

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, June 1

Senior Menu: BBQ Chicken breast, au gratin potatoes, coleslaw, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.  
State Golf Meet in Sioux Falls  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Jr. Legion hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m.  
U12 Baseball hosts Roslyn, DH, 5:30 p.m., Falk Field  
T-Ball Practice, 6 p.m., Nelson Field

## Tuesday, June 2

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, mixed vegetables, fruit, breadstick.  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena  
GBB Open Gym, 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., GHS Gym  
State Golf Meet in Sioux Falls  
JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Arena  
U14 Legion at Britton, 5:30 p.m.  
Sr. Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m.  
U10 Baseball hosts Columbia, DH, 5:30 p.m. (R&B)  
U8 Baseball host Columbia, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red)

## Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

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

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FOCUS. COMMIT. BELIEVE.

*You've got this!*



ONE TEAM. ONE GOAL.  
STATE BOUND.



## Wednesday, June 3

Senior Menu: Hot beef combo, mashed potatoes with gravy, carrots, fruit.  
Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.  
JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Arena  
Jr. Legion at Northville, 4:30 p.m.  
U12 Baseball at Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m., North Complex  
U10 Baseball at Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (B&W), North Complex  
U8 Baseball at Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Blue), North Complex  
U12 Softball hosts Aberdeen, DH, 6 p.m. (B&G)  
U10 Softball hosts Aberdeen, DH, 6 p.m. (B&G)  
U8 Softball Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

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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.**

## Israel Seizes Medieval Castle

Israel has seized control of Beaufort, a medieval castle in Lebanon, several miles from the Israeli border. The capture marks the farthest Israeli soldiers have ventured into the country since their 18-year occupation of southern Lebanon ended in 2000.

The news comes as Israel and Lebanon continue negotiations to end the weekslong hostilities. Lebanon agreed in 2024 to disarm Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed militant group based largely in southern Lebanon. However, violence broke out again between Hezbollah and Israel in March, with Hezbollah launching rockets in response to Israeli attacks on Iran. Israel has since carried out airstrikes and invaded southern Lebanon, killing more than 3,300 people and displacing more than 1.2 million, according to the latest estimates.

The war between Israel and Hezbollah could have implications for the US war with Iran; Iran has said any peace deal with the US must also end the war in Lebanon.

## Spur(s) of the Moment

The San Antonio Spurs will meet the New York Knicks in the NBA Finals (Game 1, Wednesday at 8:30 pm ET, ABC) after upsetting the defending champion Oklahoma City Thunder in Game 7 Saturday night. The Spurs will face the New York Knicks, who are in their first finals since 1999, when they lost to the Tim Duncan-led Spurs.

San Antonio is led by 22-year-old French phenom Victor Wembanyama, widely regarded as the top player of the NBA's next generation. The fluid 7-foot-4 center had 22 points, including going 3-of-5 from the three-point line. The Thunder entered the game shorthanded, with guard Jalen Williams out with a hamstring injury, while 7-foot-1 center Chet Holmgren was held to four points while only taking two shots.

## 'Backrooms' Takes Center Stage

Horror film "Backrooms" is projected to have grossed more than \$81M domestically and \$118M worldwide in its opening weekend. The haul marks the best debut in A24's history.

The movie's concept dates back to a message board on 4chan. In 2019, an anonymous user posted an image of empty, yellow-wallpapered rooms and encouraged others to upload similarly disquieting images. The photo was taken at a former Wisconsin furniture store in the early 2000s. One user characterized the images as "Backrooms," with the concept inspiring a YouTube series by then-16-year-old director Kane Parsons. A24 tapped Parsons to adapt his series into a feature-length film; at age 20, he is the youngest director in the company's history.

A24 began as a film distribution company in 2012 and expanded to production as its films gained accolades and cult followings.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Paris Saint-Germain defeats Arsenal to win the Champions League for the second consecutive year; French police arrest more than 700 people amid violent clashes.

Carolina Hurricanes defeat the Montreal Canadiens to win the NHL Eastern Conference finals; will compete against the Vegas Golden Knights in Game 1 tomorrow at 8 pm ET.

President Donald Trump says he will headline Great American State Fair, set to take place June 24, after several musical acts back out.



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## Science & Technology

Meta to develop an AI pendant—a clip-on Bluetooth microphone that records and interacts with users throughout the day—over the next year, according to reports.

Analysis of child remains at ancient Spanish burial site reveals tuberculosis and respiratory diseases were widespread among the population roughly 5,000 years ago.

Dutch officials dismantle cybercrime network composed of bots on more than 17 million devices; operation linked to Russian group.

## Business & Finance

US stock markets close up Friday (S&P 500 +0.2%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq +0.2%), driven by gains in tech stocks; all three indexes hit record highs during intraday trading.

US average gas price at \$4.3 per gallon.

SoftBank to invest more than \$87B building five gigawatts of data center capacity; will be Europe's largest AI facility.

Former Barclays CEO Jes Staley agrees to speak with House Oversight subcommittee over his ties to deceased sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein.

## Politics & World Affairs

Meteor measuring roughly three feet wide and traveling at over 75,000 miles per hour explodes off the coast of Massachusetts, releasing the equivalent of 300 tons of TNT in energy.

Death toll rises to 11 in last week's chemical tank explosion in Washington state, as authorities recover the bodies of nine missing workers at the paper facility.

Colombian presidential election heads to June 21 runoff, as 14-candidate race narrows down to left-wing senator Iván Cepeda and right-wing lawyer Abelardo De La Espriella.

★ GROTON ★

# TRANSIT

## FUNDRAISER



Join us for an evening of great food,  
good company, and community support!

**WHEN:**  
Thursday,  
June 11, 2026

**TIME:**  
5:00 pm  
- 7:00 pm

**WHERE:**  
Groton  
Community  
Center

Groton Community Center - 109 N 3rd Street  
One block East of Groton Transit

★ LET US DO THE COOKING FOR YOU! ★

  
BURGERS

  
BRATS

  
BEANS

  
WATERMELON

  
CHIPS

★ FOOD ★ FUN ★ DOOR PRIZES

## FREE WILL DONATION

Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!



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The Minnesota Vikings kicked off their Organized Team Activities (OTAs) last week, and even though they are voluntary, nearly every member of the team was present and accounted for. There are some big story lines to follow, starting with the quarterback position, and we'll get into that shortly.

However, the big news coming out of Minnesota is that the Vikings finally hired their new GM, nabbing Nolan Teasley, the Seahawks' Assistant General Manager who is coming off a Super Bowl victory. It's been reported that Rob Bryzinski will go back to the operations side after acting as the interim GM this offseason.

If you recall, Kwesi Adofo-Mensah was fired nearly a month after the season ended, and the Wilfs decided to postpone the GM search until after the draft. It was unorthodox timing, but it might end up being a blessing in disguise for Teasley. Most GMs are hired and immediately scramble to get ready for a free agency period and draft that's right around the corner. Teasley, on the other hand, will have plenty of time to properly evaluate the roster and coordinate with the coaching staff.

One of the things we see in football is teams hiring someone who is the opposite of the person they are replacing. This GM hire is no different. Kwesi was an analytics guy who came from a stock-trading background rather than a football one. Teasley, on the other hand, played football at Central Washington and got his start in the NFL as an intern in 2013, making his way up through the scouting ranks.

The juxtaposition between the Vikings and Seahawks in recent years can't be ignored.

- Kwesi decided against bringing back Sam Darnold, then watched him go to Seattle and lead them to a Super Bowl victory.

- Kwesi made 28 draft selections from 2022-2025, and none of those players have made the Pro Bowl. The Seahawks, on the other hand, had six Pro Bowl selections and a First-Team All-Pro in that same time frame.

- The Vikings didn't win a playoff game during Kwesi's tenure. The Seahawks are coming off a Super Bowl victory.

Ultimately, the goal of every GM is to put together a roster and staff that can win a Super Bowl. Kwesi just wasn't getting it done. Now it's Teasley's turn to try and bring that ever-elusive Super Bowl trophy to the land of 10,000 lakes.

## News and Notes

The Vikings signed wide receiver Jauan Jennings, who had spent the last five years in San Francisco. Unlike Justin Jefferson and Jordan Addison, Jennings is a big-bodied WR who can bully defenders and block in the run game. He instantly comes in as the WR3 and gives the Vikings flexibility in their play calling.

Like I mentioned earlier, the Vikings have kicked off OTAs. The single biggest story I'll be watching closely is the quarterback competition. J.J. McCarthy, the 10th overall pick in the 2024 draft, will be competing with newly acquired Kyler Murray, the 1st overall pick in 2019. Early indication is that Murray looks significantly better so far.

One thing that really stood out to me was the difference in how each QB handled their press conferences. Kyler was calm and confident. J.J. was frazzled. Even though McCarthy was saying the right things, it was clear that the pressure was starting to get to him. I highly encourage you to check out both press conferences on the Vikings' YouTube channel.

Another big story I'll be keeping my eye on is the roster construction. Many of the Vikings cuts this offseason were given a post-June designation, which allowed the Vikings to spread out the dead cap. Now that June is here, some cap space will become available, which the new GM can use to bring in players to round out the roster. I wouldn't be surprised to see the Vikings bring in someone to compete at center, as well as a player or two for the defensive backfield.



## Understanding the Ups and Downs of Pain During Recovery

Many equate pain with injury and thus assume that pain should be a straight line when recovering. So, if pain flares up a bit, they worry that something is wrong. Maybe the injury is getting worse, or they “overdid it” the day before. In reality, pain often rises and falls during normal recovery, and these ups and downs do not automatically mean you’re injuring yourself. Pain is more complex than a simple measure of tissue damage.

### Healing tissues and a sensitive alarm system

Pain is best thought of as your body’s alarm system. Early after an injury or surgery, that alarm is turned up on purpose to protect healing tissues. Even as the tissues recover normally, the alarm may remain slightly sensitive for a while. This means everyday movements, increased activity, or changes in routine can trigger pain, even when the tissues themselves are safe.

This sensitivity usually settles with time, movement and confidence. A short-term increase in pain does not automatically mean damage has occurred. It often reflects a nervous system that’s still learning what is safe again.

### Next day pain

Pain that shows up later, such as soreness the next day, is often blamed on “overdoing it.” While extreme overload can contribute to flare-ups, changes in pain from one day to the next are often a normal response to increased movement. Your body adapts to activity gradually, and mild soreness or stiffness can be part of that process, especially when trying something new or returning to activities you’ve avoided.

Pain levels don’t always match how well your body is healing. You are recovering successfully, even on days when pain feels worse.

### Stress, sleep and mood matter

Your nervous system doesn’t work in isolation. Poor sleep, emotional stress, worry or fatigue can increase pain sensitivity. We often say, “You’re getting on my nerves” when someone stresses us out. Biologically, that’s true. Stressful events release chemicals that make nerves more sensitive. On stressful days, the pain alarm becomes easier to trigger, which is why pain may spike during busy weeks, after poor sleep or during emotional strain without any change in the injury itself.

These influences are real and biological; they are not imagined or “in your head.”

### Your body’s healing chemistry

Your body naturally produces both pro-inflammatory chemicals (which increase sensitivity) and anti-inflammatory chemicals (which reduce sensitivity) as part of the healing process. This balance shifts from day to day, like a teeter-totter. Some days you may feel more sensitive, and other days less so. These shifts are a normal part of recovery and help explain why pain often fluctuates.

### Pain doesn’t equal harm

One of the most important principles of recovery is this: pain does not always mean damage. Pain is often a sign of sensitivity rather than danger. Gradually continuing to move, even with some discomfort, is often part of restoring normal function and confidence.

### When to check in

While fluctuating pain is common, steadily worsening pain, new symptoms or pain accompanied by significant swelling, weakness or loss of function should be discussed with a health care provider. Otherwise, ups and downs are a normal and expected part of recovery.

Healing isn’t about eliminating every painful moment. It’s about helping your body and nervous system feel safe enough to move forward, one step at a time.

Kory Zimney, PT, DPT, PhD is a professor at the University of South Dakota, School of Health Sciences Physical Therapy Department and director of the PhD in Health Science program. Dr. Zimney is part of the Center for Brain and Behavioral Research at the University of South Dakota and the Therapeutic Neuroscience Research Group, conducting research specifically in the areas of pain science and therapeutic alliance. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairedoc.org](http://www.prairedoc.org), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. 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).



By Kory Zimney, PT, DPT, PhD

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## Groton Legion splits Sunday action with loss at Clark, Locke Electric powers past Ramona

GROTON — Groton baseball teams experienced mixed results on Sunday, as Groton Legion Post 39 dropped a 6-1 decision to Clark/Willow Lake Legion at Clark, while Groton Locke Electric erupted for a 29-1 victory over Ramona Express behind a pair of home runs from Ty Sieber.

Post 39 struggled to generate offense against Clark/Willow Lake pitching, managing just two hits in the contest.

Clark/Willow Lake broke a scoreless tie in the third inning when Watson Grantham delivered a two-run single. The hosts added to their lead throughout the game and held Groton to a single run.

TC Schuster led Groton at the plate, going 2-for-3 and accounting for both of the team's hits. Alex Abeln drove in Groton's lone run. The Post 39 defense also turned a double play.

Jarrett Erdmann took the loss on the mound, working 5 1/3 innings. The left-hander allowed six runs, only one of which was earned, on eight hits while striking out five and walking one.

Clark/Willow Lake was paced offensively by Grantham and Ky Vandersnick, who each drove in two runs. Vandersnick and Cooper Pommer both collected two hits.

Groton Post 39 returns to action Tuesday when it hosts Sisseton.

Meanwhile, Groton Locke Electric unleashed an offensive barrage in Ramona, collecting 23 hits in a 29-1 victory over Ramona Express.

Leading the attack was Ty Sieber, who blasted two home runs and drove in six runs. Sieber connected on a three-run homer in the second inning and added another three-run shot in the fourth.

Locke Electric wasted little time getting started, scoring twice in the first inning before erupting for 11 runs in the second to seize control.

Nick Morris and Ryan Groeblichhoff fueled the second-inning rally. Morris delivered a two-run single while Groeblichhoff added a two-run hit of his own. Bradin Althoff capped the inning with a two-run double.

The offensive fireworks continued in the third inning as Groton added eight more runs. Althoff launched a two-run homer and Morris followed with a three-run blast as the lead swelled to 21-0.

Locke Electric closed out the scoring with another eight-run fourth inning, highlighted by Sieber's second three-run homer and a two-run double by Groeblichhoff.

Palmer Boyd earned the win, striking out six over two hitless innings. Groeblichhoff and Brevin Fliehs combined to finish the game in relief.

Groeblichhoff, Althoff and Fliehs each recorded four hits for Locke Electric. Morris drove in a team-high seven runs, while Sieber finished with six RBIs. Jonah Schmidt also collected multiple hits in the victory.

Locke Electric showed patience at the plate throughout the afternoon, drawing 12 walks while improving with one of its most complete offensive performances of the season.

Ramona's lone hit came from Will Matson, who also drove in the team's only run.

## EARTHTALK

### Barred Owls In Federal Crosshairs For Threat To Spotted Owls

by Rachel Berliner

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true the federal government is planning to slaughter 450,000 wild owls in the Pacific Northwest? How do environmentalists feel about it?  
-- Paula T., Bend, OR

In 2025, the federal government released a controversial plan to remove 450,000 barred owls from Pacific Northwest forests in an attempt to protect the endangered spotted owl population. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the number of spotted owls dropped by 75 percent over the past two decades and were officially classified as endangered in December of 2020. Environmental advocates are split over the issue: Is removing one owl species to protect another truly an ethical decision, or is it a necessary step towards creating safe habitats for endangered species?



**Barred owls are encroaching on the territory of the threatened northern spotted owl so federal wildlife officers can shoot to kill.** Credit:

Pexels.com.

Many officials agree that barred owl removal is an unfortunate but essential way to maintain the diminishing spotted owl population. Over time, barred owls have invaded the west coast, the spotted owls' natural habitat. Barred owls are east coast natives and much larger than spotted owls, giving them an advantage in the western ecosystem. The plan would remove less than one percent of the barred owls, which some experts believe is a minimal cost to protect the mere 15,000 spotted owls left in the U.S.

"Without actively managing barred owls, northern spotted owls will likely go extinct in all or the majority of their range, despite decades of collaborative conservation efforts," says Kessina Lee, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Oregon state supervisor. "This isn't at all about one owl versus another," agrees Bridget Moran, another U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service official. "This is about having spotted owls. If we do nothing, we will have only barred owls. If we do something, we'll have both."

Many advocates have taken the opposing side, arguing that such a plan will lead to more destruction. Animal Wellness Action, a wildlife protection lobbyist group, filed a lawsuit against the strategy. They alleged that the USFWS did not thoroughly consider the impact and neglected alternative options, thus violating the National Environmental Policy Act. "The vastness of physical geography of the 'control area' makes the plan unworkable and impractical," says Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. In March 2025, 19 lawmakers wrote a bipartisan letter asking the federal government to abandon the strategy. The letter argued that barred owls were not invasive, but instead an important part of the ecosystem. That said, the U.S. Senate voted 25-72 against the effort to stop the plan in October 2025.

Readers interested in getting involved can call your congressional representatives to take action.





