

# Groton Daily Independent

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## **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)

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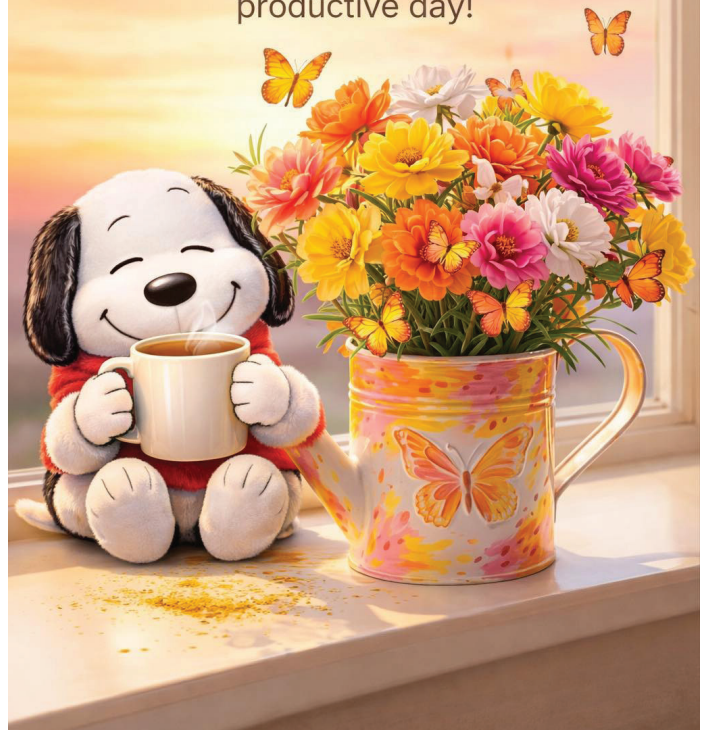
**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**

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

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## Happy Tuesday

May your week be as bright and fresh as a new bloom. Have a productive day!



## **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.**

## California Primaries

Voters in California head to the polls to cast ballots in several closely watched primary races today. The state employs a jungle primary system, in which all candidates for each office compete in the same primary and the top two vote-getters advance to the November general election.

The Los Angeles mayoral race has drawn outsized attention, partly due to surprise candidate and influencer Spencer Pratt (R), of reality television show "The Hills" fame. As of this writing, Pratt enters the day polling at 22%—trailing, but within the margin of error—of incumbent Karen Bass (D, 26%) and city councilmember Nithya Raman (D, 25%).

The gubernatorial race was thrown into disarray following explosive sexual harassment allegations against then-leading candidate Rep. Eric Swalwell (D) in April. Former state attorney general Xavier Becerra (D) now leads polls at 28%, with billionaire Tom Steyer (D, 22%) and Republican political commentator Steve Hilton (21%) right behind him.

## Anthropic Eyes IPO

Anthropic has confidentially filed to go public, the company behind AI chatbot Claude revealed yesterday. The move positions Anthropic for a public debut as early as this fall, potentially ahead of competitor OpenAI.

While details of the company's finances remain private, Anthropic said last week it was valued at \$965B, above OpenAI's reported \$852B valuation in March. Anthropic's revenue run rate is estimated at \$47B, up from roughly \$10B at the end of last year, despite being blacklisted by the Pentagon. A run rate is the estimated annual revenue based on current monthly performance.

The company is especially popular in Silicon Valley due to the release of Claude Code and its unreleased model, Mythos. Anthropic shared the model with 40 technology firms to help detect cybersecurity vulnerabilities, forgoing a public release over concerns that it could exploit flaws in critical systems.

If Anthropic debuts at a valuation above \$1T, it could become the second- or third-largest IPO ever.

## Serena Williams Returns

Serena Williams is returning to professional tennis after accepting a wild-card entry into the Queen's Club doubles draw in London next week, marking the 23-time Grand Slam singles champion's first competitive appearance since the 2022 US Open.

The news comes nearly four years after Williams declared she was evolving away from tennis, stopping short of a formal retirement. The 44-year-old mother of two became eligible to compete after reentering the sport's antidoping testing pool, a required step for any sanctioned return. Williams has won 14 Grand Slam doubles titles and spent 319 weeks ranked No. 1 in the world. She is the only player in tennis history to complete a career Golden Slam in both singles and doubles—a feat that means winning all four major tournaments (the US Open, Australian Open, French Open, and Wimbledon) plus an Olympic gold medal.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Carolina Hurricanes face off against Vegas Golden Knights in Game 1 of the Stanley Cup Final tonight at 8 pm ET.

Los Angeles Rams secure deal to nab Cleveland Browns star Myles Garrett.

Philadelphia Eagles trade wide receiver AJ Brown to New England Patriots.

NFL Hall of Fame wide receiver Raymond Berry dies at age 93; Berry played 13 seasons with the Balti-



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more Colts.

Ronald LaPread, bassist who cofounded The Commodores with Lionel Richie, dies at age 75.

## Science & Technology

Chipmaker Nvidia unveils AI processors to allow Windows PCs designed around AI agents; consumer products expected to be available in the fall.

Agricultural researchers find crops like rice, tomatoes, and more reduce their iron uptake when experiencing drought.

New drug prevents cancer cells from "hiding" from the immune system, improving the effectiveness of immunotherapies; in small trial, some patients saw tumor shrinkage of at least 30%.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close up (S&P 500 +0.3%, Dow +0.1%, Nasdaq +0.4%).

Hewlett Packard Enterprise reports biggest earnings beat since 2018.

Berkshire Hathaway to acquire homebuilder Taylor Morrison Home in \$6.8B deal—the first for new CEO Greg Abel.

People Inc.—owner of Travel & Leisure and Food & Wine—makes \$18B takeover bid for casino giant MGM Resorts.

Sekai raises \$20M Series A for AI platform that lets users create and remix mini-apps from text prompts; founder Lucky Zhang has sold startups to Apple and TikTok parent ByteDance.

## Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump says US-Iran talks are continuing and that Israel and Hezbollah have agreed to dial back fighting; update comes after Iran threatens to close Strait of Hormuz.

Justice Department says it will abide by court order to pause work on \$1.8B anti-weaponization fund.

Malaysian ban on social media for kids under age 16 goes into effect, joining Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, and others with similar restrictions.

Florida becomes first state to sue OpenAI over child safety risks, alleging the company and CEO Sam Altman released ChatGPT despite knowing it could harm users.

★ GROTON ★

# TRANSIT

## FUNDRAISER



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

 <b>WHEN:</b> Thursday, June 11, 2026	 <b>TIME:</b> 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm	 <b>WHERE:</b> Groton Community Center
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 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
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AND THE FAMOUS MINI DONUTS! 

★ FOOD ★ FUN ★ DOOR PRIZES ★

## FREE WILL DONATION

Please join us & Help support Groton Transit!



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## **Groton City Council Meeting Agenda**

June 2, 2026 – 7:00pm

City Hall – 120 N Main Street

**(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY  
CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)**

1. Approval of Agenda
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
*(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)*
3. Approval of Shirley Larson First Addition Plat
4. City Map Agreement – IMEG
5. Department Reports
6. Surplus 2007 Ford F55 4x4 Bucket Truck
7. Install Eastbound Stop Sign at Intersection of West 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and State Street
8. Policy Regarding Late Payments and Postmarks
9. Minutes
10. Bills
11. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
12. Allow Area IV Senior Nutrition to Use Kitchen and Portion of Southwest Room at Community Center
13. Groton Airport Hangar Leases
14. Adjournment



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## **BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA**

### **GENERAL MEETING**

**TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2026, 8:45 A.M.**

**COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS**

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

1. Call To Order - Pledge of Allegiance
2. Approval of the Agenda
3. Opportunity for Public Comment
  - ❖ *Public comment will be limited to 10 minutes or at Boards Discretion. Presentations will be limited to 3 minutes*
4. Richmond Dam Update
5. Discuss & Decide on Speed Limit for BC Hwy 13
6. Second Reading and Possible Adoption of Ordinance #324 – Rezone for Shawn & Melissa Schultz
7. Approve and Authorize Chairman to sign Payment No. 1 for Landfill Cell #5 Construction
8. Consent Calendar
  - a. Approval of General Meeting Minutes of May 26, 2026
  - b. Claims/Payroll
  - c. HR Report
  - d. Auditor's Report of Accounts for April 2026
  - e. Set Bid Date and Authorize Publication for Weed & Pest Vehicle
  - f. Acknowledge Sheriff Report for April 2026
9. Other Business
10. Executive Session (if requested per SDCL 1-25-2)
11. Adjourn

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

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

Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts: <https://meet.goto.com/install>

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

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## **BROWN COUNTY BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION AGENDA ELECTION CANVASS**

**FRIDAY, JUNE 5, 2026, 1:00 P.M.**

**COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS**

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

**CANVASS THE PRIMARY ELECTION HELD JUNE 2, 2026**



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## Junior Legion Photos from Britton Game



**Alex Abeln, pitching first game vs Britton while Kason Oswald is catching.** (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



**Xavior "Javi" Ellenbecker in the delivery pitching.** (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



**Lincoln Shilhanek covering 1st base with Wesley Borg at second.** (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



**Kason Oswald at bat.** (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



**Alex Abeln at 3rd base with Wesley Borg looking on from 2nd.** (Courtesy Photo Bruce Babcock)



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## Senior Citizens plant flowers

Top left: Don Hoops and John Aldrich, Top right: Ruby Donovan. Bottom left: Ruby Donovan and Don Hoops. Bottom right: Don Hoops and Ruby Donovan. The Groton Area senior citizens planted flowers in the planters at the Groton Community Center. They had received a \$250 Thrivent Action grant for the project. (Photos courtesy John Aldrich)



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## New light installed

Korbin Kucker (left in the bucket) and Teylor Diegel (right in bucket) were working on installing a new light at the corner of West Third Avenue and Garfield Street. Todd Gay, electric superintendent, is overseeing the work.

## State Girls Golf Meet



**Carlee Johnson and Claire Schuelke are participating in the state golf meet in Sioux Falls. After the first day, Johnson is tied for 34th and Schuelke is tied for 66th.**

(Courtesy Photo)

<div>☆</div>	T34	<div>Carlee Johnson</div> <div>Groton Area</div>											+17											87
Mon, June 1 Two Rivers Golf Club (MIDDLE - Ladies)																								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total			
Carlee Johnson	4	6	6	5	5	4	4	5	5	44	6	5	3	5	5	4	6	3	6	43	87			
<div><div></div> Starting Hole</div> <div><div></div> Eagle or Better</div> <div><div></div> Birdie</div> <div><div></div> Par</div> <div><div></div> Bogey</div> <div><div></div> Double Bogey or Worse</div>																								

<div>☆</div>	T66	Claire Schuelke <i>Groton Area</i>											+31						101			
Mon, June 1 <i>Two Rivers Golf Club (MIDDLE - Ladies)</i>																						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total	
Claire Schuelke	6	7	7	7	7	4	4	5	8	55	6	6	4	5	4	5	6	4	6	46	101	
<div><div></div> Starting Hole</div> <div><div></div> Eagle or Better</div> <div><div></div> Birdie</div> <div><div></div> Par</div> <div><div></div> Bogey</div> <div><div></div> Double Bogey or Worse</div>																						



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Election Day brings possible runoff drama in South Dakota governor primary

**While Republicans have most at stake in statewide contests, voters will also consider local races and questions**

**BY: SETH TUPPER**

Tuesday is Primary Election Day in South Dakota, the first of what could be two elections needed to select the Republican Party's nominee for governor.

If no candidate in the four-way race reaches 35%, the top two will advance to a runoff on July 28.

State law requires a runoff when nobody reaches the 35% threshold in a primary with three or more candidates for governor, U.S. House or U.S. Senate. No race has gone to a runoff since the passage of the law in 1985. There were six occasions before 1985 when such races failed to produce a 35% winner, and the nominees were decided by delegates at state party conventions.

In this year's Republican governor primary campaign, none of the four candidates reached 35% support in five independently commissioned polls released publicly since last year. There was plenty of opportunity to gain support, with 14% or more of the respondents in each poll undecided.

The candidate who wins the Republican nomination will advance to the Nov. 3 general election to face former legislator Dan Ahlers, who is uncontested for the Democratic nomination.

The Republican candidates are Gov. Larry Rhoden, U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, state House Speaker Jon Hansen and businessman Toby Doeden.

Former Gov. Kristi Noem opened the door for a primary race when she resigned in January 2025 to accept a job in President Donald Trump's administration. Noem's departure elevated Rhoden from lieutenant governor to serve the remainder of Noem's second term, which ends in January.

#### **The rest of the ballot**

Republican voters are also selecting a nominee to run for Johnson's U.S. House seat. Republican state Attorney General Marty Jackley faces James Bialota in that race.

In a Republican U.S. Senate primary, incumbent Mike Rounds faces challenger Justin McNeal.

There are 49 Republican legislative primary races in districts across the state, and one Democratic legislative primary. There are no Democratic primaries for statewide offices.

Voters may also have primaries for county offices, races for city government and school board positions, and other local races or questions on their ballots.

Republican primary contests are only open to voters registered as Republicans. But Samantha Chapman, advocacy manager for the American Civil Liberties Union of South Dakota, told South Dakota Searchlight recently that other voters should not assume there's nothing on their ballot.

"That is a message we've been trying to get out desperately, which is that if you are registered to vote, chances are you still have a lot to vote for, even if you are not a registered Republican," Chapman said.

#### **Factors influencing turnout**

Voter turnout for modern South Dakota primary elections has ranged from less than 20% to more than 50%, influenced by the number and types of races on the ballot. Turnout this year was expected to receive a boost from the Republican governor primary and a new state law requiring local elections to be



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combined with either the primary or the November general election.

But turnout in advance voting is not significantly ahead of the pace from the last primary election in 2024. The final turnout number that year was 17%, including 26% among Republicans and 7% among Democrats.

By last Tuesday, 16,674 ballots had been cast in advance, either in person or by mail. That compares to 16,394 ballots received by the week before the 2024 primary.

A late start to advance voting may have affected early turnout. Voting was supposed to begin April 17 but was delayed by several days in counties across the state due in part to a calendar quirk: There were five Tuesdays in March.

That created an unusually small window between a filing deadline for candidate nominating petitions on the last Tuesday in March — which was March 31 this year — and the start of ballot printing and advance voting. Ballot printing was delayed as county auditors waited for the state to certify candidates.

Earlier this year, state lawmakers declined to apply a fix sought by county auditors, which would have moved the filing deadline for candidate nominating petitions earlier. Some legislators expressed concerns about changing the laws governing a process that was already underway, since prospective candidates were in the process of gathering signatures from registered voters to earn a spot on the ballot. Lawmakers ultimately changed the deadline for future elections, but not for this year's primary.

*Seth is editor-in-chief of South Dakota Searchlight. He was previously a supervising senior producer for South Dakota Public Broadcasting and a newspaper journalist in Rapid City and Mitchell.*

## COMMENTARY

### With data centers, skepticism is not anti-business

Debate in South Dakota needs reframing before next wave of AI development

by Brad Johnson

South Dakota is having the wrong argument about data centers.

This is not a debate about technology. It's a debate about power — who gets to decide what happens to rural land, water and infrastructure when billion-dollar industries come calling.

Too many of those decisions are being made everywhere except in the communities expected to live with the consequences.

The artificial intelligence economy is coming whether South Dakota participates or not. The real question is whether the state enters that future with a plan, or rushes to approve projects before the rules are written.

Rural residents have seen this pattern before — in Black Hills mining fights, large concentrated animal feeding operations, industrial wind corridors, and now battery-storage campuses.

The industry changes. The political script does not.

Again and again, industrial-scale projects are pushed into agricultural landscapes while local residents are told the impacts are manageable and the economic benefits inevitable and necessary.

Wind farms are not farms. Battery-storage campuses are not farms. Data centers are not farms.

They are industrial facilities, and they should be treated as such.

