

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, May 18

Senior Menu: Spanish Rice with hamburger, broccoli, fruit, vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cook's choice.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, potato squares.

**Postponed to Wednesday, May 20:** Track at Warner, 9:30 a.m.

NEC Girls Golf at Groton, 10 a.m.

Softball at Redfield (JV at 4:30 p.m. followed by varsity)

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

JVT Practice at Arena, 7 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at Community Center, potluck at noon.

Sign up for swimming lessons and pass pre-sale at the pool, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Christian Literature Circle, 7:30 p.m.

Sons of the Legion meets at the Legion, 7 p.m.

North Super Region High School Baseball Tournament

## Tuesday, May 19

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, tri tater, sauerkraut, fruit.

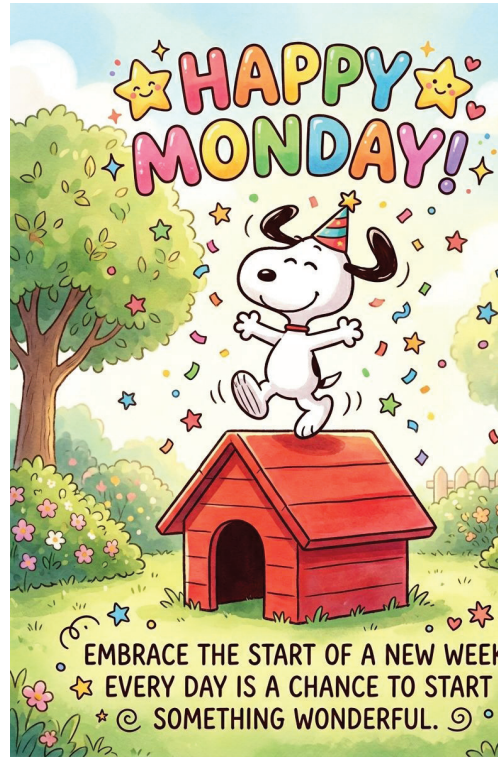
School Breakfast: Cook's choice.

## Groton Daily Independent

**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**

**Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460**

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School Lunch: Mac and cheese, peas.

5th DARE Graduation, 2 p.m., GHS Gym

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

Softball at Deuel, Varsity at 4 p.m. followed by JV

JVT Practice at Arena, 7 p.m.

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Quilting, 9 a.m.

North Super Region High School Baseball Tournament

## Wednesday, May 20

Last Day of School!

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, Catalina blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cook's choice.

School Lunch: Sack lunch made by kitchen.

Girls Region 1A Golf Meet at Dell Rapids, 9 a.m.

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

JVT Practice, 6 p.m., Arena

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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

North Super Region High School Baseball Tournament

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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.**

## End of the Line

The MV Hondius cruise ship—associated with the recent hantavirus outbreak—arrives in the Netherlands today for its final stop. The remaining crew and medical staff will disembark for quarantine, and the ship will be disinfected.

The ship departed Argentina April 1, carrying 147 people from 23 countries to some of the world's most remote islands. On April 11, Dutch bird-watcher Leo Schilperoord died of what was later determined to be hantavirus, followed by his wife roughly two weeks later. Today, there are at least 10 cases associated with the outbreak: eight confirmed and two suspected.

Hantavirus is not believed to pose a widespread threat to public health. Cruise ships may be especially conducive to the spread of illnesses due to the gathering of travelers from diverse regions, close eating and sleeping quarters, and potential exposure to local diseases.

## Bulgarian 'Bangaranga' Bop

Bulgarian singer Dara won the 70th Eurovision contest with pop banger "Bangaranga." The win marks the first-ever for the Balkan nation, which first joined the contest in 2005.

The contest is among the most-watched live broadcast events in the world, reaching 166 million viewers last year. This year, five broadcasters—from Iceland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and Spain—boycotted over Israel's participation amid the war in Gaza. A report also found Israel's government has invested in ad dollars in recent years to promote Israeli musical acts. This year's Israeli participant came in second place for his ballad "Michelle".

Eurovision began in 1956 as a post-World War II effort to unite Europe through live broadcasting, with seven countries and 14 songs. Today, it features countries across Europe and some outside the continent, including Australia and Israel, whose broadcasters are part of the European Broadcasting Union.

## Oldest English Poem Discovered

Researchers leafing through a ninth-century manuscript have discovered a copy of the earliest surviving English poem, according to a recently published study. Known as "Caedmon's Hymn," the short verse is considered to be a foundational text in English literature.

Purportedly composed by an illiterate cowherd after experiencing a religious vision, the nine-line verse references heaven and praises God for creation. The poem is known for its inclusion in some versions of the medieval "Ecclesiastical History of the English People," written by the monk Bede the Venerable, which was reproduced about 200 times. While two older copies of the poem have surfaced, they were both written in Latin. The recent discovery was written in Old English and embedded in the main Latin text, suggesting English poetry was valued by Latin readers much earlier than previously thought.

It marks the second major discovery involving an ancient poetic text in recent weeks, after archaeologists found part of Homer's "Iliad" buried with a Roman-era Egyptian mummy.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Aaron Rai takes the Wanamaker Trophy at this year's PGA Championship at Aronimink, marking his first-ever professional tournament win.

Oklahoma City Thunder star Shai Gilgeous-Alexander wins NBA MVP for the second year in a row.

Cleveland Cavaliers defeat Detroit Pistons, will play New York Knicks in Eastern Conference finals.

Napoleon Solo wins 151st Preakness Stakes, defeating favorite Taj Mahal and 12 other horses—the race's largest field in 15 years.



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## Science & Technology

World Health Organization declares Ebola outbreak in Congo and Uganda a global emergency; more than 80 deaths linked to current outbreak.

Scientists use molecule derived from spinach to trigger photosynthesis in mouse eyes; may lead to a simple treatment for dry eye disease.

Predominance of right-handedness may be linked to the evolution of human brain size and the ability to walk.

Roughly 90% of people are right-handed; see what predicts whether you'll be in the remaining 10%.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets slide Friday (S&P 500 -1.2%, Dow -1.1%, Nasdaq -1.5%), dragged down by tech-sector losses.

Starbucks to lay off 300 corporate employees, closing offices in Atlanta, Dallas, Chicago, and other cities.

SpaceX targets June 12 for its initial public offering, will list on Nasdaq, according to reports; company targeting a \$2T valuation, would mark the largest IPO in history.

Jury deliberations begin today in Elon Musk's lawsuit against OpenAI alleging the company betrayed its nonprofit roots; see trial's biggest moments.

## Politics & World Affairs

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) loses primary race as Trump-backed Rep. Julia Letlow (R, LA-5) and state Treasurer John Fleming advance to runoff.

President Donald Trump turns to tomorrow's Kentucky race, the most expensive House primary in US history.

Senate's parliamentarian finds \$1B proposal to fund additional security, White House ballroom fails to meet procedural rules.

Rwandan genocide suspect Félicien Kabuga dies in custody at age 93; Kabuga had been accused of promoting and bankrolling the genocide and managed to evade arrest on false passports for two decades before he was arrested in 2020.



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The first two days of the NFL Draft are where teams usually get their starters (or, at the very least, key rotation pieces). The third day is where teams look for depth pieces and occasionally find diamonds in the rough. Today we look at the four players the Vikings drafted on day three, plus the undrafted rookies signed once the draft concluded.

Max Bredeson, fullback, Michigan. 5th round, 159th overall

With the retirement of C.J. Ham, the Vikings had a need at fullback. Bredeson played with Vikings QB J.J. McCarthy in college, who was at Bredeson's draft party. Blocking is his calling card, but it remains to be seen how well he can catch out of the backfield because of his limited op-

portunity to do so in college.

Charles Demmings, cornerback, Stephen F. Austin State, 5th round, 163rd overall

The first cornerback taken by the Vikings, Demmings is a press-man corner with the speed to stick with receivers. Making the jump from Stephen F. Austin State to the NFL will require time and patience, but he is expected to compete for a role on special teams right away. He came in at number 151 on the consensus big board.

Demond Claiborne, running back, Wake Forest, 6th round, 198th overall

Needing a little juice in the running backs room, the Vikings took the speedy Claiborne in the sixth round. He's a smaller back at only 188 pounds, but his speed will complement Aaron Jones and Jordan Mason well. Expect Claiborne to also be in the mix for the team's kick return role. He came in at number 144 on the consensus big board.

Gavin Gerhardt, center, Cincinnati, 7th round, 235th overall

The Vikings must not be very concerned with the center position, because they waited until their very last pick to address it in the draft. Gerhardt, like most 7th rounders, will need time to adjust to the NFL, and it'll be a few years before we see him on the field. He was not listed on the consensus big board.

Undrafted rookie free agent signings

Once the draft is over, teams start calling players who didn't hear their names called. There can be some solid players found in this group, and even some Hall of Fame-level talent, such as Kurt Warner, Antonio Gates, and even the Vikings very own John Randle. Most of the players on this list won't play a single snap in the NFL, but two stood out to me as players to keep an eye on during training camp: Dillon Bell and Brett Thorson.

Dillon Bell, WR, Georgia – A player most thought would be drafted, Bell was one of the top undrafted rookies in 2026. He's a Swiss Army knife, capable of playing any receiver spot and also running back if the need arises. He came in at number 287 on the consensus big board.

Brett Thorson, P, Georgia – The Ray Guy award winner in 2025, given to the best college punter, Thorson has a great chance of making the Vikings roster now that former Vikings' punter Ryan Wright signed with the New Orleans Saints. The Vikings did bring in veteran Johnny Hekker, but Thorson will have a chance to compete for the spot.

Here's the rest of the Vikings' rookie free agent signings:

Marcus Allen, CB, North Carolina

Da'Veawn Armstead, CB, North Texas

Tyreek Chappell, CB, Texas A&M

Monkell Goodwine, DL, South Carolina

Shaleak Knotts, WR, Maryland

Keli Lawson, LB, UCF

Tristan Leigh, OL, Clemson

Delby Lemieux, OL, Dartmouth

Kejon Owens, RB, Florida International

Tomas Rimac, OL, Virginia Tech

Marcus Sanders Jr., WR, Georgia Southern

Cam'Ron Stewart, OLB, Temple

Jacob Thomas, S, James Madison

Arden Walker, OLB, Colorado

Lyke Wysong, WR, Arizona



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ABERDEEN, SD | EST. 2011

WEBER LANDSCAPING  
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# FOOD TRUCK

TTT GRILL & CATERING



20  
MAY

10:45<sub>AM</sub> - 3:00<sub>PM</sub>



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## EARTHTALK

### Can My House Be A Net Zero Home? by Nitya Dani

Dear EarthTalk: What is a "net-zero" home? Does it have to be new construction or can I retrofit an older home to be "net-zero"?

—Peter B., Boulder, CO

As the impact of climate change becomes more severe, homeowners are adopting sustainable practices in order to reduce their carbon footprint. One method getting much attention is the "net-zero" home. A net-zero home is designed or upgraded to generate as much energy as it consumes over the year. With time, net-zero homes are becoming more readily available in the US, Canada and Europe.

"The zero-energy trend is irreversible," say the Zero Energy Project, accounting for 28,000 net-zero homes in North America. Key benefits include reduced greenhouse gas emissions, lowered energy bills, and much more.



Primary features of a net-zero home include insulation to prevent heat loss, energy-efficient models of domestic appliances, airtight construction and renewable energy systems such as solar panels. A common misconception is that net-zero energy can only be achieved by new construction, but many homes can be retrofitted to reach or approach net-zero. Transforming existing homes to net-zero can be achieved through a framework of steps, typically beginning with assessing current energy efficiency. From there, homeowners can incrementally invest in improving insulation, upgrading to energy-efficient equipment, optimizing ventilation systems, and lastly, switching to renewable energy sources. This approach ensures that the energy demand is lowered before using clean energy, making the process efficient and effective.

Retrofitting has many advantages besides being eco-friendly. There are economic benefits, including increased home value. However, retrofitting can pose its own drawbacks: Older homes may be subject to design limitations that hinder full energy optimization, and most important, it can be quite costly. However, government support through tax credits, rebates and low-interest loans can help cover the upfront costs of net-zero upgrades. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, "You can benefit from energy-efficient financing whether you're buying, selling, refinancing or remodeling a home."

On the other hand, new construction offers a blank slate. Builders have complete control over design, materials and technology. New net-zero homes are also built in compliance with current regulations. As a result of these benefits, they often meet true net-zero goals. However, the high upfront costs and a smaller pool of new homeowners make this option less feasible. In comparison to new construction, retrofitting is a more sustainable, time and cost-friendly approach. Ultimately, the goal is not perfection, but rather progress towards a clean and healthy environment. Hence, even if achieving full net-zero is not possible, making considerable strides towards greater energy efficiency is a step in the right direction..

## "Reflecting on Progress"

It's human nature to tell stories about the past, and doctors aren't immune to that impulse. The second year medical students rotating through my clinic have me reflecting on my own years as a fledgling physician, and the changes I've seen in my decades of practice.

I remember one late evening spent in the PICU watching over a toddler who had meningitis. At one point I turned and bumped into a bedrail, which came crashing down. Both my preceptor and I jumped, and I probably even shrieked. The child, however, didn't even blink. That's when we knew her illness had left her profoundly deaf.

The seasoned pediatrician I was with that month had started practice before the introduction of the Hib vaccine. As we talked about what we could do now for the child in our care, he told me stories from "the old days", when the PICU at Sioux Valley Hospital would perpetually have 2 or 3 children being treated for meningitis. Less than 10 years later, our unimmunized patient was the first case they'd had in months.

Early in my own practice, winter months would see at least a child or two here in Brookings hospitalized with rotavirus on any give day, and the occasional adult. They would be with us for a few days or even a week, getting IV fluids until the diarrhea slowed down. Our first vaccine had rare but serious side effects and was pulled off the market. The vaccine we've been using for nearly 20 years now has turned the illness into something that rarely lands a child in our hospital. To be sure, we still see rotavirus infections. It's just that far fewer patients are so sick that they require IVs.

We've got a new weapon against another common childhood scourge. RSV has been a terror for longer than I've been in practice. It results in the hospitalization of nearly 2% of children before they turn 1. We now have two ways to protect infants. The first is a traditional vaccine given to expectant mothers later in their pregnancy. Mom's immune system responds by developing antibodies, which are transferred to the infant. Since babies' immature immune systems can't respond to the vaccine we have for RSV, we can't give them that vaccine. However, we have an antibody against RSV that can be given directly to newborns. We've had something similar for most of my career, but it was expensive and had to be given monthly, so we only used it in the highest risk children. This new version is much less costly, and requires only one shot.

These strategies don't teach the baby's own immune system to fight the infection. Instead, they provide temporary soldiers to wage the battle. That protection will fade, and the baby's immune system will still have to learn to fight RSV by catching it, but we will have delayed that day until the child is older, and less likely to get terribly sick.

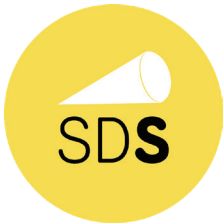
I am optimistic that RSV, too, will become something we still see, but that doesn't cause the suffering it once did. And I wonder, what will my young colleagues someday tell their future students about medicine in "the old days?"

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



**Debra Johnston, MD**





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Praise for simplicity, concern about brevity greet new format for South Dakota water quality report**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR**

South Dakota's environmental regulatory department has changed how it publicly presents its report on the quality of the state's rivers, lakes and streams, leading to praise for the simplified presentation but concern about the reduced amount of information made available.

Instead of publishing the 2026 Surface Water Quality Assessment as a 200-plus-page document, as it has in the past, the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources is directing the public to a scrollable presentation on the department's website. A separate, online Surface Water Quality Dashboard allows viewers to click waterways on a map for information.

The reports come out every two years. The 2024 report included detailed sections on monitoring, methodology, assessments, pollution control programs, pollution causes and more.

That year, the state reported that 78% of assessed stream miles, as well as 68.5% of lake surface acres in the state, did not support one or more of their assigned "beneficial uses." That refers to a practical purpose that a lake, river or stream is supposed to serve, such as swimming, fishing, boating or irrigation. If a waterbody is not meeting a beneficial use, it means the water is polluted beyond the standard set for that use.

The 2026 data show that 77% of assessed stream miles and 73% of lake acres are not supporting one or more of their beneficial uses.

Mercury in water remains the primary cause of water bodies failing to support their beneficial uses. About 70% of the tested lake acres in the state have mercury levels exceeding their standards, which is about the same as in 2024. The toxic heavy metal ends up in fish worldwide, largely due to atmospheric deposition. Coal-fired power plants release mercury into the air before it settles into lakes and rivers.

Another major pollutant is E. coli, with 68% of river and stream miles testing at levels that are too high.

But unlike past reports, the new one does not include statements such as one from the 2024 report calling nonpoint-source pollution, such as E. coli, the state's "most serious and pervasive threat" to water quality, or examples of causes such as livestock waste, and failing septic systems. Those kinds of explanatory passages do not appear at the same level of detail in the new format.

Paul Lorenzen, watershed protection administrator with the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, explained to lawmakers during the 2026 legislative session why the format change was occurring. He said the prior format made the percentage of unsupported beneficial uses sound "troubling" and got "quite a bit of attention," without the public fully understanding the meaning.

"We're really trying to limit the narrative and be heavy on pictures, graphs, tables, things like that," Lorenzen told lawmakers.

Lorenzen said waters not supporting all their uses are not necessarily unsafe or unusable. He said that, often, only one parameter or sample fails, criteria can be conservative, and increases in the percentage of non-supporting uses over time can reflect more data or changed standards, rather than worsening quality.

Lorenzen said the new format is intended to make the report easier to understand and less dependent on a dense executive summary.

Travis Entenman is the executive director of Friends of the Big Sioux River. He said his organization is "excited that the report is in a more user-friendly system, more interactive and we have more access to the data."

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However, "We do feel like there is a lack of analysis of the causes, and the next steps beyond saying this is the water quality level," Entenman said. "Now what?"

The streamlined public presentation arrives as concern about agriculture's role in water pollution has grown. A legislative memo last year said E. coli from livestock was the primary reason some streams did not support recreational uses.

In November, when that memo was shared, Senate President Pro Tempore Chris Karr, R-Sioux Falls, said the state could no longer "dance around" the possibility of stronger agricultural regulation if something was to be done about water pollution. Gov. Larry Rhoden then said he would set Karr straight.

Karr then sponsored and Rhoden signed a bill into law during this year's legislative session that put \$10 million toward water quality improvement programs. It offers \$8 million to incentivize an existing water quality initiative that helps landowners plant buffer strips that filter agricultural runoff, and \$2 million to help improve local water, wastewater and stormwater systems.