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Proposed Indigenous medical school aims to boost Native physician numbers

**Effort has funding for a feasibility study with a goal of 2030 opening in Rapid City**  
**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER**

As of 2024, 0.3% of practicing physicians in the nation were Native American.

A proposed Indigenous School of Medicine in Rapid City could help change that.

The school would be the first of its kind in the nation, said Donald Warne, a physician, co-director for the Center for Indigenous Health at Johns Hopkins, and member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

Warne envisions weaving traditions, ceremonies and cultures into the accredited school and its curriculum. Rather than cramming students full of information within four years, the school would prioritize wellbeing and competency — which would allow students to take longer to complete the program if needed, Warne said.

The approach allows students to bring their full cultural selves into their medical training, he added.

"There is still a sense we have to check our culture at the door to become a cookie-cutter doctor as opposed to maintaining who we are," Warne said. "There are still students who feel they aren't adequately represented or supported in medical school."

The proposed Indigenous School of Medicine received a \$1 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to conduct a feasibility study and business plan, along with a \$100,000 NDN Collective capacity building grant. Warne hopes to start enrolling students in 2030. The location within Rapid City has not been finalized.

Tim Ridgway, dean of the University of South Dakota Sanford School of Medicine, said the state likely couldn't sustain two public medical schools. But he said the Indigenous school would complement — not compete with — USD's mission.

"How could I not be part of this?" Ridgway said. "It is, in essence, part of the mission of this school."

The schools could collaborate on curriculum, share faculty, and work together to create residency programs tailored toward Indigenous students, Ridgway said.



**Donald Warne, physician, co-director for the Center for Indigenous Health at Johns Hopkins, and member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, speaks at the National Indian Health Board conference in Washington, D.C.** (Courtesy of Donald Warne)

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The school's presence in Rapid City could inspire young Native children to pursue medicine, Warne said, and help fill deep vacancies in rural and tribal health facilities with culturally adept physicians. South Dakota has one of the largest health disparities between Native Americans and white residents in the United States, according to a recent report from a foundation that advocates for equitable healthcare.

"Quality of care is improved when there is culture concordance between doctor and patient," Warne said. "Quality of care and quality of communication are based on cultural competence."

Kenzie Lindemann is a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and a medical school student at USD. Both her parents are physicians; her mother is a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and practices on the Cheyenne River Reservation. Lindemann participated in the InMED program — a pipeline initiative through USD and the University of North Dakota to support Native students pursuing medical careers.

Still, she's drawn to the idea of a school where a Native American student wouldn't constantly "have to explain yourself" — one surrounded by Indigenous peers, taught through the holistic, competency-based model Warne envisions.

During observed standardized clinical encounters, Lindemann sets aside Native American jewelry or a ribbon skirt. The patient — who determines her grade — is usually non-Native.

"I can't really change the way I look — my skin or my face shape — but if I can take away some level of unknown biases the standardized patient might have about Native Americans, I'll do that," Lindemann said.

She sees the proposed school as a way to shift that dynamic.

"By slowly but surely increasing the number of Native American physicians, maybe people won't see the stereotypes," Lindemann said. "Maybe they'll just see us as physicians in the community."

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

## City of Leola Remains Underwater after nearly 7" of Rain

**From the McPherson County Herald**

Extremely heavy rainfall throughout the evening hours today resulted in widespread flooding and flash flooding in and around the City of Leola. Numerous streets and intersections that were underwater and impassable this evening were carefully guarded by the Leola Fire Department and Leola Ambulance. A plow could even be seen pushing water along Main Street as the rain continued to pour.

Law enforcement reported earlier today that highway 45 south of town was deemed impassable.

According to the local SDSU weather station, 5.46" of total rain has already fallen throughout the day, combined with 1.36" yesterday, for a total of 6.82", resulting in many flooded basements.

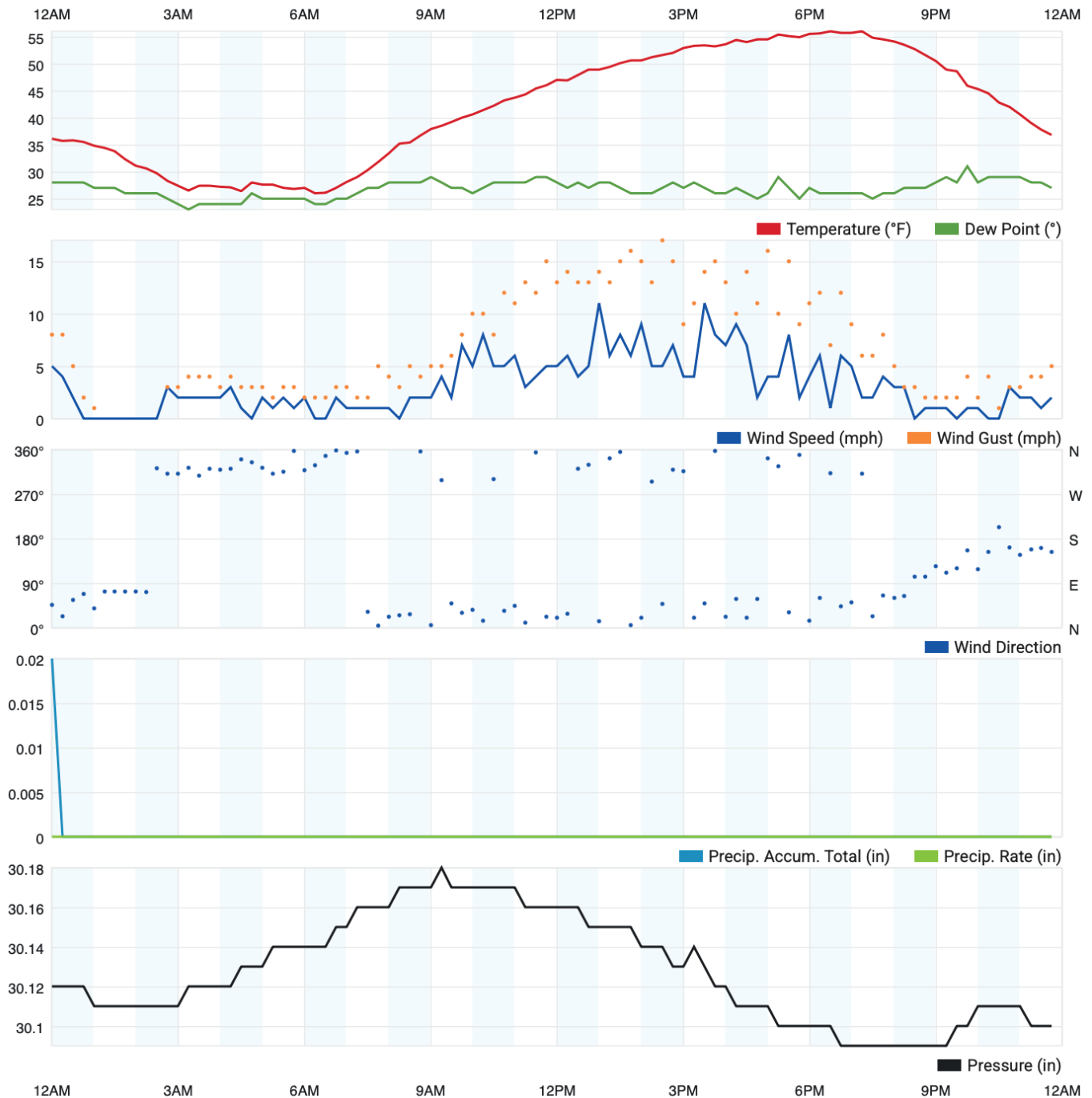
New rainfall amounts of a quarter to a half an inch are yet possible overnight. A flood warning remains in effect until 9:45 a.m.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

May 1, 2026





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Today



High: 82 °F

Becoming  
Sunny

Tonight



Low: 54 °F

Increasing  
Clouds

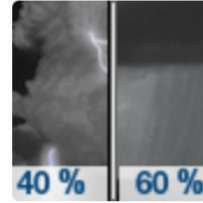
Tuesday



High: 84 °F

Chance  
T-storms

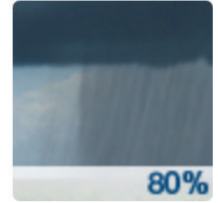
Tuesday Night



Low: 56 °F

Chance  
T-storms then  
Showers  
Likely

Wednesday



High: 80 °F

Showers

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

### HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:  
Isolated Severe Storms  
Possible

Late Afternoon And  
Evening

### PRIMARY THREATS

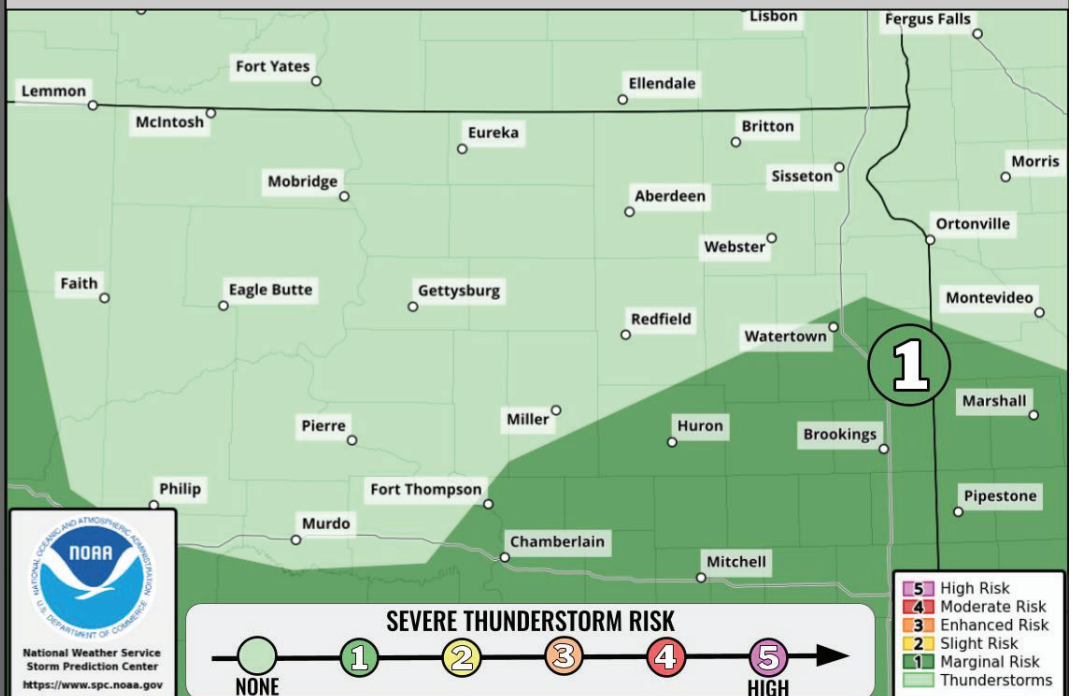


LARGE HAIL of 1"  
in diameter

NWS  
Aberdeen, SD



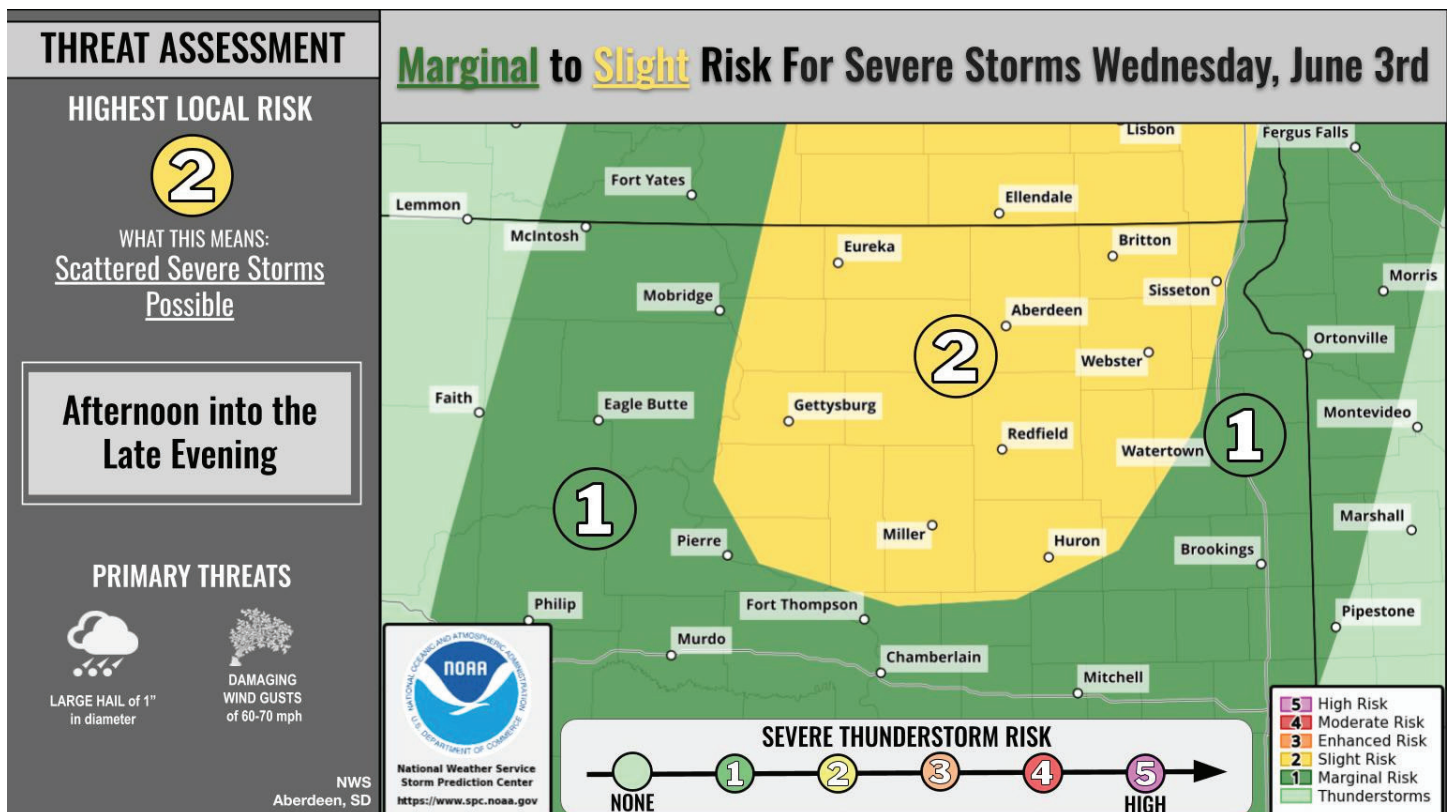
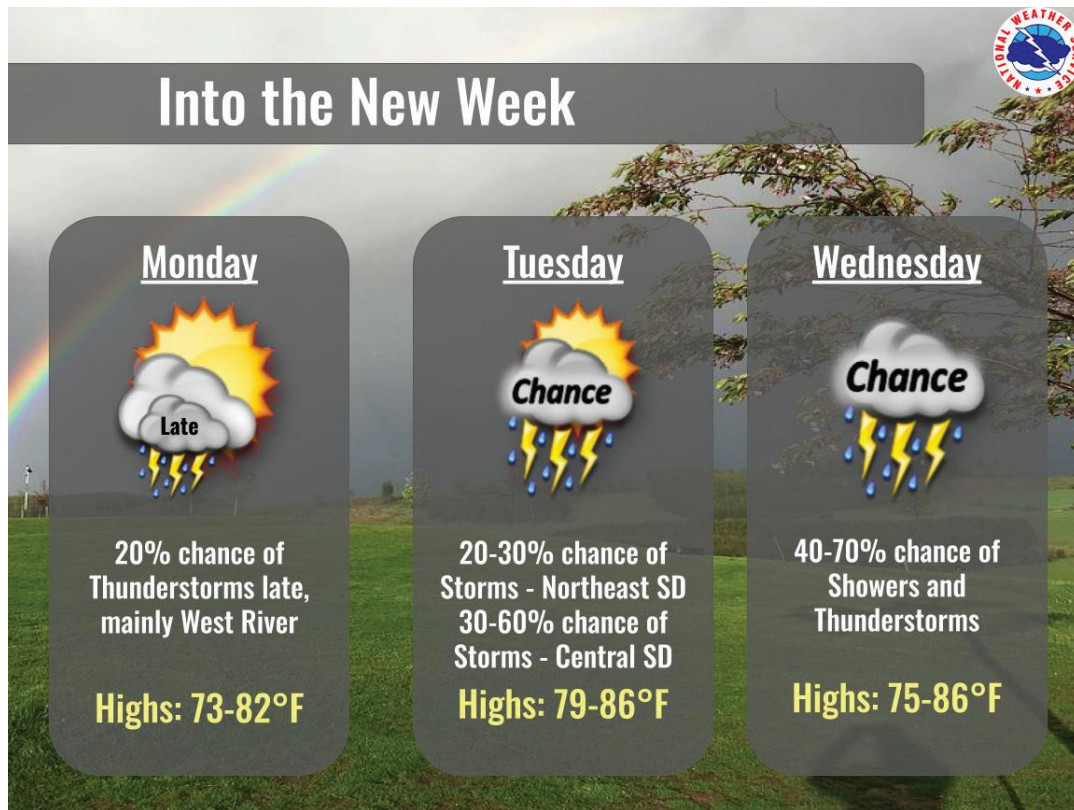
## Marginal Risk For Severe Storms Late Afternoon/Evening June 1st



There is a marginal risk (level 1 out of 5) of severe weather mainly over a portion of northeast South Dakota this afternoon into this evening. The primary threat will be hail up to an inch in diameter.

