for Republicans in the midterm congressional elections.

California Republican Rep. Ken Calvert, the House subcommittee's chair, asked about the impact of the Iran war on military funding as well as weapons stockpiles drawn down from the conflict.

"Questions persist about whether we are building the depth and reliance required for a high-end conflict," Calvert said.

Minnesota Rep. Betty McCollum, the defense subcommittee's ranking Democrat, pressed Hegseth on whether the military has a plan to draw down troops in the Middle East if Congress passes so-far-unsuccessful efforts to end the Iran war.

"We have a plan to escalate if necessary," Hegseth said. "We have a plan to retrograde if necessary. We have a plan to shift assets."

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He said he would not reveal any next steps publicly. Noting repeated questions from lawmakers over weapons stockpiles, Hegseth said the concerns have been "unhelpfully overstated" and "we have plenty of what we need."

He said the defense industry has been told to "build more and build faster," blaming the military industrial base's inadequate capacity on previous administrations and U.S. aid to Ukraine in its war with Russia.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies has painted an alarming picture of U.S. stockpiles of munitions, including interceptors that can defend against incoming enemy missiles on land and sea.

The think tank said in an April analysis that American forces "expended more than half of the prewar inventory" on four key weapons systems and that rebuilding to adequate levels for a possible war with China "will take additional time."

Trump administration faces pressure from the economic impact of the Iran war

Trump is facing increasing pressure from the economic shocks of Iran effectively closing the Strait of Hormuz, where 20% of the world's oil normally flows. The U.S. military in turn has blockaded Iranian ports and the two sides have traded fire, with American forces thwarting attacks on their warships and disabling Tehran-linked oil tankers.

Republican Sen. Susan Collins, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, questioned whether the Trump administration anticipated Iran's closure of the strait, which has surged gasoline prices.

Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the president is briefed with carefully considered military options.

"It seems to me that there's been a different plan almost daily of, with dealing with this problem, which is why I ask," said Collins, who joined Democrats last month in a failed vote to halt the conflict and is facing a tough reelection fight.

Democrats in both hearings repeatedly questioned what the cost of the war would be, from repairing damaged military installations in the Middle East to the rising fuel prices.

"You're spending families' hard-earned tax dollars on a war that many strongly oppose, and you're forcing people to pay more at the pump," said Sen. Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington state. "And yet you're not even providing a real breakdown for the cost of this war."

Hegseth responded rhetorically: "What is the cost of Iran obtaining a nuclear weapon? And the fact that this president has been willing to make a historic and courageous choice to confront that it comes with cost — and we recognize that."

Delaware Sen. Chris Coons, the ranking Democrat on the Senate's subcommittee, repeatedly asked how the Trump administration will reopen the strait to commercial shipping.

"If we control it, how do we reopen it?" Coons pressed Hegseth in a tense exchange.

Hegseth responded defensively, saying the senator was being disingenuous and ignoring the "incredible battlefield successes."

Coons shot back that he was worried that "you've achieved a series of tactical successes but are on the verge of a strategic loss."

Tiger Woods' prescription drug records will be handed over to prosecutors in Florida DUI case

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

STUART, Fla. (AP) — Tiger Woods' prescription drug records will be handed over to prosecutors following his March arrest in Florida on suspicion of driving under the influence, a judge ruled Tuesday morning.

Judge Darren Steele approved an agreement between Woods' defense attorney and prosecutors following a four-minute hearing in Martin County circuit court, just north of Palm Beach County.

Prosecutors had issued a subpoena seeking copies of all prescription medication records for the legendary golfer at a Palm Beach pharmacy from the start of the year through the end of March. Defense attorney Doug Duncan had previously argued that Woods has a constitutional right to privacy when it comes to his prescription medications, but he acknowledged during the hearing that the right is not absolute and that

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prosecutors could make a compelling argument for why they were needed.

Meanwhile, prosecutors agreed to Duncan's request for a protective order limiting the release of records only to prosecutors, law enforcement officers, state experts and Woods' defense team.

Bob Jarvis, a law professor at Nova Southeastern University who is not connected to the case, said the agreement and the judge's approval seems normal for DUI case, particularly one that involves drugs instead of alcohol. Florida law considers a driver with a blood-alcohol content of 0.08% or higher to be impaired, but there's no clear, measurable standard to determine impairment for other drugs. That means prosecutors will have to use field sobriety tests, officer testimony and other evidence to convince jurors beyond a reasonable doubt that Woods was impaired.