*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*



**GROTON AREA TIGERS**  
**FASTPITCH**  
**SOFTBALL**

**MONDAY,  
MAY 18**

★ **AT REDFIELD** ★  
**JV AT 4:30 P.M.**  
**FOLLOWED BY VARSITY**

GAMES TO BE BROADCAST LIVE ON  
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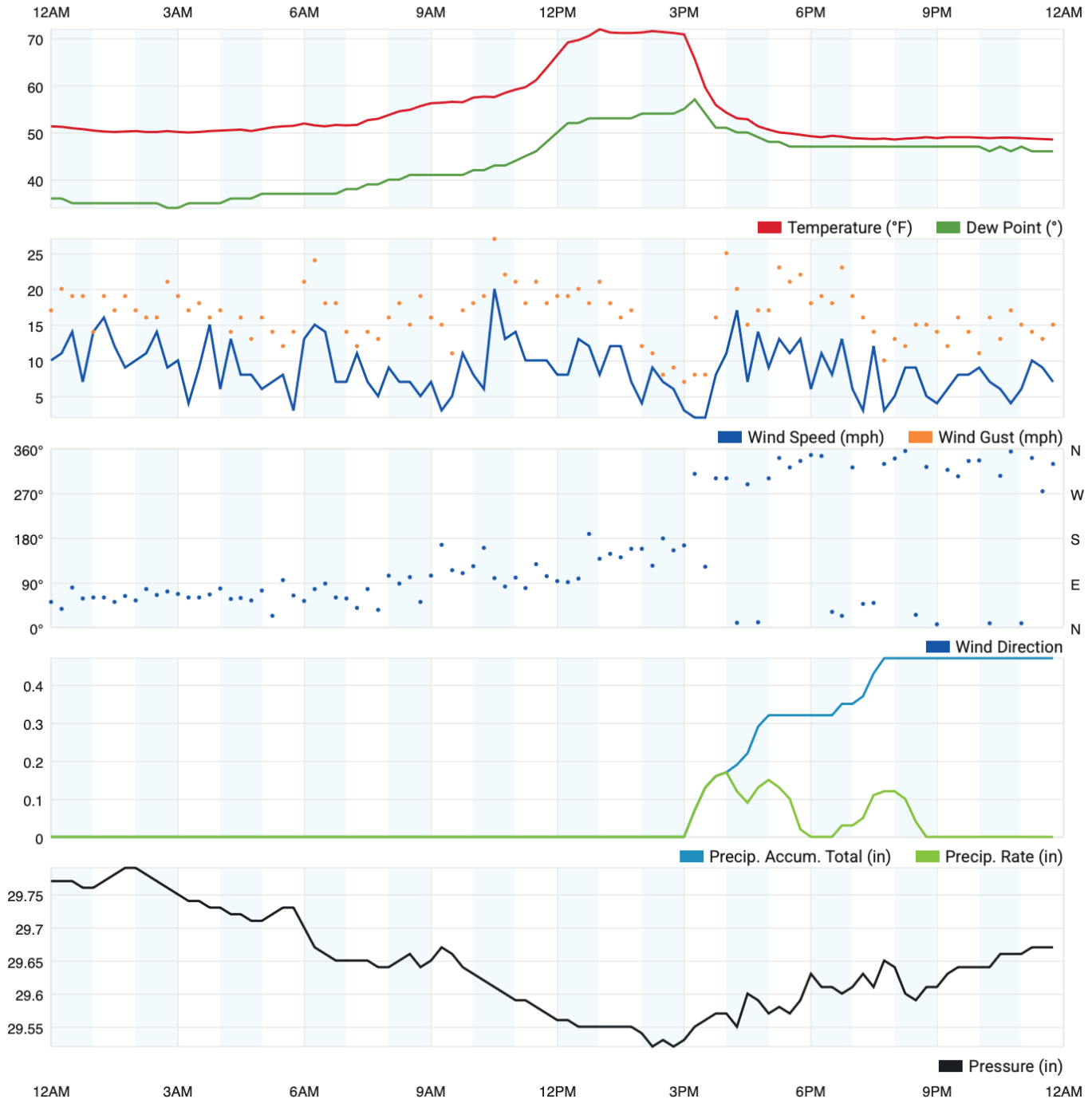
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

May 17, 2026

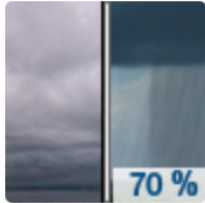




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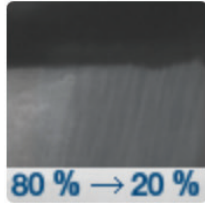
Today



High: 52 °F

Cloudy then  
Showers  
Likely

Tonight



Low: 35 °F

Showers then  
Slight Chance  
Showers

Tuesday



High: 53 °F

Partly Sunny

Tuesday Night



Low: 31 °F

Mostly Cloudy  
then Frost

Wednesday



High: 67 °F

Frost then  
Sunny

## WORK WEEK FORECAST



Today



AM Fog over  
Sisseton Hills  
Light Showers

Highs: 48-55°

Lows: 33-40°

Tuesday



Highs: 50s

Lows: 30-35°

Wednesday



Highs: 68-72°

Lows: 41-44°

Thursday



30-50% chance of  
afternoon showers

Highs: near 70°

Lows: 40-45°

Friday



30-50% chance of  
showers

Highs: 66-70°



**COLD TUESDAY NIGHT:** Temperatures will fall into the low to mid 30s overnight Tuesday night into early Wednesday morning. Clouds could limit actual frost formation. Still, the **cold temperatures could harm sensitive outdoor plants**

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

[weather.gov/aberndeen](http://weather.gov/aberndeen)

Expect patchy fog over the Sisseton Hills this morning. Otherwise light showers will return, mainly this afternoon. Highs will be in the upper 40s to mid 50s. Dry weather will return Tuesday and Wednesday. Lows in the low to mid 30s Tuesday night into early Wednesday morning could harm sensitive outdoor plants. A 30 to 50 percent chance of rain showers will return Thursday afternoon into Friday. A few rumbles of thunder are possible Thursday afternoon and evening over central South Dakota.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 72 °F at 12:59 PM**

**Low Temp: 48 °F at 7:57 PM**

**Wind: 28 mph at 10:31 AM**

**Precip: : 0.47**

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1934

Record Low: 26 in 1915

Average High: 71

Average Low: 45

Average Precip in May.:2.00

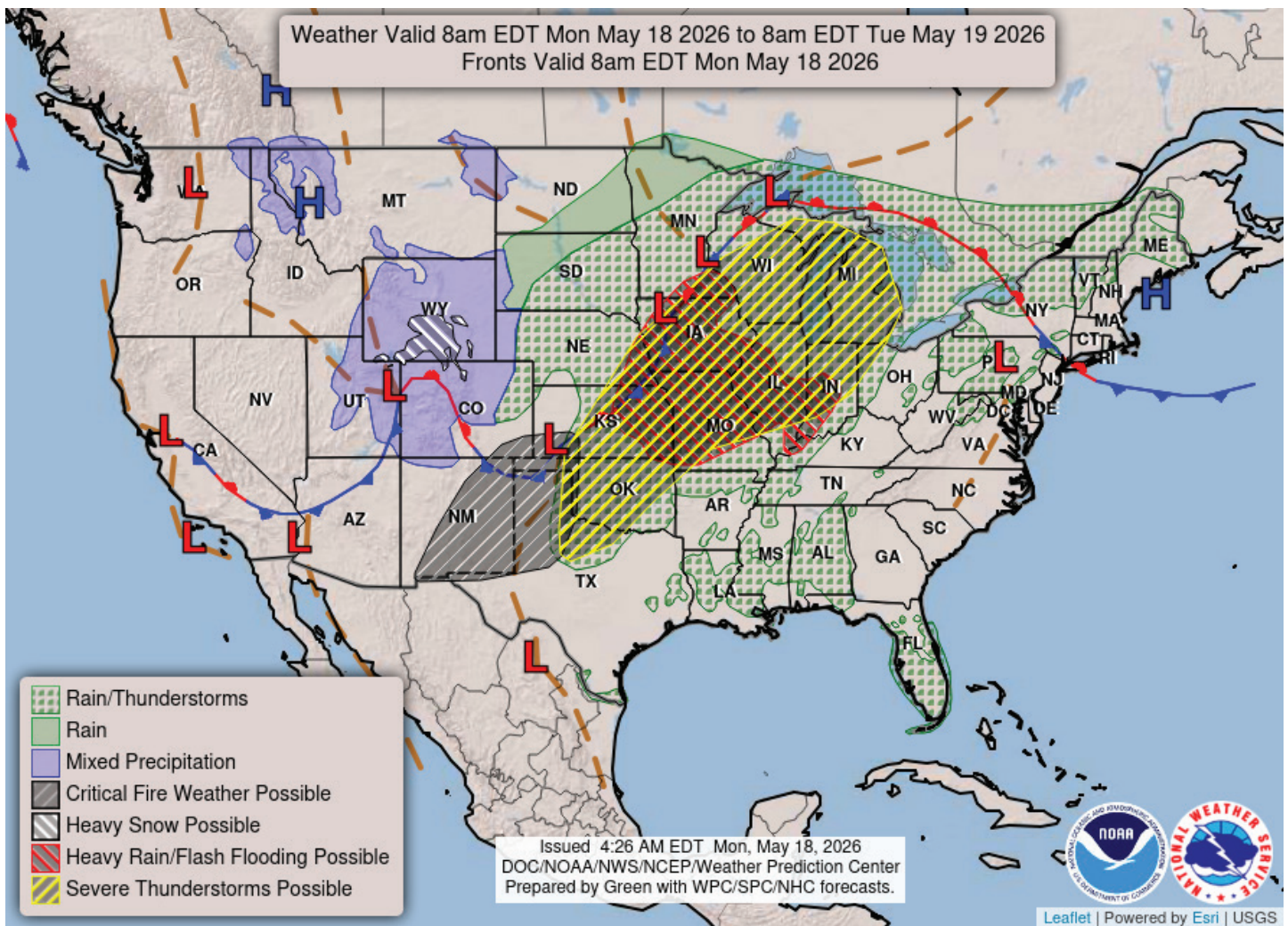
Precip to date in May.: 0.50

Average Precip to date: 5.97

Precip Year to Date: 3.62

Sunset Tonight: 8:59 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:57 am



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## Today in Weather History

May 18th, 1918: An estimated F2 tornado moved NNE from 5 miles NNW of Ferney, across the eastern edge of Groton. Homes were unroofed, and barns were destroyed. Nine farms lost buildings. One man was injured in a barn, another in a car that was thrown from the road. The estimated damage was set at \$60,000. Tornadoes were also seen in Lincoln and Sanborn Counties in South Dakota.

Also, an estimated F2 tornado moved northeast through the townships of Akron and Artichoke in Big Stone County, Minnesota. About 300 farms were damaged. The funnel dissipated on Artichoke Lake.

May 18th, 1960: Pierre received 1.96 inches of rain in less than 30 minutes, which caused flash flooding. About 30 basements were flooded, and one home suffered extensive cave-in damage. Flash flooding from 2 to 3 inches of rain occurred near Presho, washing out county roads, three bridges, and a grain storage bin. Gettysburg also received 2.5 inches of rain.

May 18th, 1996: A brief F0 tornado touched down and cut a narrow path from 2 miles east of Willow Lake with no damage reported.

A 100 mph wind gust blew down 38 large trees on Highway 81 from the junction of Lake Norden corner on Highway 28 to the intersection of the Hayti corner. Also, four double-posted and five single-posted signs were broken off, and one single-posted steel sign was bent over.

1825 — A tornado said to have crossed all of the state of Ohio smashed into the log cabin settlement of Burlington, northeast of Columbus. (David Ludlum)

1960 — Salt Lake City UT received an inch of snow. It marked their latest measurable snowfall of record. (The Weather Channel)

1980 — Mount Saint Helens in Washington State erupted spewing ash and smoke sixty-three thousand feet into the air. Heavy ash covered the ground to the immediate northwest, and small particles were carried to the Atlantic coast. (David Ludlum)

1987 — Thunderstorms in Kansas, developing along a cold front, spawned tornadoes at Emporia and Toledo, produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Fort Scott, and produced golf ball size hail in the Kansas City area. Unseasonably hot weather prevailed ahead of the cold front. Pomona NJ reported a record high of 93 degrees, and Altus, OK, hit 100 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Low pressure anchored over eastern Virginia kept showers and thunderstorms over the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. Flash flooding was reported in Pennsylvania. Up to five inches of rain drenched Franklin County PA in 24 hours. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from the Central Gulf Coast States to the Lower Missouri Valley during the day and evening. Thunderstorms spawned sixteen tornadoes, and there were 74 reports of large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the central U.S. spawning a sixteen tornadoes, including a dozen in Nebraska. Thunderstorms also produced hail four inches in diameter at Perryton TX, wind gusts to 84 mph at Ellis KS, and high winds which caused nearly two million dollars damage at Sutherland NE. Thunderstorms deluged Sioux City IA with up to eight inches of rain, resulting in a record flood crest on Perry Creek and at least 4.5 million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)





## A Purpose of Adversity

**Adversity is often God's tool for teaching us to hate sin and run toward Him.**

Psalms 37:23-28: 23 The steps of a man are established by the LORD, And He delights in his way.

24 When he falls, he will not be hurled headlong, Because the LORD is the One who holds his hand.

25 I have been young and now I am old, Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken Or his descendants begging bread.

26 All day long he is gracious and lends, And his descendants are a blessing.

27 Depart from evil and do good, So you will abide forever.

28 For the LORD loves justice And does not forsake His godly ones; They are preserved forever, But the descendants of the wicked will be cut off.

When we're walking through adversity, it's easy to focus exclusively on the momentary trouble. God, however, has specific purposes for bringing us through times of hardship.

One reason He may allow trials is to teach us to follow Him more closely by rejecting sin. In Psalm 97:10, we are told, "Hate evil, you who love the Lord." Isn't it true that we sometimes don't act as if we hate evil? We may say, "Evil is all around me in this world, so I guess it's inescapable! The best I can hope to do is to try and manage it."

But we are not commanded to manage evil; instead, we are instructed to hate its very presence. In today's passage, verse 27 says, "Depart from evil and do good, so you will abide forever." When we see evil, we are to turn around and run in the opposite direction.

Adversity has a way of clarifying things. In difficult seasons, God refines our spiritual vision, and we begin to see sin's destructiveness more clearly. The hardship that once felt purposeless becomes the very means by which He draws us closer to Himself, teaching us to cling to what is good and flee from what destroys.

*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*

# Groton Daily Independent

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Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.17.26

11 23 41 45 55 1

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 37 Mins 29  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.15.26

17 23 25 52 61 3

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$277,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 22  
Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.16.26

1 4 24 31 46 2

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$26,730,000**

NEXT DRAW: 15 Hrs 37 Mins 29  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.16.26

14 16 18 32 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$94,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 15 Hrs 52  
Mins 29 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.16.26

11 21 27 41 59 18

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

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 21 Mins 29  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
05.16.26

8 37 40 44 65 18

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$100,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 21 Mins 29  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



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

### **Congo announces 3 Ebola treatment centers in Ituri as country grapples with a new outbreak**

By WILSON MCMAKIN Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — The Congolese health minister announced the opening of three treatment centers in the Ituri region of eastern Congo on Sunday evening as the country grapples with a new Ebola outbreak. "We know that the hospitals are already under stress because of the patients," the minister, Samuel Roger Kamba, said during a visit to Bunia, the capital and largest city in Ituri. "But we are preparing to have treatment centers at all three sites in order to be able to expand our capabilities."

The World Health Organization declared the Ebola disease outbreak a public health emergency of international concern on Sunday, after more than 300 suspected cases and 88 deaths in Congo and two in neighboring Uganda. Although the outbreak is centered in Ituri, cases have been reported in the capital, Kinshasa, and in Goma, the largest city in eastern Congo.

The WHO Regional Office for Africa said Sunday on X that a team of 35 experts from the WHO and the Congolese Ministry of Health had arrived in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, along with 7 tons of emergency medical supplies and equipment.

Rwanda closed its land border with Congo on Sunday, the U.S. State Department said on social media on Sunday evening. AP reporters tried to cross the border on Sunday and Monday morning, but were informed it was closed except for holders of international flight tickets. Rwandan authorities have not replied to a request for comments.

Ebola is highly contagious and can be contracted via bodily fluids such as vomit, blood, or semen. The disease it causes is rare, but severe and often fatal.

Health authorities say the current outbreak, first confirmed on Friday, is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rare variant of the Ebola disease that has no approved therapeutics or vaccines. Although more than 20 Ebola outbreaks have taken place in Congo and Uganda, this is only the third time that the Bundibugyo virus has been detected.

The Bundibugyo virus was first detected in Uganda's Bundibugyo district during a 2007-2008 outbreak that infected 149 people and killed 37. The second time was in 2012, in an outbreak in Isiro, Congo, where 57 cases and 29 deaths were reported.

WHO's emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. By WHO's standards, it shows the event is serious, there is a risk of international spread and it requires a coordinated international response.

Jean Kaseya, Director-General of the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, told Sky News on Sunday that he is in "panic mode" due to a lack of medicines and vaccines as deaths rise, but there are some candidate treatments anticipated in the coming weeks.

The East African Community a regional bloc that includes Congo, said Monday that the new Ebola outbreak underscores the importance of regional solidarity and preparedness. Andrea Aguer Ariik Malueth, the deputy secretary general, said that given the high level of movement of people and goods across the region, coordinated preparedness and rapid information sharing are essential to preventing cross-border transmission.

In a statement he added that the bloc is committed to helping its members strengthen surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, infection prevention and control and other efforts, particularly in border areas.

## Stocks fall and oil prices gain after Trump warns the Iran 'clock is ticking'

By CHAN HO-HIM AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — World shares mostly retreated and oil prices jumped on Monday after U.S. President Donald Trump warned Tehran that the "clock is ticking" as U.S.-Iran negotiations over a permanent end to the war stall.

U.S. futures fell and markets in Japan and South Korea pulled back from their records. In early European trading, Britain's FTSE 100 edged up 0.1% to 10,205.31. France's CAC 40 lost 0.9% to 7,883.42, and Germany's DAX dropped 0.1% to 23,925.82.

During Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 1% to 60,815.95, a decline led by technology-related stocks. It reached all-time intraday high levels last week above 63,000.

The yield on the 10-year Japanese government bond surged to as high as 2.8%, its highest level since the late 1990s. That's part of a broader shift toward higher yields as the Bank of Japan gradually raises interest rates and higher energy costs raise expectations of rising inflation. The yield was around 2.55% just one week ago.