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## Off And On Rain Chances Through Friday, June 5th

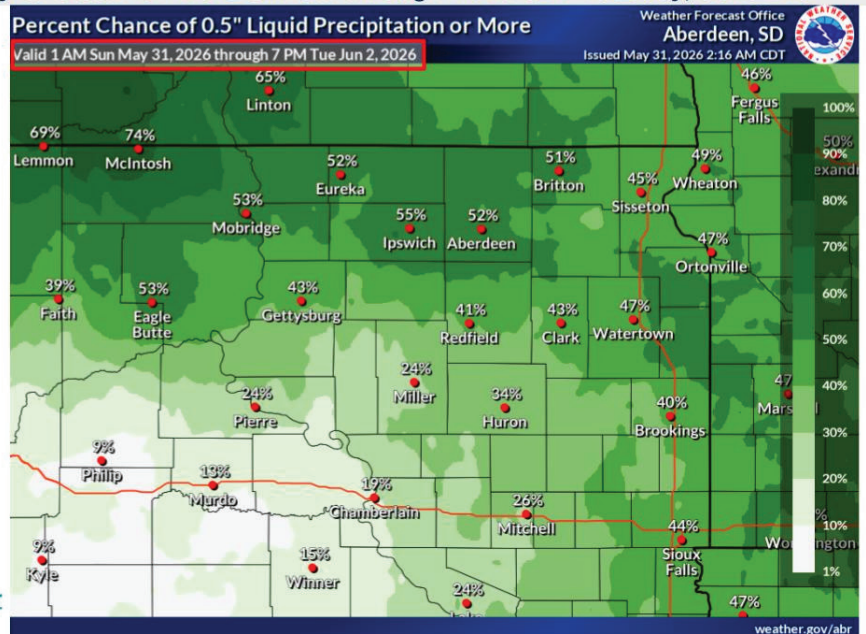
May 31, 2026

3:24 AM

\*\*\*This Map Depicts The Probability Of 0.50in Or More Of Rain through 7 PM CDT Tuesday, June 2nd\*\*\*

- Isolated/scattered showers and thunderstorms today into this evening.
- There is a **risk of severe thunderstorms this afternoon into this evening**, mainly throughout the Missouri River valley region, over into northeast South Dakota.
- **Combining** forecast rainfall amounts for today through the end of the day Tuesday, the resulting **likelihood of a half-inch or more of rainfall** is shown in the image on the right.

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



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Rainfall is possible at various times and locations over the next 5 or so days. The image shows the likelihood of 0.5" or more through early Tuesday evening.



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 78 °F at 5:39 PM**

**Low Temp: 61 °F at 11:20 PM**

**Wind: 25 mph at 10:29 AM**

**Precip: Total Rain: 0.43**

## Today's Info

Record High: 99 in 1933

Record Low: 34 in 1946

Average High: 76

Average Low: 51

Average Precip in May.: 3.28

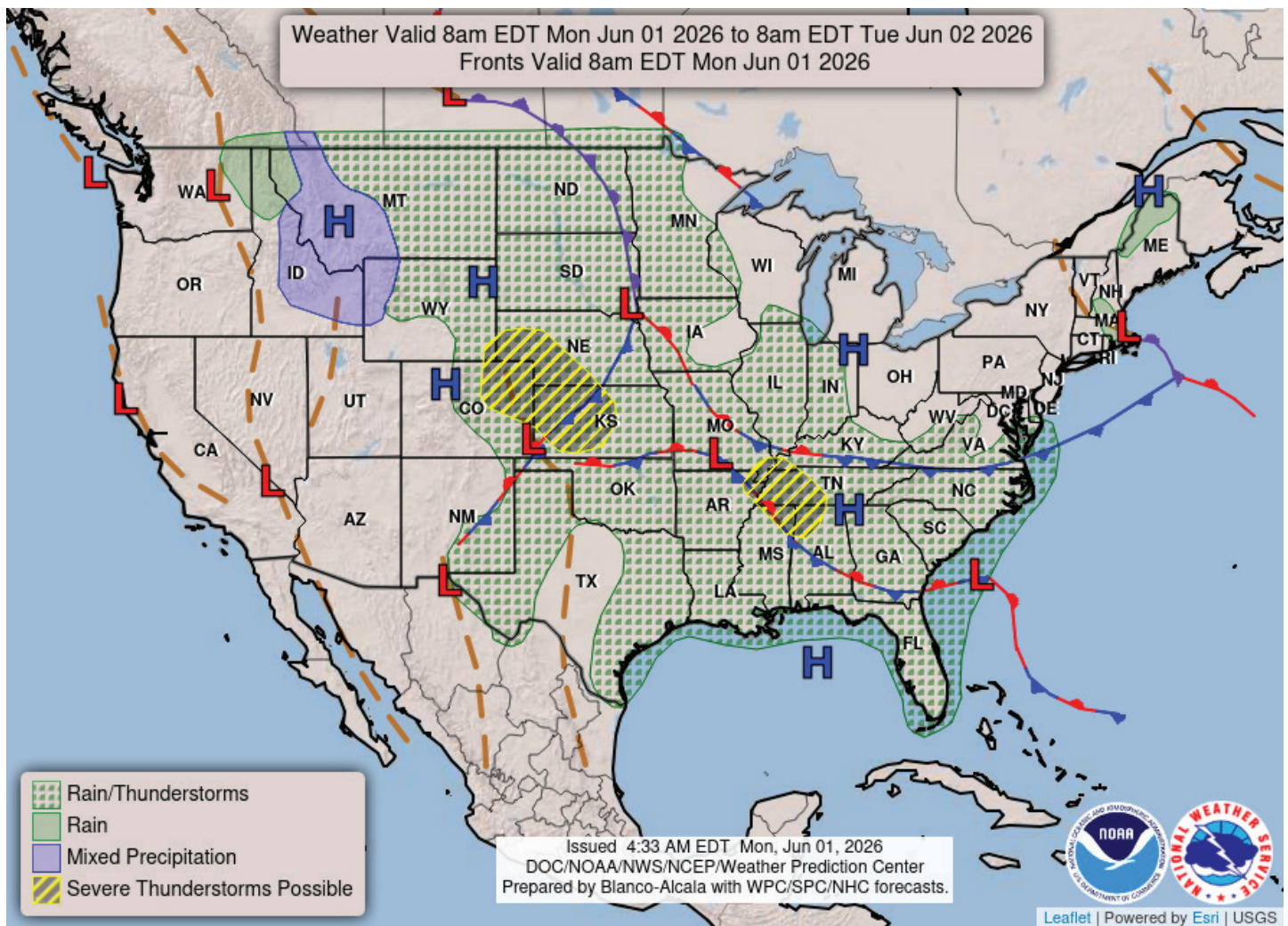
Precip to date in May.: 3.24

Average Precip to date: 7.35

Precip Year to Date: 6.36

Sunset Tonight: 9:13 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46 am



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## **Today in Weather History**

June 1st, 1990: A small F0 tornado blew over two mobile homes on the north side of Groton. Numerous trees were either blown down or lost limbs. Also, high winds of 65 mph occurred 5 miles south and 1 mile east of Mellette.

June 1st, 2008: Severe thunderstorms developed along the eastern slopes of the Black Hills and dropped large hail and heavy rain over eastern Custer and Shannon Counties. Softball-sized hail was reported south of Hermosa.

June 1st, 2011: High water levels coming into June and above-average June rainfall kept water levels up on Blue Dog, Bitter, Rush, and Waubay Lakes in Day County throughout the month. The high lake levels continued to cause extensive road and property damage. Many families remained away from their homes and cabins. Also, hundreds of acres of farmland remained flooded along with many roads. Road and property damage would cost several millions of dollars. The high lake levels and flooding would continue for the next several months. In Hamlin County, Lake Poinsett, including several other lakes, continued to flood and damage several homes along with several county and township roads. High lake levels and flooding would continue for the next several months.

1812 — Apple trees at New Haven CT did not blossom until the first of June, the latest such occurrence during the period beginning in 1794. Snow whitened the ground in Cleveland OH and Rochester NY. (David Ludlum)

1903 — A strong tornado just 50 to 75 yards in width killed many persons around the Gainesville GA Cotton Mill. The tornado strengthened and widened near the end of its four mile path, killing 40 persons at New Holland GA. A total of 104 persons were killed in the tornado. (The Weather Channel)

1980 — A man from Falmouth ME was struck by lightning restoring his eyesight. The man had been blind and partially deaf since a truck accident in 1971. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Severe thunderstorms in the Upper Mississippi Valley and the Lower Ohio Valley produced wind gusts to 81 mph at Albert Lea Airport in southern Minnesota, and baseball size hail around Otterbein IN, Sarona WI, and Danville IL. Two inches of hail totally destroyed 5000 acres of corn and soybean north of Danville. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms drenched north central Texas with torrential rains, with more than 14 inches reported in Commanche County. Afternoon thunderstorm in New Jersey and Pennsylvania produced wind gusts to 70 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms developing during the afternoon over the Southern Plains Region produced severe weather through the evening and the night, spawning nine tornadoes. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Alpine TX, and baseball size hail at Balmorhea, TX, Fluvanna, TX, and in Borden County, TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



## Our Protector

**No matter what dangers lie ahead, our strong and faithful God will guide us to safety.**

Psalms 121:1-3: 1 I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come?

2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.

Psalms 121 describes the safety that is found in the Lord. Today and tomorrow, we'll look at several verses to better understand how we are truly secure in God.

"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord" (vv. 1-2). When this psalm was written, robbers hid in the mountains, waiting for travelers to become their unsuspecting victims. Not only that, but wild animals also posed a threat.

Our lives can be like mountainous territory. Do you wonder what dangers lurk in the future? Thankfully, the Lord is our helper; He is able to protect us, regardless of what lies ahead. He knows everything and has all the power necessary to rescue us.

"He will not allow your foot to slip" (v. 3). God has provided everything we need in order to avoid sin. The Holy Spirit directs and empowers us, and the Word lights our path. Yet at times, we choose to sin. Even then, He upholds us, enabling us to walk in His way.

These opening verses focus on the Lord's ability to protect us. Whether trouble originates with others, external circumstances, or our own sin, we can find ourselves in danger and at risk. Thankfully, we have a loving Father who leads us to safety.

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



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## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.31.26

3 11 26 45 56 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.29.26

19 24 47 59 65 7

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$346,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 11 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.30.26

5 8 9 11 15 4

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$28,220,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 26 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.30.26

4 6 7 22 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$113,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 41 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.30.26

4 27 65 66 69 4

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 10 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.30.26

1 27 35 44 52 12

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$180,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 10 Mins 35 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **Macron says French Navy, backed by the UK, intercepted a sanctioned tanker from Russia**

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The French Navy, with support from the United Kingdom, has intercepted an oil tanker under international sanctions that was traveling from Russia, the most recent effort by nations that support Ukraine to target Russian oil exports helping to finance President Vladimir Putin's war.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced the interception in a post Monday on X, saying the Tagor was boarded on Sunday in the Atlantic. The post included a video showing a person rappelling from a helicopter onto a ship. It is the latest in a series of French naval interceptions of tankers suspected of links to Russia.

"It is unacceptable that boats skirt international sanctions, violate the law of the sea and finance the war that Russia has been waging for more than 4 years against Ukraine," Macron wrote. "These ships, that don't respect the most elementary rules of maritime navigation, are also a threat to the environment and everyone's security."

Oil revenue is a key part of Russia's economy, allowing Putin to pour money into the war effort against Ukraine without worsening inflation for everyday people and avoiding a currency collapse.

Russia is believed to be using a fleet of hundreds of ships to evade international sanctions imposed over the war. France and other countries have vowed to crack down on the sanction-busting so-called "shadow fleet."

French maritime authorities said the tanker was intercepted more than 400 nautical miles west of France, in international waters in the Atlantic. It was traveling from the northwestern Russian port of Murmansk, according to the authorities' statement.

It said the tanker is suspected of operating under a false flag and that the French navy is now escorting it to an anchorage for more checks.

Tankers previously intercepted by France include the Deyna, boarded in the Mediterranean Sea in March. Another tanker, the Grinch, intercepted in the Mediterranean in January, was released in February after paying a multimillion-euro penalty.

### **Malaysia enforces ban on social media accounts for children younger than 16**

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia on Monday began enforcing rules barring millions of children younger than 16 from having social media accounts, joining a global effort to tighten online safety protections for young users.

The rules require social media platforms with at least 8 million users including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and YouTube, to implement age-verification systems and block users under 16 from creating accounts.

Malaysia's Communications and Multimedia Commission said Monday that age verification for existing users will be rolled out progressively over the next six months.

Users identified as under 16 will have a month to download or transfer their data, including photos and videos, before any restrictions, suspensions, or other actions are applied, it said in a statement.

Companies that fail to comply could face penalties of up to 10 million ringgit (\$2.5 million). But parents whose children manage to bypass the law will not be penalized.

The government said the measures are aimed at protecting children from harmful content, cyberbullying and platform features designed to encourage excessive use.

Other countries including Australia, Brazil and Indonesia have introduced or announced age-based re-



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strictions or requirements for children's access to social media. Countries including Britain, France, Spain, Denmark, Thailand and South Korea are also studying or developing similar approaches.

The regulator said the rules are not intended to prevent children from accessing digital technology.

"These measures help strengthen the protection of children in the online environment, while providing added reassurance to parents in navigating increasingly complex digital risks," it has said.

Platforms are required to improve user safety, discourage excessive use and take action against underage accounts and harmful content.

Technology companies have yet to detail how they will comply with Malaysia's new requirements.

Clara Koh, Meta's director of public policy for Southeast Asia, had cautioned in April that Malaysia's blanket under-16 ban could backfire by driving teenagers away from protected apps and into unregulated corners of the internet.

She said Meta has launched "teen accounts" for those under 18 that limits contact, screen time and exposure to inappropriate content.

Malaysia's curbs come as governments face growing pressure to address concerns about social media's impact on children's mental health and online safety.

In March, a U.S. jury ordered Meta and YouTube to pay millions of dollars in damages in a case alleging that platform design features contributed to harm suffered by a young user.

How two Malaysian families see the changes

Kuala Lumpur parents Saravanan Ganasan and Jayaradha Veerasamy — whose children are 12 and 15 — approve of the changes. They already banned their kids from using social media, believing minors lack the psychological capacity to cope with it.

The couple ban unsupervised scrolling on TikTok and Instagram. Devices are kept out of bedrooms, screen time is limited to common areas, and their son is not allowed to lock his phone with a password.

"Exposure is what we fear," Saravanan said. "The wrong kind of exposure will do damage to the mind."

Aadhavan Saravanan, 15, said he believes he would be addicted to social media if allowed full freedom. "Social media is like, a luxury and it's not a necessity," he said

The couple said the restrictions have forced their children to develop offline life skills. Instead of scrolling, Aadhavan reads books in a backyard mango tree and repairs broken household appliances, while their daughter cooks and does crafts.

"A lot of parents are very scared that children get bored," the kids' mother, Jayaradha, said. "But boredom is actually very good because they start thinking out of the box."

But Shaun Hew, who lives in the Kuala Lumpur suburb of Cheras, feels the new restrictions go too far.

Hew believes social media offers an outlet for his kids to spend time productively, as long as there is proper adult oversight. His 11-year-old son uses platforms to learn cooking and his daughter, 14, uses YouTube for exam revision.

He worries a sudden cutoff could cause teenagers to rebel and find unregulated ways to bypass internet blocks.

Some voice concerns over privacy and safety

Some critics contend that Malaysia's move could increase the risks of data privacy breaches and expand state surveillance.

"It is very much following the trend but in a way that is raising alarms due to requiring a government ID for age verification," said Benjamin Loh, social science lecturer at Monash University in Malaysia.

Loh also said experiences elsewhere suggest age-based restrictions have yet to prove consistently effective. Without penalties on parents, families can easily bypass the law by creating accounts for their children, he said.

"This is a major gap that unless regulators are willing to fix, will result in the law having little effect in stopping children from using social media," he added.

## Hundreds of youths protest outside Kenya's Ebola quarantine center for US citizens

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Hundreds of youths in Kenya's central town of Nanyuki on Monday demonstrated against the establishment at the Laikipia Air Base of an Ebola quarantine center for American citizens exposed to the virus.

The protests come two days after Kenya's High Court suspended the establishment of the facility and the arrival of any foreign patients pending the hearing of a case filed by the Law Society of Kenya and a constitutional watchdog.

The two organizations cited Kenya's fragile health system as the reason why foreign Ebola patients should not be quarantined in the country.

U.S. officials said Thursday that the United States was planning to send Americans exposed to Ebola while abroad to a new facility in Kenya instead of flying them home. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the administration's plans. They said the facility would be at Laikipia Air Base and would be operational with 50 quarantine beds by Friday.

On Monday, hundreds of youths marched to the gates of the air base, chanting anti-Ebola slogans.

Health Minister Aden Duale on Sunday said the quarantine center was for "everyone" and not exclusively for U.S. nationals.