Jarvis said there's no indication so far that Woods is receiving special treatment, either more harsh or more lenient, because of his celebrity status.

"We don't know if the prosecutor offered a plea, and a typical defendant would have taken the plea, and Tiger Woods decided not to take the plea," Jarvis said. "But other than that, I think that this is what would happen no matter who the defendant was."

Woods has pleaded not guilty to driving under the influence. A sheriff's office report said deputies found two pain pills in his pocket, and he showed signs of impairment after his SUV clipped a truck's trailer and rolled onto its side.

Woods was traveling at high speeds on a beachside, residential road on Jupiter Island with a 30 mph (nearly 50 kph) speed limit when his Land Rover caused \$5,000 in damage to the truck, according to an incident report. Woods agreed to a Breathalyzer test that showed no signs of alcohol, but refused a urine test, authorities said.

Woods has traveled outside of the United States to seek treatment at an inpatient treatment facility, according to court records.

Appeals court spares Trump from paying \$83 million defamation award to E. Jean Carroll — for now

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump won't have to pay an \$83 million defamation award to a longtime advice columnist until the U.S. Supreme Court gets a chance to review the case or reject an appeal, according to a court entry Tuesday.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to a request by one of Trump's lawyers that it let the president delay the payment to E. Jean Carroll, though it required that Trump post a \$7.4 million bond to cover any additional interest costs, a request Carroll's attorney had made.

The appeals court late last month refused Trump's request for a rare meeting of the full 2nd Circuit to hear an appeal of a three-judge panel's affirmance of the January 2024 verdict.

Afterward, Trump attorney Justin D. Smith asked the 2nd Circuit to stay the effect of its decision upholding the award so that Trump would not be forced to pay the judgment before the high court has a chance to consider an appeal.

Smith said last week there was a "fair prospect" that the Supreme Court will find in favor of Trump, who has called Carroll's claims first made publicly in 2019 that she was sexually attacked by Trump in a Manhattan luxury department store dressing room in spring 1996 a "made up scam."

The \$83 million award to Carroll, 82, came from a jury that briefly heard Trump testify and observed his animated behavior for several days.

In upholding the verdict, a 2nd Circuit panel wrote last September that Trump continued his attacks against Carroll for at least five years, making them "more extreme and frequent as the trial approached."

"He also continued these same attacks during the trial itself," the appeals court said. "In one such statement, issued two days into the trial, Trump proclaimed that he would continue to defame Carroll 'a thousand times.'"

The jury had been instructed to accept the findings of a jury that in May 2023 awarded Carroll \$5 mil-

lion after concluding Trump sexually abused her in the department store and then defamed her after she published her account of it in a 2019 memoir.

Trump is challenging the \$83 million award on several grounds, asserting "absolute immunity" for comments he made while president as he disavowed knowing Carroll and attacked her motivations, saying they were politically driven or arose from a desire to promote her memoir.

Trump and Hegseth claim 'control' over Iran and the Strait of Hormuz as ceasefire talks are stalled

By JON GAMBRELL and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Kuwait said on Tuesday that Iran launched a failed attack earlier this month on an island where China is helping build a port in the Gulf Arab country. The accusation came just hours before U.S. President Donald Trump was to depart for Beijing on a high-stakes visit over the Iran war and other issues.

Trump said he would have a "long talk" about Iran with Chinese President Xi Jinping but said trade would be a bigger focus. As he left for the summit, Trump again threatened Iran if its leaders don't reach an agreement on its nuclear program.

"We have Iran very much under control," Trump said. "We're either going to make a deal or they're going to be decimated. One way or the other, we win."

Iranian state media quoted the country's foreign ministry as calling "baseless" the allegation by Kuwait, which came under attack by Iran in the war and during the shaky ceasefire that is still holding. But the allegation and ongoing attacks in the region have threatened to reignite open warfare.

The narrow Strait of Hormuz remains in Iran's chokehold, the U.S. is maintaining a blockade against Iran and negotiations between the two countries appear at a standstill.

"True peace cannot be built with a literature of humiliation, threats, and coercive score-settling," Kazem Gharibabadi, an Iranian diplomat, said Tuesday on X.

With the risk of the conflict breaking out again, Israel has sent Iron Dome air-defense weapons and personnel to operate them to the United Arab Emirates, the U.S. ambassador to Israel said.

It was the first publicly acknowledged deployment of Israel's military to the Emirates — home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai — and underlined the growing relationship between Israel and the UAE.