Seoul's Kospi climbed 0.3% to 7,516.04 after trading lower earlier in the day. It crossed the 8,000 mark for the first time on Friday, supported by buying of technology shares driven by the boom in artificial intelligence, but later declined partly on profit-taking by investors.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 1.1% to 25,675.18. The Shanghai Composite index edged 0.1% lower to 4,131.53, after China reported weaker-than-expected economic data for April.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 declined 1.5% to 8,505.30.

Taiwan's Taix dropped 0.7%, while India's Sensex fell less than 0.1%.

Oil prices rose after Trump warned Iran in a social media post that "the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them" following a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Trump has set deadlines for Iran and then backed off, so investors have remained cautious about the situation in the Strait of Hormuz and how it is impacting global energy flows, including oil and gas. The strait is still mostly closed, and the U.S. has also imposed its own sea blockade on Iranian ports since last month.

A drone strike over the weekend on a United Arab Emirates' nuclear power plant added to worries over a potential escalation in the conflict.

Brent crude, the international standard, gained 0.7% to \$110.05 per barrel. It was trading at roughly \$70 a barrel in late February before the start of the Iran war. Benchmark U.S. crude was trading 1% higher to \$106.49 per barrel.

"Re-escalation risks are increasing," ING commodities strategists Warren Patterson and Ewa Manthey wrote in a research note. While there has also been a pick up on shipping activities over the past week around the strait, they said, "this can change quickly."

The pair also noted that the oil market was reacting to the lack of tangible results on the Iran war after last week's widely-watched summit between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, even as the White House said both the U.S. and China had agreed that the Strait of Hormuz must remain open.

U.S. officials had hoped that Beijing could use its influence, given its economic ties with Iran, to help broker a peace agreement and reopen the strait. Trump said last week in an interview that Xi told him China "would like to be of help" in negotiating an end to the war. So far it's been unclear how Beijing might do that.

The yield on the U.S. 10-year Treasury was at around 4.60%, up from 4.47% last Thursday and sharply higher than the nearly 4% level it was holding at before the Iran war.

On Friday, the benchmark S&P 500 dropped 1.2% from the record it set the day before. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.1% and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite lost 1.5%.

In other dealings early Monday, the U.S. dollar rose to 158.82 Japanese yen from 158.62 yen. The euro was trading at \$1.1645, up from \$1.1622.

## Hantavirus-stricken cruise ship docks in the Netherlands for disinfection

By MOLLY QUELL Associated Press

ROTTERDAM, Netherlands (AP) — The cruise ship hit by a deadly hantavirus outbreak has docked at the Dutch port of Rotterdam for disinfection, wrapping up a troubled journey that put international health authorities on alert.

The MV Hondius was carrying 25 crew members and two medical personnel as it reached Rotterdam on Monday morning, after all the passengers disembarked elsewhere.

An Associated Press journalist saw people board the boat via pier wearing white hazardous materials suits. A short distance from where the ship docked, authorities had set up 25 white containers along the water in between a line of windmills.

The crew will enter immediate quarantine, with those who cannot be repatriated spending their time in quarantine in these containers with satellite internet and catering, said the port's harbor master, René de Vries.

"The ship is in need, the ship is at sea, crew members are sick, probably affected. So in that case, I think it's unacceptable to say no, you're not welcome in the biggest port of Europe," he said.

He said Rotterdam port frequently shelters ships struck by misfortune in the North Sea, but this is the first time they welcomed a vessel that sailed "halfway around the world" from Antarctica.

De Vries said the port's health authorities would work with the Erasmus Medical Center and the city of Rotterdam to safely disinfect the ship.

"She will be cleaned here at the jetty," he said of the Hondius. "We can manage this."

During the outbreak, three passengers who had been aboard the ship died, including a Dutch couple who health officials believe were the first exposed to the virus while visiting South America.

The MV Hondius has spent the past six days sailing from the Canary Islands, where the remaining passengers were escorted off the vessel by personnel in full-body protective gear and boarded flights to more than 20 countries to enter quarantine.

The outbreak on the ship has reached at least 11 cases, nine of which have been confirmed. Three passengers have died, including a Dutch couple who health officials believe were the first exposed to the virus while visiting South America.

The Public Health Agency of Canada said one of the four Canadians in isolation after leaving the ship had tested positive Sunday and it would share information on the case with the World Health Organization.

The vessel made the journey from Tenerife up the coast of Africa and Europe with 25 crew members and two medical personnel. According to the ship operator Oceanwide Expeditions, no one on board is experiencing any symptoms.

Crew members who are unable to return home will be quarantined in the Netherlands, the Dutch health ministry said last week. Some two dozen passengers and crew are already in quarantine in the Netherlands after arriving in the country on a series of flights over the previous two weeks.

Eighteen Americans are currently under observation at specialized healthcare facilities in the United States designed to treat people with dangerous infectious diseases.

After everyone on board has disembarked, the ship will be decontaminated based on Dutch public health guidelines. "Personal protective measures are being taken to ensure that the cleaners do not need to quarantine after the cleaning," the health ministry said in a letter to the Dutch parliament last week.

Public health officials will inspect the vessel before it is allowed to sail again. The hantavirus outbreak aboard the MV Hondius is the first known case on a cruise ship.

The Dutch company that owns the cruise ship said it doesn't foresee any changes to its operations. It has an Arctic cruise setting sail from Keflavik, Iceland, on May 29.

France's Pasteur Institute said on Saturday it has fully sequenced the Andes virus detected in a French passenger from the MV Hondius and found that it matched viruses already known in South America, with no evidence so far of new characteristics that would make it more transmissible or more dangerous.



## Israeli troops intercept vessels from a flotilla trying to breach the blockade of Gaza

By SUZAN FRASER and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — The Israeli military began intercepting boats on Monday morning that are part of the latest wave of flotilla activists attempting to break the blockade of Gaza.

More than 50 vessels departed from the port in Marmaris, Turkey, last week in what the organizers of the Global Sumud Flotilla described as the final leg of their planned journey to Gaza's shores.

The organization's livestream on Monday showed activists aboard several vessels putting on life jackets and raising their hands before a boat carrying troops approached. Israeli troops wearing tactical gear boarded the ship, and the livestream abruptly ended. Many of the ships are currently off the coast of Cyprus.

Other footage showed Israeli troops on speedboats approaching and instructing the activists to move to the front of the boat.

An hour prior to the interception, Israel's Foreign Ministry called on activists to "change course and turn back immediately."

"Once again, a provocation for the sake of provocation: another so-called "humanitarian aid flotilla" with no humanitarian aid," the Foreign Ministry posted on X. The Israeli military declined to comment on the ongoing operation.

Organizers said the boats were intercepted 250 nautical miles from the shores of Gaza. Unlike previous interceptions, which took place under the cover of night, the Israeli military boarded the boats in broad daylight.

The blockade has been in effect for 18 years, long predating the recent war in Gaza.

Israel and Egypt, which borders Gaza to the south, imposed the blockade after the 2007 Hamas takeover of the territory, seeking to prevent the group from smuggling in weapons. Since then, Israel has controlled Gaza's airspace and coastline, and restricted the flow of goods and people in and out of the territory.

Some critics consider it collective punishment.

Around 20 boats from flotilla intercepted last month

On April 30, Israeli forces intercepted more than 20 boats from a flotilla near the southern Greek island of Crete, initially holding about 175 activists. Israeli officials said they had to act early because of the high number of boats involved.

Israel took two of the activists — a Spanish-Swedish citizen of Palestinian origin, Saif Abukeshek, and Brazilian citizen Thiago Avila — back to Israel, where they were interrogated and detained for several days. The activists accused Israel of torture, which Israel denied. Brazil and Spain condemned Israel for "kidnapping" their citizens. The two were deported from Israel after about a week in detention.

Organizers say the latest efforts involved a regrouped fleet joined by additional boats. Nearly 500 activists from 45 countries were taking part.

Previous flotillas also unsuccessful in reaching Gaza

The activists' attempt comes less than a year after Israeli authorities foiled a previous effort by the group to reach Gaza. That attempt involved about 50 vessels and around 500 activists, including Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, Nelson Mandela's grandson Mandla Mandela and several European lawmakers.

Israel arrested, detained and later deported the participants, who claimed Israeli authorities abused them while in detention. Israeli authorities denied the accusations.

The Israeli action raised questions about what any nation can legally do to enforce a blockade in international waters. Several world leaders and human rights groups have condemned Israel, saying it violated international law.

Previous efforts to breach the blockade have also failed. In 2010, Israeli commandos raided the Turkish boat Mavi Marmara, which had been participating in an aid flotilla attempting to reach Gaza. Nine Turkish citizens and one Turkish-American on board were killed. The last time an activist boat succeeded in reaching Gaza was in 2008.

Flotilla aims to draw attention to the situation in Gaza

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The ceasefire between Israel and Hamas remains fragile, and the top diplomat overseeing it says it has stalled because of the deadlock over disarming Hamas. Both sides have traded accusations of violations. Gaza has seen near-daily Israeli fire with more than 850 people killed in the Palestinian territory since the ceasefire went into effect in October, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The ministry is part of Gaza's Hamas-run government, but staffed by medical professionals who maintain and publish detailed records viewed as generally reliable by the international community. The ministry says Israel's retaliatory strikes in the war have devastated the Palestinian enclave and killed more than 72,700 people.

The flotillas have been criticized for bringing minute amounts of aid on tiny ships. The Israeli defense body overseeing humanitarian aid to Gaza claims that sufficient aid is entering Gaza, with around 600 trucks carrying humanitarian aid entering Gaza daily, similar to prewar levels.

Nonetheless, around 2 million Gaza residents are still living with severe shortages of housing, food and medicine.

Flotilla organizers have said they hope their latest attempt to reach Gaza will help highlight the living conditions endured by Palestinians in the territory, particularly as global attention has shifted its focus to the U.S. and Israel's war against Iran.

## **A strong quake in south China kills 2 and triggers evacuation of 7,000**

BEIJING (AP) — A 5.2 magnitude earthquake struck south China's Guangxi region early Monday, killing two people, toppling buildings and triggering the evacuations of thousands, state media reported.

Four others were injured, while more than 7,000 residents were evacuated from Liuzhou city.

The search for several missing residents wrapped up around midday Monday, after the last trapped person, a 91-year-old man, was found alive in good condition, authorities said.

Images aired by state broadcaster CCTV showed excavators clearing debris. At least 13 buildings collapsed, while landslides triggered by the quake blocked roads to the area, according to CCTV.

Train services around Liuzhou were canceled or delayed.

Earthquakes occasionally strike south China, with more intense ones usually occurring toward the mountainous west or the east, toward Taiwan. The most devastating recent earthquake with a magnitude of 7.9 occurred in the southwestern Sichuan province in 2008, leaving more than 87,000 dead or missing.

## **Argentina's icy outpost at the end of the world fears the hantavirus will chill tourism**

By ISABEL DEBRE Associated Press

USHUAIA, Argentina (AP) — Travelers hoping to catch a glimpse of Magellanic penguins and humpback whales have journeyed in greater numbers every year to Ushuaia, the main Antarctic cruise hub at the southernmost point of Argentina.

The wind-lashed city that bills itself as the "end of the world" now fears for its future. In the last week, the remote outpost has found itself at the center of speculation about the source of a deadly hantavirus outbreak on an Atlantic cruise after Argentina's Health Ministry said it was examining whether the outbreak's first victims, a Dutch couple who died in April, contracted the rat-borne virus there.

Questions surround the investigation. Authorities in Ushuaia — the capital of left-leaning Tierra del Fuego Province, which has frequently clashed with libertarian President Javier Milei — say they're victims of a smear campaign. The Argentine Health Ministry says it can't rule out any destination visited by the Dutch bird enthusiasts during their monthslong road trip through Argentina and Chile before boarding the ship in Ushuaia.

Despite a lack of any evidence to suggest the outbreak started in Ushuaia, people here whose livelihoods depend on foreign visitors say they are feeling the effects.

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"This is a place that we've tried to promote as being as far away as possible from all the world's problems — war, racism, health problems, too," said Julio Lovece, the former tourism secretary of Ushuaia. "There's concern because our main attraction is clean and pure landscapes, the imaginary idea of the end of the world."

Hantavirus anxieties cause some travelers to reconsider

The arrival of winter has emptied Ushuaia save for a trickle of Brazilian tourists in puffy jackets and big hoods bobbing down the sleet-slick streets like the penguins they've come to visit.

"We got a little worried this was something similar to what we experienced with COVID," said Vinícius Pezzini, 38, an investment banker from São Paulo on his honeymoon. "But from what it seems, everything is functioning normally."

As the subpolar Patagonian wind blows in off the Beagle Channel, tour operators already are looking toward the high season. Winter is when deep-pocketed passengers plan summer cruises to Antarctica. Several travel agents said that fears about the Andes variant of the hantavirus have already caused some Americans and Europeans to scrap cruise bookings for next season. They declined to say how many.

"We have seen a number of passengers canceling trips, but my main concern is not the cancellations but people who were thinking about going to Ushuaia but had two or three destinations to choose from and now may go to Southeast Asia or Africa," said Ángel Brisighelli, owner of the Ushuaia-based Rumbo Sur travel agency. "That damage won't be visible until much later."

It's a reminder of just how fragile the tourism economy remains, especially for cruises occupying an outsized place in the public imagination when it comes to infectious disease.

Some officials in Tierra del Fuego are subscribing to the philosophy that all press is good press.

"We suffered a loss of prestige, yes. But this is also a chance to show that Ushuaia is one of the safest places in the world," said Juan Pavlov, the secretary of foreign affairs at the Tierra del Fuego Tourism Institute.

Antarctica tourism turned Ushuaia into a boomtown

Many residents of Tierra del Fuego, lured by tax breaks to the rugged region in the 1970s, remember when Antarctic travel meant naval patrols and research expeditions. Today, the white continent routinely tops bucket lists of vacationers from around the world.

A decade ago, just over 38,400 Antarctic cruise passengers set out from Ushuaia, a city of 80,000. In the 2025-2026 season, more than 135,000 did, according to Argentine port authorities, many hoping to experience the world's largest ice sheets before they melt.

Ninety percent of Antarctic cruises depart from Ushuaia, and the city says it relies on tourism for over 25% of its revenue. Any drop in visitors, however small, can have ripple effects throughout the economy, said Patricio Cornejo, head of local travel agency Tierra del Fuego Aventura.

"Everything would exist in a different reality without the dynamism that tourism creates here, especially when other industries fail to generate momentum," he said.

Under Milei, Tierra del Fuego has weathered a series of economic blows. The government's scrapping of trade barriers has battered the island's mainstay electronics production, while its strengthening of the local currency has given Argentines more spending power abroad, discouraging tourism at home that keeps Ushuaia afloat during the low season.

Questions hang over Argentina's investigation

Argentina's apparent lack of urgency in hunting for the origin of the outbreak has perplexed experts overseas.

Officials are still struggling to fill the gaps in the late Dutch couple's itinerary. Scientists from a government research institute have yet to arrive in Ushuaia more than two weeks after Argentina's Health Ministry said it would send them to test rodents in the province, which has never registered a case of the hantavirus.

"The investigation is going to be key for us to see what we can learn from the outbreak," said Mark Loafman, a family medicine doctor and public health expert at Cook County Health in Chicago. "We'd like to see hypotheses based on science, and not on concern over tourism."

The Pan American Health Organization — to which Argentina is party despite withdrawing from the World



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Health Organization last year — defended Argentina's response and said it was working with its government to "strengthen the detection and follow-up of potential cases."

"While the ongoing investigation remains important, its broader public health relevance for the Americas is limited, given that the disease is endemic in the region," the organization said in response to questions on whether the lagging investigation caused concern.

Here in Ushuaia, authorities argue the most logical source of contagion is the Patagonian region that spans southern Chile and three Argentine provinces, where the same Andes hantavirus identified in the cruise outbreak circulates.

But health officials say they have no record of the Dutch couple visiting those endemic areas during the incubation period for the virus — estimated to be between nine and 45 days before the arrival of symptoms on April 6.

In recent days, they've stressed that all is well in Argentina's treasured tourist destinations.

"Tourism operators tell us that many trip reservations have been canceled, so we must make this clarification," announced José Contreras, mayor of the village of Epuyén where a 2018 hantavirus outbreak killed 11 people. "Epuyén has no hantavirus this season. People should feel at ease and continue to visit."

## Redistricting debate shifts to South Carolina as Republicans seek clean sweep of US House seats

By JEFFREY COLLINS and DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — An effort to reshape South Carolina's congressional districts will get its first full airing Monday in the state House, as lawmakers launch a lengthy and potentially testy discussion on whether to accede to President Donald Trump's desires for a U.S. House map that could yield a clean sweep for Republicans.

Tense debates already have played out in Tennessee, Alabama and Louisiana as Republicans push aggressively to leverage a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that weakened Voting Rights Act protections for minority districts. The ruling has opened the way for Republicans to redraw districts with large Black populations that have elected Democrats.

In South Carolina, that means targeting a seat long held by U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, the only Democrat among the state's seven representatives in the House.

Clyburn has said he has no intention of retiring, even if his district gets changed. He told reporters last week in Washington that he has addresses in Columbia, Charleston and Santee, adding: "I live in three districts. I'll decide which one to run in."

"It ain't about Jim Clyburn's district," he said. "This isn't about voting. This is about turning the clock back to Jim Crow 2.0."

Early voting is scheduled to begin May 26 for South Carolina's statewide primaries on June 9. In addition to redrawing congressional districts, legislation pending in the state House would move the U.S. House primaries to August. If it clears the House, the legislation then must go to the Senate.

Republican Gov. Henry McMaster, who called lawmakers into a special session on redistricting, said it is important for South Carolina to send as many Republicans to Washington as possible to try to prevent Democrats from taking control of the House and attempting to impeach Trump.

But some Republicans have expressed concern that an attempt to draw 7-0 House map for the party could spread Republican voters too thin, making some existing Republican-held districts susceptible to Democratic victories.

Republicans are ahead in the national redistricting battle thus far. Since Trump urged Texas Republicans to redistrict last year, Republicans think they could gain as many as 15 seats from new House maps in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Florida, Tennessee and Alabama. Democrats, meanwhile, think they could gain six seats from new maps in California and Utah. But litigation is ongoing in some states, and voters will have the final say on who wins.

## Talks to end a strike shutting down the largest US commuter rail system will resume Monday

By PHILIP MARCELO and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A marathon day of negotiations that finished early Monday failed to end a strike that shut down the Long Island Rail Road, North America's largest commuter rail system, setting the stage for a rough start to the work week for about 250,000 commuters.

Unions representing rail workers and the Metropolitan Transportation Agency, which runs the railroad, negotiated through much of Sunday and early Monday after some prodding from the National Mediation Board and New York Gov. Kathy Hochul.