The U.S. government intends to commit \$13.5 million toward Kenya's Ebola preparedness efforts, Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

## Philippine senator charged with plunder says he will surrender

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A Philippine senator said he will surrender to authorities after a special anti-graft court ordered his arrest on Monday on a non-bailable charge of plunder after he allegedly pocketed a huge kickback in a flood-control project in the latest crisis to hit the upper chamber.

The special Sandiganbayan anti-graft court had initially issued a warrant for Sen. Jinggoy Estrada's arrest Friday on a graft charge that was bailable. He then surrendered and was released on bail and again denied any wrongdoing.

Estrada, 63, has strongly denied allegations mainly by a former government public works engineer that he received more than 570 million pesos (\$9.3 million) in kickbacks from flood control projects.

Before leaving the Senate to surrender, Estrada suggested that the corruption cases he was facing and his arrest were a result of his being aligned with the camp of former President Rodrigo Duterte and his daughter, incumbent Vice President Sara Duterte, a former ally but now an arch political rival of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

"I will not yield to threats. I will not be intimidated," Estrada said at the Senate.

"I will not be pressured into surrendering my independence of judgement," he said.

The senator was an actor like his father, former President Joseph Estrada. Both have been previously detained on other corruption-related charges.

Several other senators and members of the House of Representatives have been implicated in the flood control anomalies in a poverty-stricken Asian archipelago that is among the most vulnerable to deadly floods and typhoons.

With Jinggoy Estrada's looming arrest, two senators in the 24-member chamber would now be effectively sidelined by legal troubles.

Another senator, Ronald dela Rosa, has gone into hiding after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest for an alleged crime against humanity.

Dela Rosa was a former national police chief who enforced a brutal anti-drugs crackdown under then-President Rodrigo Duterte that left thousands of mostly low-level suspects dead. The unprecedentedly large numbers of killings alarmed Western governments.

Duterte, who stepped down in 2022 after his stormy six-year term, was arrested last year on orders of the ICC and flown to the Netherlands, where he was detained and will face trial for alleged crimes against humanity starting in November over some of the killings.

Duterte and dela Rosa have denied any wrongdoing but Duterte had repeatedly threatened drug suspects with death.

## Venezuela's ruling party unity cracks as Delcy Rodríguez shifts Chávez-era policies

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

It's a slogan that's long encapsulated the unique ability of Hugo Chávez's fiercely nationalistic revolution to stay in power in Venezuela for 27 years: "United, we will win!"

The young, the old, ruling party leaders and propagandists alike shout it at official events, street demonstrations and on state television, pumping their fists to show loyalty to the self-described socialist government — and its traditional antipathy toward the United States. Even when confronted with overwhelming truths that defy such bravado, the diverse coalition of military, ideological and opportunistic hangers-on has acted in lockstep.

But cracks in that unity have emerged after the stunning U.S. military operation that captured then-President Nicolás Maduro in January. Longtime loyalists are airing disagreements with the government of acting President Delcy Rodríguez and even discussing publicly rumors that an insider's betrayal helped the U.S. depose Maduro.

A warming relationship with the US draws criticism

Rodríguez, has done away with some of Chávez's policies, complied with U.S. demands and shuffled the government to her liking, removing ministers, pushing legislation through the National Assembly to overhaul the nation's oil industry and releasing political prisoners.

Supporters of Chavismo are making their disapproval known. Many criticize the warming relationship between Rodríguez's government and the White House, whose occupant, regardless of party, Chavismo has historically seen as its main adversary.

May's deportation of a former minister to face criminal investigations in the U.S. and Rodríguez's recent authorization for the U.S. military to conduct a training exercise in Venezuela's capital laid bare internal divisions.

Mario Silva spent years spreading pro-government propaganda as the host of a program on state TV before being removed from the airwaves after Maduro's capture. Silva questioned the legality of the deportation of Alex Saab, a close ally of Maduro's, arguing that it violated a constitutional ban.

He contended that Rodríguez is not governing freely, as some decisions "are being made in the U.S. Embassy."

"The imperialists don't negotiate. They conquer, test and probe — until our country shatters," Silva said in a livestream. "Nobody is safe right now. And that is a concrete, terribly dangerous fact."

On May 23, a few dozen people in Caracas protested the training that saw two Marine Corps Osprey aircraft land at the U.S. Embassy. They held a Venezuelan flag with the message, "No to the Yankee drill" written over it. Participation was minimal, which stood out in a city used to frequent demonstrations with attendance in the thousands.

Elías Jaua, who served as Chávez's vice president and in Maduro's cabinet in his first years in office, repudiated the exercise on social media. He later told The Associated Press he was speaking up to raise awareness among Venezuelans of the "humiliating" situation facing the country.

"At this stage, the most important thing is to prevent this occupation and this colonial administration to which a nation like Venezuela is being subjected from becoming normalized," Jaua said.

Chávez and Maduro — as well as Rodríguez, in her previous roles as vice president and communications and foreign affairs minister — had long prophesied that the U.S. would use force to take control of Venezuela's oil industry, which has opened up to private capital after Maduro's capture. The Trump



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administration oversees oil sales and administers revenues as part of its phased plan to turn the troubled South American country around.

Maduro's ouster prompts power struggle

The social, political and economic crisis that took hold when Maduro became president in 2013 drove more than 7.7 million people to leave Venezuela and pushed millions of others into poverty. It also led to rounds of anti-government protests and U.S. economic sanctions, both of which the ruling party survived.

Party stalwarts celebrated a Maduro victory in a 2024 election despite overwhelming evidence showing he had lost. They also echoed the party leadership's denial of a surge of migration. Their loyalty was often rewarded, be it with food and basic goods for the poor or multimillion-dollar contracts and bodyguards for the better-off.

Andrés Izarra, a communications minister under Chávez and tourism minister under Maduro, said the fractures are not based in ideology or a defense of Chavismo, which he believes ended when its founder died in 2013. Maduro's interest, he said, was in enriching himself and remaining in power at all costs..

Self-interest, he said, is creating division.

"Since there is no ideological foundation, it is simply a struggle for power, money, positions, and survival. Do you think (he) would be protesting if he'd kept his bodyguards, or if they'd kept his little salary, or his share of power?" Izarra, who lives in exile since becoming a government target last decade, said of one critic of change under Delcy. "If they had an ideological interest, they would have spoken much earlier."

Loyalists discuss possible betrayal of Maduro

Criticism even aired on state television last month, when a Colombian leftist leader sitting in the audience of Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello's show stood up and questioned Venezuela's efforts to free Maduro and first lady Cilia Flores from U.S. custody.

"We've seen a very weak campaign for Cilia and Nicolás's freedom," Manuel Caicedo said before a visibly stunned Cabello.

Another devout Chavista, lawmaker Iris Varela, told a podcaster she believed a government insider had helped the U.S. oust Maduro. The idea has widely rumored since President Donald Trump announced that the authoritarian leader had been captured on Jan. 3, but no evidence has emerged.

Of course there's a betrayal," Varela said. "I say that every Christ has a Judas. If our Lord Jesus Christ knew he was going to be betrayed and yet he let Judas kiss him on the cheek, ... won't a traitor emerge for Maduro?"

## Rescuers search for alternative route to reach 2 missing in a flooded Laos cave

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Rescue workers in Laos searched Monday for an alternative passage into a flooded cave where two people are believed to have been trapped for nearly two weeks after heavy rainfall flooded the main entrance, making it impassable.

The two people remain unaccounted for since a search and rescue operation began last month in a rugged area of Xaisomboun province, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the capital, Vientiane. Five of the seven people initially trapped inside the cave have been rescued.

Malaysian diver Lee Kian Lie, who is involved in the operation, said workers were pumping water out of the cave.

"We will go into the suspected area to continue the search if the water level is lowered," he told The Associated Press.

Another team of rescuers is also looking around the other side of the cave in hopes of finding a dry passage that could provide access to the area where the missing people are believed to be trapped, he said.

Rescue teams from Laos and neighboring Thailand have been working together for more than a week. They were joined by divers from countries including Finland, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, France and Aus-

tralia.

Several of the rescuers previously took part in the complicated 2018 cave rescue in northern Thailand that saved 12 schoolboys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave.

Laos's Rescue Volunteer for People group posted on its Facebook page that heavy rain caused "massive amounts of water" to flow down into the area, forcing them to suspend operations on Sunday night.

Kengkaj Bongkawong, head of the Thai group Metta Tham Rescue Kalasin, said that the workers are also looking for air shafts from above that may provide access into the cave.

Rescuers believe the two missing people are trapped deeper inside the cave than the location where the five survivors were originally found on Wednesday. But the passage into that area is said to be very narrow and heavily flooded.

The villagers reportedly entered the cave nearly two weeks ago to look for valuable minerals such as gold before being trapped by a flash flood that blocked their way out. One other villager escaped and alerted the authorities.

The first man was safely extracted on Friday, guided through a narrow flooded passage by an expert diver. The remaining four left the cave on Saturday after the water receded enough for them to walk out on their own, rescuers said.

## **Israeli army captures strategic castle in Lebanon in deepest incursion into country in 26 years**

By BASSEM MROUE, KAREEM CHEHAYEB and MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israeli troops have captured a strategic mountain topped with a Crusader-built castle in southern Lebanon in the deepest incursion into the country in more than a quarter-century, the military said Sunday, while U.S. Secretary of State spoke to Lebanese and Israeli leaders in an effort keep negotiations going.

The taking of Beaufort castle, near the city of Nabatiyeh, followed days of airstrikes and intense fighting in nearby villages between Israeli troops and Hezbollah militants.

The capture marked a major Israeli advance in the latest Israel-Hezbollah war, which began on March 2, when Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel two days after the U.S. and Israel attacked its main backer, Iran.

Since then, Israel has launched a ground invasion, capturing dozens of Lebanese villages and towns close to the border. Hezbollah has launched thousands of missiles and drones at Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon and northern Israel.

The Israeli push came despite a nominal ceasefire that has been in place since April 17 and just days before Lebanon and Israeli hold their next round of direct talks in Washington starting Tuesday.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio spoke to Lebanese President Joseph Aoun and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to propose a fresh path to continue ongoing negotiations, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private diplomatic conversations. Under the proposal, Hezbollah would halt all attacks on Israel and Israel would refrain from escalating military operations in the Lebanese capital of Beirut, according to the official.

In a televised statement, Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a key Hezbollah ally, said he can guarantee the militant group's "full, comprehensive and immediate commitment to a ceasefire."

"But who will force Israel to stop its aggression?" he said in a statement on his television station, NBN.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot requested an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council to discuss Israeli military operations in Lebanon, which he described as "unacceptable."

"Nothing can justify the prolongation of Israeli military operations in Lebanon and its increasingly deep occupation of Lebanese territory," Barrot said Sunday on French television BFM TV.

Diplomats said the council meeting might take place Monday afternoon, speaking on condition of anonymity ahead of a formal announcement.

A historic and strategic fortress

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The Israeli military's Arabic-language spokesperson, Avichay Adraee, posted photographs on X showing Israeli troops walking outside the castle, and Defense Minister Israel Katz wrote on X that they raised an Israeli flag over the castle. Israeli troops previously captured the castle in 1982 and held it until they withdrew from Lebanon in 2000.

"Twenty six years after the withdrawal from the security zone in Lebanon, the Israeli flag has returned to fly on the peaks that overlook the Galilee towns," Katz said Sunday at a memorial ceremony for Israeli soldiers killed in its previous occupation of southern Lebanon.

Katz said Israel intends to hold the castle as its troops work to destroy thousands more homes that he says were used by Hezbollah and other military infrastructure in southern Lebanon.

The Beaufort fortress, perched high atop Lebanon's rolling green hills and overlooking the Litani River, has been a strategic military asset for centuries.

Built as a Crusader castle around the 12th century on top of previous fortifications, it has also been used by Saladin's Jerusalem army, Mamluks, Ottomans, the French mandate and the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Crusaders named it Beaufort, which is Old French for "beautiful fortress."

The 1982 capture of the castle from the PLO was a major victory for the Israeli military, which was then led by Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, who later became prime minister. At the time, the Israeli army pushed all the way north and occupied Beirut.

In 2000, the castle was partially restored and opened to visitors.

During the previous Israel-Hezbollah war in 2024, UNESCO gave enhanced protection to 34 cultural sites in Lebanon, including Beaufort Castle, to safeguard them from damage.

The castle is a few kilometers north of the Israel border and overlooks wide parts of southern Lebanon and northern Israel. In Arabic, it is called Al-Shaqif castle, an old Syriac word referring to the formidable rocky area.

Beaufort is symbolic across the region, including in Israel, where it was one of the best-known places Israel controlled during the 18-year occupation. An Israeli film titled "Beaufort" explores moral questions about war in the last days before the military withdrew.

Israel expands invasion in Lebanon

In recent days, Israel has expanded the scope of its operations in Lebanon, sending troops across the Litani River, which previously served as a de-facto boundary, and demanding that residents leave much of southern Lebanon.

"The occupation of Beaufort is a dramatic stage and a dramatic shift in the policies we are leading," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday, citing the military occupation of security zones in Syria, Lebanon and Gaza along Israel's borders. He said Israel has killed 3,000 Hezbollah militants since the start of the war. Hezbollah has not disclosed its casualty numbers.

Israel has designated the area from the Litani up to the Zahrani River a combat zone. Some residents have already left the area due to intense strikes in recent days, but people remain.

Israeli troops have been advancing for days in villages close to Beaufort castle. They are now about 5 kilometers (3 miles) from Nabatiyeh, a major center in southern Lebanon. They have called on people to leave that area, as well as the coastal city of Tyre, the country's fourth-largest city, and its surroundings.

There was no immediate comment from Hezbollah or the Lebanese government on the Israeli push.

The expanded operation would give Israel an upper hand in the upcoming talks with Lebanon in Washington, said Beirut geopolitical analyst Joe Macaron.

"We are at a tipping point," Macaron said, adding that it is still too early to say how Hezbollah will react to the loss of land. "The more land they (the Israeli military) can grab before the ceasefire, the more they can impose conditions on Hezbollah before their withdrawal."

Exchanges of fire across the border continue

Israel has continued striking near Tyre, including near the Hiram Hospital. The Lebanese Health Ministry said 13 health workers were wounded in the strike. Elsewhere, a strike in Deir al-Zahrani, near Nabatiyeh, killed eight people and wounded 16 others, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency.



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Hezbollah overnight claimed two attacks targeting Israeli troops and a Merkava tank in the southwestern town of Bayada near the border. In recent days, the group has said it has clashed with Israeli troops in several towns just north of the river near Nabatiyeh and the strategic castle. It also claimed attacks deeper into Israel near the northern city of Haifa, Nahariya, as well as border areas.

Hezbollah on Saturday fired salvos of rockets into northern Israel, including Kiryat Shmona, the largest city in the area.

Hezbollah's use of hard-to-detect fiber optic drones has been deadly for the Israeli military, which is struggling to respond. There have been nearly 200 alerts for Israeli civilians across northern Israel warning of drones and missiles in the past 24 hours, according to Israel's military.

The latest round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has killed 3,350 people in Lebanon and displaced more than 1 million people.

According to Netanyahu's office, at least 25 Israeli soldiers and a defense contractor have been killed in or near southern Lebanon, including one on Saturday. Two civilians have also been killed in northern Israel.

## **Jerome Powell uses JFK award speech to warn against political pressure on Fed, courts and schools**

By LEAH WILLINGHAM Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Former Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell used one of his first major public appearances since leaving office to defend independent institutions while accepting an award Sunday honoring his efforts to preserve the central bank's independence.

Speaking at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library overlooking Boston Harbor, Powell called universities, courts, Congress and the central bank "the foundation and the embodiment of our democracy" and argued that the Fed's independence was a "priceless asset" that must be protected.

It was one of his most direct defenses of Fed independence, warning that a single administration's decision to remove bank officials over policy differences would open the way for future elected officials to follow suit, ultimately undermining the credibility that the Fed has spent decades building.

Powell, who frequently clashed with Trump during his eight years as chair, stepped down as his term expired in May. He was succeeded by Kevin Warsh, whom Trump selected to lead the central bank.

After stepping down as chair, Powell took the unusual step of keeping his seat on the Fed's governing board, which he has until January 2028. By doing so, he has deprived the Trump administration of an opportunity to appoint another member of the board.

The Trump administration has also sought to fire Fed governor Lisa Cook, which would open an additional seat on the rate-setting committee the president could fill. Yet Cook sued and the courts have so far let her keep her seat.

While Powell never mentioned Trump by name Sunday, he repeatedly returned to the importance of protecting institutions from political pressure and preserving public trust in their independence.

"Like many other institutions, the Fed has been undergoing a stress test," he said. "Congress wisely chose to insulate monetary policy decisions from political pressure. All other advanced economy nations have done the same."

Since 1989, the John F. Kennedy Profile in Courage Award has recognized public servants who make what the foundation describes as courageous decisions of conscience despite personal or professional consequences.

Previous recipients include former Presidents Barack Obama and George H. W. Bush, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and former Vice President Mike Pence.

In March, the foundation said it was awarding Powell for protecting the independence of the Federal Reserve "despite years of personal attacks and threats from the highest levels of government."

Trump harshly criticized Powell throughout his tenure as chair, frequently attacking the Fed's interest-rate decisions and urging the central bank to cut borrowing costs more aggressively.