These operations require transmission corridors, substations, emergency-response planning and long-term pressure on roads, water systems and electrical grids. Yet South Dakota continues forcing many of them through zoning systems designed for cornfields and cattle lots.

The result is predictable. Residents fill hearing rooms. Opposition outweighs support. Citizens raise concerns about groundwater, roads, fire protection and property values.

Then they are told the project meets standards already written into law.

The public gets a hearing. The outcome too often feels predetermined.

That disconnect is what makes the data-center debate politically volatile. Rural South Dakotans are not anti-technology. They are tired of being treated as spectators in decisions that permanently reshape their

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communities.

Their concerns are legitimate.

South Dakota already faces pressure on water supplies, aging infrastructure and increasing competition for electricity. Into that reality comes an industry capable of consuming enormous amounts of power and, depending on cooling systems, massive quantities of water.

Skepticism is not anti-business. It is risk assessment — and it may be the last remaining form of practical conservatism in South Dakota politics.

The state possesses exactly what the AI economy wants: land, energy capacity, cold weather and political stability. That makes South Dakota attractive.

It also makes South Dakota vulnerable to negotiating from weakness.

States eager to “win” economic-development competitions often stop asking whether projects truly benefit the people expected to live beside them for decades. If a project only works through tax exemptions, subsidized infrastructure and public assumption of long-term risk, lawmakers should ask two simple questions: Who actually benefits? Who absorbs the risk?

Serious government begins with calling these projects what they are: industrial.

If a facility requires major transmission infrastructure, industrial water demand and round-the-clock emergency planning, it should be regulated as industrial development — not pushed through agricultural zoning frameworks designed for a different century.

Serious siting policy cannot stop at roads, substations and water pipelines.

Industrial siting is also a habitat issue. South Dakota sits within one of North America’s most important migratory bird regions. The Prairie Pothole Region supports globally significant waterfowl populations, while the state’s grasslands and river corridors remain critical habitat for pheasants, ducks, raptors and migratory birds that also underpin a major outdoor recreation economy.

New transmission corridors and industrial energy infrastructure fragment habitat, disrupt migration routes and increase collision risks for birds and other wildlife. Other states increasingly incorporate wildlife-corridor mapping, habitat analysis and avian-protection standards into large-scale siting decisions.

South Dakota should do the same before AI-related infrastructure expands faster than the state’s ability to manage the ecological consequences.

A state that spends millions promoting big game and pheasant hunting, waterfowl habitat and outdoor tourism cannot pretend habitat fragmentation stops mattering simply because the industry carries a technology label instead of an energy label.

Companies should also pay the full cost of the infrastructure they require. If a data center demands new substations, transmission upgrades, expanded roads or emergency-response capacity, those costs should not quietly migrate onto rural ratepayers and county taxpayers under the banner of economic development.

Counties must retain meaningful zoning authority. Local control cannot be a campaign slogan in the fall and an inconvenience in the spring. If state government overrides county decisions whenever corporate pressure intensifies, then “local control” becomes meaningless.

A serious framework also requires transparency. Before approvals occur, companies should disclose projected water withdrawals, energy demand, cooling methods and infrastructure impacts. Independent hydrological reviews should be mandatory and funded by the applicant, not taxpayers. Drought-contingency restrictions should ensure industry, agriculture and households operate under the same reality when water supplies tighten.

This is not anti-business. It is the minimum standard for responsible governance.

When rural residents conclude that corporations operate under one set of rules while ordinary citizens operate under another, public trust collapses. Cynicism spreads. People stop believing economic growth is designed to benefit them — and they stop believing that state government is on their side.

If South Dakota approves billion-dollar industrial projects without a statewide siting plan, transparent water rules and real county authority, that is not “pro-growth” competitiveness. That is surrender.

South Dakota needs a plan before the next wave of AI-driven development arrives, because once the

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infrastructure is built, the consequences are permanent and the leverage is gone.

Without that plan, "local control" becomes a slogan, nothing more. With it, South Dakota can welcome innovation without surrendering the people who live closest to the land — the people with the most to lose, and the most worth protecting.

*Brad Johnson is a certified general real estate appraiser and longtime journalist. He is past president of South Dakota Lakes and Streams Association, president of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation, a member of the National Wildlife Federation's board of directors, and served 16 years on the South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources. He lives in Rapid City and Watertown.*

## The feds have embraced medical marijuana. Now what?

**DOJ's cannabis reclassification offers tax, research benefits but leaves recreational weed adrift**

**BY: AMANDA WATFORD**

The U.S. Department of Justice's recent decision to downgrade the drug classification for medical cannabis will help medical marijuana businesses. Companies will be able to claim some federal tax benefits. New research can start up at state universities.

But the broader divide between federal and state marijuana policy remains largely intact, leaving states to navigate a fragmented and still-evolving cannabis landscape with few clear answers about what comes next.

The unprecedented change in April reclassifying medical marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III means the federal government is acknowledging an accepted healthcare use for cannabis. Recreational marijuana, however, remains a Schedule I drug under federal policy, even though 24 states and the District of Columbia allow recreational cannabis in various forms, from dried flower to vaping oils to processed gummy candies.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration is set to hold its first hearing at the end of June on the possible de-scheduling of marijuana broadly, which would include recreational or adult-use cannabis.

Until then, some experts say little is expected to change for the more than half of states with medical or recreational marijuana programs.

"This change is sort of catching up to what states are already doing," said Katharine Neill Harris, a drug policy fellow at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy. "In some ways the federal government is following the states on this issue."

States have spent years building regulatory frameworks for medical and recreational marijuana programs — including licensing systems, tax structures, testing requirements and retail oversight.

Following the DEA's announcement in April that it would reschedule medical cannabis, some state commissions acknowledged the decision but stressed that their laws have not changed and that they are awaiting further federal guidance.

In Nevada, for example, state cannabis officials released a statement noting that the rescheduling change allows medical cannabis licensees to register with the DEA, while also emphasizing that Nevada law still classifies non-medical marijuana as a Schedule I substance.

In mid-May, the California Department of Cannabis Control proposed emergency regulations that would allow businesses holding licenses for both medical and recreational marijuana to obtain separate licenses. The change could position cannabis businesses to take advantage of potential benefits tied to the re-scheduling of medical marijuana.

Many of the day-to-day functions of state cannabis programs are expected to remain intact, according to experts.

"Right now, nothing would have to change for states because we don't know what the federal regulations are going to look like for managing medical cannabis," said Heather Trela, the director of operations and



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a fellow at the Rockefeller Institute of Government, a nonpartisan public policy think tank.

"Everyone's kind of figuring it out right now, and we don't have all the details, so it's hard for states," she said.

State cannabis regulators and officials in several states, including Oklahoma, Vermont and Washington, told Stateline they are waiting for guidance from the DEA and other federal agencies before determining whether businesses will be required to register with the DEA, qualify for federal tax relief or face new compliance requirements, and whether states may need to revise their own cannabis laws.

"None of us really can effectively advise our licensees, which is just incredibly frustrating, especially with a ticking clock," said James Pepper, the chair of the Vermont Cannabis Control Board, which regulates the state's medical and adult-use market.

In the coming months, other federal agencies may issue guidance on how rescheduling will affect existing rules, according to policy experts. The U.S. Department of Transportation said in December that drug testing and licensing standards will not change, and TSA rules still prohibit carrying marijuana on flights. Financial guidance from the IRS and the Treasury Department also are still pending.

## **'Taxed like a normal business'**

But some marijuana policy experts and industry leaders say the federal shift could bring major changes to cannabis business operations and scientific research.

Cannabis businesses have long been blocked from taking certain federal tax deductions because marijuana was classified as a Schedule I substance. Some industry leaders say moving medical cannabis to Schedule III could ease some of those constraints.

"Going forward, we can be treated and taxed like a normal business, which ultimately helps the bottom line and allows us to reinvest more meaningfully in the states where we operate," said Lauren Niehaus, the executive director of government relations at Trulieve Cannabis Corp., one of the largest cannabis companies in the country. Trulieve, based in Florida, operates dispensaries in eight states.

The tax policy change is a central issue for cannabis operators across the board, from small businesses to large multistate companies, Niehaus said.

Ryan Hunter, the chief revenue officer of Spherex Labs, said rescheduling changes could shift investor and lender attitudes toward the cannabis industry, with some capital partners becoming more willing to invest.

But Hunter said the latest federal change also creates new uncertainty for companies operating in both medical and recreational markets, including Spherex Labs, which operates in Colorado.

"Our business is still very much in wait-and-see mode," Hunter said. "There are a lot of positive gains here, but really more than anything, a lot more confusion."

The federal government has effectively created different legal frameworks for the same substance, he added. Medical cannabis is now federally recognized, while recreational marijuana and its consumers remain in conflict with federal law.

The rescheduling change also carries federal registration requirements under the Controlled Substances Act, a law that would require medical cannabis businesses to register with the DEA, pay annual fees, and comply with detailed reporting, inventory and security rules that may overlap or conflict with existing state systems.

Spherex Labs has chosen not to register at this time, Hunter said, opting to wait for further federal guidance.

Earlier this month, the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs Control sent a letter to licensed medical cannabis businesses encouraging them to register with the DEA and warning of possible sanctions, including revocation of their state licenses, for failing to comply with federal requirements.

But the Oklahoma Medical Marijuana Authority, which oversees cannabis licensing and regulation in the state, told Stateline the letter came as a surprise and that it remains unclear whether federal officials actually intend to require DEA registration for medical operators.

Other states could adopt similar federal registration requirements, according to Trela, of the Rockefeller

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Institute of Government.

## Cannabis research

Some researchers and experts say rescheduling marijuana could reduce longstanding barriers to studying its medical use, safety and long-term health effects.

Current research on marijuana's effects falls short of what is needed to fully understand cannabis as a medical treatment, according to Chad Johnson, an assistant professor of pharmaceutical sciences at the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy. Johnson also is the director of the university's medical cannabis graduate studies program.

"We really do need those randomized trials to really say that cannabis is effective for treating a particular condition," Johnson said.

There are still major gaps in cannabis research, he said, including how it is formulated and delivered, such as whether methods beyond smoking, vaping or edibles may be more effective, and how to determine appropriate dosing for specific medical conditions.

Johnson added that rescheduling could allow academic institutions to study products already being sold in their respective states, making research more closely aligned with what consumers are actually using, rather than relying on cannabis sourced through federally authorized suppliers.

Some public health and addiction experts say the federal shift should not be interpreted as a signal that cannabis is risk-free, pointing to ongoing concerns about cannabis use disorders, dependency and effects on mental health.

"It's going to reduce the public's perception of risk of cannabis, and right now, I don't think the public is aware of the high potency that cannabis has," said Dr. Alta DeRoo, the chief medical officer of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation, one of the largest nonprofit treatment providers for addiction and mental health. DeRoo also is a board-certified addiction medicine physician and OB-GYN.

Some opponents of the change also argue it is driven as much by political and economic pressure from the cannabis industry as by evolving science.

"The issue is not research. The issue is money, tax breaks for an industry, and that's really what the whole effort to relax marijuana laws is about," said Kevin Sabet, a former drug policy adviser to three presidential administrations and the president and CEO of Smart Approaches to Marijuana, a nonprofit that opposes legalizing marijuana.

## What's next

New federal changes also could face court challenges or be reversed by a future administration, according to some cannabis policy experts.

Last week, the attorneys general of Indiana, Louisiana and Nebraska filed a petition for review in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, arguing that the Justice Department's rescheduling order violates federal administrative law. Louisiana and Nebraska have medical-only cannabis programs, while Indiana does not have a cannabis program at all.

Smart Approaches to Marijuana and the National Drug and Alcohol Screening Association filed a similar lawsuit earlier this month, arguing that the administration exceeded its authority under the Controlled Substances Act.

At the same time, the White House's latest National Drug Control Strategy document also raised concerns about high-potency marijuana and warned that international cartels and organized crime groups continue to exploit state cannabis legalization laws.

Aside from criminal justice implications, federal restrictions have limited cannabis businesses' access to banking, investment and long-term planning, even as state markets have expanded into a multibillion-dollar industry.

Banks have largely avoided working with cannabis businesses because marijuana remains broadly illegal under federal law, which exposes financial institutions to potential regulatory penalties and compliance

risks even in states where cannabis is legal.

Several bills have been introduced in Congress that would provide protections for banks offering services to cannabis businesses, but no legislation has been adopted.

*Stateline reporter Amanda Watford can be reached at [awatford@stateline.org](mailto:awatford@stateline.org).*

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

*Amanda Watford (formerly Hernández) covers criminal justice for Stateline. She has reported for both national and local outlets, including ABC News, USA Today and NBC4 Washington.*

## Trump's \$1.77 billion 'slush fund' may be on the way out after GOP objections

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's nearly \$1.8 billion "anti-weaponization" fund appeared to be on shaky ground Monday as he continued to face opposition from his own party.

Trump had not yet made a public announcement by late afternoon, but several media outlets reported the president planned to possibly drop the fund to clear the way for Senate Republicans to advance a \$72 billion immigration enforcement funding package. Politico reported White House officials communicated the decision Monday to Republicans on Capitol Hill, according to two unnamed sources.

Trump's fund has sparked resistance from both parties as concerns mounted that Jan. 6, 2021, riot defendants who assaulted police officers could conceivably get reparations by claiming the law was "weaponized" against them for political purposes.

A slew of lawsuits challenging what opponents called a "slush fund" followed, including from police officers who defended the Capitol that day.

Shortly after the reports circulated that Trump might shelve the idea, the Department of Justice defended the fund on social media but said it would comply with a court order issued Friday temporarily barring the government from any further action on the fund. The order did not address the merits of a suit filed against the fund.

"The Department of Justice disagrees strongly with the decision on the Anti-Weaponization Fund put forth by the United States District Court Judge in the Eastern District of Virginia, wherein the Court stated that, under no circumstances, may the Department of Justice proceed with the Anti-Weaponization Fund recently established in order to make up for the tremendous abuse, harm, and hate unfairly shown to so many people. This Fund was open to anybody who was so weaponized, targeted, or persecuted, whether they were Democrat, Republican, Conservative, Independent, or otherwise. The Department will abide by the Court's ruling," according to the department's post on X.

The DOJ and the White House directed States Newsroom to the post when asked if the president would scrap the fund altogether.

Several Republicans vehemently opposed the fund, including retiring Sen. Thom Tillis, R-N.C., who called the fund "stupid on stilts."

Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., abandoned plans for a floor vote on the immigration bill ahead of the Memorial Day recess as members threatened to defect unless the budget reconciliation package also included language to apply guardrails on the massive "anti-weaponization" pot of money.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Monday that even if Trump says he will drop the fund, "a promise from Trump is worthless."

"If Trump and Republicans are truly abandoning this corrupt scheme, they should have zero problem banning it in law," Schumer said on the floor. "This week, Senate Democrats will push legislation to ban this slush fund and ensure no president can ever do this again. Trump's word is nowhere near enough."

The Department of Justice announced the \$1.776 billion fund on May 18 as a condition for Trump drop-



ping his \$10 billion lawsuit against the IRS. A day later, the DOJ issued another order declaring Trump and his family would be forever immune from government inquiries, including tax audits, as part of Trump's voluntary dismissal of the suit.

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

## Some trans military members banned by Trump allowed to continue service under ruling

BY: ASHLEY MURRAY

WASHINGTON — Transgender military members won a temporary victory against the Trump administration in federal appeals court Monday when two judges ruled a policy banning them from service violated their constitutional right to equal protection under the law.

Judges Judith W. Rogers and Robert L. Wilkins for the U.S. Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia upheld a lower court ruling allowing those plaintiffs involved in the case to continue their service. The decision is a preliminary injunction, meaning the case will continue to play out in court.

The policy, issued by President Donald Trump in an executive order in January 2025 and carried out by Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, "appears to be driven by the bare desire to harm a politically unpopular group: persons who identify as transgender," Wilkins wrote for the 2-1 decision.