The two sides came up short, but the talks went well enough that negotiators agreed to return to their work early Monday morning, according to a spokesperson for union workers. The negotiations lasted so long that even a deal could not have saved Monday morning's commute because of the time needed to get crews and trains in place.

The National Mediation Board, the federal labor agency governing labor relations for railroads and airlines, summoned representatives for both sides to a Sunday afternoon meeting that got the talks started. They continued until nearly 1:30 a.m. Monday. The sides agreed to return to the negotiating table six hours later.

Earlier Sunday, Hochul, appeared with the MTA's chief executive and said they were ready to do whatever was necessary to help talks along as a strike continued for a second day.

"We all know that the railroad is the lifeblood of Long Island. Without it, life as we know it is simply not possible. The bottom line is, no one wins in a strike. Everyone is hurt," she said. Hochul offered to provide refreshments.

Nation's busiest commuter railroad

The LIRR serves hundreds of thousands of commuters who live along a 118-mile-long (190-kilometer-long) land mass that includes Brooklyn and Queens in New York City and the Hamptons, a summertime playground for the rich and famous near its eastern tip. The railroad has long provided commuters relief from its rush-hour clogged highways.

Most of its riders live outside New York City in two counties populated by nearly three million people.

After the news conference, the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and the Transportation Communications Union said in a statement that the union workers "are not asking for special treatment — they are simply fighting to keep up with the skyrocketing cost of living in the New York region after years without a raise."

The railroad closed down and workers went on strike at 12:01 a.m. Saturday after five unions representing about half its workforce walked off the job for the first time in three decades.

Workers have gone years without a new contract

The unions and the MTA have been negotiating a new contract since 2023, with talks stalled over workers' salaries and healthcare premiums. President Donald Trump's administration got involved in September after unions asked for a panel of experts to be appointed, but they couldn't reach a deal. The unions were legally allowed to strike starting at 12:01 a.m. Saturday.

At her news conference, Hochul said workers would lose every dollar that they would gain with a new contract by remaining on strike for three days.

MTA Chairman Janno Lieber said during the news conference that the unions' proposals would "blow up the MTA's budget" but he joined the governor's request for the unions to resume talks.

"They elected to walk out. We're more than willing to meet them halfway on wages," he said.

Sports fans felt the pain first

The impact of the walkout, the first for the LIRR since a two-day strike in 1994, fell on many sports fans who wanted to see the Yankees and Mets battle or the Knicks' playoff run at Madison Square Garden, which is located directly above the railroad's Penn Station hub in Manhattan.

Federal law makes it extremely difficult for rail workers to walk out and even allows Congress to block a strike, but lawmakers didn't intervene here like they did with the nation's freight railroads in 2022.

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Would-be commuters were greeted all weekend by train schedule departure boards that listed ghost trains marked "No Passengers" rather than upcoming trains listed by destination.

Hochul said essential workers among the roughly 250,000 weekday LIRR riders can take buses into the city from six locations on Long Island starting at 4 a.m. Monday and during an evening rush-hour commute from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Hochul and Trump blame each other for the strike

Hochul, a Democrat, has blamed the Trump administration for cutting mediation short in September and pushing the negotiations toward a strike. Trump, a Republican, said on his Truth Social platform that he had nothing to do with the strike.

"No, Kathy, it's your fault, and now looking over the facts, you should not have allowed this to happen," Trump said.

Hochul urged companies and agencies that employ workers from Long Island to let them work from home whenever possible.

"It's impossible to fully replace LIRR service. So effective Monday, I'm asking that regular commuters who can work from home, should. Please do so," she said.

The MTA has said the unions' initial demands to raise salaries would result in large fare increases and be disproportionate to what other unionized workers are paid.

The unions, which represent locomotive engineers, machinists, signalmen and other train workers, have said more substantial raises were warranted to help workers keep up with inflation and rising living costs.

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Associated Press writers Josh Funk in Omaha, Nebraska, and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles contributed.

## 4 crew members eject safely after two Navy jets crash during air show in Idaho

By REBECCA BOONE and MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — All four crew members ejected safely after two Navy jets collided and crashed Sunday during an air show at the Mountain Home Air Force Base in western Idaho, officials said.

The collision involved two U.S. Navy EA18-G Growlers from the Electronic Attack Squadron 129 in Whidbey Island, Washington, said Cmdr. Amelia Umayam, spokesperson for Naval Air Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The aircraft were performing an aerial demonstration when the crash occurred, Umayam said in a statement. The four crew members from both jets safely ejected and the crash was under investigation, she said.

The crew members were in stable condition, base officials said.

Nobody at the military base was hurt, said Kim Sykes, marketing director with Silver Wings of Idaho, which helped to plan the air show.

"Everyone is safe and I think that's the most important thing," Sykes said.

Planes fell to the ground together

The base said in a social media post that it was locked down immediately following the crash. The remainder of the air show was canceled.

Videos posted online by spectators showed four parachutes opening in the sky as the aircraft plummet to the ground near the base about 50 miles (80 kilometers) south of Boise.

The EA-18G Growler is a variant of the F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet with sophisticated electronic warfare systems.

Shane Ogden said he was filming the two jets as they came close together. A video he captured shows the two aircraft appear to make contact and then spin in tandem as the crew members eject and their parachutes open. The planes then fall together, exploding into a fireball upon impact as the crew members drift to the ground nearby.

"I was just filming thinking they were going to split apart and that happened and I filmed the rest,"



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Ogden said in a text message. He said he left soon after the crash because he did not want to get in the way of emergency responders.

Organizers said the popular air show that includes flying demonstrations and parachute jumps is a celebration of aviation history and a look at modern military capabilities. The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration squadron headlined the show both days.

The National Weather Service reported good visibility and winds gusting up to 29 mph (47 kph) around the time of the crash.

Little room for error

It was remarkable both crews were able to eject from their planes, and aviation safety expert Jeff Guzzetti said that may have been possible because of the way the planes collided and appeared to remain stuck together in midair before falling to Earth. Crews usually don't have a chance to eject in a midair collision, he said.

"It's really striking to see," Guzzetti said. "It looks like they struck each other in a very unique fashion to cause them to remain intact and kind of stick to each other and that very well could have saved them."

"It appears to be a pilot issue to me. It doesn't look like it was a mechanical malfunction," he added. "Rendezvousing with another airplane in formation flight is challenging, and it has to be done just right to prevent exactly this kind of thing."

Aviation safety expert John Cox, who is CEO of Safety Operating Systems, said the pilots who perform at air shows are among the best, but there is little room for error.

"Air show flying is demanding. It has very little tolerance," Cox said. "The people who do it are very good and it's a small margin for error. I'm glad everybody was able to get out."

This year's Gunfighter Skies event was the first at the base since 2018, when a hang glider pilot died in a crash during an air show performance.

In 2003, a Thunderbirds aircraft crashed while attempting a maneuver. The pilot, who was not hurt, was able to steer the plane away from the crowd and eject less than a second before it hit the ground.

The air show industry has been working to improve safety for years at the roughly 200 events held each year in the U.S. The last fatal crash at an air show came in 2022 when two vintage military planes collided at an event in Dallas and killed six people.

John Cudahy, president and CEO of the International Council of Air Shows, said that there used to be an average of about two deaths a year at a U.S. air show. But over the past decade, the average has been closer to one death per year, he said. There were no air show deaths in 2025 or 2024, and a spectator hasn't been killed at an air show in the U.S. since 1952.

"Safety wise we've enjoyed really an unprecedented term of few accidents," Cudahy said.

Investigators may be able to quickly get an idea of what happened in Sunday's crash because the crews of both planes survived and will be able to tell investigators what they saw and experienced before the collision. The Navy will lead the investigation, so there won't be as much information shared publicly as in civilian crashes.

The Iran war has led to the cancellation of some air shows this year at bases where military units are flying missions related to the conflict.

## Summer travelers who relied on Spirit Airlines may struggle to find budget alternatives

By RIO YAMAT AP Airlines and Travel Writer

Days after Spirit Airlines shut down in the middle of the night, a lawyer for the defunct budget carrier stood before a bankruptcy judge and apologized to the price-conscious customers who might struggle to find affordable flights in its absence.

"We apologize most specifically for those Americans who may now be priced entirely out," Spirit lawyer Marshall Huebner said in court, thanking all the passengers who relied on the airline during its 34-year run, many of whom, he said, "could not otherwise have afforded air travel."

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Spirit's May 3 demise is not the only curveball confronting people planning trips a week before the summer travel season has its traditional U.S. launch on Memorial Day. Rising jet fuel costs tied to the Iran war have pushed up airfares and associated fees across the commercial aviation industry. Two of the remaining U.S. budget carriers just finalized a merger.

The uncertain outlook for economical air travel reflects how difficult it has become for low-cost, no-frills airlines to operate while squeezed by volatile fuel prices, inflation and increasingly fierce competition. While budget airlines appeal to customers motivated by fare prices alone, traditional carriers can more easily generate revenue to offset fuel costs through premium cabins, membership rewards, corporate travel programs, add-on charges and pricing algorithms.

"Dynamic pricing has taken away one of the last structural advantages that low-cost carriers had," said Shye Gilad, a former airline captain who now teaches at Georgetown University.

For decades, low-cost carriers thrived by offering fares that traditional airlines often couldn't match without losing money. But that edge has weakened as the "big three" — American, Delta and United — got better at tailoring prices to different travelers, and as JetBlue, Southwest and other airlines that long positioned themselves as less expensive alternatives began chasing higher-paying customers.

Today, big airlines can sell a handful of bare-bones seats at Spirit-level prices while still charging more for standard and premium tickets elsewhere on their planes. That has made it harder for budget airlines to compete solely on price.

"They can't just be the cheapest airline anymore," Gilad said. "They have to be the smartest low-cost airline."

Like gasoline and diesel prices, the price of jet fuel has jumped since the Iran war put a chokehold on Middle East oil shipments 11 weeks ago. The strain prompted the Association of Value Airlines, a U.S. trade group representing Allegiant Air, Avelo Air, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines and Sun Country Airlines, to ask the Trump administration in late April for \$2.5 billion in temporary financial aid.

Airlines for America, the trade group for Alaska Airlines, American, Delta, JetBlue and Southwest, opposed the idea, saying that federal help would give the budget airlines an unfair advantage.

"Government intervention on behalf of those airlines would punish other airlines that have engaged in self-help in order to deal with increased costs and reward airlines who haven't made those tough decisions," Airlines for America said in a statement. "And, in the long-term, sustaining businesses that cannot earn their cost of capital harms competition and consumers by making it more difficult for other airlines to compete."

Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy rejected the request the day Spirit stopped flying.

Even before the latest run-up in fuel costs, consolidation was already underway in the budget airline sector. Alaska Airlines completed its \$1 billion purchase of Hawaiian Airlines in September 2024 after the two carriers agreed to maintain the level of service on key routes within Hawaii and between Hawaii and the U.S. mainland where they didn't face much competition.

Spirit was an unsuccessful merger target of both Frontier and JetBlue as its losses mounted after the coronavirus pandemic.

Allegiant said last week it had finalized its roughly \$1.5 billion acquisition of Sun Country, a deal first announced in January. The combined airline brings together passenger service with Sun Country's cargo operations and charter business serving sports teams, casinos and the U.S. Department of Defense.

"Consolidation is a signal" of weakness in the industry, Gilad said. "If you can remove a competitor and improve your product offering, you might be able to eke out more profit."

Other experts note the diversity within the budget airline sector, a factor that could make some carriers more resilient to spiking fuel costs and market disruptions than others.

"Budget airlines are a pretty peculiar creature," Vikrant Vaze, an aviation systems expert at Dartmouth College's engineering school, said, describing a category that has encompassed struggling carriers like Spirit to giants like Southwest Airlines, which grew from a low-cost pioneer into one of the largest U.S. airlines.

"Even though they can be clubbed together as budget airlines, if you want a big umbrella term, they're

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very different from each other," Vaze said. "They have very different levels of budget-ness."

Allegiant's focus on leisure travel centers on smaller airports with less direct competition. JetBlue, a hybrid low-cost carrier, leans more heavily on premium seating and loyalty perks than Spirit ever did.

Frontier comes closest to Spirit's model as an ultra low-cost carrier, though analysts say it entered this period of volatility with stronger liquidity and could benefit from Spirit's exit. It has already begun expanding in former Spirit-heavy markets that include Las Vegas, Detroit and the Florida cities of Orlando and Fort Lauderdale.

Gilad sees echoes of his own experience working as a pilot and flight-training instructor at Independence Air, a short-lived low-cost airline that previously served as a regional carrier for United and Delta. The airline, which launched in mid-2004 as fighting between U.S.-led forces and insurgents in Iraq sent fuel prices soaring, shut down during bankruptcy proceedings in January 2006.

"They burned through almost \$200 million in 18 months," Gilad said. "It was just that quick that they were gone."

He said the same structural pressures remain in place today, but there are fewer remaining budget airlines to share them.

## Teenagers arrested in random shootings across Austin that left 4 injured

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Two teenagers were in custody and a potential third suspect was being sought following at least 10 random weekend shootings in Austin, Texas, that left four people injured, city officials said Sunday.

Driving around the city in stolen vehicles, the suspects fired at two fire stations, apartment buildings and houses during a string of robberies and shootings from Saturday afternoon to Sunday morning, Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis said.

The two boys, ages 15 and 17, were apprehended after they were pulled over in a stolen car and attempted to run. A third person who had been in the car also ran and remained at large. Davis said it was unknown if that person was involved in the shootings.

She said the firearm that was used in the shootings had earlier been stolen by the 15-year old, and that the 17-year old was wanted for a separate firearm theft.

The city ordered residents of a large part of the southern area of Texas' capital city to shelter in place Sunday while they were searching for the suspects. With two suspects in custody, the order was later lifted.

Four victims were taken to hospitals, including one with critical injuries, officials said.

The suspects stole at least four vehicles as they traveled around the city, Davis said.

"We don't have any specific motive that has been identified. In fact, these actions appear to be random," Mayor Kirk Watson said.

## Tiny patients, big fight: NICU parents win leave in 2 states and push for more

By ALEXANDRA OLSON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — As his daughter Olivia was born, Marlon White felt his wife's hand slacken as she fainted. The baby, born at 29 weeks and weighing about 2 pounds, wasn't making a sound as she was rushed to the neonatal intensive care unit. Terrified, he waited in the hall while the doctors stabilized his newborn and wife.

The next day, White, a welder, was back at work. Two days later, his wife, Farra Lanzer-White, was also back on the job, setting up a work station at the Denver hospital. For two months, first at one hospital then another, she kept up with emails and meetings as alarm bells went off each time Olivia stopped breathing, as she herself prepared for open-heart surgery for a condition discovered during her difficult pregnancy.

The Fort Collins, Colorado couple made a choice familiar to many parents with newborns in intensive



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care: Keep working while the baby is in the NICU to save any parental leave they might have for when the baby comes home. They are now part of a growing movement advocating for the adoption of NICU leave in the country's patchwork of family leave policies, which differ between states, cities and companies.

In January, seven months after Olivia was born, Colorado became the first U.S. state to adopt paid NICU leave, offering up to 12 weeks for parents with newborns in intensive care on top of the 12 weeks of parental leave under the state's family and medical leave program. A more modest policy will take effect next month in Illinois, guaranteeing between 10 and 20 days of unpaid leave to NICU parents.

While advocates want more states to adopt NICU leave, a major focus now is galvanizing support for a federal bill to add NICU leave to the Family and Medical Leave Act, the 1993 law that entitles eligible workers nationwide to take unpaid leave for family and medical reasons, said Inimai Chettiar, president of A Better Balance, a nonprofit that advocates for paid leave and other workplace policies in support of families.

"We think it's promising in terms of bipartisan support, because as we've approached people, it seems that they intuitively understand it," said Chettiar.

U.S. Rep. Brittany Pettersen, a Colorado Democrat who is drafting the federal bill said it would offer up to 12 weeks of NICU leave on top of the 12 weeks of parental leave available under the FMLA.

Push for bipartisan support

The U.S. has no federal law mandating paid family or parental leave, an issue that has long divided Democrats and Republicans. While FMLA leaves out many workers who can't afford to take unpaid leave, Pettersen said the goal is to win bipartisan support for the idea of NICU leave and bring it to the forefront of discussions surrounding parental leave.

The NICU leave bills passed in Colorado and Illinois offer mixed signals about the potential for bipartisanship. Colorado's paid leave passed mostly along party lines, while the shorter, unpaid leave adopted in Illinois had overwhelming bipartisan support.

Unlike Colorado, Illinois does not already have a paid family leave program in which it could incorporate NICU leave, said Illinois state Rep. Laura Faver Dias, a Democrat who introduced the bill and whose twin boys were born at 27 weeks in 2014 and stayed intensive care for three months.

Several Republican lawmakers became co-sponsors, including state Rep. Nicole La Ha, whose daughter spent 45 days in the NICU in 2017 after her water broke at almost 30 weeks.

"Unless you have had this experience, you can't fully understand why something like this is so meaningful," said La Ha. "You have an infant who is struggling to eat and breathe. The last thing you want to think about is work but unfortunately you have bills to pay."

While Colorado's bill lacked bipartisan support, Colorado State Sen. Jeff Bridges said "it was the quietest opposition you could hear," with few Republicans or business groups publicly speaking against it. Bridges introduced the bill a year after his son Kit was born two months early and weighing just 2 pounds.

"I wanted to share stories that were so moving that the lobbyists would look like monsters if they opposed it," Bridges said.

A handful of businesses step in

Nearly one out of 10 babies born in the U.S. are admitted to a NICU, according to the most recent figures from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

While in the NICU, newborns are still learning to swallow, breath on their own and regulate their body temperature, said Dr. Karen Puopolo, section chief for Newborn Medicine at Pennsylvania Hospital and chair of the Committee on Fetus and Newborns of the American Academy of Pediatrics. Parental presence has a "multitude of advantages both ways," Puopolo said. Skin-to-skin contact slows down the baby's heart beat, improves their breathing and helps the mother with milk production.

In recent years, a smattering of companies have adopted dedicated paid NICU leave, including Morgan Stanley, Pinterest and the organic baby formula company Bobbie, while others have extended the length of parental leave or added policies like caregiving leave, which could also help NICU parents.

But mostly, the plight of NICU parents has been a blind spot, said Sahra Cahoon, executive director Love for Lily, a Colorado-based organization that supports NICU families and advocated for Colorado's new law.

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Cahoon launched the organization after her daughter Lily, born at 24 weeks and five days, died after three-and-a-half months in the NICU. Cahoon, who owned a jewelry-making business at the time, said she worked, believing her daughter would survive.

"It's probably one of my biggest regrets," Cahoon said, though at the time she felt lucky to be able to work remotely from the hospital and didn't feel she could afford to give up her income. "We did not know that our story was going to end that way."