Beyond the Federal Reserve, Powell defended U.S. universities and research institutions, the Constitu-

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tion, Congress and the court system.

"The United States has long been the leader of the world's freedom-seeking people — the indispensable nation. Other countries know us as a nation built on integrity, and that integrity must be maintained," he said.

In his remarks, Powell indirectly acknowledged mistakes as chair. The Fed is legally required to seek stable prices, but inflation surged amid the pandemic's supply chain crunch. Many economists believe the central bank should have raised interest rates more quickly in response.

"At the Fed, we are, of course, human and thus imperfect," Powell said. "When we make mistakes, we acknowledge them and change course."

Powell was honored alongside residents of Minnesota's Twin Cities, who received the award for what the Kennedy Foundation described as acts of courage during a federal immigration crackdown that led to thousands of arrests and the deaths of Minneapolis mother Renée Good and nurse Alex Pretti, both of whom were killed while observing or documenting enforcement activity.

"It's wonderful just to be invited, honoring Renée," Good's father, Tim Granger, said as he entered the library with family members.

Kennedy's only surviving child, Caroline Kennedy, and her son, Jack Schlossberg, said in a statement that without people like Powell and those in Minnesota "willing to put their lives on the line to hold America to its promises, our democracy can't survive."

Attendee U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who is running for governor of Minnesota next year, reflected that the award was unusual because it recognized ordinary residents rather than elected officials.

"This didn't go to an elected leader for a reason," Klobuchar said. "It's because the people stood up. They stood up by marching 50,000 strong. They stood by bringing kids they didn't even know — strangers' kids — to school, by bringing them groceries and they didn't blink. And that's what this award is about. It's about courage."

## California contests for governor, LA mayor head toward primary election with no clear leaders

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD AP Political Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California spiraled toward a primary election Tuesday with its two marquee races defined by uncertainty and with a pair of outsider candidates looking to crack open the state's durable Democratic hierarchy.

In the governor's race, former Fox News TV host and British political adviser Steve Hilton is urging Republicans to unite behind him as he fights for one of two spots in the November election alongside two Democrats, billionaire climate activist Tom Steyer and former state attorney general Xavier Becerra.

In the Los Angeles race for mayor, reality TV personality Spencer Pratt is hoping to turn his insurgent campaign into a surprise upset of Democratic Mayor Karen Bass. The two are tightly clustered with Nithya Raman, a progressive city council member running to Bass' political left.

"We can't give up on LA," Pratt told applauding supporters at a block party Sunday. "We've got to fight." Democrats once feared that the party's large field of gubernatorial candidates could open a path for two Republicans to advance to November. But now, in the campaign's closing days, Hilton is warning the opposite could happen — what he called a "doomsday scenario" in which only Democrats advance.

Hilton is pleading with his chief Republican rival, county Sheriff Chad Bianco, to pull out of the contest, fearing an all-Democratic ticket would dampen GOP turnout across the state and reorder races for Congress and the Legislature.

Becerra and Steyer locking out a Republican from the November ballot would be "a disaster for California, it means no change. It's a disaster for everyone who's running as a Republican up and down the ballot," Hilton said on the social platform X.

Mail voting began in early May, but just 15% of voters had returned their ballots as of Sunday. That's

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left the candidates seeing room for a last-minute shake-up in the race's closing days.

A vulnerable mayor looks for second term in LA

In heavily Democratic Los Angeles, Bass' shaky first term has left her vulnerable. She points to a drop in homelessness, though encampments and rows of rusting RVs remain a common sight in many neighborhoods. Meanwhile, she's still trying to overcome lingering fallout from the 2025 Palisades Fire, the most destructive in Los Angeles history. Bass was in Ghana as part of a presidential delegation when the flames ignited. Pratt lost his home in the blaze and has made the fire and the city's recovery a foundation of his campaign.

At Pratt's block party, Vivian Escalante, a historian who lives in the heavily Hispanic Boyle Heights neighborhood adjacent to downtown, said the quality of life has been sliding for years — dirtier streets, more homeless encampments and a lack of pride in the neighborhood she's called home all her life.

"It's gotten completely worse," Escalante said, with a Pratt cap perched on her head. The Democratic Party, she said, has "completely abandoned us."

The LA race is officially nonpartisan, but Bass is a Democrat, as is Raman, who made a last-minute decision to challenge her one-time ally and is among the top group of contenders.

Pratt, who rose to fame alongside his wife, Heidi Montag, on "The Hills," is a registered Republican who has received a nod of approval — if not an outright formal endorsement — from President Donald Trump. He has sought to distance himself from national politics, saying his concerns are strictly within city limits.

A University of California, Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies poll, co-sponsored by The Los Angeles Times, found Bass tightly clustered with Raman and Pratt, with other candidates trailing. The poll of 1,351 likely voters conducted between May 19 and May 24 gave no candidate a statistically significant edge.

The city is at a difficult juncture.

Hollywood jobs have been decamping for years for cheaper filming locations. A downtown renaissance was crushed by extended pandemic closures and many office buildings remain desperate for tenants. The city has long struggled to provide basic services, whether paving buckled streets and fixing sidewalks or keeping streetlights on.

A crowded governor's race with no clear leader

The governor's race has been the most wide open in a generation. More than 50 names are on the ballot.

Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom is banned by law from seeking a third term. Other candidates seeking to replace him include former Democratic U.S. Rep. Katie Porter, Democrat Matt Mahan, the mayor of San Jose, and Bianco, the Riverside County sheriff.

Rebecca Katz, a strategist with Steyer's campaign, said Sunday that they are "feeling pretty good" but emphasized how close the race was with a sporting reference, "It's three candidates for two spots, every possession counts."

Steyer, a former hedge fund manager turned liberal activist, has set spending records hoping to advance to the November contest. Hilton, a former Fox News host who has been endorsed by Trump, has promised to bring down costs in a state with some of the nation's highest gas prices, utility costs and taxes. Becerra has been stressing his experience in arguing he's best prepared to lead the nation's second most populous state, having served as the Biden administration's health secretary, a former U.S. House member and state attorney general.

Broadly, Republicans in the race are promising drastic change after years of Democratic governance — Democrats haven't lost a statewide race in two decades and Republicans last elected a Los Angeles mayor in 1997. Democrats, though in charge for years, are promising to bring down costs and continue to fend off the Trump administration in its numerous conflicts with Democratic California.



## Pro-Trump candidate pulls ahead in Colombia presidential vote as ruling party sows doubt in results

By MEGAN JANETSKY and ASTRID SUÁREZ Associated Press

BOGOTÁ, Colombia (AP) — Tough-on-crime outsider Aleraldo de la Espriella took the lead in Colombia's presidential race in the first round of voting Sunday night, setting up a runoff with Iván Cepeda, an ally of Colombia's outgoing President Gustavo Petro who questioned the results of the election.

With no candidate taking an outright majority of the vote, the election will head to a second round in June. But Cepeda and Petro sowed doubt in the results of the first round, claiming without evidence that hundreds of thousands of votes were manipulated and that foreign actors manipulated the results of the election.

Cepeda said he was waiting for electoral authorities to scrutinize the results before accepting the election.

"Only when the vote-counting commissions have fully clarified what happened will we comment on tonight's results," Cepeda said, though he acknowledged the vote was likely going to a second round.

Cepeda won 41% of the vote, while de la Espriella won 44% of the votes, with 99.98% of the results counted by electoral authorities.

Cepeda is a progressive senator who has promised to carry on a fraught plan to achieve "total peace" by negotiating peace pacts with guerrillas and criminal gangs. He was consistently leading polls in the run up to the Sunday vote, but in the weeks leading up to the election de la Espriella rapidly gained support with a promise that he would crack down on armed groups.

The neck-and-neck results likely spell trouble for Cepeda in the run-off election, as de la Espriella is expected to scoop up support from voters who threw their support behind another conservative candidate in the first round.

De la Espriella — a newcomer known as El Tigre, or "The Tiger" — has sought to portray himself as a supporter of U.S. President Donald Trump.

"Let the United States of America and democratic parties monitor this runoff election. I will lead this battle; I will be Colombia's best warrior," de la Espriella said in an impassioned speech Sunday night, pounding his chest behind bullet-proof glass in front of supporters.

Colombian voters are weighing peace deals or a crackdown

Voters across Latin America are increasingly ditching leaders that pitched progressive policies aimed at addressing the root issues of conflict, such as lack of opportunities for young people and corruption. Instead, voters have increasingly turned to candidates promising heavy-handed security crackdowns.

The polarized vote comes as the Trump administration is playing a more aggressive role in Latin America than any U.S. government in decades, placing mounting pressure on countries like Colombia, Mexico, and Ecuador to crack down on crime.

The election has also underscored two sharply diverging visions for the future of peace in a country marked by years of conflict.

On one side, Cepeda has promised to continue Petro's progressive agenda and a largely failed effort to negotiate peace pacts with armed groups, following a plan that's likely to sharply contrast with Trump's vision for Latin America.

On the other side, de la Espriella has promised to fiercely crack down on criminal groups and build 10 mega-prisons, echoing the war on gangs policy of El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele, which has driven down homicide rates but fueled accusations of human rights abuses.

"Today's election isn't just important for us, it's important for all of Latin America," said Juan Acevedo, a 62-year-old sociologist walking out of a voting station in Colombia's capital on Sunday morning. "Whoever wins here will suggest to the region if progressive policies will continue or if things are going to return to the right."

Vote is seen as a referendum on Petro

The election — 10 years after Colombia signed an historic peace pact with guerrillas of the Revolutionary

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Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC — as seen as a referendum on Petro's policies.

The deal a decade ago had offered hope to break the nation's vicious cycle of fighting between rebel groups and the government. But violence has since roared back, in part because armed groups have taken advantage of peace negotiations with Petro's government to make territorial gains.

That came to a head in the lead-up to the election. Criminal groups have increasingly launched drone strikes, armed attacks have plagued the race and last June, 39-year-old politician and presidential hopeful Miguel Uribe Turbay was fatally shot at a political rally. Still, Cepeda and Petro have maintained strong support among many because of progressive policies pushed forward under Petro, such as boosting the minimum wage.

Both de la Espriella and Valencia have touted their affinity for Trump, though Valencia's electoral loss dealt another blow to a once powerful political current known as Uribismo.

Colombians are divided on the way forward

Maria Eugenia, a 57-year-old seamstress on Friday in downtown Bogotá, Colombia's capital, said she welcomed an all-out offensive on an expanding slate of criminal groups, regardless of the human cost.

While she approved of Petro's pushes to improve the country's medical infrastructure, she said she was voting for de la Espriella because violence in rural areas of the country has gotten out of hand. She said negotiating peace pacts was effectively rewarding armed groups.

"Of course, whenever you come down with a heavy hand, there's always going to be debate," she said. "But some people are going to have to fall to clean up what needs to be cleaned up."

Others, like Acevedo, the sociologist, said a security crackdown such as the one promoted by de la Espriella meant a return to past military campaigns that he said only reinforced Colombia's cycle of violence.

He said he supports Cepeda, adding that while the government hasn't done a perfect job — failing to pass ambitious reforms and follow through on promises to reduce violence — it was better to continue pushing forward with their political coalition's efforts to take a different approach in addressing the country's violence.

He added that his main critique of Petro's administration was the power grabs made by criminal groups as they negotiated with the government. He said he hoped that if Cepeda won, he would strike a better balance between negotiating peace and maintaining control over those groups.

"We're a country that has lived through 60 years of conflict," Acevedo said. "The danger here is that we return to the times where everyone is saying that the only way to solve our problems is with bullets and more war."

## **Platner's wife calls news coverage of Senate hopeful's sexually explicit texts with women 'shameful'**

By JESSE BEDAYN and KIMBERLEE KRUESI Associated Press

Graham Platner's wife called the media reports that her husband had previously exchanged sexually explicit text messages with several women "shameful" over the weekend, the latest controversy to hit the Maine Democrat's whirlwind Senate campaign.

Platner, an oyster farmer and combat veteran, posted a video taken by his wife, Amy Gertner, who reportedly told his campaign of the text messages last year. In the five-minute video, Gertner avoided speaking directly about her husband's reported texts, dubbing the broader coverage as "gossip" and saying that "being married is hard."

"I find it really shameful that there's a group of media outlets and people who are willing to spread gossip," she said in the informal, selfie-style video where she walked along a road. "No marriage is perfect, and I don't want a perfect marriage. I want my marriage."

Platner is seeking the Democratic nomination for one of the most closely watched Senate races as Democrats hope to defeat longtime Republican Sen. Susan Collins in the party's efforts to win control of the narrowly divided Senate. The Maine primary is June 9.

Genevieve McDonald, a then-campaign staffer for Platner, told the The Associated Press that the can-

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didate was "sexting multiple women while married" and that "the campaign tried to assess that as an election vulnerability."

Platner told reporters Sunday that what McDonald had said wasn't true. Asked if he was confirming that the text messages didn't exist, Platner replied, "I'm confirming that what Genevieve McDonald said in The New York Times is not true." Platner didn't provide any specifics. He was referring to a Times story that names McDonald Saturday, after The Wall Street Journal first reported the story.

Gertner had told the campaign in August about the messages, which she had discovered on his phone last year, to make sure they weren't a liability to the campaign, according to the Wall Street Journal. Platner's campaign team reportedly decided that the texts were private and being handled by the couple, who were married in 2023. The two are in counseling, Gertner has said.

Platner told reporters that he and Gertner spoke with the campaign about their marriage, but reiterated that McDonald's claims were false.

Platner's campaign on Sunday did not specifically confirm the text messages to the AP, but issued a statement from Gertner saying the disclosure of the conversations she had with a campaign aide was a betrayal that "deeply hurt."

"I trusted this person with the most private chapter of our lives — the early days of our marriage before any campaign was on our mind," she wrote.

It's not Platner's first controversy

Platner, who has never held public office, has a gruff, less buttoned-up approach on the campaign trail, fashioned a platform around economic equality and has already had to navigate statements that surfaced from his past.

The candidate had a tattoo recognized as a Nazi symbol, which he said he didn't realize until he was several weeks into the campaign. There's also been much attention on his former Reddit posts, which were dismissive of military sexual assaults and used homophobic slurs, for which he has apologized.

Platner's campaign weathered those earlier revelations in what had been considered one of the most competitive Democratic primaries before Gov. Janet Mills dropped out of the race in late April due to a lack of campaign funds. Mills, a two-term governor, had been seen as one of the Democrats' top 2026 recruits when she entered the Senate race before her campaign fizzled out.

Platner has still pulled support from big-name Democrats, including Sens. Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Ruben Gallego as well as U.S. House Rep. Ro Khanna. The latter is scheduled to rally with Platner on Friday, and so far, it appears he hasn't lost any endorsements with this latest texting revelation.

Two Democratic senators on Sunday declined to directly address the topic when pressed by reporters. Connecticut Sen. Chris Murphy told CBS' "Face the Nation" that Platner had served his country and community, but "also made mistakes and he has admitted that."

On CNN's "State of the Union," New Jersey Sen. Andy Kim sidestepped, too. "With any campaign in the country, the character and the transparency about the different candidates is going to come out," said Kim, "and the voters are going to decide what they ultimately think."

Barreling forward Sunday, Platner posted a video on X from an event "happening now" where he entered a room to a standing ovation from ecstatic supporters.

Questions over whether additional controversial information about Platner could still surface have added to some Democrats' anxiety over his chances in a general election against Collins, who has represented Maine in the Senate since 1997.

In October, after the revelation that he once had a Totenkopf tattoo on his chest and promptly had it covered, the AP asked him if other scandals were on the horizon.

Platner said he was expecting his opponents were "going to keep dragging things up."

"They're going to keep making things up," he said. "I fully expect people to just lie about me at this point."

Voters are familiar with the couple's struggles, including with infertility and traveling out of the country to afford IVF treatment, which they've discussed on the campaign trail.

In late April, Platner shared that Gertner had suffered a miscarriage, and he's discussed his own mental

health struggles and the role of his family and therapist in helping.

Former aide explains why she went public

McDonald initially worked on Platner's campaign as his political director and resigned a few months later when his now-deleted Reddit posts began surfacing, saying she couldn't stand behind him as a candidate. She later declined a severance offer from the campaign in exchange for signing a non-disclosure agreement.

On Saturday, McDonald wrote on Facebook that Platner's campaign had "demanded" she retract her statements she had made to The Wall Street Journal or his team would accuse her of violating the couple's trust. McDonald wasn't named in the newspaper's article, but after that exchange, she said she made the choice to be publicly named in a New York Times story.

"His consultants greatly overestimate how much I do not aspire to be them," she wrote on Facebook.

After resigning from Platner's campaign, McDonald moved to help Democrat Jordan Wood's congressional campaign in Maine's second district. McDonald submitted her resignation from Wood's campaign Saturday morning, according to Wood's campaign.

Wood endorsed Platner after Mills dropped out.

## Marta Kostyuk stuns 4-time champion Iga Swiatek on big day for Ukraine at French Open

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — There will be a first-time women's champion at the French Open this year, and two Ukrainian players are among the strongest contenders.

Undefeated this season on clay, 15th-seeded Marta Kostyuk showed her strong credentials as she reached the quarterfinals in Paris for the first time on Sunday by taking out four-time champion Iga Swiatek 7-5, 6-1 and ruining her birthday.