"As such, at this preliminary stage, I conclude that the Hegseth Policy is both arbitrary and based upon animus, and for those reasons the Policy violates Plaintiff-Appellees' constitutional right to equal protection of the law," continued Wilkins, who was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2014.

Rogers was appointed by President Bill Clinton in 1994.

Judge Justin R. Walker, a 2019 Trump appointee, dissented.

Walker argued U.S. Supreme Court precedent dictates "the military can deprive its members of rights that the Constitution may well guarantee to civilians."

"Like today's majority, I cherish those rights, and so I understand the impulse behind the majority's unprecedented intervention into military affairs. But because the plaintiffs are service members not civilians, and because we are judges not generals, I respectfully dissent," Walker wrote.

Jennifer Levi, the lead attorney for the eight military plaintiffs, said Monday's appeals ruling is an "enormous victory."

"I will say that the plaintiffs in this case have just served their country with incredible honor and courage, and this decision is a recognition of that fact," Levi, senior director for GLAD Law, told States Newsroom in an interview.

"And really it's important because (it is) recognizing that those who are capable of serving should be able to continue."

States Newsroom reached out to the Pentagon and the White House for comment.

Eight active-duty service members and transgender individuals who are actively pursuing enlistment in the armed forces initially brought the case, *Talbott et al v. Trump*, against Trump and Hegseth, among other officials and three branches of the U.S. military. The number of plaintiffs has since grown.

The preliminary injunction does not extend to the plaintiffs pursuing enlistment, and does not extend universally to all active transgender service members beyond those who filed the case.

Kara Corcoran, executive director of SPARTA Pride, an advocacy organization for transgender service members, said many transgender service members, including her, are uncertain about the future of their careers.

"While today's decision provides important relief for certain named plaintiffs, it does not extend protection to the broader transgender military community. Thousands of service members remain subject to ongoing administrative actions, involuntary separation processes, and significant uncertainty about their

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futures,” said Corcoran, an 18-year Army veteran who is awaiting the military’s decision on whether they will allow her to claim retirement instead of a separation because she is transgender.

Corcoran said “there’s a lot of unknowns to the future” for named plaintiffs and others as the government could seek an emergency stay on the ruling as they did in a separate case, Shilling et al v. Trump.

In Shilling, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on April 18, 2025, upheld a lower court’s ruling that allowed transgender troops to continue serving, denying the government’s appeal.

In May 2025, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed Trump to ban transgender people from the military.

“This is now two appellate courts from both Schilling and Talbot who have now signaled to the Supreme Court that yes, this is irreparable harm to people who are in (this situation), and at the same time, it’s discrimination,” she said.

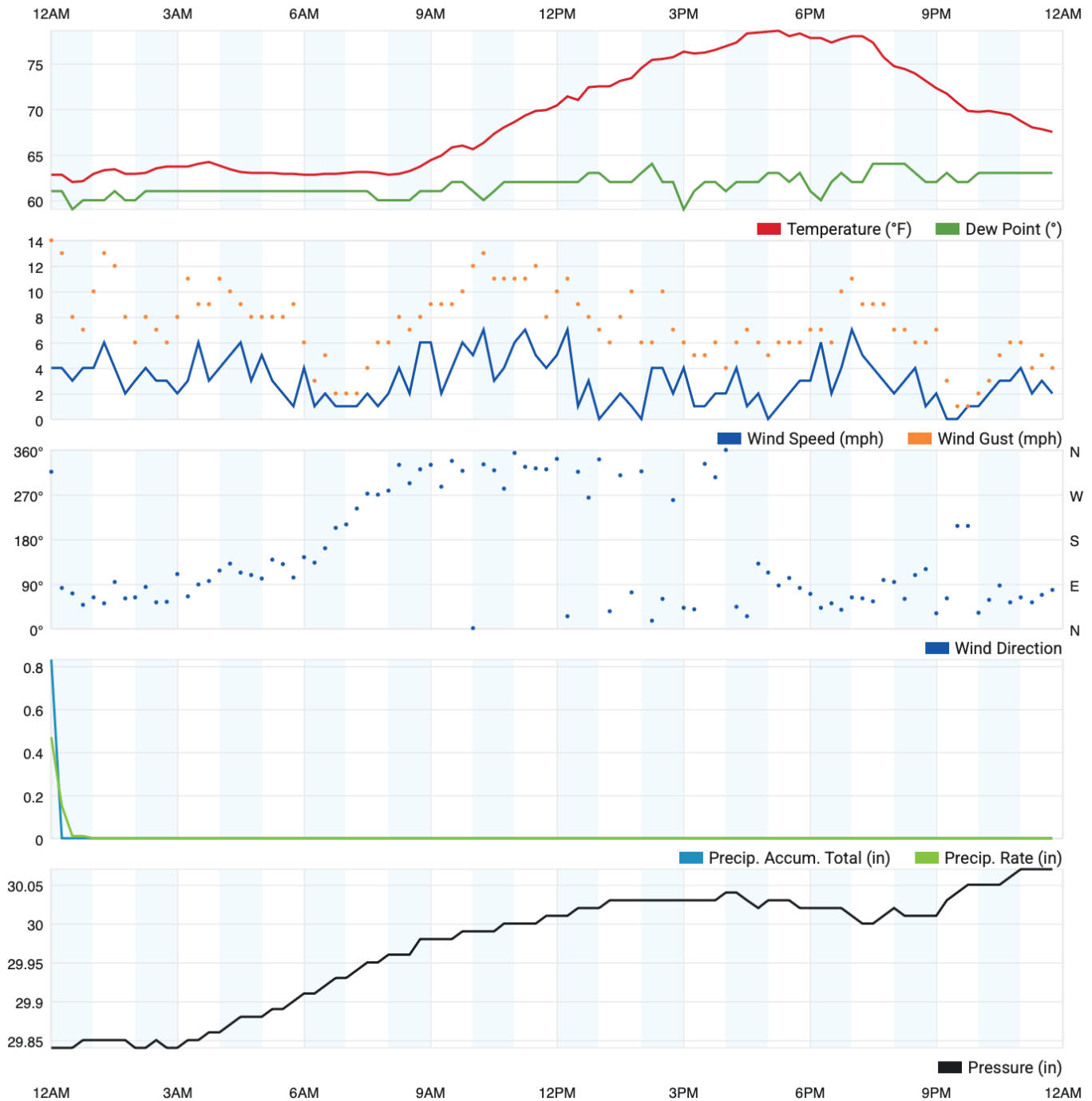
*Ashley Murray covers the nation’s capital as a senior reporter for States Newsroom. Her coverage areas include domestic policy and appropriations.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

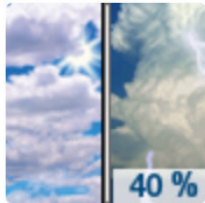
June 1, 2026



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Today



High: 84 °F

Mostly Cloudy  
then Chance  
T-storms

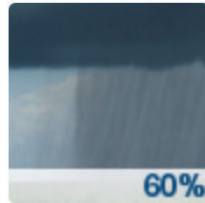
Tonight



Low: 56 °F

Chance  
T-storms

Wednesday



High: 81 °F

Showers  
Likely

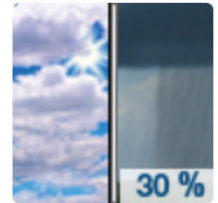
Wednesday  
Night



Low: 53 °F

Showers  
Likely

Thursday



High: 82 °F

Partly Sunny  
then Chance  
Showers

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

### HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

2

WHAT THIS MEANS:  
Scattered Severe Storms  
Possible

**Late Afternoon into  
the Late Evening**

### PRIMARY THREATS



LARGE HAIL of  
1-2" in diameter



ISOLATED  
TORNADO(ES)  
POSSIBLE

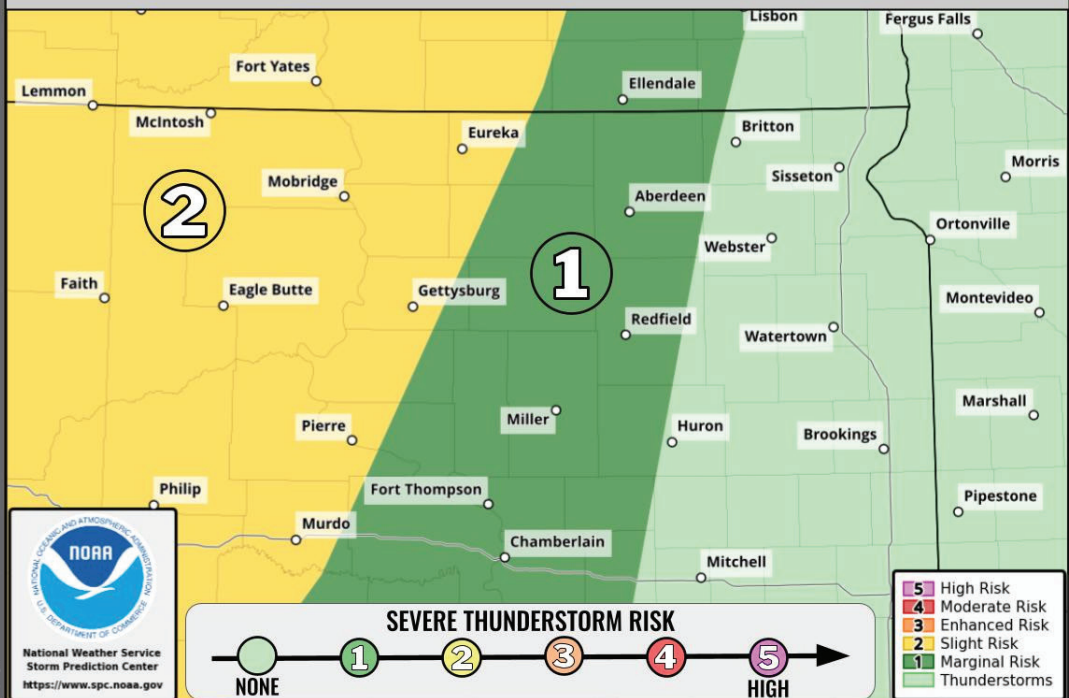


DAMAGING  
WIND GUSTS  
of 60-70 mph

NWS  
Aberdeen, SD



## Marginal to Slight Risk For Severe Storms Tuesday, June 2nd

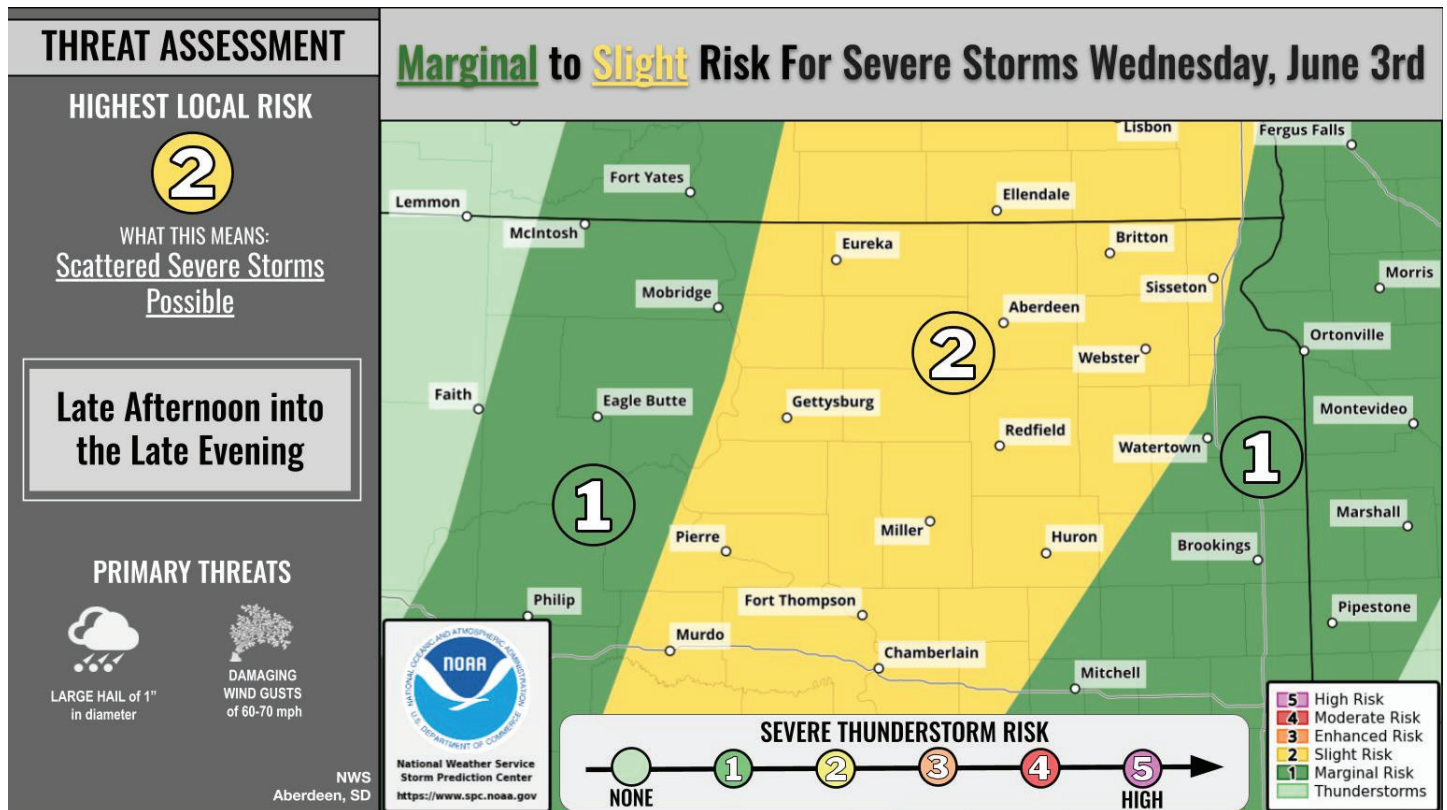


There is a Slight risk (level 2 out of 5) of severe weather extending from the Missouri River valley region westward Tuesday afternoon and evening. The primary threats will be damaging wind gusts 60 to 70 mph, and large hail 1 to 2 inches in diameter. However, an isolated tornado is not out of the question.