Also very late on Tuesday night, a magnitude 4.6 earthquake shook parts of Iran, followed by several aftershocks, according to Iranian state media. Witnesses felt the temblor in the capital of Tehran, where some people sought refuge in the streets. Iranian state TV said there were no reports of casualties.

Kuwait alleges Iran planned attack

Kuwait said a paramilitary Revolutionary Guard team tried to infiltrate Bubiyan Island in the northwest corner of the Persian Gulf near Iraq and Iran on May 1.

Four men were detained and two escaped when Kuwait's forces disrupted the attack, it said.

A statement that Iranian media attributed to the foreign ministry in Tehran said four officers on a "conventional maritime patrol mission" had entered Kuwait's waters because of "a disruption in the navigation system." It denied any hostile intent and called for the men's release.

Bubiyan Island is home to Mubarak Al Kabeer Port, which is under construction as part of a Chinese plan to build infrastructure across the world. It also came under Iranian attack during the war.

Kuwait provided no reason for why it delayed linking the attack to Iran after initially announcing it on May 3 without any details. Trump is traveling this week to China for a summit where Iran will likely be a main topic. Beijing long has been a buyer of sanctioned Iranian crude oil and has been hurt by the strait's closure, which has sparked a global energy crisis.

Huckabee says Israel deployed to UAE

U.S. ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee revealed at a conference in Tel Aviv, Israel, that Israel has sent Iron Dome air-defense to the UAE.

The United Arab Emirates diplomatically recognized Israel in 2020. That drew criticism from Iran, long

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Israel's main regional enemy. Iran didn't immediately respond to Huckabee's remarks, though it has repeatedly suggested over the years that Israel maintained a military and intelligence presence in the Emirates.

The Israeli military declined to comment on Huckabee's statement about the Iron Dome while the UAE didn't immediately respond.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Mike Waltz, was quoted as making comments similar to Huckabee's during an event at the Israeli mission — suggesting the release of the information was intentional, likely with the Emiratis' and Israelis' blessing.

The UAE has faced Iranian missile and drone fire even after the ceasefire was reached last month. It has been trying to signal to nervous investors and the public that it remains open for business and safe.

Hegseth tells Congress: 'We control the strait'

U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told members of Congress Tuesday that the military has plenty of bombs and missiles despite concerns about its stockpiles.

He also maintained that the U.S. is in control of the Strait of Hormuz, even as Iranian attacks — and threats — have disrupted the shipment of oil and other products through the vital waterway.

"Ultimately we control the strait, because nothing's going in that we don't allow to go in," said Hegseth, who faced tough questions from Republican and Democratic lawmakers who oversee defense spending.

Sen. Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat, asked what the Trump administration's strategy is for reopening the waterway. "Your average American is seeing this at the gas pump every single day as the cost of gas continues to rise," Coons said.

Hegseth avoided specifics about the next steps in Iran. The Pentagon's top budget official told Congress that the cost of the war is close to \$29 billion so far — that's up from an estimate of \$25 billion just two weeks ago.

Norway has some 25 stranded vessels

One of Norway's top diplomats met Tuesday with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in Tehran, pressing for the need to open the strait.

Deputy Foreign Minister Andreas Kravik stressed that the attacks on commercial shipping and obstruction of the passageway must end, his minister, Espen Barth Eide, said in an email.

Kravik said Iran's actions affecting third-party countries are "completely unacceptable" and noted that Norway has some 25 vessels stranded, according to Eide.

Trump's proposed 'Golden Dome' estimated to cost \$1.2 trillion, far more than he initially said

By FATIMA HUSSEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's plan to put weapons in space — pitched as a "Golden Dome for America" missile defense program — is estimated to cost \$1.2 trillion over a 20-year period, according to a new analysis from the Congressional Budget Office, a far heftier sum than the initial \$175 billion price tag he gave last year.

The nonpartisan CBO report, published Tuesday, is described as an analysis that reflects "one illustrative approach rather than an estimate of a specific Administration proposal."

The futuristic system was ordered by Trump in an executive order during his first week in office. He said then that he expected the system to be "fully operational before the end of my term," which wraps up in January 2029.

"Over the past 40 years, rather than lessening, the threat from next-generation strategic weapons has become more intense and complex with the development by peer and near-peer adversaries of next-generation delivery systems," Trump said in his executive order, justifying the need for the missile defense system.

The CBO's estimates are in part based on a lack of details from the Defense Department about what and how many systems will be deployed, "making it impossible to estimate the long term cost" of the Golden Dome system, the report says.