She will be up against her compatriot Elina Svitolina next, ensuring there will be an Ukrainian woman semifinalist at Roland Garros for the first time in the professional era (1968). The seventh-seeded Svitolina rallied past Belinda Bencic 4-6, 6-4, 6-0.

"There's going to be Ukraine in the semifinals, so it's already amazing," said Svitolina, whose country is in a 4-year-old war with Russia.

"I think it couldn't be a better, amazing achievement for Ukrainian tennis. I think in such a difficult situation right now in the war, with the invasion, it's really, really difficult, and I think it's really inspiring for the next generation to really believe that it is possible one day to play on this court and win."

None of the players still in the draw have yet lifted the trophy in Paris, following Coco Gauff's elimination on Saturday and Swiatek's exit. It's the same in the men's draw, after the defeats of Jannik Sinner and Novak Djokovic and with Carlos Alcaraz absent because of an injury.

In men's play, Spanish teenager Rafael Jodar moved into his first Grand Slam quarterfinal after coming back from two sets down to beat Pablo Carreno Busta 4-6, 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2. Jodar, who also played five sets in the previous round, will play second-seeded and former runner-up Alexander Zverev in the quarterfinals. Zverev defeated Jesper de Jong 7-6 (3), 6-4, 6-1.

Also, 19-year-old Joao Fonseca followed up his five-set victory over Novak Djokovic by beating two-time runner-up Casper Ruud 7-5, 7-6 (8), 5-7, 6-2.

Fonseca will next face 20-year-old Jakub Mensik, who held off a comeback from Andrey Rublev in a 6-3, 7-6 (6), 4-6, 2-6, 6-3 win.

Swiatek's bad day

Kostyuk had lost her three previous matches against Swiatek and never taken a set against the former top-ranked player, who turned 25 on Sunday.

"I'm still in shock. To beat such an unbelievable player, who won four times here," she said.

Kostyuk has been the best player of the clay-court season. She defended extremely well, chasing Swiatek's shots all over the court, and also produced some stunning groundstroke winners while her rival



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was also undone by her own mistakes.

An intense baseline battle unfolded from the outset. Swiatek showed signs of nerves as she double-faulted, shanked a forehand wide and then missed a volley at the net, allowing Kostyuk to level at 5-5 in the opener. Swiatek hit two more double faults in the 12th game and the 15th-seeded Ukrainian player sealed the set with a backhand passing shot.

Swiatek then briefly left the court. Meanwhile, Kostyuk kept herself warm by stretching and hopping beside her chair, then received some applause as she did a few dance moves to the music playing in the stadium.

Following a first week marked by a suffocating heatwave, relief finally arrived in Paris on Sunday, with temperatures dropping to 21 degrees C (70 F) around midday. When play resumed, Swiatek broke but another double fault coupled with more unforced errors brought her opponent back at 1-1. Kostyuk then won the last five games.

Kostyuk, who had reached the fourth round at Roland Garros in 2021 when she lost to Swiatek, extended her winning streak on clay to 16 matches. Ahead of the French Open, she won in Madrid, the biggest title of her career, after she claimed another clay-court title in Rouen, France.

"The most important thing that I've been doing this whole time is really just trying to enjoy," she said. "It's helping. I want to keep enjoying. I try not to focus at all on winning or losing because I'm not playing tennis to win, I'm playing tennis because I love it."

17 years later

Romanian veteran Sorana Cirstea, who is planning to retire at the end of the season, beat Chinese qualifier Wang Xiyu 6-3, 7-6 (4) to reach her second Roland Garros quarterfinal, 17 years after first making it to the last eight.

The gap between Cirstea's first and second Grand Slam quarterfinal appearances in Paris is the longest at a single major by any woman in the Open Era.

"There is no expiration date for ambition and for dreams," Cirstea said. "I think back then I was a kid, just started on tour. Now I have so many years behind me. I have so much experience, maturity. I feel I'm a completely different player."

Also advancing was Mirra Andreeva of Russia, who beat Jil Teichmann 6-3, 6-2.

## Indigenous leader Brooklyn Rivera dies in Nicaragua after nearly 3 years of detention

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Brooklyn Rivera, a renowned Indigenous leader from Nicaragua who spent years fighting for the rights of his community and was imprisoned by the government in September 2023, has died.

The Nicaraguan government issued a statement Sunday saying that Rivera died from a bacterial infection after his health had declined following a case of COVID-19, which led to his physical and neurological deterioration.

Human rights activists and groups worldwide denounced his death and an earlier statement by the government in which they referred to Rivera as "Brother" and said they were praying for him.

"They took him alive, and after refusing to tell his family, his lawyer, the world anything about his fate, then they call him brother," said Reed Brody, an American human rights lawyer and member of a group of U.N. experts on Nicaragua. "Unconscionable cynicism on the part of the government to make it seem like they were trying to help him."

The U.S. had called for his release on Friday after the Nicaraguan government published photos of him in the hospital in critical condition.

"This is just complete neglect," said Manuel Orozco, director of the migration, remittances and development program at the Inter-American Dialogue. "His death represents the magnitude of repression."

The Argentina-based Inter-American Center for Legal Assistance in Human Rights also denounced

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Rivera's death. Those responsible for the death of the Indigenous lawmaker "should be held criminally accountable," it wrote on X.

Albert R. Ramdin, secretary general of the Organization of American States, said he was "deeply concerned" about reports of Rivera's death.

"His death demands an immediate, independent, and transparent investigation," Ramdin wrote Sunday on X. "The rights to life, personal integrity, and due process must be guaranteed. My condolences to his family and the Miskito people. We continue to demand the unconditional release of all political prisoners unjustly detained by the Nicaraguan regime."

**A fight for land and autonomy**

Rivera led the Miskito people, who live along Nicaragua's northeast coast and have long fought to retain their lands.

For decades, he fought the ruling Sandinista government and helped establish the area along the northeast coast as an autonomous region. It is rich in gold, silver and other resources, and it is considered a key area for the administration of co-Presidents Daniel Ortega and his wife Rosario Murillo to attract foreign investment.

Rivera's fight for Nicaragua's Indigenous people began in the 1960s. After opposing Ortega's Sandinista's government in the late 1970s, he temporarily went into exile in nearby Costa Rica in 1980.

He later returned to Nicaragua, where he survived an attack by Sandinista forces, forcing him once again to seek safety elsewhere, this time, in Colombia.

In the late 1980s, he founded the group known as Yatama, the Organization of the Peoples of Mother Earth. It played a key role in securing limited autonomy for Indigenous people following peace negotiations with the Sandinistas.

"He has been fighting in one way or another for their rights," Brody said. "He fought for land, he fought for autonomy."

Nicaragua's Indigenous people operated autonomously until they were annexed into the country in 1905.

"Since then, they have advocated for the recognition of their rights and for respect for their identity," stated a September 2024 report published by the group of U.N. experts.

**First official sign of life since the 2023 arrest**

In April 2023, Rivera traveled to Geneva to participate in a U.N. forum on Indigenous people, where he spoke out against the Nicaraguan government.

Shortly afterward, Ortega and Murillo banned him from returning to the country, but he slipped in anyway and lived in hiding until September 2023, when he was arrested and accused of terrorism.

"Nobody heard from him since then," Brody said in a phone interview, adding that he and other U.N. experts wrote the government requesting that it provide some sign of life. "The government never gave any indication. He was a disappeared person."

It wasn't until late last week that the government published pictures of Rivera in the hospital.

Rivera was not only respected by his supporters, but by political opponents as well, Orozco said in a phone interview, noting he had known Rivera for decades.

"It's disheartening how this dynasty is just getting rid of people, back and forth, left and right and getting away with it," he said.

Ever since his arrest and that of his second-in-command, Rivera's party has gone into hiding, Orozco said.

"This is a big blow," he said. "They have been basically dispersed, not organized. They keep a certain level of communication, of political engagement underground, but mostly with people in the exile."

Condolences for Rivera poured in online, with one person writing on Facebook: "He was a father to our generation; he taught us, guided us, and led us with actions, not words."

Brody noted that the U.N. group of experts has documented 124 cases of arbitrary detention of Indigenous people in Nicaragua since 2018, and 46 deaths following violence incidents.

He noted that at least six political prisoners have died in custody since 2019, including two last August.

"Brooklyn Rivera spent 40 years fighting for his people," he said, "and hopefully the international community will finally pay attention."

## What to know as Israeli forces' historic Lebanon incursion complicates an Iran deal

By MELANIE LIDMAN, KAREEM CHEHAYEB and CARA ANNA Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli forces are making their deepest incursion inside Lebanon since they withdrew from the country over a quarter-century ago, despite a nominal U.S.-brokered ceasefire and the first direct talks between the countries in decades.

The Israeli advance presents a challenge in the emerging deal to extend the Iran war ceasefire as Tehran wants any agreement to end fighting in Lebanon, too. Qatar called it a "dangerous escalation." Germany's foreign minister said it was cause for serious concern, according to German press agency dpa. There was no comment by the United States.

On Sunday, Israeli forces seized a symbolic fort in southern Lebanon that offers commanding views across Lebanon and into northern Israel. The last time they seized it, they held it for 18 years.

Israel says it is targeting the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group, which has a strong political presence in southern Lebanon and has launched thousands of missiles and drones at Israeli soldiers there and in northern Israel.

Israel has warned Lebanese civilians across the south to evacuate or risk being in the line of fire. Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam on Saturday accused Israel of "implementing a policy of total destruction of cities and towns."

Over 3,300 people, including dozens of children, have been killed in Lebanon since the fighting began March 2, two days after the Iran war started. About 1 million people have been displaced. At least 25 Israeli soldiers and a defense contractor have been killed in Lebanon or northern Israel, along with two civilians in northern Israel.

Here's what to know:

Fort has been a military asset for nearly 1,000 years

Israeli forces seized Beaufort, also called Al-Shaqif, which was built as a Crusader castle around the 12th century and later used by Saladin's Jerusalem army, Mamluks, Ottomans, the French mandate and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who last week vowed to "increase the blows," noted that Beaufort is "a symbol of a heroic battle for our fighters" but also "a symbol of deep division between us."

The fort summons a sense of victory over the Israeli military's seizure of it in 1982, but it also symbolizes the high price of defending it before it was handed over in 2000, said Orna Mizrahi, a former deputy director in the government's National Security Council.

The military's return feels like Israel is going in circles, said Mizrahi, now a senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies. "There's a feeling of, 'For what?'"

Israel likely will relinquish control eventually, she said, even as Defense Minister Israel Katz vows to make Beaufort part of Israel's permanent security zone in southern Lebanon.

The military's presence will not solve the issue with Hezbollah, Mizrahi said: "Yes, we are damaging them in the operations, but in parallel we need to pursue a political and diplomatic solution."

Israel sees a threat to its northern communities

Israel has long considered Hezbollah a threat. The Shiite Muslim armed group emerged in 1982 in response to an Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. Hezbollah has targeted communities in northern Israel and joined the war in Gaza in 2023 in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Israel badly weakened Hezbollah during months of war. Fighting ended with a U.S.-brokered ceasefire in late 2024 after indirect talks, and Israeli forces withdrew except from five strategic hilltops along the border.

The new Lebanese government came to power with promises to disarm groups such as Hezbollah, but the militants resisted. Israel, meanwhile, claimed that Hezbollah was rearming and rebuilding.

On March 2, Hezbollah again fired at Israel, prompting Israel to invade southern Lebanon. Lately, Israel has said it is trying to keep Hezbollah from using a new kind of fiber-optic drone against its forces and

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civilians. The drone has been widely used in the war in Ukraine.

Lebanon says Israel has gone too far

Hundreds of thousands of people have fled southern Lebanon as Israeli forces carried out airstrikes and ground troops pushed into the country. Many people now shelter in the capital, Beirut, where hundreds have been killed, including in an intense bombardment in April.

The United States brokered a ceasefire that began in mid-April. Unlike the one in the Iran war, it has not held.

Israeli forces now control large areas in southern Lebanon and have demolished homes and historical sites. Israel is trying to "uproot Lebanon's memory and erase the people's history," Lebanon's prime minister, Salam, said Saturday.

Hezbollah has refused to accept results of talks

Talks between senior officials from Israel and Lebanon began in April in Washington, the first in more than three decades between the countries that have no formal diplomatic relations.

On Friday, the first direct military talks in decades occurred.

Issues to work out include an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, deployment of Lebanese forces there and the disarming of Hezbollah, which has refused to give up weapons while Israeli forces remain in the country.

Talks will continue this week. Hezbollah is not taking part and has said it would not accept any results. The group prefers that negotiations benefit from Iran's leverage and sees the Lebanese government as weak, a position shared by some others in the country.

Lebanon's people have been divided over the talks, whose announcement was met with protests. Many Lebanese are angry with Hezbollah for the destruction it has caused in the country but also wary of Israel.

Lebanon's prime minister has called the direct negotiations "currently the least costly option," adding that they don't mean a surrender and acknowledging they are not guaranteed to produce results.

## Blast at building storing explosives in Myanmar kills more than 45 people

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A blast on Sunday at a building in northeastern Myanmar said to have been storing explosives for mining has killed more than 45 people, according to rescue workers and independent media reports.

About 70 other people were injured in the explosion that took place around noon in the village of Kaung-tup, in Namhkam township.

The area, located about 3 kilometers (2 miles) south of the Chinese border, is under the control of the Ta'ang National Liberation Army, an ethnic armed group which has engaged in sporadic fighting against Myanmar's central government.

A rescue worker who rushed to the site of the blast told The Associated Press that 46 bodies, including six children, had been recovered by Sunday evening and taken for cremation.

The rescuer, who spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons, said 74 injured people had been transported to the township hospital and rescue operations were continuing.

Another rescuer in Namhkam, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said about 40 people were killed and more than 100 houses near the blast site were damaged.

Myanmar media outlets, including Shan State's online Shwe Phee Myay news agency, reported death tolls ranging from 50 to 55. They published photos and videos showing smoke from the explosion and damaged buildings and debris in its aftermath.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV reported the explosion caused multiple deaths and injuries, with many residential houses being severely damaged, but did not give figures.

It said that according to preliminary investigations, the blast occurred at a site where large quantities of explosives used for mining operations were stored.



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Local authorities are currently providing relief, medical care and resettlement assistance to affected residents, said the report.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, said in a statement released on its Telegram channel that gelignite had been stored by the group's economic department for use in mining and stone quarrying sites, and that an investigation into the cause of the explosion is underway.

Gelignite is widely used in mining and rock blasting, but can become highly unstable over time and if poorly stored.

The Ta'ang National Liberation Army, or TNLA, is a member of the rebel Three Brotherhood Alliance, and has controlled the Namhkam area since the alliance and its allies launched a major offensive against the military in northeastern Myanmar in late 2023. The alliance members and other ethnic armed groups have long fought for increased autonomy.

The TNLA signed a ceasefire with Myanmar's military following China-mediated talks in October last year, but relations remain tense.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi on Feb. 1, 2021, triggering widespread popular opposition. After peaceful demonstrations were put down with lethal force, many opponents of military rule took up arms, and large parts of the country are now embroiled in conflict.

## **Jonas Vingegaard wins Giro d'Italia to become the eighth male rider to win all 3 Grand Tours**

ROME (AP) — Danish cyclist Jonas Vingegaard won the Giro d'Italia on Sunday, becoming the eighth male rider to win all three Grand Tours.

Vingegaard, who rides for Team Visma-Lease a Bike, ended the three-week race with an overall advantage of 5 minutes, 22 seconds over second-place Felix Gall. Jai Hindley finished third, 6:25 behind.

Vingegaard won the Tour de France in 2022 and '23 and last year clinched his first Spanish Vuelta title. It was his first Giro.

"It's amazing. It's something I've dreamt of my whole life and to now be able to do it, it's something special," an emotional Vingegaard said in his first interview as Giro winner. "I'm lost for words.

"It was a really special day, with so many people on the side of the road, so many spectators, it was really incredible. To get the honor to wear the maglia rosa in the streets of Rome is something special. With these last three weeks, it's just such a nice way to end this race."

After crossing the line in Rome, the 29-year-old Vingegaard embraced his wife and two children, who were wearing replicas of his maglia rosa — the leader's pink jersey.

"Yeah, that's even nicer, it also gives me tears in my eyes, they're always there for me," said Vingegaard, who has celebrated his five stage wins at the Giro by kissing the photo of his family that is on the handlebar of his bicycle, before kissing his wedding ring.

Vingegaard also carried his children with him to the podium, where he was presented with the Trofeo Senza Fine (Trophy With No End).

Having dominated his first Giro — living up to his billing as pre-race favorite — Vingegaard will turn his attention to the Tour de France as he attempts to become the ninth man to complete the Giro-Tour double in the same year.

However, there he will face cycling's top talent Tadej Pogacar. The Slovenian, who skipped the Giro to focus on adding to his four Tour titles, became the first man in 26 years to do the Giro-Tour double when he achieved the feat in 2024.

Sunday's largely processional final Giro stage, that ended with eight laps through Rome, was won by sprint specialist Jonathan Milan.

The 131-kilometer route started in Rome and then went out the sea before returning to the Italian capital for the finishing circuit.

So relaxed were the riders that they were all seen sharing a box of sweets as they started the stage,

before also being given glasses of Prosecco. They also all posed for team photos during the ride out to the sea.