Feeling unprepared

When Rebeca Herrera-Moreno learned about Colorado's NICU leave law last year, it brought her back to her son's time in the NICU six years earlier and she decided to leap into advocacy for a similar provision in her home state of California.

When her son Nico was born at 32 weeks in 2020, Herrera-Moreno was already on disability leave, having entered preterm labor weeks earlier. Her husband, Martin Moreno, was entitled to six weeks of paid parental leave under California law at the time, but they decided he would save that time for when Nico could come home, which ended up being three weeks later.

She struggled to enjoy moments with her tiny son while holding him surrounded by machines, monitors and nurses. She would say "I love you" every day before leaving him while guilt swelled inside her that she hadn't developed that feeling yet. Weeks later at home, she opened up to her husband, Martin Moreno, who confessed that he had felt the same way.

Moreno, a health director for a labor union, said he was consumed at the time with his job, which suddenly intensified as the COVID-19 pandemic swept the country. To this day, his most vivid memory of the period isn't with his son in the NICU, but of a video he helped produce to show workers how to properly wash their hands.

When he came home, he felt unprepared to care for Nico, who had to be fed on his side to prevent choking. He had been oblivious to his wife's emotional turmoil.

"I wish I would have had more preparation with the medical staff to really feel like I had everything set. And that's speaking to the medical piece of it — not even addressing being absent for Becky during so much of this," Moreno said.

Being present

Nearly 800 people have applied for neonatal care leave since Colorado's policy took effect in January, according to Tracy Marshall, director of Colorado's Family and Medical Leave Insurance Division.

Among the first were Chris and Stevie Madden, whose son was born almost eight weeks early on Jan. 11.

Stevie Madden, a mental health professional who had been rushed to the hospital after her blood pressure spiked and she began bleeding, said she panicked about how to handle the crisis and work when she realized she had planned to start her maternity leave much later.

A nurse at the hospital, however, told Chris Madden about the new NICU leave, which they both applied for.

Madden, an oil field mechanic, said he wouldn't have been able to keep his mind on his risky job while his son was fighting for his life. He said he learned how to handle his baby's delicate skin — press gently, don't rub — and gained the confidence he needed when Roczen stopped breathing once after returning home and had to be rushed to the hospital.

He told every parent he met at hospital about NICU leave.

"It was life changing not to have to think about money and stress and just be present with your baby," Madden said.

## China agrees to boost trade for US ag products such as beef and poultry following Trump-Xi summit

By DIDI TANG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — China has agreed to ramp up trade for U.S. agricultural products such as beef and poultry, buying at an annualized rate of \$17 billion per year for 2026 and at that level for 2027 and 2028, the White House announced Sunday, two days after President Donald Trump returned from a high-stakes summit in Beijing where he sought to ease the impact on American farmers from the trade war he launched last year.

China would restore market access for U.S. beef and resume imports of poultry from U.S. states determined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to be free of the bird flu, the White House said. The deals are on top of China's soybean purchase commitments last year.

The agreements offer some hope to American farmers harmed by the trade war as they saw a major export market for soybeans and other products dry up. Farmers also are feeling new pressure from Trump administration policies — the war that the U.S. and Israel launched against Iran has curtailed shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital trade corridor that has restricted global fertilizer supplies and sent those prices soaring.

There was no immediate confirmation of the terms from Beijing.

China's Ministry of Commerce on Saturday said the two sides would "resolve or make substantial progress toward resolving certain non-tariff barriers and market access issues" regarding agricultural goods.

The U.S. would "actively work" to address China's concerns regarding detention of its dairy products, seafood, the export of potted bonsai, and the recognition of Shandong province as a bird-flu-free zone, while the Chinese side will "likewise actively work" to address U.S. concerns regarding the registration of beef processing facilities and the export of poultry meat from certain states to China, a ministry spokesperson said.

The two sides also agreed to expand trade, including that of farm goods, through measures such as reciprocal tariff reductions on "a specific range of products," though the spokesperson did not specify the products.

China, recognizing the link between food security and national security, has diversified its sources of imported soybeans, beef and other farm goods, turning increasingly to Brazil, Argentina and other countries over the U.S.

China sharply cut back US imports during the trade war

Data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture show China's imports of U.S. agricultural goods peaked in 2022 with \$38 billion but fell to \$8 billion in 2025. These figures include nearly \$18 billion in soybean purchases in 2022 and \$3 billion in 2025.

It's not immediately clear how much more China would buy from American soybean farmers, who were hit especially hard in the trade war. China, traditionally the largest foreign buyer of American soybeans, stopped purchasing them altogether last year after Trump hiked tariffs on Chinese goods.

The latest agreement builds on a trade truce Trump reached with Chinese President Xi Jinping in October in which China agreed to resume buying U.S. soybeans. The White House said then that China committed to buying 12 million metric tons in the current marketing year and 25 million metric tons for each of the next three years.

According to the White House, hundreds of U.S. beef plants, including those run by Tyson and Cargill, also will be able to export again to China, though it's not immediately clear how much beef American businesses will be selling to China.

China let licenses for hundreds of U.S. beef plants expire last year, and the import value for 2025 fell to less than \$500 million, according to USDA figures. China's purchases of U.S. beef had peaked at \$2.14 billion in 2022, the government data shows.

The U.S. export of poultry meats and products to China was \$286 million in 2025, down from more than \$1 billion in 2022.



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Trump and Xi used summit to find areas of economic cooperation

During the summit last week, Trump and Xi discussed ways to enhance economic cooperation, including expanding market access for American businesses in China and increasing Chinese investment into U.S. industries, the White House had said. The two leaders agreed to set up separate boards of trade and investment — though offered few details on the proposals or how they would differ from existing trade dialogues.

The Board of Trade will allow the two governments to manage trade of “non-sensitive goods,” and the Board of Investments would provide a venue for the two sides to discuss investment-related issues, according to the White House.

China’s Ministry of Commerce said the two bodies would address respective concerns regarding trade and investment. The Board of Trade, the ministry spokesperson said, would allow the two sides to discuss issues such as tariff reductions on specific products. “In principle, the two sides agreed to reduce tariff on products of respective concern at equivalent scale,” the spokesperson said.

Xi said last week that China’s door of opportunity will open wider when he met with U.S. business leaders joining Trump on the trip. Among those who traveled to Beijing was Brian Sikes, CEO of the agricultural giant Cargill.

Soybeans, which are used for livestock feed and biofuels in China, are among the top U.S. agricultural exports. Soybean exports to China in the past had accounted for about half of U.S. exports of agricultural goods to the Asian nation.

USDA data shows the U.S. exported 10.9 million metric tons of soybeans to China as of May 7, putting China on track to fulfill its previous commitment by the end of the marketing year on Aug. 31. This is well below the 25 million to 30 million metric tons that China purchased in past years.

Before Trump’s initial planned trip to Beijing in late March — which was postponed by the Iran war — the American Soybean Association urged him to prioritize soybeans in the trade talks with Xi.

Scott Metzger, president of the association, said Thursday the group would like to see “additional soybean purchases this marketing year, as well as continued progress toward fulfilling future purchase commitments.”

“Greater certainty and consistency in the marketplace help provide farmers with the confidence they need as they make decisions for the year ahead,” he said.

## Thousands flocked to the National Mall in Washington for an America-themed prayer rally

By TIFFANY STANLEY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands of people streamed onto the National Mall for a daylong prayer rally Sunday billed as a “rededication of our country as One Nation under God.”

Against the backdrop of the Washington Monument, worship music blared from a stage that made clear the event’s Christian focus. Arched stained-glass windows, set underneath grand columns resembling a federal building, depicted the nation’s founders alongside a white cross.

Most speakers celebrated Christianity’s ties to American history, a blending of ideas that critics flagged ahead of the prayer gathering as supporting Christian nationalism.

President Donald Trump read a passage of Scripture in a video shown at the rally. Filmed in the Oval Office, it was the same footage used during a marathon Bible-reading event last month. The verses from 2 Chronicles are often cited by those who believe America was founded as a Christian nation.

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways,” Trump read, “then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Other top Republicans, including Vice President JD Vance, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., were also on the schedule as part of the celebrations this year marking 250 years of U.S. independence.

Many names on the Rededicate 250 program were among Trump’s longtime evangelical supporters,

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including Paula White-Cain of the White House Faith Office and evangelist Franklin Graham of Samaritan's Purse.

"We are deeply concerned that what is really being rededicated is a nation to a very narrow and ideological part of the Christian faith that betrays our nation's fundamental commitment to religious freedom," said the Rev. Adam Russell Taylor, a Baptist minister who leads the progressive Christian organization Sojourners.

The conservative Christian lineup featured guests who often argue that the United States was founded as a Christian nation, a narrative disputed by many historians and other religious traditions.

Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, noted the religious diversity of early America, including Jews, Muslims and Indigenous people. "I want to shine a light on America's history as a nation that welcomes, celebrates, and protects people of all faiths and those of no faith," Pesner said.

Attendees believe prayer event is significant

Many in the crowd wore Trump hats and patriotic colors, joining the festivities under a sweltering sun.

"It's all about Jesus," said Denny Smith, 72, of Rhode Island, who rented a motorized scooter to traverse the National Mall.

Retha Bond, 58 and from southern Illinois, also heard Trump speak not far away on Jan. 6, 2021. She said she did not join the protesters who rioted later that day at the Capitol but has remained a steadfast Trump supporter.

"I'm not saying Trump is the savior," Bond said. She added that "this is one of the most important things that could be going on in the world, for us to rededicate our nation back to God."

Speakers mentioned the late conservative activist Charlie Kirk from the stage. Kirk's activism has been a powerful example for Alessandra Seawright, 15, of Santa Fe, New Mexico, who came to Rededicate 250 with her mother.

"I think we just need more of this in our country, and we just need to share the word of the Lord," she said. "We love going to events like this."

They also attended Kirk's memorial service, which mixed Christian worship and political messages. Events like these, Seawright said, help her feel less alone in her conservative Christian beliefs.

Prayer event spurs protest

Hegseth, who has infused Christian language and worship with his role leading the Pentagon, asked the gathering in a video to pray to "our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." Referencing George Washington's faith, he said, "Let us pray without ceasing. Let us pray for our nation on bended knee."

Orthodox Jewish Rabbi Meir Soloveichik was the only non-Christian religious leader listed on the program. To applause, he told the crowd, "Antisemitism is utterly un-American" — a seeming reference to debates dividing the right.

Soloveichik serves on the Trump administration's Religious Liberty Commission along with White-Cain, Graham and Cardinal Timothy Dolan and Bishop Robert Barron, Catholic clerics also featured on the program.

The event was organized by Freedom 250, a public-private partnership backed by the White House. Congressional Democrats have questioned the nonprofit's structure and finances, which they see as a Trump-controlled end run around a separate commission charted by Congress a decade ago to prepare semiquincentennial events.

Progressive groups staged counterprogramming. Among them were the Freedom From Religion Foundation, which advocates a strict separation of church and state, and the Christian organization Faithful America. The two groups displayed a large balloon near the mall of a Trump-like golden calf, in a biblical reference to idolatry.

On Thursday evening, the Interfaith Alliance projected protest slogans onto an exterior wall of the National Gallery of Art. "Democracy not theocracy," said one. Another said: "The separation of church and state is good for both."

## WHO declares global health emergency over Ebola outbreak in Congo and Uganda

By CHINEDU ASADU and SALEH MWANAMILONGO Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — The World Health Organization declared the Ebola disease outbreak caused by a rare virus in Congo and neighboring Uganda a public health emergency of international concern on Sunday, after more than 300 suspected cases and 88 deaths.

WHO said the outbreak doesn't meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency like COVID-19, and advised against the closure of international borders.

WHO said on X that a laboratory-confirmed case has also been reported in Congo's capital, Kinshasa, which is about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from the outbreak's epicenter in the eastern province of Ituri, suggesting a possible wider spread. It said the patient had visited Ituri and that other suspected cases have also been reported in North Kivu province, which is one of Congo's most populous and borders Ituri.

On Sunday, the rebel government of Goma, eastern Congo's largest city, said in a statement that the first confirmed case of Ebola was detected in the city. The infected person traveled from Ituri province and was currently under isolation, the statement said. Goma was the site of a rapid rebel offensive in early 2025, and the conflict between the Congolese armed forces and the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel paramilitary group has displaced hundreds of thousands.

Rare but often fatal and highly contagious

Ebola is highly contagious and can be contracted via bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen. The disease it causes is rare, but severe and often fatal.

WHO's emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. By WHO's standards, it shows the event is serious, there is a risk of international spread and it requires a coordinated international response.

In a separate statement on X on Sunday, the WHO Regional Office for Africa said that a team of 35 experts from the WHO and the Congolese Ministry of Health had arrived in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, along with 7 tons of emergency medical supplies and equipment.

The global response to previous declarations has been mixed. In 2024, when WHO declared mpox outbreaks in Congo and elsewhere in Africa a global emergency, experts at the time said that it did little to get supplies like diagnostic tests, medicines and vaccines to affected countries quickly.

It's hard to treat a variant of Ebola

Health authorities say the current outbreak, first confirmed on Friday, is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rare variant of the Ebola disease that has no approved therapeutics or vaccines. Although more than 20 Ebola outbreaks have taken place in Congo and Uganda, this is only the third time that the Bundibugyo virus has been detected.

Congo accounts for all except two of the cases, both of which were reported in Uganda, WHO said.

The Bundibugyo virus was first detected in Uganda's Bundibugyo district during a 2007-2008 outbreak that infected 149 people and killed 37. The second time was in 2012, in an outbreak in Isiro, Congo, where 57 cases and 29 deaths were reported.

Dr. Richard Kitenge, chief of operations at the Centre des Opérations d'Urgence de Santé Publique, part of Congo's National Institute of Public Health, recently arrived in Ituri. He said that while the risks may be high, Congo has weathered previous outbreaks.

"We have managed enough epidemics in the country without treatment. The Zaire virus, which we managed, was also untreated in several epidemics, and not everyone died," Kitenge told The Associated Press.

Conflict and migration complicate efforts

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Director-General Dr. Jean Kaseya said Saturday that a high number of active cases remain in the community, particularly in Mongwalu, where the first cases were reported, "significantly complicating containment and contact tracing efforts."

Violent conflict with militants, some backed by the Islamic State group, as well as constant population movement because of mining, both within Congo and across the border in Uganda, have also posed a



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major challenge to response efforts.

Officials first reported the spread of the disease in Ituri province, close to Uganda and South Sudan, on Friday. On Saturday, the Africa CDC reported 336 suspected cases and 87 deaths in Congo.

"There are significant uncertainties to the true number of infected persons and geographic spread associated with this event at the present time. In addition, there is limited understanding of the epidemiological links with known or suspected cases," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

The two cases in Uganda include one person whom officials said had traveled from Congo and died at a hospital in Uganda's capital, Kampala, and another WHO said had also traveled from Congo.

WHO said the high percentage of positive cases among samples tested, the spread to Kampala and Uganda and the clusters of deaths across Ituri "all point toward a potentially much larger outbreak than what is currently being detected and reported, with significant local and regional risk of spread."

CDC says risk to Americans low

U.S. health officials describe the risk to Americans as low, but did not directly answer questions about whether any Americans may have been exposed to the Ebola virus in Africa.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with other health officials "to ensure the outbreak is managed and prevent further spread of Ebola," said Dr. Satish Pillai, the manager of the CDC's response to the outbreak, in a call with reporters Sunday.

The agency has an office with 30 personnel in Congo, and is working to deploy additional CDC workers to respond to the outbreak, Pillai said.

The agency on Friday issued travel advisories urging Americans traveling in Congo and Uganda to avoid people who have symptoms like fever, muscle pain and rash. The CDC also is "putting in appropriate measures for identifying individuals with any symptoms" at ports of entry, Pillai said, but CDC officials did not immediately respond to follow-up questions asking for more detail.

Congo outbreak killed 50 before it was detected

Kaseya said that slow detection delayed the response and gave the virus time to spread.

"This outbreak started in April. So far, we don't know the index case. It means we don't know how far is the magnitude of this outbreak," Kaseya said, using a term for the first detectable case of an epidemic.

The earliest known suspected case, a 59-year-old man, developed symptoms on April 24 and died at a hospital in Ituri on April 27.

By the time health authorities were first alerted to the outbreak on social media on May 5, 50 deaths had already been recorded, the Africa CDC said.

WHO said at least four deaths have been reported among healthcare workers who showed Ebola symptoms.

## Aaron Rai runs away with the PGA Championship, first English-born winner in more than a century

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

NEWTOWN SQUARE, Pa. (AP) — Aaron Rai was just another name among a dozen others who had reason to believe the PGA Championship was theirs for the taking Sunday at tough Aronimink.

There was Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm and Xander Schauffele, with 10 majors among them, all ready to seize the moment on a stage that was unfamiliar to Rai.

Justin Thomas was the clubhouse leader for nearly four hours after a 65 before the course turned hard under a hot sun.

What followed was a master class from golf's newest major champion.

Rai made six birdies over the last 10 holes, taking the lead for good on the 13th and pouring it on with a 70-foot birdie putt across the 17th green that evoked a roar so loud everyone else on the course must have realized it was over.

He closed with a 5-under 65 for a three-shot victory to become the first English-born player in more than a century to capture the PGA Championship.

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"To be here is outside my wildest imagination," Rai said.

Three shots behind as he approached the turn, Rai got back in the game with a 5-wood up the hill and a 40-foot eagle putt. His 40-yard bunker shot was sublime and set up a 6-foot birdie on the 13th hole, the reachable par 4 that moments earlier gobbled up McIlroy and Schauffele.

And then the 31-year-old Rai — who wore Ferrari shirts at junior golf tournaments because he once dreamed of being a Formula 1 driver — hit the gas with a back nine that ranks among the best in major championship history.

The previous two players to go 6 under or better over the final 10 holes of a major were Cameron Smith at St. Andrews when he won the 2022 British Open, and Jack Nicklaus when he won the 1986 Masters.

Rai now takes his place in some exclusive company.

Those chasing him with a better golfing pedigree — even Alex Smalley and Matti Schmid, who also took turns atop the leaderboard while going for their first win — were undone by untimely mistakes or failure to get good looks at birdie.

McIlroy, who closed with a 69, played the par 5s in even for the week and he chopped up the reachable par-4 13th for a bogey. He also glared and softly cursed at a fan who said "USA!" after McIlroy hit a wedge from the rough to the bunker on the par-5 16th. It was an indication McIlroy knew his hopes were all but gone.

Rai, who finished at 9-under 271, is the first player from England with his name on the Wanamaker Trophy since Jim Barnes in 1919, the second edition of this major and the first after World War I.