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The concept for the missile system is at least partly inspired by Israel's multitiered defenses, often collectively referred to as the "Iron Dome," which played a key role in defending it from rocket and missile fire from Iran and allied militant groups as it prosecutes the war on Iran alongside the U.S.

The U.S. Golden Dome is envisioned to include ground- and space-based capabilities able to detect, intercept and stop missiles at all major stages of a potential attack.

Congress has already approved roughly \$24 billion for the missile defense initiative through Republicans' massive tax and spending measure signed into law last summer.

Gen. Michael A. Guetlein, director of the Golden Dome project, testified last month about its costs. He told lawmakers that various groups estimating costs "just take the cost of a legacy system and they multiply it out and they get these really large numbers and they say, well, that must be it.

"That is not what Golden Dome is doing," the U.S. Space Force general said. "We are laser focused on affordability."

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., who requested the estimate from the CBO, said in response to the report that the missile defense project is "nothing more than a massive giveaway to defense contractors paid for entirely by working Americans."

Last May, the president said the Golden Dome would cost \$175 billion. The CBO last year estimated that just the space-based components of the Golden Dome could cost as much as \$542 billion over the next 20 years.

UK's Starmer defiant as calls for his resignation grow and several ministers quit

By BRIAN MELLEY and PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer insisted Tuesday that he has no intention of resigning as calls grew louder within his Labour Party for him to step down and some junior members of his government quit in protest.

A day before the state opening of Parliament when the government will present its legislative program for the coming year, Starmer tried to shore up support within his Cabinet.

Starmer's future has become a hot topic over the past few feverish days following historic losses for the Labour Party in local elections last week, which if repeated in a national election that has to be held by 2029, would see it overwhelmingly ejected from power.

Though no Cabinet member has quit or publicly stated the prime minister should step aside for a change in leader, there's growing speculation that the ambitious health secretary, Wes Streeting, will inform Starmer that his days are numbered when they meet on Wednesday.

Streeting has many supporters within the parliamentary party, including some of those who resigned from Starmer's government on Tuesday, which stoked speculation that Starmer could suffer the fate of Boris Johnson in 2022 when dozens of ministers quit en masse and forced his departure.

While more than 100 members of Parliament signed a letter saying it was "no time for a leadership contest," about 90 others said Starmer should stand down or at least set out a timetable for his departure.

That's not enough to trigger a leadership contest, though, as no candidate has issued a challenge to the prime minister. Under Labour party rules, a fifth of its lawmakers in the House of Commons, or 81 members, must publicly give their backing to a single candidate for a leadership election to take place.

First resignations

On Tuesday, several junior ministers, some of whom were elected for the first time in Labour's landslide election victory in July 2024, resigned and urged Starmer to do the same.

Miatta Fahnbulleh, minister of housing, communities and local government, was the first to quit, urging Starmer "to do the right thing for the country."

She was followed by Jess Phillips, the safeguarding minister and a prominent member of the Labour Party. In her resignation letter, she described Starmer as a "good man fundamentally" but unable to make bold changes.

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"I know you care deeply, but deeds, not words are what matter," Phillips said. "I'm not sure we are grasping this rare opportunity with the gusto that's needed and I cannot keep waiting around for a crisis to push for faster progress."

Despite the party's dominant win driving out the Conservatives after 14 years in power, Labour's popularity has plunged and Starmer is getting much of the blame.

The reasons include a series of policy missteps, a perceived lack of vision on the prime minister's part, a struggling British economy and questions over his judgment. Starmer's choice of Peter Mandelson as U.K. ambassador to Washington despite ties to the convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein has continued to haunt him.

Starmer defiant

At the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, Starmer said he took responsibility for the losses in last week's elections but would fight on.

Labour was squeezed from the right and the left, losing votes to both anti-immigrant Reform UK and the Green Party, as well as nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales. The result reflects the increasing fragmentation of U.K. politics, long dominated by Labour and the Conservatives.

Starmer told his Cabinet that there's a process to oust a leader and it hadn't been triggered.

"The country expects us to get on with governing," Starmer said. "The past 48 hours have been destabilizing for government and that has a real economic cost for our country and for families."

That cost was evident in financial markets on Tuesday, with the interest rate charged on British government bonds up by more than those of comparable nations. That shows investors think it's increasingly risky to hold British government debt.

Embattled PM wins support

As Cabinet members left 10 Downing Street, some voiced their support for the embattled prime minister.

Works and Pensions Secretary Pat McFadden said nobody publicly challenged Starmer at the meeting, while Business Secretary Peter Kyle said the prime minister was showing "really steadfast leadership."