Milan, who had seen other bids for stage wins end in disappointment earlier in the race, finally got his victory. The Italian edged out compatriot Giovanni Lonardi and French cyclist Paul Penhoët in a bunch sprint.

"I'm super happy to end this Giro in this way," Milan said. "It's beautiful. After three weeks that we were looking for this, winning the last stage in Rome means that we were keeping the head there, we never give up, we always keep fighting for the victory, we were always believing in it, we always believe in each other."

## **Ukraine hits Russian energy targets and denies striking Kremlin-occupied nuclear plant**

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Kyiv on Sunday launched new strikes overnight on Russian energy sites. It has also denied Moscow's claims that a Ukrainian drone struck the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant.

Ukraine's General Staff said Ukrainian drones struck the Saratov oil refinery in southwestern Russia, causing a large-scale fire. It claimed the refinery has been supplying Moscow's war effort.

The refinery belongs to Russia's state oil enterprise, Rosneft. Local Russian Gov. Roman Busargin said Ukrainian drones had damaged civilian infrastructure, but did not give details. Astra, an independent Russian news channel, said an oil refinery was on fire in the city of Saratov.

Ukraine has stepped up its attacks on Russia's oil and gas facilities in recent months, arguing the energy sector funds and directly fuels Moscow's more than four-year invasion.

"Tonight, our soldiers applied Ukraine's long-range sanctions against an oil refinery in Saratov, Russia — approximately 700 kilometers (435 miles) from the front line. A significant achievement," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote on social media on Sunday.

Drone debris also set fire to a fuel depot in Russia's southwestern Rostov region, which borders Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine, Gov. Yuriy Slyusar reported on Telegram on Sunday. He said residents of nearby homes were evacuated.

Ukraine's General Staff on Sunday confirmed its forces were behind the strike on the facility in the town of Matveev Kurgan. Local authorities said a drone strike on the depot had caused a large-scale fire across a wide area.

According to its General Staff, Ukraine also struck the Lazarevo pumping station in Russia's Kirov region northeast of Moscow, more than 1,200 kilometers (745 miles) from Ukrainian-controlled land. The station helps ship Russian oil from Siberia to Belarus.

Regional Gov. Alexander Sokolov said drones had hit a facility in the Kirov region, without giving further details.

Russia says a Ukrainian drone struck a nuclear plant

Kyiv denied that a Ukrainian drone struck the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, Europe's largest. Russia's state nuclear energy company, Rosatom, said on Saturday that the drone exploded after tearing a hole in the wall of a turbine hall. Rosatom's CEO Alexei Likhachev accused Ukraine of a deliberate attack.

"This afternoon, a Ukrainian kamikaze combat drone struck the turbine hall building of Power Unit No. 6, resulting in a detonation," Likhachev said. He added there was no damage to main equipment.

Ukraine's military said it did not target or strike the plant, describing the Russian claim as "yet another propaganda ploy." A military statement said that it adheres to international humanitarian law and is aware of the "consequences of any actions targeting nuclear facilities."

Rafael Grossi, head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog — the International Atomic Energy Agency — expressed "serious concern" in a post on X following the incident.

The IAEA said in a statement Sunday that its inspectors at the plant "observed damage to the exterior of a turbine building" that was "consistent with the impact" of a drone. It gave no details of where the drone may have come from, but said radiation levels at the site remained normal. It added that its inspectors

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had requested access to the inside of the turbine hall for further examination.

Russian forces captured the Zaporizhzhia plant in the early weeks of the war, and it remains close to the front lines in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, one of four Russia has formally annexed despite lacking full military control or international recognition for its actions. The nuclear plant has repeatedly come under fire since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, sparking fears of a nuclear accident. Moscow and Kyiv have blamed each other for targeting the plant.

Zelenskyy claims Russia treats abducted Ukrainian children 'as combatants'

In an interview broadcast Sunday, Zelenskyy told CBS News' "Face the Nation" that Russia treats abducted Ukrainian children "essentially as combatants," claiming Kyiv has evidence they are being trained to fight against fellow Ukrainians.

"They taught these children to hate their native country, to hate (their) native people. And Ukrainians, can you imagine, such young Ukrainians — young boys — come to the battlefield and kill (other) Ukrainians," he said.

He also alleged that Russians have separated abducted Ukrainian siblings, adopting them out to different families, and offered to trade some children for captured Ukrainian soldiers in prisoner swaps.

"There are hundreds of examples of such steps by Russia," Zelenskyy said, without specifying what evidence his government had.

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, tens of thousands of children have been unlawfully deported or forcibly transferred to Russia or Russian-held territories in eastern Ukraine.

Earlier this month, the European Union imposed sanctions on 16 officials accused of helping the abductions, claiming many children had their identities changed or were put up for adoption.

Sanctions were also slapped on seven centers suspected of indoctrinating the children or training them to serve in the armed forces, either for Russia or pro-Russian militias inside Ukraine.

The International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions.

Deadly drone attacks continue

Elsewhere, Ukraine's air force said Sunday that it had shot down 212 of 299 drones launched by Russia overnight. It said 14 drones had reached their targets, while drone debris fell in five locations.

A truck driver died early on Sunday as drones hit a parking lot in Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region, according to local administration head Vyacheslav Chaus.

Russian drones struck the city of Dnipro and an oil refinery in Ukraine's Rivne region, causing fires, authorities said. The head of the Dnipropetrovsk region, of which Dnipro is the capital, said later on Sunday that one person was killed and nine were injured in Russian attacks in the province.

## WHO chief reports 5 Ebola recoveries as a new treatment center opens in eastern Congo

By JUSTIN KABUMBA and MARK BANCHEREAU Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Five patients have recovered from a rare type of Ebola virus, the head of the World Health Organization said Sunday during a visit to Bunia in eastern Congo, a city at the heart of an outbreak.

"Four people will be discharged today and there was one that was discharged the day before yesterday," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said during the opening of a new Ebola treatment center in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province.

"Of course, we're still working on vaccines and treatments but that doesn't mean that people cannot recover from Ebola," he added.

The WHO said Friday a patient had recovered from the Bundibugyo virus, the current species of Ebola, which has no approved treatment or vaccine. It was the first documented recovery of a confirmed Bundibugyo patient during the current outbreak.

The health organization said authorities have reported 134 confirmed cases in Congo and neighboring Uganda, including 18 confirmed deaths as of May 29.

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Recovered patients describe their experience

Baraka Bulambulu, one of those who recovered, told The Associated Press on Sunday that community members feared contracting an unknown illness from them, keeping their distance while delivering food and medicine.

He said the uncertainty was overwhelming, as he and other patients believed they might die without knowing what disease they had, though testing eventually confirmed Ebola.

"Being able to come out of this alive is an immense source of happiness," Bulambulu said. "Many people who were in the same situation died."

Ezo Etienne, a nurse, said his symptoms began during ward rounds when he suddenly felt dizzy, then rapidly deteriorated into vomiting, intense itching, severe diarrhea and extreme weakness. He was tested seven times before Ebola was confirmed.

His treatment remained purely to treat the symptoms: medications to control vomiting, fluids to prevent dehydration and pain relievers. "That was all they could provide," he said.

He urged the public and healthcare workers not to dismiss early symptoms such as vomiting and headaches, warning that misinformation leads many people to believe they have been poisoned rather than seeking hospital care.

Lack of supplies, distrust and insecurity complicate response

Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, said Saturday the virus continues to spread faster than the response despite better-organized health facilities and new aid arrivals. It called for the immediate expansion of testing, faster deployment of aid workers and sustained access for medical supplies.

The dangers faced by health workers have been heightened by anger among residents over the stringent medical protocols for handling the victims' bodies, which clash with local burial rites. Residents have launched at least three attacks against health centers.

Tedros stressed the importance of involving the community in the outbreak response during the opening of the new treatment center on Sunday.

"If you come to health facilities when you have symptoms, you can get the support and recover, so the key is to come forward as early as possible and to get the necessary support," the WHO chief said.

"We can stop this Ebola and anyone who has it can also recover. But the rule ... is this thing is everybody's business and every citizen should be involved," he added.

Attacks in the region by the Allied Democratic Forces, a rebel group allied with the Islamic State group, and a coalition of ethnic militias have also hindered the response.

ADF fighters killed seven people Saturday in Beni, North Kivu province, an area also affected by the outbreak, the Congolese army and civil society groups said.

The illness also has been reported in both North Kivu and South Kivu, south of Ituri, where the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group controls many key cities, including Goma and Bukavu.

"The final message we would like to share with the Ituri community is that there is hope," Pierre Akilimali, incident manager at Congo's National Institute of Public Health, said during the inauguration on Sunday.

"With the symptomatic treatment that we are currently providing, we are seeing patients recover," Akilimali added.

"We truly have hope. The virus here is not as complicated as those we have dealt with in the past, and with the support of all our partners, we believe we will be able to bring this outbreak under control as quickly as possible," said Davin Ambitapio, another doctor at the treatment center.

## Man charged with murder in killings of 3 on Hawaii's Big Island

HONOLULU (AP) — Authorities in Hawaii have charged a 36-year-old man with murder in the killings of three people in a remote community known for its eclectic, communal lifestyle.

Jacob Daniel Baker was charged with counts of first- and second-degree murder Saturday, the Hawaii Police Department said in a news release.

Baker remained jailed without bond Sunday and police said his first court appearance was scheduled for



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Monday. It was not immediately known if Baker had an attorney who could speak for him.

Charges in the killings came two days after police apprehended Baker following a manhunt on Hawaii's Big Island, where the three victims were found in the rural Puna community known for its tropical landscape and free-spirited residents.

Robert Shine, 69, was found dead Monday partially submerged in a cement pond, according to police. The second victim, a 79-year-old man, was discovered Tuesday a few hundred feet away. Friends identified him as Chitta Morse.

Police found the third victim, 69-year-old John Carse, late Tuesday at a property 19 miles (31 kilometers) from where the other two bodies were located.

Police have not given a suspected motive for the killings. Hawaii Police Chief Reed Mahuna has said investigators found no connections among the victims other than that two of them lived near each other.

In addition to the murder charges, Baker also faces counts of burglary, auto theft and criminal damage to property.

The killings left residents on edge in Puna, a community set amid lush jungle and barren lava fields where people seeking to live off-grid commonly trade work for lodging.

Puna resident Stephen Shaffer said that Baker had worked for his ex-wife, climbing coconut trees on land where she grows fruit, in exchange for a place to live. After several months, Shaffer said, his ex-wife sought a restraining order against Baker, saying she felt threatened by him.

Donald Hyatt, a friend of Shaffer's ex-wife and of two of the men killed, said Baker left the cabin where he had been living months ago. Hyatt said that Baker recently returned claiming "squatter's rights" and threatened Shaffer's ex.

Just days before the killings, two women had requested temporary restraining orders against Baker, saying he had threatened and harassed them, according to court records. A judge denied both applications, saying there was not enough proof of harassment.

Court records showed Baker named in 20 other cases in the past two decades, many of them traffic infractions. In most of those cases, Baker had no attorney and represented himself.

## **What to know about the outbreak of a rare kind of Ebola**

By CHINEDU ASADU and MOGOMOTSI MAGOME Associated Press

ABUJA, Nigeria (AP) — An outbreak of a rare type of Ebola virus has plagued Congo and Uganda, as cases outpace the response.

The World Health Organization has said that as of May 29, a total of 134 confirmed cases, including nine in Uganda, with 18 deaths among the confirmed cases, have been reported across both countries. The WHO has declared the Ebola disease outbreak in Congo and Uganda a public health emergency of international concern.

Health authorities say the outbreak is caused by Bundibugyo virus, a rare type of Ebola that has no approved medicines or vaccines. The outbreak is occurring in a part of Congo facing conflict caused by armed rebel groups and the displacement of large numbers of people fleeing the violence. Despite new aid arrivals, medical personnel continue to struggle with a lack of equipment and a distrustful population.

Here's what to know:

How Ebola can spread

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

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

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

What the WHO's emergency declaration means

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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 donors into action. However, the global response to previous declarations has been mixed.

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

An array of aid agencies are trying to help. WHO representatives in Congo said organizations on the ground included UNICEF, the International Organization for Migration, Médecins Sans Frontières, the World Food Program and the Red Cross.

Where the outbreak started

The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the first cases were reported in late April in Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, and the nearby Mongbwalu health zone, a high-traffic mining area. However, officials say they are not certain of the source and the outbreak may have started weeks earlier and gone unnoticed.

Ituri is in remote eastern Congo, with poor road networks and health facilities, and is more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from the capital, Kinshasa.

Attacks in Ituri by the Allied Democratic Force, a rebel group allied with the Islamic State group, and a coalition of ethnic militias have also hindered the response. The illness also has been reported in the Congolese provinces of North Kivu and South Kivu, south of Ituri, where the Rwanda-backed M23 rebel group controls many key cities, including Goma and Bukavu. The rebels have reported two cases.

Outbreak linked to rare virus

The WHO says Ebola is caused by a group of viruses, and three kinds are known to cause large outbreaks: Ebola virus, Sudan virus and Bundibugyo virus. The Bundibugyo type of Ebola is rare and different from the Ebola virus, sometimes known as the Zaire virus, that has been dominant in Congo's previous outbreaks.

It was first detected in Uganda's Bundibugyo district during a 2007-2008 outbreak that killed 37 people. The second time was in 2012 in an outbreak in Isiro, Congo, where 29 deaths were reported. The current outbreak is the worst known one linked to the Bundibugyo virus.

The average fatality rate of Bundibugyo virus is around 30%-50%, Anaïs Legand, a researcher in the WHO emergencies program said on May 29.

Dr. Gabriel Nsakala, a professor of public health who has been involved in past Ebola responses in Congo, said the country has extensive experience managing Ebola outbreaks, but response efforts could be complicated by the unusual type. The initial response was delayed because health authorities first tested for the more common Ebola virus.

International response

When the outbreak was confirmed, the Africa CDC convened an urgent high-level meeting with health authorities from Congo, Uganda and South Sudan, together with key partners including U.N. agencies. A WHO technical advisory group is looking at candidate vaccines that could be prioritized for clinical trial, though experts caution this will take time, likely months.

Funding is also a challenge following recent aid cuts to Africa by the United States and other rich nations. Medical aid donated by the European Union arrived in Ituri province on May 28, with more shipments expected. The U.S. announced \$80 million in additional aid on the same day, bringing its total commitment to more than \$112 million.

The response has not kept pace with one of the fastest-spreading outbreaks on record, Doctors Without Borders, or MSF, warned on May 30, calling for an immediate expansion of testing, faster deployment of aid workers and sustained access for medical supplies.

Dangers faced by health workers have been heightened by anger among residents over the stringent medical protocols for handling the victims' bodies, which clash with local burial rites. Residents have launched at least three attacks against health centers.

## What to know about the Stanley Cup Final between the Vegas Golden Knights and Carolina Hurricanes

By STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — Nineteen players have registered a point for the Carolina Hurricanes during their nearly perfect playoff run. The Vegas Golden Knights have gotten at least one from 22 players on their way to the Stanley Cup Final.

Carolina has 12 different goal-scorers. Vegas has 15.

"They're deep, we're deep, so it'll be a good matchup," Golden Knights defenseman Brayden McNabb said.

A matchup so close on paper that the Hurricanes are a very slight favorite. They've won 12 of 13 games through three rounds and have home-ice advantage.

But after NHL-best Colorado got swept by Vegas, Avalanche coach Jared Bednar said he and his team "ran into a buzzsaw." The Western Conference Final was one-sided with the Golden Knights dominating.

"They dismantled Colorado," player-turned-ESPN analyst Ray Ferraro said. "I don't know if there's ever such a thing as perfect, but whatever next door to perfect was, that's how they played in that series. It's what they are. This is their team, and they're healthy."

So are the Hurricanes, which could lead to an epic series.

When is the Stanley Cup Final?

Games 1 and 2 are Tuesday and Thursday night in Raleigh, where the fanbase full of Caniacs has been waiting years for the team's first trip to the final since 2006. Carolina won it all that year, with now-coach Rod Brind'Amour as captain.

Games 3 and 4 are Saturday night and June 9 at the arena on the Las Vegas Strip that has become known as the Fortress. The Golden Knights hoisted the Cup on home ice there three years ago.

If necessary, Game 5 is June 11 at Carolina and Game 6 is June 14 at Vegas. If a Game 7 is required, at Carolina, it would be June 17.

Every game will air in the U.S. on ABC and in Canada in English on CBC and Sportsnet and in French on TVA Sports.

Who are the stars to watch?

With Vegas, Mitch Marner has gone further in the playoffs than ever before in his NHL career, which included only first- and second-round exits during nine years in Toronto. Marner leads all scorers with 21 points.

Not far behind is Jack Eichel with 18, three years removed from playing a big role in the Golden Knights win the Cup. And he's just as good at keeping the puck out of his team's net.

"Jack Eichel might be the best 200-foot center in the game right now," 2003 Cup champion Mike Rupp said.

Vegas has gotten timely saves from Carter Hart, especially in the West final when he stopped 118 of the 125 shots he faced. Carolina has ridden goaltender Frederik Andersen to this point, counting on him to come up big on quality chances while outshooting opponents.