Rahm and Smalley tied for second, a big deal for both of them.

Rahm had his best finish in a major since defecting to LIV Golf at the end of 2023. He was slowed by a pair of bogeys on the front nine, and managed only one birdie on the back nine for a 68.

Smalley lost the lead with a messy double bogey on the sixth hole, and his best golf was too late. Rai already had his eye on the Wanamaker Trophy when Smalley made birdie on the 18th for a 70. The runner-up finish gets him in the next four majors, including the Masters.

Thomas made a 16-foot par putt on the final hole to post at 5-under 275, one shot behind as the final group was only in the second fairway. For the longest time, as Aronimink got tougher and the pressure got tighter, it looked like Thomas might have a chance.

Like everything else on this final day, Rai ended those hopes, too.

So concluded a most remarkable week in the Philadelphia suburbs when no one could separate themselves at Aronimink. The 22 players within four shots of the lead going into the final round was a PGA Championship record.

From that pack emerged the 31-year-old Rai, with one PGA Tour title, three on the European tour, and no finishes inside the top 15 at any of the majors.

He might not be well known among casual observers, but he is a star in the eyes of his peers for his humility and gracious personality.

"You won't find one person on property who's not happy for him," McIlroy said.

"Super pumped for him and his team," Schauffele said. "All-world gentleman, no doubt."

He wears two gloves, a habit he started as a kid in England to battle the cold winters when he was practicing — and he was always practicing. Even more unusual for Rai is the plastic covers on each iron, a reminder of his roots.

He once said his father sacrificed to buy the nicest golf clubs and then would clean the grooves with baby oil after his son was done playing. Rai has left the iron covers on since then "to remember where I came from and to respect what I have."

"Anybody that uses head covers in his irons because he coveted his irons when he was a kid so much that he wanted to respect the equipment and to still do it? Yeah, it shows a lot about a person," Rahm said. "What he did today is nothing short of special."

Rai had seven straight one-putt greens, the last one a 6-foot birdie putt on the 13th that made him the first player all week to reach 7 under. And then he kept right on going.

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Thomas wound up in a for fourth with Ludvig Aberg (69) and Schmid, whose 5-foot par putt on the 18th hole gets him into his first Masters next year. Smith, who didn't drop a shot until the 17th hole, had a 68 to join McIlroy and Schauffele (69) another shot back.

Defending champion Scottie Scheffler missed a 4-foot birdie putt on the third hole and twice missed 3-foot par putts on the back nine in his closing round of 69 to tie for 14th, his first time out of the top 10 at a major since the 2024 U.S. Open.

Rai now has a five-year exemption on the PGA Tour, and into the Masters, U.S. Open and British Open. He can play the PGA Championship for life.

"Golf is an amazing game," Rai said. "It teaches you so many things, and it teaches you so much humility and discipline and absolute hard work because nothing is ever given in this game."

Nothing was given to him Sunday. Rai simply outplayed the strongest field in golf and won it.

## **Bulgaria gives its Eurovision winner Dara a grand welcome upon her return home**

SOFIA, Bulgaria (AP) — Hundreds of cheering fans waving Bulgarian flags welcomed Eurovision Song Contest winner Dara upon her return home on Sunday.

Visibly tired but smiling, the 27-year-old singer arrived at Sofia's Vasil Levski Airport waving the Eurovision trophy. Bulgaria's major television stations made changes to their regular programs to air live coverage from the airport.

"This award marks the beginning of my future international career," Dara said.

The singer won the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna on Saturday with her infectious party anthem "Bangaranga," giving the southeast European country its first-ever victory in the competition.

"We have done something great for Bulgarian music, and I hope this sends a message that Bulgaria's performers and artists deserve stronger support," Dara said.

She said that Bulgaria is "an exceptionally talented nation that will continue to receive more and more attention."

Dara, whose real name is Darina Yotova, beat 24 other competitors during Saturday's grand final of the European pop music competition. Her song's infectious beats and tightly choreographed dance routine proved a hit with both national juries in participating countries and viewers around the world, whose votes together decide the winner.

Sofia Mayor Vassil Terziev was among the officials at the airport. Terziev said that the capital city is ready to host the next edition of the European song contest in 2027 when Bulgaria will mark the 20th anniversary of joining the European Union.

The Balkan country's political leaders joined the outburst of national pride.

Parliamentary speaker Mihaela Dotsova called Dara's win an "inspiration for the nation," while President Iliana Yotova said that it was a "triumph for Bulgaria" and Prime Minister Rumen Radev proclaimed it "a victory with global resonance."

## **Drone strikes UAE nuclear plant as US and Iran signal they are prepared to resume war**

By JON GAMBRELL and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A drone strike sparked a fire on the edge of the United Arab Emirates' sole nuclear power plant on Sunday in what authorities called an "unprovoked terrorist attack." No one was blamed, but it highlighted the risk of renewed war as the United States and Iran signaled they were ready to fight again.

There were no reported injuries or radiological release. The UAE, which has hosted air defenses and personnel from Israel, recently accused Iran of launching drone and missile attacks. Tensions have risen over the Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy waterway gripped by Iran, which is under a U.S. naval blockade.



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"For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them," U.S. President Donald Trump posted on social media shortly after a call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, whose attack on Iran with the U.S. sparked the war on Feb. 28.

Trump has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran and then backed off.

"Our armed forces' fingers are on the trigger, while diplomacy is also continuing," Mohsen Rezaei, a military adviser to Iran's supreme leader, said on state television.

The ceasefire remains tenuous, with diplomatic efforts for a more durable peace having faltered. And fighting has heated up between Israel and the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon despite a nominal ceasefire there.

Barakah plant can provide a quarter of the UAE's energy

The UAE Defense Ministry said three drones came over its western border with Saudi Arabia, with the other two intercepted. It was investigating who launched them. Iran and allied Shiite militias in Iraq have launched drone attacks targeting Gulf Arab states in the war.

The attack, "whether carried out by the principal actor or through one of its proxies, represents a dangerous escalation," Anwar Gargash, a diplomatic adviser to the UAE president, said on social media.

Saudi Arabia condemned the attack, and later said it had intercepted three drones that entered from Iraqi airspace.

The \$20 billion Barakah nuclear power plant was built by the UAE with the help of South Korea and went online in 2020. It is the only nuclear power plant in the Arab world and can provide a quarter of the energy needs in the UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms that is home to Dubai.

The UAE's nuclear regulator said the fire didn't affect plant safety and "all units are operating as normal." The International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, said the strike caused a fire in an electrical generator and one reactor was being powered by emergency diesel generators.

It's the first time the four-reactor Barakah plant has been targeted in the war. Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, whom the UAE has battled as part of a Saudi-led coalition, claimed to have targeted the plant while it was under construction in 2017, which Abu Dhabi denied.

The UAE's nuclear program is different from Iran's and Israel's

The UAE signed a strict deal with the U.S. over the nuclear power plant, known as a "123 agreement," in which it agreed to forego domestic uranium enrichment and reprocessing of spent fuel to ease any proliferation concerns. Its uranium comes from abroad.

That's very different from the nuclear program in Iran that is at the heart of long-running tensions with the United States and Israel.

Iran insists its program is for peaceful purposes, but it has enriched its uranium close to weapons-grade levels and is widely suspected of having had a military component to its program until at least 2003. It has often restricted the work of U.N. inspectors, including since the 12-day war with Israel last year.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear-armed country in the region, but has neither confirmed nor denied having atomic weapons. Iran struck near Israel's Dimona nuclear facility during the war.

Nuclear plants have increasingly been targeted in wars in recent years, including during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine that began in 2022. During the Iran war, Tehran repeatedly claimed its Bushehr nuclear power plant came under attack, though there was no direct damage to its Russian-run reactor or any radiological release.

Ceasefire appears increasingly shaky

Israel is coordinating with the U.S. about a possible resumption of attacks, said two people familiar with the situation, including an Israeli military officer. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing confidential military preparations.

Speaking to his Cabinet on Sunday, Netanyahu said "our eyes are also open" when it comes to Iran, and "we are prepared for any scenario."

On Iranian state TV, presenters on at least two channels appeared armed during live programs.

One of them, Hossein Hosseini, received basic firearms training from a masked member of the paramili-

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tary Revolutionary Guard. Hosseini mimed firing a shot at the flag of the UAE.

On another channel, Mobina Nasiri said a weapon had been sent to her from a gathering in Tehran's Vanak Square. "From this platform, I declare that I am ready to sacrifice my life for this country," she said.

## **Cassidy tried to get along with Trump after his impeachment vote. Retribution came anyway**

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JACK BROOK Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — When Charles Wandfluh voted in Louisiana's Republican primary over the weekend, he could only conjure the unflattering image of a panicked rodent when talking about Bill Cassidy's desperate attempt to cling to his U.S. Senate seat despite opposition from President Donald Trump.

"He's just a squirrel running around the tree, chasing nuts to find whatever he can get to benefit him," said Wandfluh, 57, in a suburb of New Orleans.

Cassidy's scramble was in vain, and his defeat on Saturday demonstrated the near-impossibility of a political future within the Republican Party without Trump's acquiescence. Despite outspending his rivals, Cassidy finished third in the primary, falling short of even making a runoff. The outcome was the latest and perhaps most spectacular failure by a Republican who tried to cross Trump and get away with it.

Even within a party notorious for its political contortions during the Trump era, Cassidy stood out. As a doctor, he overlooked Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s anti-vaccine activism to support his nomination as Trump's health secretary, only inevitably to clash with Kennedy once he took the job.

Cassidy was also unable to repair his relationship with Trump five years after voting to convict him during his impeachment trial over the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. Although Cassidy tried to assure Republican voters that he remained committed to Trump's agenda, that did not satisfy their loyalty to the Republican president.

"He was trying to portray himself side by side with Trump, like he has worked with Trump on this and that," Wandfluh complained. "I'm like, 'You voted to impeach the guy!'"

Trump's endorsed candidate

U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow, endorsed by Trump, and state Treasurer John Fleming, a former Trump administration official, will compete for the Republican nomination on June 27.

"There is no greater endorsement than the endorsement of President Trump," said Letlow, who was first in the voting Saturday. "We'll always be singing that from the mountaintops."

Trump liked what he heard, posting on social media that it was a "great victory speech tonight by Julia!!!" The president stomped on Cassidy's electoral grave, describing the senator as ungrateful for previous support.

"His disloyalty to the man who got him elected is now a part of legend, and it's nice to see that his political career is OVER!" Trump wrote.

U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a South Carolina Republican who feuded with Trump in the past but has since become a model of loyalty to the president, had no sympathy for his vanquished colleague.

"What's the headline? Trump's strong. Those who try to destroy Trump politically, stand in the way of his agenda, are going to lose," Graham said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press." "You can disagree with President Trump, but if you try to destroy him, you're going to lose. Because this is the party of Donald Trump."

Purging the party

Graham once described Trump as a "kook" who was "unfit for office," and he appeared to break with Trump after the Jan. 6 riot by saying "enough is enough." But Graham did not vote to convict Trump during the impeachment trial, unlike Cassidy and six other Republican senators.

Four of them — Richard Burr of North Carolina, Mitt Romney of Utah, Ben Sasse of Nebraska and Pat Toomey of Pennsylvania — did not run for another term afterward.

Alaska's Lisa Murkowski, who remains in office and is a vocal Trump skeptic, won reelection in 2022 when Trump was out of office. There also is Maine's Susan Collins, who has faced Trump's wrath but not

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a primary challenge as she runs for a sixth term in November. As a Republican senator from a state won by Democratic candidate Kamala Harris in the last presidential election, she remains crucial for her party's control of Congress.

Trump's grip on his party is noteworthy given his lame-duck status — he is constitutionally prohibited from running for a third term even though he has mused about it — and his low poll numbers. He is presiding over lingering inflation, economic dissatisfaction and an unpopular war with Iran, yet Republicans remain largely in lockstep with him.

As he approaches the back half of his second term, Trump appears to be finalizing a wholesale makeover of the party that he began a decade ago, and his appetite for retribution does not appear to be waning.

Earlier this month, he successfully dislodged five Indiana state senators who opposed his redistricting plan. On Tuesday, he is backing a challenger to U.S. Rep. Thomas Massie in Kentucky's primary. Massie angered Trump by opposing his signature tax legislation over concerns about the national debt, pushing for the release of the Jeffrey Epstein files and opposing his decision to go to war with Iran.

Over the weekend, Trump suggested that he could next target U.S. Rep. Lauren Boebert of Colorado because of her support for Massie.

"Even though I long ago endorsed Boebert, if the right person came along, it would be my Honor to withdraw that Endorsement, and endorse a good and proper alternative," Trump said, although the filing deadline for Colorado candidates passed months ago.

All about Trump

After his defeat, Cassidy addressed Trump's influence without naming him.

"Our country is not about one individual. It is about the welfare of all Americans, and it is about our Constitution," the senator told supporters in Baton Rouge. "And it is the welfare of my people, and my state, and my country, and our Constitution to which I am loyal."

But Trump's role was central for many Republican voters.

Mark Schulingkamp, who is 46 and works in the shipping industry, said he voted for Letlow precisely to avoid the conflict that has marked Cassidy's relationship with Trump.

"Getting federal dollars into the state is the most important thing to me, to help people with jobs," he said. "Clearly having a senator that the president doesn't like could cause a challenge or impede federal dollars coming to the state for roads, bridges, so many different programs."

Jeanelle Chachere, a 66-year-old nurse, described Cassidy as a "phony" and said she voted for Letlow solely because of Trump's endorsement.

"I'm going by what he says because I like what he does," she said.

In a sign of how Cassidy had backed himself into a political corner, he also lost support in some quarters for going along with Trump's demands.

Mark Workman, a 75-year-old retired physician, said he voted for Fleming to punish Cassidy for backing Kennedy's confirmation.

"If Cassidy had stood up and blocked RFK, I would definitely have supported him because that would have been a strong, ballsy move," Workman said. "He had the ability to stop him and he was too weak to do that."

## What to know about the Ebola outbreak that the WHO has declared a global health emergency

By CHINEDU ASADU Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — The World Health Organization declared Sunday the Ebola disease outbreak in Congo and Uganda a public health emergency of international concern.

Africa's top public health body first confirmed a new Ebola outbreak in Congo's Ituri province on Friday. By Saturday, it had reported 336 suspected cases and 88 deaths. All the cases are in Congo, except for two recorded in neighboring Uganda.

Health authorities say the current outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo virus, a rare variant of the Ebola



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disease that has no approved therapeutics or vaccines, making it much harder to fight.

Although more than 20 Ebola outbreaks have taken place in Congo and Uganda, including 17 in Congo since the disease first emerged in the country in 1976, this is only the third time the Bundibugyo virus has been reported.

Here's what to know about the health crisis:

What does the WHO's emergency declaration mean?

The WHO says the latest Ebola outbreak does not meet the criteria for a pandemic emergency, such as COVID-19, and advises against closing international borders.

Its emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. However, the global response to previous declarations has been mixed.

In 2024, when the WHO declared mpox outbreaks in Congo and elsewhere in Africa a global emergency, experts at the time said it did little to get supplies like diagnostic tests, medicines and vaccines to affected countries quickly.

The outbreak in Congo started in a remote locality

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention said the first cases were reported in Mongwalu health zone, a high-traffic mining area in eastern Congo's Ituri province. Cases there subsequently migrated to Rwampara and Bunia health zones as patients sought medical care, the Africa CDC said, "enabling spread across three health zones."

Those other two zones are Mongwalu and Bunia, the province's capital city.

Ituri is in a remote eastern part of Congo, with poor road networks, and is more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from the nation's capital, Kinshasa.

One major concern, the Africa CDC said, is the proximity of affected areas to Uganda and South Sudan. Bunia, Ituri's main city, is near the border with Uganda.

The agency said there's also a risk of further spread due to intense population movement and attacks by armed groups that have killed dozens and displaced thousands in parts of Ituri in the past year.

There are also gaps in contact tracing, Africa CDC said, as local authorities race to find those who might have been exposed to the virus.

An unusual strain

The Bundibugyo virus, which health authorities say is responsible for the outbreak, is rare and different from the Ebola Zaire strain that has been dominant in all of Congo's past 17 outbreaks except one.

The virus was first detected in Uganda's Bundibugyo district during a 2007-2008 outbreak that killed 37 people out of 149 cases. The second time was in 2012 in an outbreak in Isiro, Congo, where 57 cases and 29 deaths were reported.

The World Health Organization says the Ebola disease is caused by a group of viruses, and that three of them are known to cause large outbreaks: Ebola virus, Sudan virus and Bundibugyo virus.

Dr. Gabriel Nsakala, a professor of public health who has been involved in past Ebola outbreak responses in Congo, said treatments for viral infections like Ebola are often directed at symptoms.

He said Congo has extensive experience managing Ebola outbreaks, but response efforts could be complicated by the unusual strain.

Urgent efforts to contain the outbreak

When the outbreak was confirmed on Friday, the Africa CDC convened an urgent high-level coordination meeting with health authorities from Congo, Uganda and South Sudan, together with key partners including U.N. agencies and other countries.

The meeting, the agency said, focused on immediate response priorities, cross-border coordination, surveillance, safe and dignified burials and resource mobilization, among other areas.

On Saturday, Africa CDC Director-General Dr. Jean Kaseya said several key response measures have been put in place to address the outbreak, including mobilization of resources from partners, deployment of multidisciplinary teams at official and nonofficial border crossing points, isolation of high-risk contacts, enhancement of surveillance, and contact listing and follow-up.

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Possible logistical challenges in Congo

Congo is Africa's second-largest country by land area and often faces logistical challenges in responding to disease outbreaks due to bad roads and long distances.

During last year's three-month outbreak, the WHO initially faced significant challenges in providing vaccines, with delivery taking a week after the outbreak was confirmed.

Funding has also been problematic.

WHO said Friday that it has released \$500,000 to support the response to the Ebola outbreak. Africa CDC also said Saturday that it has mobilized \$2 million, but added that it's only a small fraction of the urgently needed funds.

During last year's outbreak, health officials were concerned about the impact of U.S. funding cuts by the Trump administration.

The U.S. had supported responses to Congo's past Ebola outbreaks, including in 2021, when the U.S. Agency for International Development provided up to \$11.5 million to support efforts across Africa.

How Ebola is transmitted

The Ebola virus is highly contagious and can be transmitted to people from wild animals. It then spreads in the human population through contact with bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen, and with surfaces and materials such as bedding and clothing contaminated with these fluids.

The disease it causes is a rare but severe and often fatal illness in people. Symptoms include fever, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain and at times internal and external bleeding.

The virus was first discovered in 1976, near the Ebola River in what is now Congo. The first outbreaks occurred in remote villages in Central Africa, near tropical rainforests.