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There is a slight risk (level 2 out of 5) of severe weather extending from the Missouri River valley region eastward into the James River valley region and the Prairie Coteau. Strong to severe thunderstorms are possible Wednesday afternoon and evening, with the primary threats being damaging wind gusts 60 to 70 mph, and large hail to 1 inch in diameter.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 79 °F at 4:53 PM**

**Low Temp: 62 °F at 12:33 AM**

**Wind: 15 mph at 12:00 AM**

**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 100 in 1917

Record Low: 30 in 1946

Average High: 77

Average Low: 51

Average Precip in June.: 0.21

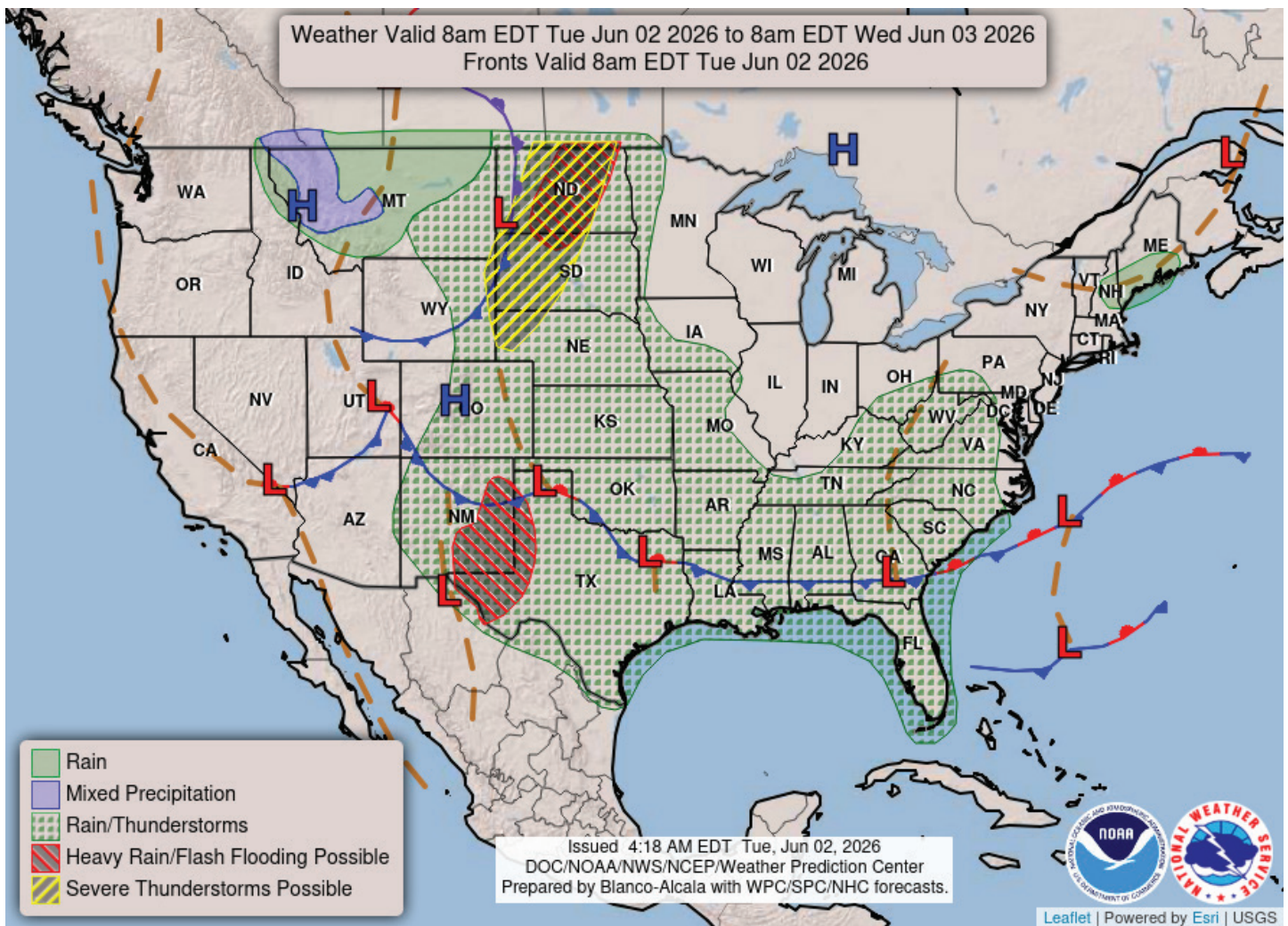
Precip to date in June.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 7.46

Precip Year to Date: 6.36

Sunset Tonight: 9:14 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46 am



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## Today in Weather History

June 2nd, 1891: An estimated F3 tornado moved northeast, passing one mile south of Hazel in Hamlin County, where three people were killed in a barn. The farm home was entirely swept away. A horse was seen being carried in the air for 400 yards. The tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 5 miles.

After touching down, an estimated F2 tornado moved northeast along the eastern edge of Watertown, where a barn was destroyed, and debris was scattered for a half mile. Two homes were leveled 5 miles northeast of Watertown. Near Waverly, one person was injured in the destruction of a flour mill. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for about 15 miles.

June 2nd, 1964: Some bitter cold temperatures were observed during the early morning hours on the 2nd. Some low temperatures include 27 degrees 12 miles SSW of Harrold; 28 degrees in Andover and 23 N of Highmore; 29 degrees 4 NW of Gann Valley, Redfield, and 2 NW of Stephan; 30 degrees in Castlewood and 1 W of Highmore; 31 degrees in Britton, 1 NW of Faulkton, and Kennebec; and 32 degrees in McLaughlin.

June 2nd, 2008: Several supercell thunderstorms rolled southeast from northwest South Dakota into central South Dakota, bringing large hail, damaging winds, and flash flooding during the late afternoon and evening hours. The large hail, up to baseball size, and high winds killed many birds, pheasants, grouse, and rabbits. Thousands of acres of grassland, cropland, and shelter belts received minor to significant damage in Stanley and Hughes County. The large hail also knocked out many windows and damaged the siding of several buildings and homes in both Stanley and Hughes counties. Many roads and cropland were also affected by flash flooding throughout Hughes and Stanley counties. Very heavy rain of over 3 inches caused flash flooding in many parts of Pierre into the early morning hours. Many roads were reportedly flooded with 1 to 2 feet of water. Several homes in southeast Pierre received sewer backup. Also, several houses on Grey Goose Road received flood damage. A Federal Disaster Declaration was issued for Hughes and Stanley counties, mainly regarding the flooding. Tennis ball hail broke most of the west side windows out of the house near Mission Ridge in Stanley County. Hail up to the size of baseballs fell in Pierre, breaking some windows out of homes and vehicles. Heavy rains of 2 to 4 inches fell across much of Stanley County, causing extensive flash flooding. Seventeen roads also sustained some form of damage from the flooding.

1889 — A great flood on the Potomac River in Washington D.C. took out a span of Long Bridge, and flooded streets near the river. The flood stage reached was not again equalled until 1936. (David Ludlum)

1917 — The temperature at Tribune, KS dipped to 30 degrees to establish a state record for the month of June. (The Weather Channel)

1949 — A tornado northeast of Alfalfa OK circled an area one mile in radius. (The Weather Channel)

1985 — Lightning struck a house, broke a bedroom window, and jumped to a metal frame bed. A man was killed but his wife was unharmed by the lightning. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes in West Texas and six tornadoes in Illinois. Thunderstorms in Illinois produced wind gusts to 70 mph at McComb and Mattoon. Thunderstorms in southern Texas produced 5.5 inches of rain south of Seguin, and up to eight inches of rain in Washington County. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 — Severe thunderstorms in Texas and Oklahoma produced hail more than three inches in diameter near Stilwater OK, and softball size hail in Jones County of north central Texas. Baseball size hail and 70 mph winds caused an estimated 100 million dollars damage around Abilene TX. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather across much of the south central U.S. through most of the day and night. Thunderstorms spawned a dozen tornadoes, and there were 123 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 78 mph at Russell KS, and baseball size hail was reported at Denver CO, Cuthbert TX, and in Reeves County TX. Afternoon thunderstorms in southern New England produced wind gusts to 120 mph at Fitchburg, MA, causing five million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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Daily Devotion

## Our Keeper

**The Lord guards our heart and mind continuously—even while we sleep.**

Psalms 121:3-8: 3 He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade on your right hand.

6 The sun will not smite you by day, Nor the moon by night.

7 The LORD will protect you from all evil; He will keep your soul.

8 The LORD will guard your going out and your coming in From this time forth and forever.

Yesterday we learned that God is our protector. Today's verses from Psalm 121 explain how He is also our keeper, who preserves us at all times and in all places.

"He who keeps you will not slumber" (v. 3). The One who is our caretaker needs no sleep; He is always alert and attentive to our cries, even when our feelings seem to tell us otherwise. If you ever feel you've been forgotten, remember that feelings are changeable but God is perfectly consistent.

"The Lord is your keeper ... He will keep your soul" (vv. 5, 7). Besides preserving us physically and spiritually, He restrains us from wrong thoughts, harmful words, and inappropriate actions. His Holy Spirit gives warnings to keep us from evil, and He also provides guidance so we'll grow in godliness.

"The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever" (v. 8). God is sovereign. He is with us always—protecting, directing, and teaching us. He accompanies and leads even in the small tasks that seem insignificant.

God is always with us (Matthew 28:20). We can never step beyond the precious love and care of our heavenly Father—the One who cares for us better than anyone else ever could.

*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:

06.01.26

12 15 21 43 50 2

TOP PRIZE:

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 32 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.29.26

19 24 47 59 65 7

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$346,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 17 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.01.26

10 37 40 46 47 5

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$28,270,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 32 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.30.26

4 6 7 22 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$113,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 47 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.01.26

2 7 35 44 57 25

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 16 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

06.01.26

2 42 47 57 58 14

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$194,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 16 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)



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## News from the Associated Press

### AP Decision Notes: What to expect in South Dakota's state primary

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — South Dakota's governor, the speaker of the state House, the state's lone representative in Congress and a businessman will face off in a competitive Republican primary for governor on Tuesday. Primary voters will also choose nominees for other state and federal offices, while Sioux Falls residents will elect a new mayor.

Gov. Larry Rhoden seeks a full term as the state's chief executive. He was previously lieutenant governor under then-Gov. Kristi Noem but assumed the top job when Noem stepped down in early 2025 to join President Donald Trump's Cabinet.

Serving less than half a term as governor was not enough for Rhoden to clear the Republican field. He faces strong challenges from U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, state House Speaker Jon Hansen and businessman Toby Doeden.

The winner will face former state Sen. Dan Ahlers in the general election. Ahlers is unopposed for the Democratic nomination.

At the top of the ballot is the race for the U.S. Senate, in which Republican Mike Rounds seeks a third term. His opponent in the primary is Justin McNeal, a U.S. Navy veteran who ran as an independent in 2024 against Johnson for his U.S. House seat but was kept off the ballot over invalid signatures on his nominating petition.

Nonprofit executive and former state trooper Julian Beaudion is unopposed for the Democratic nomination. Attorney and military veteran Brian Bengs is running in the general election as an independent. Bengs previously ran for the U.S. Senate in 2022 and received 26% of the vote against Republican Senate Majority Leader John Thune.

State Attorney General Marty Jackley is running to replace Johnson in the U.S. House. He faces Republican James Bialota in the primary.

Trump has endorsed Rounds for U.S. Senate and Jackley for U.S. House. He did not endorse a candidate for governor.

In South Dakota primaries for governor, U.S. Senate and U.S. House, candidates must receive at least 35% of the vote to win the nomination. If no candidate reaches that threshold, the top two vote-getters advance to a June 23 runoff.

In Sioux Falls, the state's most populous city, five candidates are competing to replace term-limited Mayor Paul TenHaken. If no candidate receives a vote majority, the top two finishers will advance to the runoff.

The key counties to watch on primary night are on opposite ends of the state. Minnehaha County on the eastern border is home to Sioux Falls. Pennington County on the western border is home to Rapid City.

South Dakota is one of the most reliably Republican-voting states in general elections, so the winners in Tuesday's GOP primaries should enter the general election campaign with a considerable advantage.

Here are some of the key facts about the election and data points the AP Decision Team will monitor as the votes are tallied:

When do polls close?

Polls close at 7 p.m. local time, which is 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. ET. Polls in most of the state are in Central time and close at 8 p.m. ET, but some polls are in Mountain time and close at 9 p.m. ET.

What's on the ballot?

The Associated Press will provide vote results and declare winners in contested primaries for U.S. Senate, U.S. House, governor, state Senate, state House and mayor of Sioux Falls.

Who gets to vote?

Registered party members may vote only in their own party's primary. In other words, Democrats can't vote in the Republican primary or vice versa. Independent voters or those with no party affiliation may

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participate in the Democratic primary but not the Republican primary.

How many voters are there?

As of April 1, there were about 674,000 registered voters in South Dakota, including about 318,000 registered Republicans, about 138,000 registered Democrats and about 157,000 independents or voters with no political affiliation.

How many people actually vote?

Nearly 119,000 votes were cast in the Republican U.S. Senate primary in 2022.

How much of the vote is cast early or by absentee ballot?

About 19% of the 2024 primary vote and about 20% of the 2022 primary vote was cast before primary day.

As of May 26, about 17,000 ballots had already been cast in Tuesday's election, roughly 79% in the Republican primary and roughly 15% in the Democratic primary.

When are early and absentee votes released?

In South Dakota, results from mail and in-person early voting are usually released together with results from in-person Election Day voting. More than a third of the state's 66 counties tend to release most or all of their results, including in-person Election Day results, in the first vote update.

How long does vote-counting usually take?

Although South Dakota spans two time zones, state law requires that no results are released until the final polls have closed at 9 p.m. ET.

In the state's most recent U.S. Senate primary in 2022, the AP first reported results at 9:02 p.m. ET, or two minutes after the last polls closed. The final vote update of the night was at 3:22 a.m. ET, with more than 99% of total votes counted.

When will the AP declare a winner?

The AP does not make projections and will declare a winner only when it's determined there is no scenario that would allow a trailing candidate to close the gap. If a race has not been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, such as candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear that it has not yet declared a winner and explain why.

How do recounts work?

Recounts in South Dakota are automatic only in cases of tie votes. Losing candidates for statewide office may request a recount if the vote margin is 0.25% or less of the total votes cast. Candidates for state legislative and local offices have a higher threshold: 2% of the total votes cast. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is subject to a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Are we there yet?

As of Tuesday, there will be 154 days until the 2026 midterm elections.

## **What to watch in Tuesday's primaries as Democrats try to defend California and make inroads in Iowa**

By STEVEN SLOAN and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For a state that's home to Hollywood, there isn't much star power in California's governor race. It's a somewhat different story in Los Angeles, where a reality television personality is running for mayor as the city prepares to host the Olympics.

More primaries are being held on Tuesday as well. Democrats are banking on a rare chance to regain ground in Iowa, a rural state that has repeatedly eluded them in recent years. Republicans, meanwhile, are grappling with a New Jersey congressman whose unexplained absence could put their already slim majority at risk.

Here are some things to watch as voters in California, Iowa, Montana, New Jersey, New Mexico and South Dakota cast ballots.

California's low-wattage race for governor

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Ronald Reagan. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Jerry Brown. Gavin Newsom.

The governor's office in California typically attracts some of the highest-wattage names in politics, but not this year.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris and Sen. Alex Padilla took a pass on the race. And with Newsom barred from seeking a third term, the campaign to succeed him turned into a sprawling, often messy contest.

In the final stretch, much of the attention has focused on Democrats Xavier Becerra, the former congressman and state attorney general who was also health secretary under President Joe Biden, and Tom Steyer, a billionaire known for his climate activism. Republican Steve Hilton is campaigning with President Donald Trump's endorsement.

Under California's primary system, all candidates appear on a single ballot and the top two finishers advance to the November general election, regardless of party. The absence of a front-runner incentivized virtually anyone with political ambition and a modicum of organization to join the race, leaving Democrats worried that their candidates would divide the vote and ultimately be shut out of the fall campaign. But those fears have eased in the primary's closing weeks, with the party now expecting to secure at least one slot on the November ballot.

The results could offer insight about how voters are feeling in a state where Democrats have dominated statewide elections for two decades.

Los Angeles mayor seeks to fend off reality star challenger

In a city still recovering from the most destructive wildfire in its history, Mayor Karen Bass is in a tough fight for reelection.

The mayor, who is a frequent target of Trump's criticism, was in Ghana as part of a presidential delegation when the blaze began. She has acknowledged mistakes but has centered her campaign around a message of recovery and progress.

Bass is facing a spirited challenge from reality television personality Spencer Pratt, who has blamed Bass for presiding over destruction that claimed his own home. Pratt, who rose to fame on "The Hills," has shared videos created by artificial intelligence that show him taking on a superhero persona to battle street criminals and Democratic politicians.

The race is officially nonpartisan, but Bass is a Democrat, as is progressive city council member Nithya Raman, who made a last-minute decision to challenge her one-time ally. Pratt is a registered Republican who has received a nod of approval — if not an outright endorsement — from Trump.

Unless a candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary, the top two will advance to a general election in November.

Los Angeles hasn't elected a Republican mayor since Richard Riordan won his second term in 1997, and the results will be closely watched for signs of dissatisfaction with liberal urban governance. The winner will emerge as a national and global figure as the city prepares to host the Olympics in 2028.

Democrats look to Iowa to rebuild in the heartland

Iowa wasn't always a Republican stronghold.

Before Trump reshaped American politics, this was the state that lifted the political career of Barack Obama and sent Tom Harkin to the Senate for five terms.