"He's so strong mentally," said retired goalie Cory Schneider, who like Rupp now is with NHL Network. "He's able to play games where he only sees eight or nine shots and make the save he has to make. Some goalies really struggle with your team possessing the puck all game and now you get that breakaway and you've got to find a way to make a save."

Who are the X-factors in the Cup final?

The Hurricanes' best players during the regular season were Sebastian Aho, Seth Jarvis and Andrei Svechnikov. Their second line of Taylor Hall, Logan Stankoven and Jackson Blake has led them here as their leading scorers.

"Lots of times, coaches throw three names together and it looks like it's going to work and it doesn't," Ferraro said. "Stankoven and Blake and Hall, they fit."

For Vegas, the standout scoring stars of the playoffs have been Brett Howden and Pavel Dorofeyev, with

10 goals apiece. The Golden Knights also have three players — Marner, captain Mark Stone and defenseman Shea Theodore — who lost in the Olympic final with Canada. Jarvis was also on that team.

Eichel, teammate Noah Hanifin and Carolina's Jaccob Slavin have the chance to pull off the gold medal-Stanley Cup double after winning in Milan with the U.S.

## Experimental pill promises new hope for deadly pancreatic cancer

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — A novel pill helped people with advanced pancreatic cancer live longer, researchers reported Sunday, raising hopes of long-needed better treatments for one of the deadliest types of cancer.

"While not curing the cancer, it is a very large step forward," said Dr. Zev Wainberg, of the University of California, Los Angeles, who helped lead the study.

The drug is called daraxonrasib and it blocks a mutated protein that fuels tumor growth in more than 90% of pancreatic cancer cases — a target that had eluded treatment for decades.

The daily pills nearly doubled survival time, with fewer severe side effects, in a study that randomly assigned the experimental drug or more chemotherapy to 500 patients whose metastatic, or spreading, cancer had quit responding to prior treatment. The findings were published in the New England Journal of Medicine and presented Sunday at the American Society for Clinical Oncology meeting in Chicago.

Those taking daraxonrasib lived for a median of 13.2 months compared with 6.7 months for chemotherapy recipients. While that may seem like a small improvement, Wainberg said it marked the first drug to show a substantial advantage over chemotherapy.

"Having treated pancreatic cancer for 16 years, I actually started crying" when first seeing the study results, Dr. Rachna Shroff of the University of Arizona Cancer Center, who wasn't involved with the research, said from the ASCO meeting. She was struck by how "patients stayed on this treatment because it was providing durable and meaningful benefit to them."

The pills' effects eventually wane but recipients used them for significantly longer than the comparison group stayed on chemotherapy, reporting less pain and a better quality of life as their tumors shrank. Many still were using the drug after the data was analyzed, which Wainberg said means the survival gap may widen as researchers continue tracking them.

Dr. Brian Wolpin, of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, presented the findings Sunday. He said the drug should become "a new standard of care" for previously treated metastatic pancreatic cancer, adding that researchers also will explore its use earlier in the disease, including to see if tumor shrinkage might let more patients qualify for surgery.

Side effects most likely to affect pill usage were a rash that can be severe and mouth sores, he said.

Maker Revolution Medicines funded the study and the Food and Drug Administration plans to expedite review of the drug. Meanwhile, the agency is allowing what's called "expanded access" to the experimental drug for patients who meet certain criteria. The drug garnered public attention when former U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse described on "60 Minutes" how he's had less pain while taking it. Oncologists are being flooded with requests as the special access program gets started.

Pancreatic cancer is among the most deadly forms in large part because it's hard to detect before it starts spreading to other organs. The American Cancer Society estimates about 67,000 new cases will be diagnosed in the U.S. this year and more than 52,000 people will die from the disease. The five-year overall survival rate is 13%.

Unlike with other cancers that have benefitted from a variety of chemotherapy alternatives, pancreatic cancer has been harder to tackle.

Cancer specialists not involved in the new research expressed optimism that this may be a turning point in the quest for new options, with dozens of experimental drugs in development.

The new drug targets mutations in the RAS gene family that normally regulates cell growth. So-called KRAS mutations are especially critical in fueling pancreatic cancer. But a structure that made it hard for drugs to stick to the mutated proteins meant this cancer driver was long considered "undruggable."



Revolution Medicines' drug uses what's essentially a molecular glue to bind with multiple KRAS subtypes. Wainberg said researchers next will probe whether the drug worked better in certain of those subtypes.

The drug will change pancreatic cancer treatment, said Dr. Andrew Coveler of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center, who wasn't involved in the research.

"This thing works drastically differently," he said.

Wainberg said other drugs in development target specific KRAS subtypes. Other approaches in earlier stages of testing include vaccines designed to prevent recurrence after pancreatic cancer surgery by teaching the immune system to recognize the mutated protein.

## As the Pentagon pushes for battlefield AI, some military leaders urge caution

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — The Trump administration is pushing to unleash the power of artificial intelligence for the U.S. military while facing calls to put up guardrails around the rapidly developing technology from some companies — and even notes of caution from top leaders in uniform.

Adm. Frank Bradley, head of U.S. Special Operations Command, told attendees of a recent annual special forces conference in Tampa, Florida, that troops "have to be very careful about how we come to (AI's) employment and its inspiration into the delivery of lethality."

Bradley said he can see a future where AI determines what targets to hit but that "we, as humans, have to have the confidence that ... it's going to deliver violence only where we intend it to be delivered."

The remarks from Bradley, who oversees the units that handle the military's most difficult and dangerous operations, about the need to ensure safeguards come as his boss, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, is pushing to rapidly evolve the military through AI. It is a push that has led to clashes with some tech companies worried about safety measures.

Hegseth has insisted that the Pentagon be allowed to use the technology any legal way it sees fit. He told an audience of SpaceX employees in January he would reject any AI models "that won't allow you to fight wars" and that his vision for the technology was systems that operate "without ideological constraints that limit lawful military applications."

AI's use in the military is part of the Republican administration's larger push to grow the capability it sees as a unique American advantage even as it faces pressure to ensure responsible safeguards.

President Donald Trump abruptly called off plans to sign a new AI executive order hours before an expected White House ceremony over concerns the measure could dull America's edge on AI technology.

"We're leading China, we're leading everybody, and I don't want to do anything that's going to get in the way of that lead," Trump told reporters.

Two differing AI worlds within the military

When asked about Bradley's remarks, a Pentagon official said efforts are focused on using AI to create "functional battlefield tools" that can help troops come up with and identify targets more quickly and, as a result, speed up strikes on those targets. The official spoke on condition of anonymity to offer more candid remarks.

Officials at U.S. Special Operations Command talked about AI not as something that will help eliminate targets but rather as a tool that can offer troops more time to focus on their mission.

Sgt. Maj. Andrew Krogman, the top enlisted official for U.S. Special Operations Command, said at the conference that he sees AI handling administrative tasks to free up operators or helping modernize how the command does business.

Melissa Johnson, the top acquisition official for the command, said AI should be "reducing the cognitive workload on mundane tasks."

"We're leveraging AI more and more, but it's not to replace operator judgment, it's to enhance it," she added.

Helen Toner, interim executive director at Georgetown University's Center for Security and Emerging

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Technology, said those differing descriptions about AI in the military are both true.

"There are a huge number of potential uses for AI in these kinds of bureaucratic settings, which the U.S. military is actively exploring," Toner said.

Lt. Gen. Michael Conley, head of Air Force Special Operations Command, told a congressional committee in May that his troops used AI "bots" to convert top secret intelligence down to a secret classification within seconds to make it easier to share with drone operators on the ground during the Iran war.

However, there is no doubt that AI also is helping the military find and strike targets.

The center that Toner oversees published a case study two years ago on how the Army's 18th Airborne Corps used AI to target artillery strikes "just as efficiently as the best unit in recent American history" and with 2,000 fewer service members.

"Human operators are still the ones making crucial decisions, but AI ... is making it possible to operate with a new level of speed and scale," she said.

AI safety has created a public dispute between the Pentagon and Anthropic

The clash over the integration of AI into the military, who ultimately controls the technology and the ethics behind its use has played out in unusually public fashion during the Trump administration.

Hegseth and Anthropic are embroiled in a bitter contract dispute over the company's concerns about unchecked government use of its technology, including the dangers of fully autonomous armed drones and of AI-assisted mass surveillance that could track dissent.

After CEO Dario Amodei refused to back down over concerns about how the chatbot Claude is used in classified Pentagon networks, both Trump and Hegseth accused Anthropic of endangering national security.

The Pentagon formally labeled the San Francisco-based company a supply chain risk — ending its \$200 million defense contract and prohibited other government contractors from working with the company.

Anthropic sued, claiming the Pentagon is illegally retaliating by stigmatizing the company with a designation meant to protect against sabotage of national security systems by foreign adversaries. The Pentagon has since emphasized its turn to Anthropic rivals — including Google, OpenAI and SpaceX — to secure AI technology that can "augment warfighter decision-making in complex operational environments."

Toner, a former OpenAI board member ousted after a clash with CEO Sam Altman, said "the general public often seems to underestimate the caution with which the U.S. military approaches new technologies."

"Commanders want their missions to succeed, which means both being able to create lethal effects at scale, and avoiding unintended effects like friendly fire, civilian casualties, or simply identifying targets incorrectly," she said.

## Heavy rains threaten to delay search for 2 people still missing in Laos cave

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Heavy rains threatened to delay the search for two people missing in a flooded cave in Laos on Sunday, after the rescue of five other people who were trapped underground for over a week.

Finnish diver Mikko Paasi, one of the first international rescuers to arrive at the site, told The Associated Press that rains had filled the cave up to the second chamber, preventing divers from entering the cave until pumps can lower the water level.

Making the situation even more difficult, a drainage pump broke down, said fellow diver Yoshitaka Isaji of Japan.

The cave saga began with a quest to find minerals

The seven villagers reportedly entered the cave last week to look for valuable minerals such as gold before being trapped by a flash flood that blocked their way out. One other villager escaped and alerted the authorities.

Rescue teams from Laos and neighboring Thailand have been working together in the past week at the site in a rugged area in the central province of Xaisomboun, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the capital, Vientiane. They were joined by divers from countries including Finland, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia,

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France and Australia.

Several of the rescuers previously took part in the complicated 2018 cave rescue in northern Thailand that saved 12 schoolboys and their soccer coach from a flooded cave.

The rescued men are being treated at a local hospital and are doing well, Malaysian diver Lee Kian Lie, who's taking part in the operation, told the AP on Sunday.

"We interviewed them about how the deeper part of the cave looks like. We will continue to search based on the information we have, and perhaps we will be able to get to the other two," he said.

According to rescuers, they have navigated more than 200 meters (650 feet) into the cave and discovered five chambers in the system. The five people rescued so far were found in the fifth chamber.

The 2 missing may be in a hard-to-reach chamber

Paasi told the AP that the survivors said there's a narrow crack in the fifth chamber that could be a passage leading to a deeper part of the cave system.

"This was the only place that we haven't checked in the mine, where the two lost miners could still be," he said during a video interview.

"Now there's a theory that, through that small crack, it still continues, and there's a sixth chamber, which gives us hope now that, if we could penetrate that small restriction, we might be able to reach the sixth chamber and then see what is there."

Isaji explained the difficulties of such an endeavor.

"The area between the fifth and sixth chamber is extremely narrow, and no one has seen its shape yet. Furthermore, it's a narrow space, and of course, it's muddy water, so visibility is absolutely zero. I've also heard that the shape is such that you have to twist your body to get through."

He suggested that even if rescuers could get through and find another trapped person, it would be extremely difficult to bring them out. In such a case, he said, a plan would probably involve getting food and water to those trapped and waiting for the passage to be drained.

Isaji also mentioned the possibility that the two missing villagers are not actually in the cave at all, since they were said to have moved separately from the five rescued people.

The five who were rescued were first found Wednesday. They were identified by their first names as Khamla, Mued, Ee, Ing and Laen.

The trapped men took the initiative when the water level dropped

The first man was safely extracted on Friday, guided through a narrow flooded passage by an expert diver. The remaining four left the cave on Saturday, after the water receded enough for them to walk out on their own, rescuers said.

The divers had been preparing to help with another extraction when the trapped men apparently saw that the water level dropped and decided to seize the opportunity, Paasi said, adding that he would have done the same had he been in their situation.

He and other people waiting at the cave entrance were taken by surprise, and when they emerged the atmosphere was like a party, he said.

Videos posted online Saturday showed emotional moments as the men emerged one by one from the cave. Some collapsed on the ground at the cave's entrance, and were hugged by a group of workers who cried in joy. Later moments showed them lying on a stretcher, wrapped in foil blankets and fitted with an oxygen mask before being transported out of the site.

## Scotland's former leader rejects blame for estranged husband's embezzlement of party funds

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Scotland's former First Minister Nicola Sturgeon defiantly rejected any blame Sunday for her estranged husband's embezzlement of Scottish National Party funds, saying she wouldn't apologize for his crimes.

Sturgeon told the BBC that she felt betrayed by the actions of her husband, Peter Murrell, who last week

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pleaded guilty to stealing more than 400,000 pounds (\$540,000) from the SNP to fund a lavish lifestyle when he was the party's chief executive. She consistently denied having any knowledge of his crimes.

"I am not responsible for the crimes that my former husband committed," she told the BBC. "I'm not going to apologize for somebody else's crimes."

Sturgeon's comments came as she pushed back against widespread disbelief about her previous statements that she knew nothing about Murrell's crimes. The case has heightened concerns about the accountability of U.K. politicians after a series of scandals that has eroded trust in government at all levels.

Many critics have also questioned why Murrell was allowed to remain chief executive of the SNP after Sturgeon became party leader in 2014. Sturgeon acknowledged that this was a mistake.

"Of course, with hindsight, I wish that I could go back and take a different decision," she said.

Murrell's plea capped a five-year police investigation of the SNP, which has led Scotland's semiautonomous government for almost two decades while campaigning for the country to break away from the United Kingdom.

Turmoil within the SNP exploded in 2023, as questions swirled about the party's finances and dwindling membership numbers.

Sturgeon led the Scottish government for almost a decade but abruptly resigned as first minister in February 2023. Observers were bewildered by her statement at the time that she knew in her "head and in my heart" that it was the right time to go.

The following month, Murrell quit his job after two decades as SNP chief executive and took responsibility for misleading the news media about the collapse in party membership. In April, police arrested him at the couple's home in Glasgow.

Sturgeon was arrested in June of 2023 and later cleared by police.

## **Today in History: June 1, priceless recordings destroyed in Universal Studios fire**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, June 1, the 152nd day of 2026. There are 213 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 1, 2008, a fire at Universal Studios Hollywood destroyed 3 acres (1.2 hectares) of the studio's property, including a vault holding as many as 175,000 irreplaceable master audio recordings from hundreds of musicians including Billie Holiday, Louis Armstrong, Aretha Franklin, Elton John and Nirvana.

Also on this date:

In 1813, the mortally wounded commander of the USS Chesapeake, Capt. James Lawrence, gave the order, "Don't give up the ship," during a losing battle with the British frigate HMS Shannon during the War of 1812.

In 1916, the Senate voted 47-22 to confirm Louis Brandeis as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, the first Jewish American to serve on the nation's highest bench.

In 1943, a civilian flight from Portugal to England was shot down by German bombers during World War II, killing all 17 people aboard, including actor Leslie Howard.

In 1957, Don Bowden, a student at the University of California at Berkeley, became the first American to run a mile in under four minutes during a meet in Stockton, California, with a time of 3:58.7.

In 1962, former Nazi official Adolf Eichmann was executed after being found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his actions during World War II.

In 1980, Cable News Network, the first 24-hour television news channel, made its debut.

In 1990, U.S. President George H.W. Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev signed an agreement to stop producing and reduce existing stockpiles of chemical weapons held by the two Cold War superpowers.

In 2001, Crown Prince Dipendra of Nepal shot and killed nine members of the Nepalese royal family, including his parents, King Birendra and Queen Aishwarya, before mortally wounding himself.

In 2009, General Motors filed for Chapter 11 reorganization, becoming the largest U.S. industrial company



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to enter bankruptcy protection.

In 2011, Endeavour concluded its final flight of the 30-year space shuttle era, landing before dawn at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida. (Atlantis would carry out the last shuttle flight in history a month later.)

In 2015, a cruise ship carrying more than 450 people capsized and sank in a severe storm on China's Yangtze River, leaving hundreds missing. Only a handful of people survived the sinking of the Eastern Star.

In 2020, police forcefully disbanded a protest by thousands of people in Lafayette Park across from the White House, using chemical agents, clubs and punches, who rallied against the police killing of a Black man, George Floyd, by a white officer in Minneapolis a week earlier.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Pat Boone is 92. Actor Morgan Freeman is 89. Actor Brian Cox is 80. Actor Jonathan Pryce is 79. Rock musician Ronnie Wood (The Rolling Stones) is 79. Country singer-songwriter Ronnie Dunn is 73. Actor Lisa Hartman Black is 70. Actor Teri Polo is 57. Model-TV personality Heidi Klum is 53. Singer Alanis Morissette is 52. Singer-songwriter Brandi Carlile is 45. Actor-comedian Amy Schumer is 45. Tennis Hall of Famer Justine Henin is 44. Comedian Nikki Glaser is 42. Actor Zazie Beetz is 35. Actor Tom Holland is 30. Actor Willow Shields is 26.