## Ukraine conducts large-scale drone strikes on Russia, killing 4 and wounding a dozen others

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — One of Ukraine's largest drone strikes on Russia killed at least four people, including three near Moscow, and wounded a dozen others, local authorities said Sunday. Debris fell on Russia's largest airport without causing damage.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy confirmed the drone strikes, saying that they were "entirely justified." Russia has repeatedly launched similar attacks on Ukraine's capital and other cities during the war, and an expert said that the strikes appeared to be retaliation for recent Russian attacks on Kyiv.

Russian drone strikes on Ukraine overnight wounded eight people, Ukrainian authorities said.

In Ukraine's strikes on Russia, a woman was killed after a drone hit her home in Khimki, a Russian city just northwest of Moscow, and two men died in the village of Pogorelki, which is 10 kilometers (6 miles) north of the capital, according to local Gov. Andrei Vorobyev.

Ukrainian drones had also damaged unspecified "infrastructure" and several high-rise buildings, Vorobyev said on social media.

One man was also killed after a drone struck a truck in the Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, according to local authorities.

In Moscow itself, at least 12 people were wounded in the nighttime strike, mostly near the entrance to the city's oil refinery, mayor Sergei Sobyenin reported. Sobyenin reported that the "technology" of the refinery hadn't been damaged.

Hours later, the Indian Embassy in Moscow reported that an Indian worker died in a drone strike "in (the) Moscow region," while three other Indian nationals were hospitalized with injuries. It wasn't immediately clear whether the worker was one of the three people reported dead by Moscow region officials, or a further fatality.

Russia's largest airport — Moscow's Sheremetyevo — said that drone debris had fallen on its grounds without causing damage or affecting flights.

Russian defenses shot down 81 drones headed for Moscow overnight, state agency Tass reported, cit-

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ing Sobyenin, marking one of the largest attacks on the city since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022.

Russian air defenses overnight destroyed 556 drones over Russia, the occupied Crimean Peninsula and the Azov and Black Seas, the Russian Defense Ministry said Sunday morning. Shortly after midday local time, it reported that more than 1,000 drones had been shot down or jammed in the previous 24 hours.

Zelenskyy said that the drones had flown more than 500 kilometers (310 miles) from Ukrainian territory, and that Ukraine was "overcoming" Russian air defense systems concentrated in and around the capital.

"Our responses to Russia's prolongation of the war and attacks on our cities and communities are entirely justified. This time, Ukrainian long-distance sanctions have reached the Moscow region, and we are clearly telling the Russians: their state must end its war," Zelenskyy said.

Revenge for Russian attacks, expert says

Nigel Gould Davies, senior fellow for Russia and Eurasia at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a London-based think tank, said that Ukraine's large-scale attack appeared to be "the retaliation or revenge that President Zelenskyy promised after the fierce attacks that Russia carried out on Kyiv."

Those strikes came immediately after the end of a brief ceasefire that allowed Russia to hold its annual Victory Day parade on May 9 commemorating the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany during World War II.

Russia and Ukraine accused each other of repeatedly violating the pause in hostilities.

"It brings home the fact Ukraine has the capacity to strike at very significant scale at or around the Russian capital," taking the war home to Russians in a way that would be "most unwelcome" to the Kremlin, Gould Davies told The Associated Press.

"There is no ongoing peace process to disrupt. What (the attack) is more likely to do is add to the darkening cloud of anxiety over Russia which has developed palpably over the last three or four months," he said.

He cited a combination of factors, including Russia's recent battlefield setbacks, a deteriorating economic situation at home, and the Kremlin's intensifying crackdown on the internet, including in Moscow and Russia's second-largest city, St. Petersburg.

"The fact that Ukraine is reminding the Moscow population that it is vulnerable to these attacks is likely to intensify the mix of concerns now," Gould Davies said. "I see no prospect though, in the shorter term, that even these factors together will induce Russia to consider the compromises that will be necessary for peace negotiations."

Ukrainian drones are also flying deep into Russia to strike oil facilities, sending up plumes of smoke that can be seen from space and bringing toxic rain to tourist destinations on the Black Sea. The attacks are aimed at slashing Moscow's oil exports, a key source of funding for Russia's grinding invasion of Ukraine.

While their the economic impact is so far unclear — as the rise in oil prices from the Iran war, and a related easing of U.S. sanctions, have helped replenish the Kremlin's coffers — the range of the strikes and their environmental impact is bringing the war home to ordinary Russians far from the front lines.

8 wounded in Russian drone strikes on Ukraine

Russia attacked Ukraine with 287 drones overnight into Sunday, 279 of which were shot down or jammed, the Ukrainian air force reported.

The strikes wounded 8 people in Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region: three in the regional capital of Dnipro, four in President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's hometown of Kryvyi Rih, and one in the district of Synelkove, Ukraine's state emergency service said.

Residential buildings were damaged in all three locations, the service said.

## Trump administration promotes program to check voter eligibility. Critics fear a midterm purge

By JOHN HANNA Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Even as Democratic officials fight the effort in court, the Trump administration has run millions of voter registrations through government databases to determine their eligibility in a process that critics worry could end up purging valid voters from the rolls before the November elections.

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At least 67 million registrations, primarily from Republican-controlled states, have gone through a beefed-up verification program at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and tens of thousands of those have been flagged as potential noncitizens or people who have died. Some states allow only a month for people to prove their eligibility and others suspend it immediately.

The scanning of state voter rolls at the national level is part of a broader effort by Republican President Donald Trump to federalize certain election functions and promote his messaging that elections are marred by noncitizen voting, even though instances of that are rare. Voting and civil rights advocates say the DHS system is error-prone and can mistakenly flag people who are eligible to vote.

"If a voter is wrongly removed, by the time they learn about it and correct it, they may miss their opportunity to vote in that election," said Freda Levenson, a lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio. The group is challenging an Ohio law requiring monthly checks with the DHS system.

Voters such as 29-year-old Anthony Nel have been caught in the middle.

The native of South Africa, who became a citizen more than a decade ago, was flagged as a potential noncitizen when Texas ran its voter file through the DHS verification system. Nel's local election office in Denton, north of Dallas, temporarily canceled his registration last fall while he was waiting for a new passport to replace an expired one.

"I'm like, 'You should know that I'm a citizen, that the passport exists,'" he said in an interview.

States' entire voter rolls reviewed

Trump has been trying to overhaul U.S. elections, including calling for a federal list of verified voters, and his Department of Justice has pushed states to hand over unredacted voter information for mass checks through the DHS program known as SAVE.

The Justice Department has sued states that refuse, saying the government is trying to ensure that they are complying with federal law and have accurate voter lists. States already take a number of steps to maintain the accuracy of their voter rolls.

SAVE, short for Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements, was created under an immigration law mandating that DHS help federal, state and local agencies prevent government benefits from going to non-citizens. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, an arm of DHS, said more than 1,300 agencies use it.

At least 25 states have used SAVE to check their voter rolls since April 2025, after the Trump administration significantly expanded its search abilities, and 60 million registrations were checked in a year's time, according to Citizenship and Immigration Services. That figure does not include an additional 7.4 million registrations from North Carolina, where Republicans control the state election board, that were recently run through the system.

Citizenship and Immigration Services said in an emailed statement that it is "committed to helping eliminate voter fraud" to restore Americans' trust in their elections.

"SAVE is one of the most important tools states have to verify voter information," Kansas Secretary of State Scott Schwab, a Republican, recently told a U.S. House committee examining how states keep voter rolls clean.

Schwab's endorsement is notable because he once was publicly skeptical that noncitizens represented a significant voter fraud threat.

Republicans cite hits from SAVE searches

Citizenship and Immigration Services said the 60 million voter registration checks identified about 24,000 potential noncitizens. U.S. Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon, who runs the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, said during a recent Fox News interview that those checks also identified about 350,000 people who appear to have died.

North Carolina's State Board of Elections said its check had identified another 34,000 registered voters who are potentially deceased.

Even if all those eventually were verified as ineligible, they would represent small percentages of total registered voters. The figure for noncitizens would be about 400 for every 1 million registrations. Some 384,000 people identified as potentially deceased in about 67 million registrations is a fraction of 1%.

Some voters have been mistakenly flagged.



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In Dallas, election officials recently canceled the registration of Domingo Garcia, a 68-year-old lawyer and voting rights activist, without explanation. He has been voting regularly for 50 years, most recently in the state's March 3 primary, and suspects that officials concluded he was deceased.

"I should not have been on any lists," he said.

False positives are popping up

Voting rights advocates have filed at least six federal lawsuits over SAVE checks, either against the Trump administration or states using the program.

Nel, a 29-year-old college administrator, is a plaintiff in one of them, filed recently in the District of Columbia against the Justice Department. It alleges an "illegal and unprecedented quest" by the administration for "millions of Americans' confidential voter data."

Lawyers also argue that eligible voters will be disenfranchised by hits from outdated or incomplete data.

Nel came to the United States from South Africa with his parents at age 8. His parents became citizens when he was 16, making him a citizen, as well. He said he has voted regularly since he was 18.

Yet he received a letter in October in a white envelope that looked to him like junk mail. It told him he had been identified as a potential noncitizen through a SAVE check of Texas' 18 million voter registrations. He had 30 days to prove otherwise — a deadline he missed because of the time it took to get a new passport.

"It's clear that this process that they've put into place for this doesn't work," he said.

Defenders say the SAVE system is a first step

Republican officials said the administration does not portray SAVE searches as foolproof. Instead, it identifies registrations that should be further investigated, they said.

In Kansas, Schwab's office is still investigating its list of flagged registrations and has yet to disclose the number of hits of potentially ineligible voters from a SAVE check of the state's 2 million registrations.

Once his office forwards flagged names to county officials, a state law enacted this year requires them to list the registrations as "in suspense" or "pending" until the cases are resolved. A flagged person still can vote, but the ballot is set aside for further review and might not be counted.

Texas is supposed to give people with flagged registrations 30 days to prove they are properly registered. North Carolina will require county elections boards to give people whose registrations are challenged a hearing before they can be canceled.

A new Ohio law requires local election boards to "promptly" cancel the registrations of people whom the secretary of state identifies as noncitizens during registration checks that the official is required to make at least monthly.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose, a Republican, said in an email that people's voting rights are not in danger because "all they need to do to immediately restore their registration status is show proof of citizenship."

But Levenson, the ACLU lawyer, described the approach differently.

"Shoot first and ask questions later," she said.

## Researchers stunned by a forgotten medieval book in Rome hiding the oldest English poem

By ANDREA ROSA Associated Press

ROME (AP) — The researchers in Ireland looked at their computer screen, marveling at a medieval book tracked down in a Roman library. They flipped through its digitized pages and found their sought-after treasure: the oldest surviving English poem.

"We were extremely surprised. We were speechless. We couldn't believe our eyes when we first saw that," Elisabetta Magnanti, a visiting research fellow at Trinity College Dublin's school of English, told The Associated Press.

What's more, she said, the poem was within the main body of Latin text: "It was extraordinary."

Composed in Old English by a Northumbrian agricultural worker in the 7th century, "Caedmon's Hymn" appears within some copies of the "Ecclesiastical History of the English People," written in Latin by a monk

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and saint known as the Venerable Bede. His history is one of the most widely reproduced texts from the Middle Ages, with almost 200 manuscripts, according to Magnanti's colleague Mark Faulkner, an associate professor of medieval literature at Trinity.

He considers Caedmon's poem to be the start of English literature.

The manuscript he and Magnanti found is one of the oldest, dating from the 9th century. Two earlier copies contain the poem in Old English, but as afterthoughts — translated from Latin and scrawled into the margin or appended but not within the text's main body, according to the researchers.

The discovery sheds light on the English language's wide diffusion, long before what was previously understood, Faulkner said in Rome, where the duo had traveled to view the text in person for the first time.

"Prior to the discovery of the Rome manuscript, the earliest one was from the early 12th century. So this is three centuries earlier than that. And so it attests to the importance that was already being attached to the English in the early 9th century," Faulkner said.

And it's something of a miracle they uncovered it at all.

The book had a long and twisted provenance

Caedmon is said to have composed the poem while working at Whitby Abbey in North Yorkshire, after guests at a feast began reciting poems, Faulkner said.

"Embarrassed that he didn't know anything suitable, Caedmon left the feast and went to bed," he said. "A figure then appeared to him in his dreams telling him to sing about creation, which Caedmon miraculously did, producing the nine-line hymn."

Some 1,400 years later, this copy of his poem resurfaced in Rome's main public library — but not before crossing the Atlantic Ocean at least twice and changing hands even more times.

Monks transcribed this copy of Bede's history in the scriptorium of the Benedictine abbey of Nonantola, one of the most important transcription centers during the Middle Ages, located near modern-day Modena in northern Italy, according to Valentina Longo, curator of medieval and modern manuscripts at Rome's National Central Library.

In the 17th century, as the abbey's importance declined, its vast collection of manuscripts was shifted to another abbey in Rome, then moved to the Vatican and finally on to a small church.

Along the way, some of the texts went missing, only to emerge in the early 19th century in the possession of famous international collectors, Longo said.

This copy of Bede's history went to renowned English antiquarian Thomas Phillipps. He fell on hard times, selling off bits and pieces of his collection, and Swiss bibliophile Martin Bodmer secured the book. From there, somehow, it arrived in New York City, in the trove of Austrian-born rare bookseller H.P. Kraus during the 20th century.

Italy's culture ministry was scouring the world for the Nonantola abbey's missing manuscripts, snapping them up in auctions and from collectors around the world. It bought the copy of Bede's history from Kraus in 1972, Longo said, and since then the illustrious text has remained in Rome's library — but received scant notice.

Enter Magnanti, who had spent over four years studying Bede's history and was compiling a catalog of extant copies.

"I knew that the book was listed in the library's catalog, so I was almost certain that the book was, in fact, still here," she said. "I realized that, because of the very complex history of this book, no Bede scholar had really looked at it. So it had been virtually unstudied."

She emailed the library, which confirmed the book was in its stacks. Three months later, she received digital images of the entire manuscript.

The text of the poem in Old English

Nupue. sciulun. herga. hefunricaes. puard. metudaes. maechti. and his.

mod geðanc. puerc. puldur. fadur. suæhepundragiaes

ecidrichtin or astalde. he aeristscoop eor dubearnū hefento

hrofe halig. sceppend. ða. middū. geard. moncinnes peard eci

drichtin. aefter. tia de. firū. on foldu. frea. allmechtig.

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The text of the poem translated into modern English  
Now we must praise the guardian of the heavenly kingdom,  
the might of the creator and his intention,  
the work of the father of glory, in that he of each wonder,  
eternal lord, established the beginning.

He first created the earth for men,  
heaven as a roof, the holy creator,  
then the middle earth, the guardian of mankind,  
the eternal lord, afterwards created  
for men on earth, the almighty lord.

The library is making more rare books available

The library has digitized the entire Nonantolan collection and it is freely accessible through the website, Longo said.

It's part of a massive project by the library to make thousands of rare books and manuscripts available to researchers around the world, according to Andrea Cappa, the library's head of manuscripts and the rare books reading room.

"The discovery made by the experts of Trinity College is just one starting point, a single manuscript that might pave the way for countless other discoveries, in countless other fields, through international cooperation like this," Cappa said.

## **US-Mexico border wall construction is desecrating sacred sites, Indigenous leaders say**

By JULIE WATSON and MORGAN LEE Associated Press

TECATE, Mexico (AP) — White sage burning, Norma Meza Calles gathers guests at a Mexican wellness resort into a semicircle facing Kuuchamaa Mountain and asks everyone to close their eyes and feel its presence.

"This is sacred to us like a church for you all. The mountain is our healer, our psychologist," said Meza Calles, a Kumeyaay Nation tribal leader who explains that in its creation story a shaman transformed into the mountain. "Here is where we gather strength to live in this difficult world."

Then she calls for a moment of reflection. But the silence is pierced by the crushing of rock. U.S. federal contractors have been blasting and bulldozing Kuuchamaa, which straddles both countries, to make way for new sections of wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Indigenous leaders say that in the Trump administration's rush to build border walls, contractors are desecrating Native American sacred places and cultural sites at an unprecedented pace, more than 170 years after the international boundary split the territories of dozens of tribes.

Federal crews set off blasts on sacred mountain

Barrier construction has ramped up along the 1,954-mile (3,145-kilometer) border even as illegal crossings have plummeted to historic lows. Much of it began this year after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security waived cultural and environmental laws.

In California, explosions on Kuuchamaa send rocks hurtling down its Mexico side.

"We feel that in our DNA," said Emily Burgueno, a California member of the Kumeyaay Nation, adding that "body" and "land" are the same word in the Kumeyaay language. Some tribal leaders met with DHS officials to urge them to protect Kuuchamaa and are looking into legal action.

"No one ever consented or supported the use of dynamite on the mountain," Burgueno said.

The nation consists of more than a dozen tribes in California and Mexico's Baja California.

In Arizona, DHS contractors last month carved through a massive 1,000-year-old fish-shaped geoglyph called "Las Playas Intaglio." The rare drawing, etched into the desert floor much like Peru's Nazca Lines, was created on a lava field in what is now the Cabeza Prieta National Wildlife Refuge.

The Tohono O'odham Nation said it had pointed out the site on its ancestral land for contractors to avoid.

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"This was a devastating and entirely avoidable loss," Tohono O'odham Chairman Verlon Jose said in an April 30 statement. "There is nothing more important than our history, which is what makes us who we are as O'odham. The site was also an irreplaceable piece of the United States' history, one none of us can ever get back."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a statement that a contractor "inadvertently disturbed" the site west of Ajo, Arizona, on April 23, but it vowed to protect the remaining portion. CBP Commissioner Rodney Scott is talking to tribal leaders to determine next steps.

Members of the Inter-Tribal Association of Arizona, which represents 21 tribes, traveled to Washington last month to lobby against a 20-foot (6-meter) secondary wall being built along that section of the border, as well as a primary 30-foot (9-meter) bollard wall planned on Tohono O'odham tribal lands. They met with Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin, a Cherokee Nation member, who listened but made clear his intent is to build more border walls as fast as possible, the Tohono O'odham Nation said in a statement.

Hundreds of miles are under contract

The Trump administration says the barriers are necessary to keep people and drugs from entering the U.S. illegally. It wants walls to cover at least 1,400 miles (2,250 kilometers) of the border.

Trump's "big, beautiful bill" devoted over \$46 billion to the effort.

CBP has awarded contracts or begun construction on over 600 miles (966 kilometers) of new border wall, with companion surveillance technology. A double wall is planned or under construction along another 370 miles (596 kilometers).