Later, Starmer's deputy David Lammy warned Labour lawmakers that the only beneficiary of the party's "navel-gazing" is the populist right and the leader of Reform UK, Nigel Farage, in particular.

"He has my full support, and what I say to colleagues is, look, let's just step back," he said. "Take a breath."

Potential candidates

Health Secretary Wes Streeting, long believed to be preparing for a leadership challenge against Starmer, was among senior ministers who dodged a barrage of shouted questions from a gaggle of reporters outside.

"Wes Streeting, do you want the job, or not?" a man yelled from across the street. "Are you measuring the curtains?"

Streeting is expected to meet Starmer early on Wednesday, before King Charles III outlines the government's program, to discuss the future.

The other two names often touted as possible successors are Angela Rayner, the former deputy prime minister who had to quit last year over an unpaid tax bill. She has long set herself apart as a different kind of politician with a compelling personal story, brought up in social housing and leaving school at 16 as a teen mother.

Andy Burnham, the popular mayor of Greater Manchester, is widely perceived to be one of the strongest candidates but is not currently eligible because he's not in Parliament. To get in the race, he'll have to find a seat where he can be elected.

That may involve a close ally of Burnham's in the northwest of England vacating their seat for him to stand for election. However, he may be blocked as was the case earlier this year or could even lose, if last week's results are any guide.

The Cannes Film Festival has started. Here are 5 things that happened on its first day

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — The 79th Cannes Film Festival launched on Tuesday, marking the start of 12 days of nonstop premieres that will culminate May 23 with the presentation of the prestigious Palme d'Or. Here are five things that happened on Cannes' opening day:

Peter Jackson received an honorary Palme d'Or

The French Riviera festival began with a tribute to Jackson, handing the "Lord of the Rings" filmmaker an honorary Palme d'Or. He was introduced by Elijah Wood, who played Frodo Baggins in the films.

"I've never figured out why I'm getting a Palme d'Or. I'm not a Palme d'Or sorta guy," said the shaggy-haired New Zealand filmmaker.

Jackson was then serenaded with a rendition of the Beatles' "Get Back," a nod to his lauded 2021 documentary. The director sat stage right mouthing the lyrics.

Jane Fonda and Gong Li declared the festival open

The task of declaring the festival officially open fell to the 88-year-old Fonda and Gong, the Chinese-Singaporean actor.

"Cinema has always been an act of resistance," said Fonda.

Politics dominated the jury introduction

At the introduction of the jury that will decide the Palme d'Or — Cannes' top honor — jury members spoke bluntly about holding a film festival during a time of geopolitical conflict.

Paul Laverty, the Scottish screenwriter known for his films with director Ken Loach, pointed toward this year's Cannes poster, of "Thelma and Louise," while discussing attending Cannes during what he called "genocide in Gaza."

Quoting "King Lear," he said: "Madmen lead the blind."

"Cannes has a wonderful poster," said Laverty. "Isn't it fascinating to see some of them like Susan Sarandon, Javier Bardem and Mark Ruffalo blacklisted because of their views in opposing the murder of women and children in Gaza? Shame on Hollywood people who do that."

The nine-member jury is being presided over by Park Chan-wook, the South Korean filmmaker of "Old-boy" and "No Other Choice," who said that politics and cinema go hand in hand.

"Art and politics are not concepts that are in conflict with each other," said Park. "One cannot disqualify a film on the pretext that it has a political message. Just as one cannot reject a film because it would not be political enough."

Other jury members include Chloé Zhao, Stellan Skarsgård, Ruth Negga and Demi Moore, who two years ago was celebrated in Cannes for her comeback performance in "The Substance."

James Franco turned up on the red carpet

Cannes has sometimes been known for hosting personalities that find a less welcome reception in Hollywood. Three years ago, the festival famously opened with the Johnny Depp film "Jeanne du Barry."

On Tuesday, James Franco was an unexpected guest at the opening ceremony. The 48-year-old actor also appeared in Cannes in 2024.

In 2021, Franco and his co-defendants agreed to pay \$2.2 million to settle a lawsuit alleging he intimidated students at an acting and film school he founded into gratuitous and exploitative sexual situations.

Guillermo del Toro presented a restored 'Pan's Labyrinth'

Twenty years after Guillermo del Toro premiered his lauded fable, "Pan's Labyrinth," he returned to Cannes on Tuesday to screen a 4K restoration of it. The filmmaker said the movie, about a young girl and fascist captain in 1940s Spain, remains timely.