The party is particularly excited about Rob Sand, who is running unopposed for the Democratic nomination for governor. A native of Decorah, Iowa, he has the rural roots that have become rare among Democrats. Perhaps most importantly, he's a proven winner in a Republican-leaning state, having been elected twice as auditor.

Republicans head into the primary with five candidates. Trump jumped in last week to endorse Rep. Randy Feenstra.

This is the first open contest for the governor's seat since 2006. Democrats are hoping that a combination of the economic fallout from Trump's tariff policies, rising gas prices stemming from the Iran war and the lack of a Republican incumbent could give them their best opportunity in years. Sand also has a fundraising advantage over the Republicans, including Feenstra.



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State Rep. Josh Turek and state Sen. Zach Wahls are competing in the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by incumbent Republican Joni Ernst. The race has divided in part along questions of who should lead the party in Washington, with Wahls openly criticizing Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer. Republicans have largely coalesced behind U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson as their candidate for the Senate seat.

An unexplained absence puts crucial GOP seat at risk

In the final frenzied days before an election, voters can sometimes grow tired of hearing from candidates so much. But in New Jersey's 7th congressional district, they're not hearing from one candidate at all.

Republican Rep. Tom Kean Jr. is running unopposed in Tuesday's primary. But he's facing growing scrutiny for an unexplained medical absence that has stretched for three months, causing him to miss more than 100 votes in Congress.

That's not an ideal statistic for any lawmaker, but it's especially problematic for someone running in one of the few genuinely competitive congressional districts. While gerrymandering has yielded most U.S. House seats reliably Democratic or Republican, Kean's district has flipped between the parties in each of the last two midterm elections. Republican Leonard Lance lost to Democrat Tom Malinowski in 2018. Malinowski lost to Kean in 2022.

As they cling to a narrow majority in the House, Republicans can't afford to lose a district like Kean's. Several Democrats vying to take on Kean in the fall have made his absence — and the lack of clarity surrounding it — a central part of their message.

New Jersey was one of the first places that voter pushback to Trump became apparent last year when Democrat Mikie Sherrill won the governor's race by more than 14 percentage points. The turnout in the 7th district on Tuesday could provide clues about whether that Democratic enthusiasm remains in place.

Democrats pin their hopes on independent candidates in some states

Democrats are hopeful they can mount a serious challenge against Republican Senate candidates in deep-red South Dakota and Montana this fall. But their best hope may not be the Democrats featured on Tuesday's primary ballot.

Both states feature higher-profile independent candidates, who, because they're not running to represent a political party, do not have to compete in primary elections.

In Montana, there are five Democrats competing for the party's Senate nomination. But independent Seth Bodnar, the former University of Montana president, has raised more money than all of them combined. He's even significantly out-raised Trump-backed Republican candidate Kurt Alme.

In South Dakota, three-term incumbent Republican Mike Rounds is expected to cruise to his party's nomination on Tuesday. He'll face Democrat Julian Beaudion, a former highway patrol trooper and small business owner, on the November ballot. But it's a former Democrat now running as an independent, Brian Bengs, a military veteran, who may be the tougher challenger.

## **Rubio will testify before Congress for the first time since the start of the Iran war**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Marco Rubio is set to face a litany of questions Tuesday about the Trump administration's fragile or stalling diplomatic efforts around the world when he appears for back-to-back hearings on Capitol Hill for the first time since the Iran war began.

The Republican former senator will sit before House and Senate committees to make the State Department's annual budget request. But the focus is likely to shift quickly to the already unsteady ceasefire between Washington and Tehran, which has been further tested in recent days by back-and-forth attacks.

Cabinet members, including Rubio, have defended President Donald Trump's decision to launch the conflict despite promises over the years not to engage in "forever wars" in the Middle East. That work has been made more difficult by Trump's shifting goals for the conflict.

While Rubio is testifying before Congress for the first time since the Iran war started on Feb. 28, he took

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part in a classified briefing for lawmakers days after the first U.S. and Israeli strikes. He faced Democrats' anger over the lack of congressional approval but strong support from most Republicans for taking action against one of America's oldest adversaries.

In the two months since the war began, however, a small but growing faction of Republicans have joined Democrats in questioning the astronomical price tag and overall economic consequences of the conflict as they head into midterm elections in the fall.

Last month, the Senate advanced legislation for the first time that would have forced Trump to withdraw from the conflict after GOP Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana — fresh off a primary election loss in which Trump endorsed his opponent — joined Democrats in pushing it forward.

The House also had scheduled a vote on a war powers resolution, but GOP leadership kept it from coming to the floor after it became clear that the majority party would not have the numbers to defeat it.

The actions show the GOP is struggling to maintain political backing for Trump's handling of the war as rank-and-file Republicans are increasingly willing to defy the president over the conflict.

Following his appearances Tuesday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House Appropriations subcommittee responsible for the State Department, Rubio will return to the Hill on Wednesday to testify before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and equivalent Senate Appropriations subcommittee.

Rubio, the son of Cuban immigrants, also is likely to be questioned about the Trump administration's escalatory behavior toward Cuba, as Trump has hinted that the small island country could be the next U.S. target after operations in Iran are wrapped up.

Despite a series of meetings between U.S. and Cuban officials, Trump and Rubio have renewed threats against the island's government, which take on greater weight after the administration announced criminal charges against former President Raúl Castro. Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel condemned the indictment as a political stunt that sought only to "justify the folly of a military aggression against Cuba."

Over his congressional career and now as America's top diplomat, Rubio has maintained that Cuba is a national security threat because of its ties to U.S. adversaries and that Trump is intent on addressing it.

## **As Congo grapples with Ebola, volunteers cook up meals to support patients and health workers**

By JUSTIN KABUMBA and OPE ADETAYO Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Arlette Basekawike, a volunteer for the United Nations food agency in Bunia, the heart of Congo's Ebola outbreak, spends most of her time in a small shed outside a health facility preparing meals for patients and health workers.

Her hair covered by a pink bonnet, she prepares porridge, omelets and bread for breakfast for patients at the Evangelical Medical Center. The lunch and dinner menus might include fresh fish with fufu, a starchy staple made of mashed plantains, finished off by fruit.

"Even though the patients have this disease, they still feel better when they eat, and the doctors have the energy to treat the sick and give them medication," Basekawike told The Associated Press on Monday as she prepared vegetables and potatoes with goat meat in a large cooking pot. "I'm here for them like a parent, preparing food so they feel comfortable."

Her contribution may appear, on the surface, like a simple task, but it has become one of the critical supports for the region as it grapples with the rapidly spreading rare Bundibugyo virus, the species of Ebola confirmed in eastern Congo in May.

As of Tuesday, 321 cases of the Ebola disease and 48 deaths had been confirmed in the Central African nation's three eastern provinces of Ituri, North and South Kivu, according to the World Health Organization. Neighboring Uganda has had nine cases and one death confirmed, according to the WHO, prompting Uganda to close its border with Congo.

Before the outbreak, the beleaguered region already faced one of the world's most severe food crises due to an ongoing conflict that has displaced millions of people as government forces fight rebels. The

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spreading virus has added another layer of complexity that the United Nations warns might complicate the efforts to manage the spread of the virus among an already wary population.

"We are in a region where we already have large segments of the population suffering from acute food insecurity linked to either war or displacement," said Olivier Nkakudulu, who heads the World Food Program in Ituri province. "So there are already needs and Ebola is an additional crisis on top of a crisis."

The resource-strapped agency, the World Food Program, is facing a critical choice as aid cuts from the U.S. and other major partners have disrupted operations in the vulnerable region. Efforts to contain the disease, which the World Health Organization has deemed a global health emergency, have been hampered by a lack of funds as global partners either withdrew or reduced pledges.

Also, attacks by suspicious residents on health workers and the slow delivery of aid due to the ongoing conflict have made it difficult to slow the spread of the disease.

Despite the challenges, the agency and health workers say they have ensured patients' nutritional demands are met so far.

"Today we need to increase the amount because the number of patients has gone up," Esther Bao, a nurse and one of the volunteers, said. There are also patients who, because of their health situation, "don't eat just any meal," she said.

The Bundibugyo virus has no approved vaccine or treatment. However, treatment has targeted symptoms and five people have recovered.

The outbreak continues to spread, from the three health zones affected at the onset to 22 as of this weekend, according to Congo's Ministry of Health.

On Sunday, 120 meals were served through four health facilities, bringing the total to 404 since the food assistance began on May 28, according to Nkakudulu. But the financial situation has not been easy, he said.

"Without more funding, we might not be able to prioritize every suspected case," Nkakudulu said. "We might have to focus on some and not have food to give to others."

## **Israel kills 8 in southern Lebanon, a day after Trump said Israel and Hezbollah to de-escalate**

BEIRUT (AP) — Israeli drone strikes on southern Lebanon on Tuesday killed eight people, including a father and his son and daughter, a day after U.S. President Donald Trump said Israel and Hezbollah agreed to dial back fighting.

Israel threatened on Monday to strike Beirut's southern suburbs, causing panic in the Lebanese capital as thousands fled to safer areas and Hezbollah fired rockets at northern Israel. Israeli forces recently made their deepest incursion into Lebanon in 26 years, but Beirut has been mostly spared over the past six weeks, apart from two targeted attacks on the city's southern suburbs in May.

Trump later announced after a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and communicating with the Lebanese militant group through mediators that "there will be no Troops going to Beirut."

Lebanon's State-run National News Agency reported Tuesday that an Israeli drone strike hit a car on the road linking the southern town of Marjayoun with the city of Nabatiyeh, killing James Karam, a dentist from the nearby Christian town of Qlayaa, along with his daughter and son. The Lebanese army said two soldiers were lightly wounded when a separate drone targeted them on a road outside the city.

A drone strike on the village of Jibchit killed two Syrians who worked at a plant nursery, the agency reported, while another on the nearby village of Toul killed two people. A third strike hit a car near the village of Harouf, killing one person.

NNA also reported that an Israeli airstrike on Monday killed six in the southern village of Marwaniyeh.

Hezbollah said Tuesday its fighters fired anti-tank missiles on Israeli troops who were pushing into the southern village of Hadatha, about 7 kilometers (4 miles) from the Israeli border. Sirens sounded in several areas in northern Israel, the military said in a statement, adding that "a suspicious aerial target" was identified in the area in which Israeli soldiers are operating in southern Lebanon, and that no injuries were reported.



Despite a Washington-brokered ceasefire reached in April, the two sides have continued to exchange strikes after Israel targeted areas in Lebanon, saying it was for self-defense.

The latest exchanges came as a second round of talks between Israel and Lebanon is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday in Washington, where Lebanese negotiators are set to seek a full ceasefire that will prevent future attacks. The Israel-Lebanon talks that began in April in Washington were the first in more than three decades between the countries, which have no formal diplomatic relations.

The fighting presents a major obstacle to the emerging deal to extend the ceasefire in the Iran war that erupted after the United States and Israel struck the Islamic Kingdom on Feb.28. Tehran wants any agreement to include a complete ceasefire in Lebanon.

Hezbollah has rejected direct talks, counting on pressure from Iran.

The latest round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has killed 3,433 people in Lebanon and displaced more than 1 million people. According to Netanyahu's office, at least 27 Israeli soldiers and a defense contractor have been killed in or near southern Lebanon. Two civilians have also been killed in northern Israel.

Israel's military said late Monday that a soldier was killed in southern Lebanon. It added that seven more soldiers were wounded in the incident, three of them severely.

Hezbollah's use of hard-to-detect fiber-optic drones has been deadly for the Israeli military, which is struggling to respond.

## **Police investigate Iowa man suspected of killing 6 of his relatives and then himself**

MUSCATINE, Iowa (AP) — Authorities in Iowa are investigating the fatal shootings of six people who they believe were killed by a relative who took his own life when confronted by police Monday.

Police were called Monday to a home in Muscatine, about 50 miles (80 kilometers) southeast of Cedar Rapids, where they found four people fatally shot, Muscatine Police Chief Anthony Kies said during a news conference.

Officers later found the suspect, 52-year-old Ryan Willis McFarland, of Muscatine, on a trail in the city, Kies said.

"While talking to Ryan Willis McFarland, he took his own life," he said.

Two other men who also are believed to be relatives of McFarland were later found fatally shot elsewhere in the city, according to Kies. One man was found in his home and the other was discovered dead inside a business, he said.

Authorities have yet to release the names of the victims and any details about them.

"Today I simply do not have the words," said Kies. "This act of evil and what it has done to our community."

The city's police department is continuing to investigate the shootings, working to process the crime scenes and conduct interviews. Police have asked anyone with information to contact its major crimes unit.

Kies confirmed that McFarland had a criminal record, but wouldn't share any details.

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## **'I gave birth in the street': Conflict makes childbirth risky in parts of Africa**

By CAITLIN KELLY Associated Press

BIRAO, Central African Republic (AP) — The agony began for Maude Ahmad Fadala shortly after sunset. Her baby was coming. She was in a refugee camp, weakened by typhoid. There were no camp facilities for what was about to happen, and she had no money to travel. She struggled to her feet and started walking.

She stopped every few minutes, gripped by pain from contractions, then could go no farther.

"I gave birth in the street," she said. "There was no doctor, no midwife, and no one holding my hand."

This is part of a series on maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa, which has the world's fastest-growing population and the majority of mothers dying from pregnancy-related causes: 70%, or around 182,000 deaths every year.

Nearly two-thirds of maternal deaths worldwide occur in countries affected by conflict or "fragility," the World Health Organization said this year. For women like Fadala, fleeing Sudan's war to countries like Central African Republic, the danger doesn't stop at the border.

Displacement can mean missed prenatal appointments, dangerous journeys and weakened health systems, often in remote settings.

Women in Central African Republic are 40 times more likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth than in the United States, the United Nations has said. For every 100,000 births in the country, one of the world's poorest, 829 women die.

'Risk of maternal death is going to increase'

Years of internal conflict have made Central African Republic and its health system fragile. Despite its vast reserves of gold, health services are scarce outside major cities. One in three people live on less than \$2 a day.

The government, aware of its maternal mortality problem, announced a plan in 2024 to increase spending for resources such as skilled birth attendants. Officials did not respond to questions about how it's working.

Now, sweeping cuts in humanitarian aid funding by top donor the United States and other countries have made it even harder for women to find care.

In the remote town of Birao near the Sudan border, where Fadala shelters, four local midwives who had been supported by the U.N. Population Fund lost their jobs last year as the Trump administration cut every U.S. funding agreement with the U.N. sexual and reproductive health agency.

Opposite Fadala's tent is a former UNFPA-funded "safe space" providing transport for pregnant women to the district hospital. It was one of four such spaces in Birao serving nearly 50,000 women. Those have closed without U.S. funding, along with two U.S.-backed health facilities.

Now, "some women run the risk of dying in pregnancy situations that are not medically managed," said UNFPA program officer Marie Justine Mamba Ibingui.

UNFPA's budget in Central African Republic has been halved in the past two years to \$6.5 million, country director Victor Rakoto said. UNFPA was the only provider of reproductive health products in Birao.

"The risk of maternal death is going to increase if there is no solution," Rakoto said.

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Conflict-affected settings like Birao account for six in 10 maternal deaths globally, according to the U.N. 'Giving birth here is exhausting'

The district hospital, which Fadala had tried to reach, is a few kilometers (over a mile) away over dirt roads.

On a recent day, birthing assistant Delphine Zanabe moved between patients as dozens of women waited, sitting thigh-to-thigh on hard benches in the sweltering heat. Some had walked for hours to reach the hospital. Others had risked their pregnancy with motorbike journeys over rough ground.

From the border, adjoining a part of Sudan held by paramilitary forces fighting the Sudanese military, it's a 65-kilometer (40-mile) journey to the refugee camp.

"They only come when they are about to give birth," Zanabe said. "It's a struggle and it's either the baby or the mother who suffers." According to WHO guidelines, pregnant women should attend at least eight prenatal consultations.