In Arizona, where the Patagonia Mountains descend to the border, heavy machinery crawls along freshly graded roads to extend a double wall that could block a wildlife corridor for endangered ocelots and jaguars. Jaguars have long coexisted with the Tohono O'odham, who consider the species "spiritual guardians," Austin Nunez, a tribal leader, said in a 2025 lawsuit that unsuccessfully challenged the DHS waivers.

In Sunland Park, on New Mexico's border with Mexico, crews this year set off blasts on Mount Cristo Rey, a pilgrimage site topped with a limestone crucifix.

CBP is seeking to seize a strip of the mountain owned by the Roman Catholic Church for wall construction. The Diocese of Las Cruces asked a judge this month to deny the land transfer as an affront to religious liberties and the "faithful who seek to commune with God on Mount Cristo Rey."

In western Texas, the federal government in February notified ranchers on the Rio Grande east of Big Bend National Park of its interest in their land that contains canyonland pictographs and petroglyphs, said Raymond Skiles, a retired Big Bend National Park ranger.

"There are pictographs, paintings of shaman figures and various things that we don't know how to interpret," said Skiles, describing the drawings on his family's ranchlands.

After community backlash, CBP's online planning map showed the 30-foot-wall plans were scrapped for surveillance technology, patrols and some vehicle barriers. A segment in the national park and neighboring Big Bend Ranch State Park would rely on technology alone.

CBP says it recognizes the importance of natural and cultural resources and is working to minimize the construction's impact, including leaving drainage gates open in wildlife corridors for animal passage. Illegal border crossings have littered, polluted and trampled sensitive habitat, the agency says.

CBP also says 535 miles (860 kilometers) of remote, rugged border terrain will solely rely on detection technology.

Many tribes would prefer that to walls.

Desecrating Native American sites is a felony

Tribes along the border "are all experiencing the same tragic desecration of our cultural and sacred sites," said Burgueno, chair of the Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy, a nonprofit organization in California that works to protect Kumeyaay lands. "This is a great example of the federal government not following federal laws."

Desecrating a sacred Native American site on U.S. federal or tribal land is a felony, punishable by imprisonment and fines. In 1992, the National Park Service listed Kuuchamaa Mountain, also called Tecate



Peak, in the National Register of Historic Places, giving it limited protection. It noted that "discarding or disturbing the mountain's natural state would be sacrilegious."

Rising 3,885 feet (1,184 meters) above sea level, Kuuchamaa has also captivated non-Native people.

Sarah Livia Brightwood Szekely said her father, Edmond Szekely, felt the mountain's healing energy when he arrived in Tecate, Mexico, as a Hungarian Jewish refugee during World War II, and started the renowned wellness resort, Rancho La Puerta, which she now runs.

"There are all of these people that have a deep relationship with the mountain," she said.

Meza Calles leads walks at Rancho La Puerta to teach guests about Kuuchamaa.

Traditionally, young men would spend 40 days at its base in a coming-of-age ceremony before becoming warriors or shamans, she said. Today's rituals are shorter. People suffering from a death, debt, divorce or other difficulty seek Kuuchamaa's healing, she said.

"It's sad they are ruining the mountain," she said. "We'll see how far they go. Destiny is destiny. But the fight is not over."

## **Xabi Alonso hired by Chelsea on 4-year deal in return to coaching after Real Madrid disappointment**

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

Chelsea hired Xabi Alonso as manager on Sunday on a four-year deal starting next season, with the Spaniard returning to coaching after a short, rocky spell at Real Madrid and tasked with bringing stability to a club that has become dysfunctional under its American ownership.

Alonso will formally take charge on July 1 as the replacement for Liam Rosenior, who was fired last month, and will become the fifth permanent coach appointed by Chelsea owners Todd Boehly and Clearlake Capital since they bought the Premier League team in 2022.

Alonso lasted eight months at Madrid before leaving the Spanish giants by mutual consent in January after poor results and widespread media reports that he lost control of a locker room wracked by infighting and disharmony this season.

Before that, the former Spain midfielder had built a strong reputation at Bayer Leverkusen, which he led to the German title and an unbeaten domestic campaign in the 2023-24 season, and Chelsea described Alonso as "one of the most respected figures in the modern game."

"From my conversations with the ownership group and sporting leadership, it is clear we share the same ambition," Alonso said in a Chelsea statement. "We want to build a team capable of competing consistently at the highest level and fighting for trophies."

Without a domestic trophy for eight years, Chelsea was European champion as recently as 2021 and won the Club World Cup against most pundits' expectations last summer.

However, Chelsea looks highly unlikely to be in next season's Champions League and might miss out on European competition entirely after a huge dip in form in the second half of the campaign. The club was guaranteed a trophyless season by losing to Manchester City in the FA Cup final on Saturday.

"There is great talent in the squad and huge potential at this football club and it will be my great honor to lead it," Alonso said. "Now the focus is on hard work, building the right culture and winning trophies."

Storm clouds are hovering over Chelsea

After an unseemly end to Rosenior's turbulent tenure, Chelsea's ownership said it would be undertaking "a process of self-reflection" ahead of its next coaching appointment, amid growing tension among supporters about the direction of the club and its massive financial concerns following years of heavy spending.

In the four years under Boehly and Clearlake, around \$2.5 billion has been spent on new, mostly young and unproven players on long contracts while the club has taken on a debt approaching \$2 billion, according to figures compiled by The Athletic.

Chelsea's most recent financial results revealed the club made pre-tax losses of \$350 million, a record in the Premier League era.

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It's with this backdrop that Alonso — who has long been linked with a potential move to Liverpool, another of his former teams — heads to Chelsea, which he described as "one of the biggest clubs in world football."

"His appointment," Chelsea said, "reflects the club's belief in his broad set of experiences, coaching quality and game model, leadership attributes, character and integrity, which were key to the decision to ask him to help lead the next phase of Chelsea's journey."

"He is regarded not only as an outstanding football coach, but also as a proven leader and partner across a number of areas essential to the demands of driving the team."

McFarlane remains in temporary charge

Chelsea has two games left this season — against Tottenham and Sunderland in the Premier League — for which interim coach Calum McFarlane will stay in charge.

## On the voting rights trail, bus riders to Montgomery retrace old steps while fighting a new fight

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — In 1965, Black Americans peacefully demonstrated for voting rights and were beaten by Alabama state troopers before returning two weeks later to complete their march under federal protection. Keith Odom was a toddler then.

Now 62 years old, the union man and grandfather of three retraced some of their final steps. On Saturday, he came from Aiken, South Carolina, to Atlanta, where he joined several dozen other activists on two buses to Montgomery, Alabama. A few hours later, he stepped off his bus and onto Dexter Avenue, where the original march concluded.

"The history here — being a part of it, seeing it, feeling it," said Odom, who is Black.

His voice trailed off as he saw the Alabama Capitol and a stage that sat roughly where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. concluded the original march.

Odom lamented that he and his fellow bus riders were not simply commemorating that seminal day in the Civil Rights Movement. Instead they came to renew the fight. The 1965 effort helped push Congress to send the Voting Rights Act to Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson to sign, securing and expanding political power for Black and other nonwhite voters for more than a half-century.

Saturday's "All Roads Lead to the South" rally was the first mass organizing response after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that severely diminished that landmark law. Striking down a majority Black congressional district in Louisiana, the justices concluded in a 6-3 ruling that considering race when drawing political lines is in itself discriminatory. That spurred multiple states, including Alabama, to redraw U.S. House districts in ways that make it harder for Black voters, who lean overwhelmingly Democratic, to elect lawmakers of their choice.

"I'm not trying to live a life that's going backwards," Odom said. "I want to go forward, for my grandchildren to be able to go forward."

An old political battle is new again

The passenger rosters and the scene when riders arrived in Montgomery sounded the echoes and rhymes of past and present.

"I talked to my grandmother before I came, and she was so excited," said Justice Washington, a Kennesaw State University student named because her mother and grandmother had faith in the American system. "My grandmother told me she did her part, and now it's time for me to do mine."

No one on the Atlanta buses had reached voting age when the Voting Rights Act became law. The youngest attendee was born as Democrat Barack Obama was elected the first Black president in 2008.

Kobe Chernushin is 18, white and just graduated high school in Atlanta's northern suburbs. He is an organizer with the Georgia Youth Justice Coalition and spent the day filming Khayla Doby, a 29-year-old executive for the organization, doing standups for the group's followers on social media.

"I believe in the power of showing up," he said.

The buses launched from the congressional district in Georgia once represented by John Lewis, bloodied

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on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Alabama, when he was 25. Lewis died in 2020, but some on the buses Saturday celebrated that a proposed federal election overhaul is named for him. If some Democrats get their way, the bill would override the U.S. Supreme Court, reinvigorate the Voting Rights Act and outlaw the kind of gerrymandering competition that Republican President Donald Trump has instigated.

"I'm here because of the same forces that pulled on John Lewis when he was a student," said Darrin Owens, 27. He has worked for former Vice President Kamala Harris and now trains Democratic candidates.

"Political activism is personal," Owens said, explaining that he attended Saturday as a citizen, not a political professional. "Sometimes those lines are blurred, and as a Black person in America, a Black person living in a Southern state, I'm committed to action that stops what I consider to be un-American, this possibility that the person who represents me is someone who is not from my community and does not understand me or my community."

When he arrived, Owens saw no federal authorities on Montgomery's streets. A wounded, recovering Lewis did during the second march in 1965.

This time many of the Alabama troopers and local officers who walked the area were Black.

The buses and sandwich lunches had been arranged by Fair Fight Action, a legacy of the political network built by Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, who became a national figure in her unsuccessful runs in 2018 and 2022 to become the first Black woman elected governor in U.S. history. No Black woman has yet achieved that feat.

Different generations share their stories

At different points, Montgomery has branded itself as the cradle of the Confederacy and the cradle of the modern Civil Rights Movement.

"It feels like our country is stuck in this pattern of making progress, then there's a huge backlash, and then people have to go through the same battle again just to get to where we were," said Phi Nguyen, the 41-year-old daughter of Vietnamese refugees. She is now a civil rights lawyer in Atlanta.

She stood across from the church where a young King led the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955 and not far from where Jefferson Davis took the oath of office in 1861 as the slavery-defending Confederate president.

Nguyen and her sister Bee, a 44-year-old who served in the Georgia General Assembly and ran for state-wide office, met two other women as they walked. Carole Burton and Tondalaine Ashford are 72-year-old Montgomery residents who have been friends since they were in a segregated junior high school and then newly desegregated Sidney Lanier High School.

"I don't call it 'integration,'" Ashford said, pointing at her dark skin. "It was never real integration, and it's not like we can ever just blend in."

Burton described them as being "in the second wave" of Black students. "It wasn't easy," she said. "And we had to support each other."

They remember their parents not being able to vote in the era of poll taxes, literacy tests and other racist restrictions that the Voting Rights Act eventually outlawed. But they smiled as they swapped family histories with the Nguyens.

Burton said immigrants, descendants of enslaved persons and Native Americans have different but overlapping paths. "We just want to be treated like people with the same rights and opportunities the country has promised us," she said. "They've never fully lived up to it."

Conflicting legacies are at stake

To Odom, who had begun his journey Saturday in South Carolina, the current U.S. Supreme Court reinforced that history by refusing to see some race-conscious election policy as a way to ensure fair representation, not simply the "technical right to vote."

He recalls decades of his life being represented by Strom Thurmond, a segregationist Democratic governor who became a "Dixiecrat" presidential candidate and U.S. senator — by now as a Republican — into the 21st century. Odom said he fears his state losing U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, a senior member of the Congressional Black Caucus, through redistricting.

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"They want to take away that legacy when we're still living with Strom's?" Odom said.

Odom said he is also worried that the young people who participated Saturday are not a vanguard but outliers.

"I was talking to a 20-year-old co-worker about this trip," he said. "She told me she supported me but didn't want to do it or work for anybody" running for office. "She wondered what any of them are going to do for her."

Nonetheless, he said on the way home, "I'm still going to tell her what I saw and what I heard."

## North America's largest commuter rail system remains shut a second day as Monday rush hour looms

By PHILIP MARCELO and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The shutdown of the Long Island Rail Road, North America's largest commuter rail system, continued into a second day on Sunday after unionized workers went on strike for the first time in three decades a day earlier.

The railroad, which serves New York City and its eastern suburbs, ceased operations just after midnight Friday after five unions representing about half its workforce walked off the job.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, who has urged commuters to work from home, planned a news conference for late Sunday morning.

The unions and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the public agency that runs the railroad, have been negotiating for months on a new contract, with talks stalled over the question of workers' salaries and healthcare premiums. President Donald Trump's administration tried to broker a deal, but the unions were legally allowed to strike starting at 12:01 a.m. Saturday.

Kevin Sexton, national vice president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen, has said no new negotiations have been scheduled.

"We're far apart at this point," Sexton said early Saturday. "We are truly sorry that we are in this situation."

MTA Chairman Janno Lieber said the agency "gave the union everything they said they wanted in terms of pay" and that to him it was apparent the unions always intended to walk out.

The MTA was not expected to provide an update on the strike before the governor's news conference, which was scheduled for 11 a.m.

First LIRR walkout since 1994

The walkout, the first for the LIRR since a two-day strike in 1994, promises to cause headaches for sports fans planning to see the Yankees and Mets battle this weekend or to watch the Knicks' playoff run at Madison Square Garden, which is located directly above the railroad's Penn Station hub in Manhattan.

The station was devoid of its usual weekend bustle in the afternoon Saturday. Only a few dozen people were seen traversing the main concourse, many dragging rolling luggage from departing or arriving Amtrak trains, which are not affected by the strike.

Departure boards normally showing upcoming trains by destination instead listed ghost trains marked "No Passengers." A few signs affixed to customer service windows explained that the railroad was shut down because of a strike.

Access to platforms was blocked off with bicycle-rack style barricades and roll-down gates as MTA police officers stood sentry, directing people to alternative transportation.

Shutdown could severely disrupt weekday commuting

If the stoppage continues into the workweek, the roughly 250,000 people who ride the system each weekday will be forced to find other routes to the city from its Long Island suburbs. For many that likely means navigating the region's notoriously congested roads.

Hochul, a Democrat, blamed the Trump administration for cutting mediation short and pushing the negotiations toward a strike. Trump, a Republican, responded on his Truth Social platform, saying he had nothing to do with the strike and "never even heard about it until this morning."

"No, Kathy, it's your fault, and now looking over the facts, you should not have allowed this to happen,"



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Trump said, renewing his endorsement of Long Island politician Bruce Blakeman, who is challenging Hochul's reelection bid. "If you can't solve it, let me know, and I'll show you how to properly get things done."

The MTA has said it would provide limited shuttle buses to New York City subway stations, but that contingency plan was not envisioned to handle all the riders the system normally carries on a workday.

And while remote work options greatly expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic, many people still need to show up in person, said Lisa Daglian, executive director of the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA, a commuter advocacy group.

"You work in construction, you work in the healthcare industry, you work at a school or you're about to graduate from school, that's not always possible," she said. "People need to get where they need to go."

Dave Sumner, a locomotive engineer of 32 years, said he anticipates that Trump or Congress will step in before the strike goes on much longer.

"We're pretty vital to this area," he said.

The MTA has said the unions' initial demands to raise salaries would have led to fare increases and impacted contract negotiations with other unionized workers.

The unions, which represent locomotive engineers, machinists, signalmen and other train workers, have said more substantial raises were warranted to help workers keep up with inflation and rising living costs.

Duane O'Connor, who picketed Saturday morning at Penn Station, said that while he regrets the impact on commuters, workers are simply asking for fair pay.

"I feel terrible. Terrible. This is going to hurt. This is going to hurt the island, this is going to hurt the city. ... All we are asking for is fair wages," he said.

"We're pretty much three years without a contract," said Karl Bischoff, a locomotive engineer with LIRR for 29 years. "If they did their contracts for their construction stuff like that, this place would be in worse condition."

If the unions get the pay increases they are looking for, "it will come at the expense of our riders who will see next year's 4% fare increase doubled to 8%," Gerard Bringmann, chair of the rider advocacy group LIRR Commuter Council, said in a statement. "Like the union workers, we too are burdened by the increase in the cost of living here on Long Island."

With Hochul running for reelection, the pressure might be on the MTA to strike a deal to end the shutdown, said William Dwyer, a labor relations expert at Rutgers University in New Jersey, where commuter rail workers staged a three-day strike last year.

"She's up for reelection, and Long Island is a critical vote for her," Dwyer said. "So if there's a significant fare hike, that does not bode well for her on Election Day."

## **Today in History: May 18, Mount St. Helens erupts**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, May 18, the 138th day of 2026. There are 227 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On May 18, 1980, the Mount St. Helens volcano in Washington state erupted, leaving an estimated 57 people dead or missing.

Also on this date:

In 1863, the Siege of Vicksburg began during the Civil War, ending on July 4 with a Union victory that gave its forces control of the Mississippi River.

In 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, endorsed "separate but equal" racial segregation. (The decision was reversed in 1954 by *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*.)

In 1927, in America's deadliest school attack, part of a schoolhouse in Bath Township, Michigan, was blown up with explosives planted by local farmer Andrew Kehoe, who then set off a bomb in his truck; the attacks killed 38 children and six adults, including Kehoe, who'd earlier killed his wife. (Authorities said Kehoe was seeking revenge for losing a township clerk election.)

In 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure creating the Tennessee Valley Authority, the

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largest public utility in America.

In 1973, Harvard law professor Archibald Cox was appointed Watergate special prosecutor by U.S. Attorney General Elliot Richardson.

In 1981, the New York Native, a biweekly newspaper directed toward gay men and lesbians, carried a story informing of "an exotic new disease" among LGBTQ+ people; it was the first published report about what came to be known as AIDS.

In 1998, the U.S. government filed an antitrust case against Microsoft, saying the powerful software company had a "choke hold" on competitors that was denying consumers important choices about how they bought and used computers. (The Justice Department and Microsoft reached a settlement in 2001.)

In 2018, a 17-year-old armed with a shotgun and a pistol opened fire at a Houston-area high school, killing eight students and two teachers.

In 2018, a Boeing 737 chartered by Cuba's national airline from a Mexican company crashed a short distance from Havana's Jose Marti Airport, killing all but one of 113 people on board. Cuban aviation officials later said errors in calculating the weight and balance of the plane led the crew to lose control of the aircraft during takeoff.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Reggie Jackson is 80. Musician Rick Wakeman (Yes) is 77. Musician-composer Mark Mothersbaugh (Devo) is 76. Country musician George Strait is 74. Actor Chow Yun-Fat is 71. Hockey Hall of Famer Jari Kurri is 66. Tennis Hall of Famer Yannick Noah is 66. Comedian-writer Tina Fey is 56. Rock singer Jack Johnson is 51. Figure skater Alina Zagitova is 24. Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter is 23. Actor Hala Finley is 17.