"We are, unfortunately, in times that make this movie more pertinent than ever because they tell us everything is useless to resist, that art can be done with a —ing app," said del Toro.

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The Iran war is hitting home as gasoline prices fuel inflation surge of 3.8% in the US

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumer prices climbed sharply again last month as the 10-week war with Iran delivered higher gasoline prices and more pain for Americans.

The Labor Department's consumer price index rose 3.8% from April 2025, the biggest jump in three years, and up from a 3.3% year-over-year gain in March. On a month-to-month basis, April prices rose 0.6% from March as gasoline prices rose 5.4%, according to the data released Tuesday. The month-over-month gain was down from a 0.9% increase in overall prices from February to March, when the initial financial shock from the war hit the U.S. economy.

Labor Department figures showed that gasoline prices are up more than 28% compared with a year ago. However, the AAA motor club listed the average regular gallon of gasoline above \$4.50 on Tuesday, about 44% more than it cost last year at this time.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, so-called consumer core prices rose 0.4% last month from March and 2.8% from April 2025, relatively modest readings that suggest the energy price burst has yet to spill over more broadly into prices for other goods.

Grocery prices rose 0.7% from March to April as meat prices rose after they had declined slightly in the month before.

Prices are rising at a time when Americans are already frustrated by the high cost of living. Affordability is likely to be a key issue when voters go to the polls Nov. 3 to determine whether President Donald Trump's Republican Party maintains control of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

"Inflation is the key drag on the U.S. economy now," Heather Long, chief economist at Navy Federal Credit Union, wrote. "There is a real financial squeeze underway. For the first time in three years, inflation is eating up all wage gains. This is a setback for middle-class and lower-income households and they know it. They are having to cut back on spending and stretch every dollar."

In April, average hourly wages fell 0.3% from a year earlier after accounting for inflation — the first year-over-year drop in three years.

Inflation had been dropping more or less steadily since peaking with a 9.1% year-over-year spike in June 2022, a surge caused by supply chain bottlenecks at the end of COVID-19 lockdowns and a jolt for energy prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But inflation has remained above the Federal Reserve's 2% target.

Then, the United States and Israel attacked Iran on Feb. 28, and Tehran responded by shutting off access to the Gulf of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas passes. That has sent oil prices, and most visibly gasoline, racing higher.

The Fed, which had been expected to cut its benchmark interest rate in 2026, has turned cautious as it waits to see how long the conflict lasts and whether higher energy prices spill over into other products and cause a broader inflationary outbreak.

Trump has lambasted the Fed and its outgoing chair, Jerome Powell, for refusing to slash rates to boost the economy. Kevin Warsh, the president's hand-picked choice to succeed Powell, is expected to be confirmed by the Senate this week; but it's unclear whether Warsh would pursue lower rates given the uncertainties arising from the war — or whether he could persuade his colleagues on the Fed's rate-setting committee to go along if he tried.

Some companies are also starting to feel the pain.

Whirlpool, which makes KitchenAid and Maytag appliances, reported last week that revenue dropped nearly 10% in its most recent quarter and said that the war has caused a "recession-level industry decline" that has undermined consumer confidence.

Grace King of Ames, Iowa, said that higher prices in the food aisle and at the pump are making her cut back on spending for things like clothing. The administrative assistant, 31, used to spend \$200 per month on clothing, mostly on Amazon, but not anymore.

"There's pressure basically everywhere from the groceries that I buy to the gas to fill up the tank," she said. "I've severely cut back on my frill spending."

For example, King noted that while it's only a five-minute drive to work, she makes the trip twice a day. And if she needs to do any big shopping, that's a 40-minute drive to malls in Des Moines, Iowa.

Small study hints that revving up immune cells might help fight HIV

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Scientists are tweaking a powerful cancer therapy in hopes it could fight HIV instead, by supercharging patients' own immune cells.

On Tuesday, researchers said a single dose of those revved-up cells strongly suppressed HIV in two people — one for nearly a year and the other for nearly two years — without requiring their usual medicines.

Larger and longer studies are needed to prove if what's called CAR-T cell therapy might really offer long-lasting help for HIV, cautioned Dr. Steven Deeks of the University of California, San Francisco, who led the research.

"We find the fact that two people have had such a really sustained response provocative," he said. "There is a real need for a one-and-done, safe and scalable cure ... and this is one of the strategies that we're pursuing."

The data is being presented at a meeting of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy in Boston.