For refugees, living in survival mode in unfamiliar surroundings compounds the challenges of poverty and lack of education. Zanabe said those factors often put women at risk for pregnancy and childbirth complications.

In the maternity ward, eight beds were in a room so small they almost touched. They serve a population of about 70,000 people, along with 22,000 Sudanese refugees.

Doctors said 12 staffers have lost their jobs as a result of aid cuts. The majority were from the maternity department.

Amna Adam Hessen had arrived the day before, burning with fever from malaria. Her unborn child was found to be in a breech position, a discovery made late because she had missed prenatal appointments. Brought by motorbike from the refugee camp, she bled heavily during labor and lost her baby.

The next day, her mother, Salet, fanned her in the suffocating heat.

"Giving birth here is exhausting," she said, describing the long and difficult night.

Amna writhed with fever on the bare foam mattress and cried out, "Mama, mama."

Zanabe is worried about future cuts in humanitarian assistance affecting mothers.

Over 40% of births in Central African Republic already occur away from medical facilities, the United Nations has estimated — a traditional approach that risks otherwise preventable complications.

'I abandoned them like that'

Clara Abessendé was one of the four midwives who lost their jobs.

She had watched as the number of women arriving daily at the hospital tripled after Sudan's war began in early 2023, and as staffers ran out of supplies like antibiotics and malaria treatments.

"As a result, there were more cases of infant and maternal deaths," she said. Abessendé said she feels heavy with the guilt of having to leave her job.

"The children born in my hands ...I abandoned them like that," she said.

Katidje Idrisse Tahire is one of the women she's no longer there to help.

Tahire walked slowly through the refugee camp to fetch water, one child on her back and two others at her side. She was late in her ninth month, preparing to have another.

She said she fled Sudan four months ago on foot. At the border, armed men robbed her of everything. Her husband hasn't been seen since they fled Darfur.

"My whole body aches," she said. "I am very tired and unwell."

She has no money and doesn't know if care will be available when her baby comes.

## **Only on AP: Under Notre Dame cathedral, a 'dig of the century' unearths 1,700 years of history**

By THOMAS ADAMSON and JEFFREY SCHAEFFER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Wilting in the summer sun, a line of tourists waits to climb Notre Dame cathedral and meet its gargoyles.



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Four meters (13 feet) beneath them, a team of archaeologists is digging the other way — straight down and back in time, to Roman Paris 2,000 years ago.

In 2019, fire brought Notre Dame's spire crashing down as the world watched. The cathedral was rebuilt and reopened in late 2024, and now Paris wants to soften the hot, bare square in front of it with trees and shade.

But in a city this old, the soil cannot be turned until what lies beneath it is excavated, in case it is damaged during works.

So a slice of Notre Dame's forecourt has become an excavation site — an open pit ringed by barriers and crossed by a wooden walkway, a few steps from the line-up.

A modern Da Vinci Code

French media have dubbed it the "dig of the century."

"It's a rare opportunity for us to work on something that's tangibly going to make a difference to the history of Paris," Lucie Altenburg, a conservator with the Paris archaeology unit, told The Associated Press.

Among the hundreds of objects already found: a fourth-century coin stamped with the face of the Emperor Constantine, and shards of medieval pottery painted on the inside with marks no expert has yet deciphered — like a modern Da Vinci Code.

"It makes Notre Dame feel alive again," said Emily Carter, 34, a tourist from Manchester waiting in line with her two children. "You come to see the cathedral, then realize there's another city under your feet. That's almost more moving."

The first traces appear 50 centimeters (20 inches) down; 4 meters (13 feet) lower, the team is still pulling up the past. Some days they fill 15 crates — from ground that has lain untouched for decades.

Ancient cities have archaeologists monitoring digs

This is the bargain in every old city: The past is not in a museum down the street — it is under the street.

Cities rise. Each age builds on the rubble of the last, and the ground climbs with it; in Rome, it has risen about 9 meters (30 feet) since the empire fell in the fifth century AD.

When Athens built its metro for the 2004 Olympics, it set off the largest excavation in Greek history and turned up tens of thousands of objects, now shown in the stations themselves. Paris is no different.

It all comes from the island in the Seine, the Ile de la Cite, where Paris began.

Centuries later, Notre Dame rose on the same ground.

At the cathedral's birth in 1163, the entire square was packed with medieval houses, split by a single street, said Camille Colonna, the archaeologist leading the dig.

Digging down, her team has reached their cellars — and therefore also the time in history they represent.

Below them lie Merovingian and Carolingian grain pits, from the sixth to the 10th centuries; below those, darker and deeper still, a dense Roman quarter from the fourth and fifth centuries.

Twenty centuries are stacked in 4 meters (13 feet) of earth — or about the height of two-and-a-half Napoleon Bonapartes standing on top of one another.

"Here you can see the layers — medieval Paris, Roman Paris, maybe even before that," said Yasmine Benali, 22, an archaeology student watching from behind the barriers. "It makes the city feel less like a postcard and more like something still being discovered."

Coins, ceramics and mysterious markings

The richest finds here come from the foulest place: the deep pits beneath the medieval houses, old latrines that doubled as rubbish dumps.

Out of them the team keeps lifting whole jugs and cups — thrown away centuries ago, yet still intact — among the broken plates and animal bones.

It's "rare to find complete ceramics," said Valentine Breloux, an archaeologist with the unit.

Here the soft waste cushioned them, and centuries later they miraculously came up whole.

Then some other objects came that confounded experts. As conservators cleaned what looked like ordinary medieval pottery, they found faint reddish writing painted on the inside — the same mysterious markings on shard after shard.

What they mean has yet to be deciphered.

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Of everything she has cleaned from Notre Dame, Breloux said, these are the most "astonishing."

Coins can help date the layers

The coins came up as black discs, eaten by rust. But under an X-ray, a face returned: it was Constantine, the Roman emperor who ruled in the early 300s AD.

Such objects also "can be invaluable in giving us the date of the (underground) layer," Altenburg said.

The Roman finds are the ones the archaeologists value most — the deepest, oldest and least understood. In Roman times, the town was called Lutetia, and its center lay across the river, on the Left Bank.

As the Roman empire collapsed, people pulled back to the Ile de la Cite, where Notre Dame would later rise, and fortified the island with walls of stone taken from earlier buildings.

Colonna's team found some proof: a Roman doorstep found in the dig, taken from a much bigger building, carried over, turned upside down, and laid in a road as paving.

Paris houses thousands of finds in an archaeology center

Every find leaves the pit and travels north, to the city's archaeology center — what Colonna calls "a huge archaeological store," a treasure house of Paris.

For archaeologists, the cathedral dig is a rare treat. In France, like elsewhere, they work only where building work is about to begin — a bit like how industrial quarry workers end up unearthing dinosaur remains.

"This only happens because the city of Paris decided it wanted to beautify the area," Altenburg said.

The new square should be mostly finished by 2028: a kind of woodland clearing, with 160 new trees and a thin film of water sliding over the stone to cool it in summer — part of how Paris is bracing for ever hotter summers induced by global warming.

The tourists who now wait in the bare sun beneath the gargoyles will, in a few summers, line up in the shade.

The old underground parking lot will reopen as a visitor center looking onto the Seine.

Until then, the Notre Dame team wants to go deeper still — past the Romans, toward whoever came before them, the Gauls who gave the city its first name.

"The hope is that we are able to go back in time even further than we've ever been before," Altenburg said.

## **Republican senators want more answers on \$1.8 billion settlement fund as Trump considers its future**

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, KEVIN FREKING and SEUNG MIN KIM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Republicans will meet Tuesday to discuss next steps after the Justice Department said it would comply with a court order pausing the implementation of a \$1.776 billion settlement fund designed to compensate President Donald Trump's political allies.

GOP senators who revolted against the settlement before leaving for a Memorial Day recess two weeks ago say they want more information from the administration about the future of the fund, which could potentially go to Trump supporters who beat police and attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021. Meanwhile, Trump is reconsidering whether to move forward with it at all, according to a person familiar with his thinking.

Caught in the middle is legislation that would fund Trump's immigration enforcement agencies for three years. Republicans abruptly left town without passing it after Democrats said they would offer amendments to scrap or scale back the judgment fund, forcing Republicans to go on the record for or against it and endangering the money for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol.

Returning to Washington on Monday evening, Senate Majority Leader John Thune said he wasn't sure if the immigration spending bill would move this week.

"To be determined," he told reporters.

The extraordinary standoff comes after Trump announced the fund with no heads up to lawmakers as part of a settlement to resolve his lawsuit against the IRS over the leak of his tax returns. When word of the settlement broke, the Senate was navigating tricky passage of the immigration legislation with an

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added \$1 billion in White House security costs — including for Trump's ballroom project.

Furious, Senate Republicans jettisoned the White House security money from the bill and made clear they would not pass the legislation at all unless the White House made major changes to the settlement.

"I do think the best way to handle it is if the administration decides to shut it down themselves," Thune told reporters Monday, referring to the fund.

He said Republicans will have a better idea of how to proceed after they meet for their weekly conference lunch on Tuesday.

Senators say they need more 'explicit' commitment

The Justice Department said it would comply with a ruling Friday from U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema, who temporarily halted the fund for two weeks. The judge scheduled a June 12 hearing for arguments on whether to extend her order.

The department said in a statement that it strongly disagrees with the ruling but would comply.

Republican senators weren't satisfied. They said Monday evening that they need more detail from the administration on what happens after that deadline before deciding next steps.

"It's pretty clear that the president has to say very explicitly that there's not going to be a weaponization fund," said Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa.

Oklahoma Sen. Jim Lankford said Trump administration officials "need to say what they actually mean."

"They need to say, we're setting this whole thing aside," Lankford said.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said that if the settlement is "completely pulled, then I'm satisfied. But I haven't heard anybody say that."

Republican Sen. John Kennedy of Louisiana said the administration already has to abide by the court decision, "that's in the Constitution. I have to know more about their position."

"Right now, the reconciliation bill looks like a broken arm with the bones sticking out," Kennedy said. "It won't move this week, in my opinion, unless we have some resolution on the weaponization account."

Senators issue ultimatum to Justice Department

The outrage of the fund came to a head last month at a closed-door meeting between senators and acting Attorney General Todd Blanche that Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas described on a recent episode of his podcast as "one of the roughest meetings I've seen in my entire time in the Senate."

GOP senators had been discussing several ways that they could curb the fund, including limiting who can receive payouts, changing the makeup of the commission in charge of settlement decisions, adding some sort of judicial review for applicants or scrapping the fund altogether.

Amid the backlash, a person familiar with the matter, who insisted on anonymity to discuss the president's thinking, said Monday that Trump was reconsidering whether to move forward with the fund. But the president has not said publicly what he intends to do.

Also complicating matters is Trump's campaign-year push to defeat GOP lawmakers whom he sees as disloyal, including some of Thune's most reliable Republican votes in the narrow 53-47 Senate. Sens. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and John Cornyn of Texas both lost reelection bids in May after Trump endorsed their primary opponents, and it's unclear how supportive they'll be of the president's agenda going forward.

"I think it's hard to divorce anything that happens here from what's happening in the political atmosphere around us," Thune said before the Senate left town.

## Democrats redrew California's map to counter Trump. The primary tests whether it pays off for them

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

California Democrats persuaded voters to let them redraw the state's congressional map so the party could potentially gain five seats in the U.S. House to counter GOP redistricting in Texas. Tuesday's primary will be the first indication of whether that will pay off.

The state's unusual primary system, in which the top two vote-getters advance to the general election regardless of party, means Democrats have a chance of effectively missing out on a pickup in the San



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Diego suburbs, where Republican Rep. Darrell Issa's district was redrawn to give it a slight Democratic lean.

Issa retired, and a Republican San Diego County supervisor, Jim Desmond, stepped in to run. So did an avalanche of nine Democrats — so many that some fear the Democratic vote will be split among them, leaving Desmond and the only other GOP candidate, Jim O'Neil, as the top vote-getters. Under that scenario, Democrats would be locked out of the November general election.

"After millions of dollars and a nationwide effort to redraw these districts in response to Texas, Democrats being shut out would be a nightmare," said Ammar Campa-Najjar, a former Obama administration official who is one of the Democrats running.

California has been the bright spot for Democrats in a redistricting war kicked off by President Donald Trump to help his party retain control of the House. After Texas redrew its map to make as many as five more seats winnable for the GOP, California voters allowed Democrats to suspend their state's own independent redistricting commission and create a new map in retaliation.

But when Virginia Democrats tried to replicate that, they were blocked by their state Supreme Court. Meanwhile the conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court gutted a key provision of the Voting Rights Act, letting Republicans eliminate some majority-Black congressional districts in the South.

Campa-Najjar, San Diego City Councilwoman Marni von Wilpert and investor Brandon Riker, who is financing his own campaign, are the most prominent Democrats in the race for the seat vacated by Issa. Many Democrats are optimistic their voters will coalesce around one candidate and set up a competitive election against Desmond in the fall.

The 48th district would not be the only competitive fall race for Democrats.

In the Central Valley, they redrew the seat held by Republican Rep. David Valadao to make it even more Democratic. Valadao is a survivor of several targeted Democratic campaigns and one of two remaining Republican House members who voted to impeach Trump after the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

He's expected to make it to the general election, so the primary will determine which Democrat faces him — state Assemblywoman Jasmeet Bains, a moderate backed by the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, or Randy Villegas, a political science professor at College of the Sequoias and a school board member who represents the party's liberal wing.

The schism between establishment Democrats and a younger, insurgent progressive wing is a defining characteristic of many of this year's primaries.

In a safe Democratic district in San Francisco, Scott Wiener, a state lawmaker and former member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, is considered likely to make the November race to replace retiring former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The suspense is over whether he will face Saikat Chakrabati, a wealthy former technology entrepreneur who supported Rep. Alexandria Ocasio Cortez's insurgent primary in 2018, or Supervisor Connie Chan, who was endorsed by Pelosi.

In Sacramento, city council member Mai Vang is challenging 81-year-old Rep. Doris Matsui, who succeeded her late husband after his death in 2005.

Rep. Brad Sherman, whose Southern California district stretches from the San Fernando Valley to Malibu, is being challenged by Democrat Jake Levine, a 42-year-old lawyer who argues that it is time to move on from the 15-term congressman.

And in a redrawn district that stretches from Napa Valley into conservative Northern California farming communities, 14-term Democratic Rep. Mike Thompson has drawn a younger challenger, former venture capitalist Eric Jones.

California's congressional primaries also will determine the fate of Republicans targeted in the Democratic redraw.

In Southern California, sitting Republican Reps. Ken Calvert and Young Kim, were drawn into the same conservative district and are battling over their pro-Trump credentials.

In the Sacramento suburbs, Rep. Kevin Kiley, who left the GOP to become an independent and a critic of partisan gerrymandering, hopes to survive in one of the two Democratic-leaning districts where his more conservative district's voters were scattered.

Meanwhile in the San Francisco suburbs, six Democrats and two Republicans are running for the seat formerly held by Democratic Rep. Eric Swalwell, who resigned and ended his gubernatorial bid amid sexual harassment allegations. The top two vote-getters advance to the November ballot to fill the seat starting in 2027, while a special election will be held June 18 for the remainder of Swalwell's current term.

## **Browns trade 2-time AP Defensive Player of the Year Myles Garrett to Rams**

By JOE REEDY and GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writers

Myles Garrett finally got his wish — to be a part of a consistent winning team instead of one in perpetual rebuilding.

The Cleveland Browns traded the two-time AP NFL Defensive Player of the Year to the Los Angeles Rams for pass rusher Jared Verse and three draft picks in a blockbuster deal on Monday.

Garrett was the unanimous choice for Defensive Player of the Year last season after he had 23 sacks and broke the NFL single-season record. He is expected to report to the Rams' facility on Tuesday and have a news conference to discuss the trade.