There are nearly 40 million people living with HIV around the world. Today's medicines have turned the virus that causes AIDS from a fast killer into a manageable chronic disease, often keeping the virus at undetectable levels, but only if people can afford the drugs and stick with them. The virus hides out in reservoirs in the body and rebounds fast if people stop treatment.

Researchers have long hunted an elusive cure, pursuing such clues as a rare gene mutation that makes some people naturally resistant to HIV or how a handful of HIV patients who also had certain cancers were declared cured or in long-term remission after receiving a stem cell transplant, something too risky for most people.

CAR-T therapy involves taking immune soldiers called T cells out of a person's blood, genetically engineering them into "living drugs" and infusing them back into the patient. They're widely used to cure certain types of cancer and are being studied for other diseases.

For HIV, scientists at the nonprofit drug developer Caring Cross created CAR-T cells with dual features. They're programmed to better find and kill HIV-infected cells — and engineered with protection against infection by the very virus they're supposed to fight.

With that added armor, they should be able to reproduce enough to keep HIV in check, said Caring Cross executive director Boro Dropulić.

Deeks' early-stage experiment tested different dosing strategies in people who stopped their HIV medicine the day they received their CAR-T cells. There were no serious side effects. The first three recipients showed no response and resumed their usual medicines.

Six others received a small amount of chemotherapy to make space for the new T cells. Those two strong responders saw their HIV drop to undetectable levels, inching up only occasionally when the CAR-T cells presumably got to work again. A third patient had a temporary response and resumed regular HIV treatment.

Those three patients all had started their original HIV treatment soon after they'd been infected, Deeks said. That makes sense because people treated early tend to have less HIV hiding in the body and a healthier immune system.

"This is certainly very fascinating that they've had this positive response," said Dr. Hans-Peter Kiem, a gene therapy expert at Seattle's Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center who wasn't part of the new study. He cautioned that it will take additional research to prove if CAR-T really works.

But the strategy is exciting because it's "boosting what our body, our immune system, can already do," said Andrea Gramatica, vice president for research at amfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, which is funding some work to create easier-to-use versions.

Ukraine officials say Zelenskyy's ex-chief of staff is a suspect in a money-laundering probe

By HANNA ARHIROVA and BARRY HATTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Two national agencies fighting corruption in Ukraine named President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's former chief of staff as an official suspect in a major graft investigation. They said Tuesday that the Ukrainian leader is not under suspicion in the case.

Andriy Yermak is suspected in an alleged 460-million-hryvnia (\$10.5 million) money-laundering scheme, the agencies announced late Monday.

Meanwhile, Zelenskyy met with the CEO of Palantir Technologies, part of Ukraine's growing cooperation with the U.S. defense sector, as a three-day U.S.-brokered ceasefire that decreased the fighting but failed to stop it altogether ended Monday.

Russia's invasion of its neighbor is now in its fifth year, with no sign of a peace settlement within reach.

Graft investigation embarrasses Zelenskyy

Ukraine's National Anti-Corruption Bureau and the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office said in a Telegram announcement that the investigation into Yermak is ongoing.

The move is a step short of formally charging Yermak, who resigned in November. He was the country's lead negotiator in talks with the U.S and left during the scandal that brought the biggest threat to Zelenskyy's government since Russia's full-scale invasion.

The investigation is deeply embarrassing for the Ukrainian leader as he pushes for his country's admission to the European Union, a process that will likely take years. Endemic corruption is one of the obstacles slowing Ukraine's admission.

Rustem Umerov, head of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council and a key negotiator in U.S. diplomatic peace efforts, has been questioned and is a witness in the case revolving around a luxury real estate development near the capital, prosecutors told a media briefing in Kyiv.

Several other senior officials, including former Deputy Prime Minister Oleksii Chernyshov, are "implicated" in the case, according to the prosecutors, as is prominent Ukrainian businessman Tymur Mindich.

The graft investigation also involves suspected wrongdoing in Ukraine's energy sector, the defense industry, and the procurement of drones and other military equipment, they said.

Yermak was a trusted confidant of Zelenskyy, who resisted persistent pressure to replace him, and a powerful figure in the government. Investigators searched his home in November.

Zelenskyy made no public comment on the anti-graft agencies' announcement, but his press officer, Dmytro Lytvyn, said: "The investigation is ongoing, it's early to draw conclusions."

Yermak's attorney, Ihor Fomin, called the suspicion notice groundless and denied his client's involvement in the alleged laundering of 460 million hryvnias (\$10.5 million) through an elite construction project outside Kyiv.