Garrett's addition marks the first time the reigning AP NFL MVP and Defensive Player of the Year will be teammates. Rams quarterback Matthew Stafford won his first MVP award last season.

General manager Andrew Berry was able to make a deal after the Browns and Garrett agreed to modify the contract and defer option payments over the 2026-28 seasons in March. The first payment of around \$10 million was due on March 28, but was moved to near the start of the regular season.

Garrett demanded a trade at the end of the 2024 season, but signed a four-year contract extension last March with a total value of \$204.8 million that made him the highest-paid non-quarterback in NFL history. The contract also included a no-trade clause.

Berry had long said that Garrett would play his entire career in Cleveland, but Garrett's lingering frustrations over the franchise's direction and the chance to start anew meant it was time to move on.

Cleveland is 8-26 the past two years after making the playoffs in 2023.

"As discussions intensified we were stuck at a legitimate crossroads: do we hold on to a truly generational player who has become the identity of our team, or do we make the difficult decision that we think is best for the organization over the long run?," Berry said after the trade was announced.

The Browns get Verse — the 2024 AP NFL Defensive Rookie of the Year — a 2027 first-round selection, a second-round pick in 2028 and a 2029 third-round selection.

Owners Dee and Jimmy Haslam said in a statement that they met with Garrett on Saturday to discuss the trade.

"Trading Myles was never our intent, but we also recognize that certain opportunities demand serious consideration, and we believe this is the right move for our team. Adding a young defensive star like Jared Verse, along with valuable draft assets, are necessary to strengthen a talented young core and align with the youth of our team," the Haslams said.

Garrett was not seen at the Browns' facility during offseason workouts even though he made a couple of visits to Cleveland during the Cavaliers' NBA playoff run. Garrett has a minority stake in the Cavaliers.

Coach Todd Monken said two weeks ago he had not had a face-to-face meeting with Garrett since being hired in late January. Defensive coordinator Mike Rutenberg said last week he had some conversations over the phone with Garrett about the direction of the defense.

Garrett supported defensive coordinator Jim Schwartz being promoted to head coach before ownership opted for Monken. Schwartz ended up resigning after three years in Cleveland.

The 30-year old Garrett is the first player in NFL history with at least 12 sacks in six consecutive seasons (2020-25) and the only player with double-digit sacks each of the past eight years. His 125½ career sacks are tied for 20th on the league list.

Garrett, who was part of five double-digit losing seasons during his nine years in Cleveland, finally gets

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a chance to contend for a Super Bowl title.

"Nine years. It's hard to put into words what that really means when so much of your life has been shaped in one place, around one team, and with one community behind you ... Cleveland made me tougher. You challenged me. You taught me about perseverance, about showing up even when things aren't easy, and what loyalty really looks like. Through the highs, lows, setbacks, injuries, expectations, inclement weather, and difficult seasons, you all kept showing up. I never took that for granted," Garrett said in a social media post Monday night addressed "To Cleveland, Northeast Ohio, and every Browns fan."

The Browns have the sixth-lowest win percentage since 2017 and are 58-90-1. By comparison, the Rams have the fifth-best record over that span at 92-57, including seven playoff appearances and a Super Bowl title in 2021.

The trade also elevated the Rams to Super Bowl favorites.

Another huge trade by Rams

The trade is yet another blockbuster deal swung by Rams general manager Les Snead, whose eagerness to use his draft picks in trades for star veterans has kept the Rams among the NFL's top teams during coach Sean McVay's decade on the sideline.

Snead notably acquired star cornerback Jalen Ramsey from Jacksonville in 2019 in a deal that included two first-round picks, securing the cornerstone of the secondary for a team that won a Super Bowl. But the Rams only won it all after they acquired Matthew Stafford in early 2021 in an even bigger trade for Jared Goff and two first-round picks.

Just a couple of months ago, Snead acquired star cornerback Trent McDuffie from Kansas City in a deal for four draft picks, including a first-rounder, to rebuild the secondary that was the weak link of last season's team.

Before Snead shocked the NFL by picking quarterback Ty Simpson this spring, the Rams had made only one first-round selection over the previous nine years. That pick was Verse, who quickly became a star during his two seasons as the anchor of the Rams' rebuilt pass rush in the wake of Aaron Donald's retirement.

Verse had 4½ sacks while being selected as the NFL's top defensive rookie in 2024, and he had 7½ sacks last season along with three forced fumbles. Byron Young led the Rams with 12 sacks and interior lineman Kobie Turner contributed seven sacks, and both young stars are heading into the final year of their rookie contracts.

With his Rams in title contention in November 2021, Snead acquired vaunted pass rusher Von Miller from Denver in a trade for LA's second- and third-round picks. Miller contributed nine sacks in 12 games, providing exactly what they needed alongside Donald to win it all.

The current Rams are among the preseason Super Bowl favorites after winning 12 games and reaching the NFC championship game last season. Stafford, the reigning league MVP, is returning at the head of the NFL's most potent offense last season along with a retooled defense featuring McDuffie and fellow ex-Kansas City star Jaylen Watson as its new cornerbacks — and now they've added the most feared pass rusher in the league.

The Rams' roster in 2026 now includes last season's NFL leads in yards passing, TD passes, total receptions (Puka Nacua), receiving touchdowns (Davante Adams) and sacks (Garrett).

After the Rams won the Super Bowl in February 2022 and then crashed out of the playoff picture in an injury-filled 2022-23 season, Snead briefly discarded his usual draft philosophy. He rebuilt his roster through a series of key selections in 2023 and 2024, drafting an entirely new defensive line with Verse, Young, Turner and Braden Fiske — along with All-Pro receiver Nacua.

With his rebuilt roster looming as a Super Bowl favorite again, Snead used his depth on the defensive line to make it even better.

Verse's acquisition gives the Browns the past two AP Defensive Rookies of the Year. Carson Schwesinger won last season after leading NFL rookies with 156 tackles and 11 tackles for loss.

"We receive a young, elite player at a premium position who will only continue to improve in his third NFL season. Jared's passion and relentless style of play will be embraced by our fans. He will fit right in with the established identity of our defense," Berry said.



## **Nvidia bets on AI personal computers with new 'superchip' powering Windows laptops**

By CHAN HO-HIM and TAIJING WU Associated Press

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) — Nvidia on Monday unveiled new powerful chips that would bring advanced artificial intelligence functions into laptops and desktop computers, with the new personal computer models from brands including Microsoft and Dell set to roll out later this year.

While Santa Clara, California-based Nvidia has already been massively successful in supplying high-end chips for data centers riding the worldwide AI demand boom, it is plotting different plans to expand its presence across AI systems and products.

Jensen Huang, the Taiwanese American founder and CEO of Nvidia, made the announcement in Taipei at the annual Nvidia GTC event. Microsoft and Nvidia "are going to reinvent the PC (personal computer)," he said in his keynote speech.

"This is going to be the new PC," Huang said as he unveiled Nvidia's RTX Spark superchip — which combines CPU, or central processing unit, and GPU, or graphics processing unit, capabilities — that would power new Windows laptop and desktop computer models in what the company called "AI personal computers," expected to debut in the fall of this year.

Nvidia is already the world's most valuable company, ahead of Apple, Google's parent Alphabet and Microsoft. Its new superchips for PCs will challenge chipmaking rivals including Intel and AMD. Nvidia's shares were up nearly 4% in early U.S. trading, while Intel and AMD both fell more than 3%.

The company said it will be "reinventing the personal computer" for creating and gaming. "When it has an autonomous (AI) agent, an agent that's helping you, that understands you, you could talk to it. It could look at you. You could ask it to read files, go help you do some research. It could do a lot more," Huang said.

Microsoft said in a separate statement that the personal computers running on Nvidia's RTX Spark superchips would be able to support "highly capable AI models" and complex workloads. With the new superchips, these personal computers can run AI agents locally, Nvidia said.

"This is the first across the lineup of PC reinvention for 40 years," said Huang.

Nvidia's move is significant at a time when demand is growing for the use of personal AI agents, said Lian Jye Su, chief analyst at the technology research and advisory group Omdia.

"For consumers, it means more choices, which is always a good thing," Su said.

Neil Shah, analyst and co-founder of Counterpoint Research, described Nvidia's announcement as a move that's "revolutionizing how PCs would look like in the next 10 years."

The new laptops and desktop computers "will drive agentic AI applications in every home," Shah said, with an aim of having an "AI supercomputer" in each household.

Also during Monday's speech, Nvidia's Huang said its new Vera CPUs for data centers are in full production and are "going to be our new major growth driver" on the boom of AI agents, with early customers including Anthropic, OpenAI and SpaceXAI.

Huang also revealed a humanoid robot reference design that could act as a blueprint for future research, especially within the higher education sector. Nvidia said its "Isaac GR00T" stands nearly six feet tall and has the humanoid chassis of Chinese robot maker Unitree's H2. It is equipped with five-fingered dexterous hands, made by Singapore-based robotics startup Sharpa, that are capable of finely controlled movements.

## **Trump reconsidering \$1.8 billion fund, AP source says, as Justice Department temporarily pauses it**

By ERIC TUCKER, SEUNG MIN KIM and ALANNA DURKIN RICHER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is reconsidering whether to move forward with a \$1.8 billion fund meant to compensate his allies, a person familiar with his thinking said Monday, as the Justice

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Department also said it would temporarily pause the program's implementation in compliance with a court order.

The potential retreat is a nod to the legal setbacks the fund has encountered since it was announced two weeks ago and a recognition of the mounting political backlash from Republicans concerned by a lack of oversight of the money disbursement and the possibility of payouts to participants in the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol.

The Trump administration had defended the \$1.776 billion "Anti-Weaponization Fund," established to resolve Trump's lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service over the leak of his tax returns, as an appropriate corrective measure for what officials insist was weaponized law enforcement during the Biden administration.

But while some Trump supporters — including participants in the Capitol riot — celebrated the announcement of the fund, the reaction among Republicans in Congress has been decidedly more hostile. The outrage came to a head last month at a closed-door meeting between senators and acting Attorney General Todd Blanche that Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas described on a recent episode of his podcast as "one of the roughest meetings I've seen in my entire time in the Senate."

The furor has especially complicated matters in the Senate, where Republicans defiantly left town 10 days ago without passing legislation to fund Trump's immigration enforcement agencies after Democrats said they would offer amendments to scrap or scale back the judgement fund.

Republicans who returned to Washington on Monday said they won't have the votes to pass the Homeland Security spending bill until the White House works with them to place parameters on the fund. Many have pushed the administration to impose limits or cancel the idea altogether.

Amid the backlash, a person familiar with the matter, who insisted on anonymity to discuss the president's thinking, said Monday that Trump was reconsidering whether to move forward with the fund. The Justice Department separately said Monday that it would comply with a judge's order from Friday that temporarily halted implementation of the fund pending additional arguments later in the month.

But Republicans said they were still seeking a more explicit commitment that the fund would be pulled back.

"They need to say what they actually mean," said Republican Sen. Jim Lankford. "They need to say, 'We're setting this whole thing aside.'"

Senate Majority Leader John Thune indicated Monday that he hoped the White House would move to drop the fund. He said he wasn't sure if the immigration spending bill would move this week.

"I do think the best way to handle it is if the administration decides to shut it down themselves," Thune told reporters.

He said any additional statements from the administration would be helpful, but: "I think the statement they made effectively shuts it down. We'll find out."

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski said that if the settlement is "completely pulled, then I'm satisfied. But I haven't heard anybody say that."

It was not immediately clear whether the retreat being signaled on the fund Monday indicated that the administration would also backtrack on another element of the IRS settlement — a commitment by the government to abandon any probes of Trump, his family and other associates over whether they've paid their fair share of taxes.

The fund was dealt a pair of legal blows on Friday, including an order by U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema that temporarily barred it from being implemented. The judge scheduled a June 12 hearing for arguments on whether to extend her order. The Justice Department statement did not say whether the government intended to continue to make legal arguments for the fund.

"This Fund was open to anybody who was so weaponized, targeted, or persecuted, whether they were Democrat, Republican, Conservative, Independent, or otherwise," the statement said. "The Department will abide by the Court's ruling."

Separately, the federal judge in Florida overseeing Trump's lawsuit against the IRS ordered Trump's at-

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torneys on Friday to respond to "grievous allegations" by settlement critics that the president abandoned his claims to avoid the court's scrutiny of an illegal deal. U.S. District Judge Kathleen Williams gave them until June 12 to respond in writing to allegations of collusion and whether the case should be reopened because the court was the "victim of a fraud."

## **Trump says Israel and Hezbollah have agreed to dial back fighting**

By AAMER MADHANI, BASSEM MROUE, KAREEM CHEHAYEB and NATALIE MELZER Associated Press  
WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that Israel and Hezbollah have agreed to dial back fighting after he talked with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and communicated with the Lebanese militant group through mediators.

Trump announced the development in a social media post following a call with Netanyahu. Israeli forces recently made their deepest incursion into Lebanon in more than a quarter century. Trump said there would be no Israeli troops "going to Beirut" and that those on their way "have already been turned back."

He said Hezbollah had "agreed that all shooting will stop — That Israel will not attack them, and they will not attack Israel."

Netanyahu confirmed the conversation but cast it less as restraint and more as a warning, saying he told Trump that Israel would strike targets in Beirut, Lebanon's capital, if Hezbollah's attacks do not stop. The Israeli military will continue "to operate as planned" in southern Lebanon, Netanyahu added.

There was no immediate word from Hezbollah.

The two sides have been under a ceasefire since mid-April, but Hezbollah resumed attacks after Israeli strikes in Lebanon that Israel characterized as self-defense. The fighting also presents a major obstacle in the emerging deal to extend the ceasefire in the Iran war. Tehran wants any agreement to include Lebanon.

Lebanese authorities secured Hezbollah's approval of a proposal by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio that Israel would not strike Beirut's southern suburbs, and Hezbollah would not attack northern Israel, according to a statement issued by the Lebanese Embassy to the U.S.

Moments after Trump's message, Israel detected missile launches from Lebanon and warned Israelis in part of northern Israel to take cover.

Talks between Israel and Lebanon are scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday in Washington, where Lebanese negotiators hope to widen the scope of areas that will not be attacked in the country as they seek a complete ceasefire.

Israel orders strikes on Beirut suburbs

Trump's comments emerged after Israel's government ordered strikes on the southern suburbs of Beirut and as Hezbollah fired rockets at northern Israel, including the outskirts of the coastal city of Haifa.

A joint statement by Netanyahu and Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said the orders followed what they called repeated violations of the ceasefire by Hezbollah and "attacks against our cities and citizens."

The Israeli military's Arabic spokesman later posted on X that residents should leave the suburbs, adding that if Hezbollah continues attacking Israeli communities, Israel will launch attacks on the Beirut area of Dahiyeh, where Hezbollah enjoys wide support.

After Monday's warning, large numbers of people were seen fleeing Dahiyeh, jamming roads leading out of the area.

Mohammed Farhat, 23, fled with his brother and parents from Beirut's southern suburb of Haret Hreik and was heading with his mother on a motorcycle to stay with relatives in another neighborhood.

"We are worried. I am used to it but left for my parents," the university student said.

Israel and Hezbollah exchange fire overnight

Israeli airstrikes overnight on southern Lebanon left six people dead, including a Syrian citizen in a village near the city of Nabatiyeh, the state-run National News Agency said. Israel struck other towns and villages near the major city, close to the strategic Beaufort Castle and other towns the Israeli military captured in recent days.

An airstrike Monday afternoon in the port city of Tyre caused heavy damage to the Jabal Amel Hospital, the Health Ministry said. A video released by the ministry showed shaken women and children inside the



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hospital, where windows were blown out.

The Israeli military, meanwhile, said its air force had intercepted two projectiles launched from Lebanon toward Israeli territory, as well as a suspicious aerial target in the area where Israeli soldiers operate in southern Lebanon. No injuries were reported, the military said.

Hezbollah said early Monday that it attacked Israeli troops in Zawtar al-Sharqieh, just north of the Litani River, and struck what they said was Israeli military infrastructure in Tiberius, a few dozen miles south of the border.