"In my view, this entire situation has been provoked by public pressure," Fomin said in an interview with Ukrainian public broadcaster Suspilne.

A decision on whether to bring formal charges against Yermak could still take months.

Zelenskyy holds talks with CEO of US firm Palantir

Zelenskyy said Tuesday he met in Kyiv with Alex Karp, as part of Ukraine's growing cooperation with the U.S. defense sector.

The Ukrainian leader said in a social media post that Ukraine and Palantir "can be useful to each other."

"We discussed directions of technological development both in the context of combat operations and civilian needs," Zelenskyy said on the Telegram messaging app.

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Palantir Technologies is an artificial intelligence software company that helps global defense agencies. It specializes in software platforms that collate and analyze large volumes of data and has partnered with Ukraine for several years.

AI can help combatants quickly sift and decipher a huge volume of battlefield information, enabling more accurate attacks, among other things.

Ukraine Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said after meeting with Karp that cooperation with the company is giving Ukraine a technological edge in the war.

It has enabled detailed analysis of air attacks, AI solutions for handling large volumes of reconnaissance data, and the integration of technology in the planning of Ukraine's deep-strike operations on Russian soil, Fedorov said on Telegram.

Also, Ukraine and Palantir have created a platform for developers to get battlefield data to train AI models, with more than 100 companies currently involved, he said.

Russia launches strikes on Ukraine after relative lull

Ukraine offered to extend the pause in hostilities, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said. But he reported Tuesday that Russia launched over 200 drones against Ukraine overnight, striking civilian infrastructure and killing at least one person and wounding another six.

"It is time to strengthen our positions and force Moscow to end the war," Sybiha said on X. Russian President Vladimir Putin "must realize that it will only get worse for him."

Western analysts and officials say Ukraine's battlefield position has recently improved as it deploys cutting-edge drone technology to hold Russia's bigger army at bay.

German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius, who visited the Zaporizhzhia and Dnipro regions of Ukraine on Tuesday, said he thinks that "the Ukrainians really have momentum" at present.

"Russia is having a phase of weakness, economically as well as in domestic political terms and on the battlefield," Pistorius said, according to German news agency dpa.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday that its air defenses intercepted 30 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions on the border with Ukraine.

Today in History: May 13, United States declares war on Mexico

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Wednesday, May 13, the 133rd day of 2026. There are 232 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 13, 1846, the United States Congress formally declared war against Mexico, following battles along the disputed U.S.-Mexico border in the preceding weeks; the Mexican-American War would continue for nearly two years until the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February 1848.

Also on this date:

In 1940, in his first speech to the House of Commons as British prime minister, Winston Churchill said, "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears and sweat."

In 1973, in tennis' first so-called "Battle of the Sexes," Bobby Riggs defeated Margaret Court 6-2, 6-1 in Ramona, California. (Billie Jean King soundly defeated Riggs at the Houston Astrodome later that year.)

In 1980, a tornado struck downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan, killing five people and injuring 79.

In 1981, Pope John Paul II was shot and seriously wounded in St. Peter's Square by Turkish assailant Mehmet Ali Ağca. (Ağca was sentenced to life in prison in Italy in July 1981, but was pardoned in 2000 at the Pope's request.)

In 1985, a confrontation between Philadelphia authorities and the radical group MOVE ended as a police helicopter dropped two bombs onto the group's row house, igniting a fire that killed 11 people (including five children) and destroyed 61 homes.

In 1995, British climber Alison Hargreaves became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest, the world's tallest mountain, without bottled oxygen or the help of sherpas. (The following August, she was one of several climbers to die in a sudden, fierce storm while descending from the pinnacle of

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K2, the world's second-highest peak.)

In 2012, 49 mutilated bodies were found dumped along a Mexican highway near the northern city of Monterrey in killings authorities blamed on fighting among rival drug gangs.

In 2016, the Obama administration issued a directive requiring public schools to permit transgender students to use bathrooms and locker rooms consistent with their chosen gender identity.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Harvey Keitel is 87. Musician Stevie Wonder is 76. Screenwriter-producer David Simon ("The Wire") is 67. Basketball Hall of Famer Dennis Rodman is 65. TV host/comedian Stephen Colbert is 62. Musician Darius Rucker (Hootie and the Blowfish) is 60. Actor Samantha Morton is 49. Actor-writer-director Lena Dunham is 40. Actor Robert Pattinson is 40. Actor Debby Ryan is 33. Country musician Morgan Wallen is 33. Actor Mika Abdalla is 26.