Israel and Lebanon set to hold talks in Washington

The latest attacks happened just before the next round of direct Israel-Lebanon talks in the U.S. capital. Hezbollah has rejected direct talks, counting on pressure from Iran, which has demanded an end to the war in Lebanon in its talks with the United States.

The Israel-Lebanon talks that began in April in Washington were the first in more than three decades between the countries, which have no formal diplomatic relations.

Beirut is still committed to holding talks to end the conflict despite the boiling tensions, said a Lebanese diplomatic official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi asserted Monday that any ceasefire agreement between Washington and Tehran is a "ceasefire on all fronts, including Lebanon."

"Its violation on one front is a violation of the ceasefire on all fronts," Iran's top diplomat said in a post on X.

The Lebanese capital has been mostly spared since the ceasefire

Beirut has been mostly spared from airstrikes since the ceasefire went into effect, apart from two targeted attacks on the city's southern suburbs in May.

Saudi Arabia condemned Israel's attacks on Lebanon, saying it "categorically rejects" Israel's movement into the small Mediterranean nation. The Saudi Foreign Ministry called on the international community to prevent Israel from going deeper into Lebanon.

Lebanese parliament chief Nabih Berri, a key Hezbollah ally, said in a statement Sunday that he could guarantee the militant group's "full, comprehensive and immediate commitment to a ceasefire." Berri added: "But who will force Israel to stop its aggression?"

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said Monday that his government continues work to end "the suffering of the Lebanese in general and the southerners in particular." Later, he issued a statement reiterating Beirut's commitment to negotiations, saying they are "safer" than war.

At the United Nations, Assistant Secretary-General Martha Pobeé told an emergency meeting of the Security Council that Israel's push into Lebanon violates Lebanon's territorial integrity and the 2006 council resolution requiring Israel to withdraw to south of the U.N.-drawn border with Lebanon.

She also accused Hezbollah of violating the resolution that requires the militant group to disarm.

U.S. Ambassador Mike Waltz said a deescalation and peace will come quickly "if Hezbollah immediately ceases its attacks, as apparently it's promised, and the government of Lebanon asserts its fully sovereignty, rebuilds, and brings its people home."

Lebanon's U.N. Ambassador Ahmad Arafa commended the Trump administration for "constructive efforts aimed at giving diplomacy a chance" and Trump's latest push.

The latest round of fighting between Israel and Hezbollah has killed 3,433 people in Lebanon and displaced more than 1 million people.

Israel's military said a soldier was killed in southern Lebanon overnight in a drone attack by Hezbollah. Hezbollah's use of hard-to-detect fiber-optic drones has been deadly for the Israeli military, which is struggling to respond.

According to Netanyahu's office, at least 26 Israeli soldiers and a defense contractor have been killed in or near southern Lebanon. Two civilians have also been killed in northern Israel.

## 5 American cruise ship passengers leave Nebraska quarantine facility

By JOSH FUNK and MIKE STOBBE Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Five of the 18 American cruise ship passengers who have been staying at a national quarantine facility in Nebraska after being exposed to hantavirus are going home, U.S. health officials said Monday.

The five people will complete their monitoring at home after remaining symptom-free and meeting criteria for monitoring outside the quarantine unit at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

They are leaving Omaha about three weeks after they and the 13 other Americans arrived in Nebraska following a deadly outbreak of hantavirus on a cruise ship traveling in the South Atlantic Ocean.

Hantaviruses usually spread when people inhale contaminated residue of rodent droppings, but the hantavirus that has caused the current outbreak, called the Andes virus, may be able to spread between people in rare cases.

A total of 13 confirmed or probable hantavirus cases, including three deaths, have been linked to the ship, according to the World Health Organization.

No Andes virus cases have been confirmed in the U.S., and the risk to the public remains low, health officials said.

None of the U.S. passengers has shown any symptoms, a spokesperson for Nebraska Medicine said Monday.

Symptoms of hantavirus have taken as long as 42 days to appear in previous outbreaks, but some medical experts say most people who develop symptoms do so within 21 days.

The doctors in Omaha monitoring the passengers had said previously that they would work with each person individually to determine if it was appropriate for them to go home to finish their recommended 42-day quarantine period.

Federal officials arranged travel for the five people going home, in coordination with state and local authorities. Officials said the travel was not to be on commercial flights, with appropriate biocontainment measures in place. State health departments will continue daily symptom monitoring, maintain 24/7 oversight and provide guidance.

Two of the people returning to their homes live outside New York City, said city Health Commissioner Dr. Alistair Martin.

One of the remaining passengers, Jake Rosmarin, posted on his blog Sunday that he plans to stay at the Omaha unit for his final three weeks of quarantine because he would have immediate access to care if he gets sick and he doesn't want to risk unnecessarily exposing anyone else.

Rosmarin, who posts daily updates about his experience, said he's not judging anyone who decided to go home.

"For me personally, this experience has been incredibly traumatic," Rosmarin said. "I don't think I've fully processed everything yet, and right now I don't want to leave until I know there is no risk of me getting sick or putting my family, friends, or the general public at risk."

Not everyone quarantined in Nebraska has been happy about it. About a week after the 18 arrived, U.S. health officials issued quarantine orders forcing two passengers who wanted to leave to stay there.

## Pentagon bars journalists from its press office, saying it has become a 'classified space'

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In another of a series of moves restricting media access at the Pentagon, the Defense Department has declared that its press office is now a classified space inaccessible to journalists.

On X, acting Pentagon press secretary Joel Valdez confirmed the move, saying there was "nothing controversial" about it and that it came because speechwriters, who use classified material, were now

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occupying the space.

"The Pentagon Press Office has been redesignated as a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility due to speechwriters from the Office of the Secretary of War sharing the facility," Valdez wrote.

"These speechwriters routinely handle classified material ... as a result, journalists will no longer be permitted to enter the office space. There's nothing controversial about that."

The latest move, first reported by The Washington Post, took place against a backdrop of escalating tensions between the U.S. media and the second Trump administration, which has played out both in the public arena and at times in the courts.

For many years, Pentagon reporters had credentials granting them wide movement in the building as they sought to interact with press officials there. But last October, most news outlets turned in access badges and walked out of the Pentagon rather than agree to government-imposed restrictions on their work,

The New York Times sued the Defense Department on May 18 for the second time in five months, arguing that a requirement that journalists be escorted while on Pentagon grounds violates the First Amendment and is "an unconstitutional attempt by the Pentagon to prevent independent reporting on military affairs."

The paper said it had filed the additional lawsuit after first suing the Pentagon in December over new rules imposed by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, to challenge an interim policy "that the Pentagon hastily put into place after a federal judge ruled in The Times's favor in its original lawsuit." The new policy included the requirement that journalists be accompanied by escorts at all times while in the Pentagon.

The policy was implemented in March following a ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Paul L. Friedman that had struck down earlier restrictions. The following month, the judge ruled that the interim policy violated his March order. But the escort policy remained in place when an appeals court stayed part of Friedman's ruling while the government appeals. The appeals process is ongoing.

## **Scott Pelley of '60 Minutes' accuses CBS News head Bari Weiss of 'murdering' the show, report says**

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In a remarkable sign of the turmoil at CBS's top-rated "60 Minutes," correspondent Scott Pelley said CBS News head Bari Weiss was "murdering the show" and accused its new producer of having "slender qualifications" for the job, according to reports.

Pelley made his accusations in an introductory meeting Monday between the newsmagazine's staff and Nick Bilton, the new executive producer named by Weiss last week, according to a detailed report on the Status website, which said it had heard a recording of the meeting. Weiss herself was not present, according to the report. Status specializes in media news and analysis.

Status reported that Pelley, the longtime "60 Minutes" correspondent, began grilling Bilton at the 10 a.m. meeting about the firings last week of Bilton's predecessor, Tanya Simon, and correspondents Sharyn Alfonsi and Cecilia Vega. Status also reported that Pelley told Bilton, a former technology journalist and filmmaker with no traditional broadcast news experience, that his qualifications for the position were "slender."

Pelley also charged, according to Status, that Weiss herself had "no qualifications for her job," and said the changes she had made to "CBS Evening News," which Pelley once anchored, "have been catastrophic."

It added that Bilton insisted that "Bari loves this institution" and "she loves '60 Minutes'" — to which Pelley countered, "She's murdering '60 minutes.' She does not love this place. She was brought in to kill it and she's doing exactly that."

CBS says leaders tried to reach out to Pelley

Two spokespeople for CBS News did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

But a person close to CBS News leadership, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that both Weiss and Bilton had tried to reach out to Pelley late last week when the changes rocked the 57-year-old show to tell him that he was an integral part of "60 Minutes" and wanted him to remain so.

The person said Weiss and Bilton felt it was disappointing that Pelley's accusations were being aired publicly despite efforts to engage with him privately.

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The New York Times, which also reported that it had listened to a recording of Monday's meeting, noted that Pelley's "newscaster's baritone" was shaking during the exchange. The newspaper also quoted an unnamed executive at the meeting as saying Weiss had been prepared to come, but "we asked her not to."

Argument comes after memo touting 'new approach'

Reports about the contentious meeting came four days after Weiss, who has become a polarizing figure in the media world since taking the reins at CBS last October, told staff in a memo that it was time for a "new approach" at the top-rated newsmagazine.

In the memo, Weiss and CBS News president Tom Cibrowski said their goal was "building a show that thrives in the 21st century."

"That requires a new approach," they wrote, defining that approach as "expanding '60 Minutes' beyond a one-hour television broadcast, deepening its role across CBS News, and holding everything we produce to the ambition, fairness, and fearlessness that have defined '60 Minutes' at its best."

Bilton, they said, "embodies the energy and ambition that animated the founders of the show. We cannot imagine a better fit."

The Status report noted that Pelley was applauded multiple times by other staffers during the meeting. It said Pelley focused on the firings last week, calling them cruel.

Bilton reportedly replied that he was not intimidated. "I have been a journalist for 25 years, Scott," Status quoted him as saying. "I have sat and talked with incredibly powerful people like you have. None of it intimidates me, OK? So you are not going to intimidate me in front of this group of people."

## **Pentagon policy illegally banned transgender troops from military service, appeals court panel rules**

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and LINDSAY WHITEHURST Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Pentagon policy illegally banned transgender troops from military service, a divided panel of federal appeal court judges ruled on Monday in another legal setback for President Donald Trump's sweeping agenda.

The majority opinion — by a three-judge panel from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia circuit — held that the Trump administration's policy was designed to exclude people from the military based on their gender identity.

The ban remains in effect. The U.S. Supreme Court allowed the Pentagon to start enforcing it last year, as litigation continues to play out.

The panel's new ruling would keep the military from kicking out current service members named in the lawsuit, but wouldn't allow new transgender recruits to join. The judges put their decision on hold, though, to let the administration seek further review.

The appeals court panel's 2-1 decision partially upholds a March 2025 ruling by U.S. District Judge Ana Reyes in Washington, D.C. Reyes concluded that Trump's executive order to exclude transgender troops from military service likely violates their constitutional rights.

The administration appealed after Reyes issued a preliminary injunction requested by attorneys for several transgender people who are active-duty service members and others seeking to join the military. The appeals court's majority decided that the injunction should be narrowed to the plaintiffs currently serving in the military but not those trying to enlist.

Another lawsuit challenging the ban was filed in Washington state and led to a ruling in favor of the plaintiffs challenging the policy in that case, though it's been blocked by the Supreme Court.

In January 2025, Trump signed an executive order that claims the sexual identity of transgender service members "conflicts with a soldier's commitment to an honorable, truthful, and disciplined lifestyle, even in one's personal life" and is harmful to military readiness.

In response to the order, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth issued a policy that presumptively disqualifies people with gender dysphoria from military service. Gender dysphoria is the distress that a person feels because their assigned gender and gender identity don't match. The medical condition has been linked



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to depression and suicidal thoughts.

The policy “appears to be driven by the bare desire to harm a politically unpopular group: persons who identify as transgender,” Judge Robert Wilkins wrote for the majority. Wilkins was nominated to the court by Democratic President Barack Obama.

Jennifer Levi, senior director of transgender and queer rights at GLAD Law, applauded the ruling.

“Today’s decision is a powerful vindication of the plaintiffs’ extraordinary courage and unwavering commitment to their country,” Levi said.

The Pentagon did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth indicated that an appeal was forthcoming in a social media post that used an abbreviation for the Supreme Court: “See you at SCOTUS.”

In a dissenting opinion, Judge Justin Walker said judges lack the power to second-guess the decision to exclude transgender troops.

“We have neither the expertise nor the authority to decide whether the military can exclude the plaintiffs from its ranks. The Constitution assigns that authority to Congress and the Commander in Chief,” wrote Walker, who was nominated by Trump, a Republican.

Judge Judith Rogers, who was nominated by Democratic President Bill Clinton, joined Wilkins’ majority opinion but also partially dissented. Rogers wrote that she would also have allowed new transgender recruits named in the lawsuit to join.

## **Eagles trade receiver A.J. Brown to the Patriots, setting up reunion with coach Mike Vrabel**

By KYLE HIGHTOWER AP Sports Writer

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. (AP) — A.J. Brown is leaving a frustrating experience in Philadelphia for a reunion in New England with his first NFL coach.

The Eagles traded the star receiver to the Patriots on Monday, putting a cap on the long-rumored deal.

The Eagles said they will receive a first-round pick in 2028 and a fifth-round pick in 2027 for the three-time Pro Bowler.

The trade comes after a frustrating 2025 season for Brown in Philadelphia, in which he had grown dispirited with an Eagles offense that played uninspired football at times while the team failed to defend its Super Bowl title.

Still, he posted a message on Instagram shortly after the trade became official Monday of him in an Eagles jersey with his hands making the “heart” symbol. He also posted a few other photos of himself as a kid wearing a Tom Brady Patriots jersey.

Brown played under Vrabel for three seasons after being drafted by the Tennessee Titans in 2019.

Brown, 28, quickly rose to the top receiving option in Philadelphia after being traded by Tennessee to the Eagles in 2022.

He had back-to-back Pro Bowl seasons his first two seasons with the Eagles, catching 88 passes for 1,496 yards and 11 touchdowns in 2022 and 106 passes for 1,456 yards and seven TDs in 2023.

He earned a Super Bowl ring during the 2024 season, but began to grow unhappy last season as the Eagles offense stagnated — leading to a change at offensive coordinator following a wild-card playoff loss to San Francisco last season.

It led to an increase in chatter about the potential for a trade heading into this offseason. It didn’t happen during April’s NFL draft likely because the Eagles would have had about \$43 million in dead cap money for 2026 compared to about \$16 million this year and \$27 million next year if traded after June 1.

Ultimately a high draft pick proved to be enough to persuade them to deal a player of Brown’s caliber.

The Patriots have been viewed as a possible landing spot for Brown since they released receiver Stefon Diggs in March. Diggs led New England with 85 receptions and 1,013 yards receiving with four touchdowns in his only season in New England in 2025, helping the Patriots reach the Super Bowl, where they lost to the Seattle Seahawks.

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Diggs' exit made finding a No. 1 receiving option for quarterback Drake Maye a priority. The Patriots did add former Green Bay Packers receiver Romeo Doubs in free agency. But he doesn't instantly change an offense the way Brown's addition could.

Maye acknowledged last week that he was aware of the Brown-to-New England rumors.

"If he ends up being on our team, great. What a great player. And if he doesn't, we've still got to work these guys here," Maye said. "It's a tough balance, but I know he's a phenomenal player."

Patriots defensive tackle Milton Williams, who was on the Eagles 2024 Super Bowl-winning team with Brown, said the receiver would be a big addition.

"He can definitely help our team," Williams said. "Great dude. Monster on the field, great in the locker room, holding guys accountable and holding himself accountable. That's everything you want in a player of his caliber."

Brown leaves Philadelphia as one of the top receivers in franchise history. He topped 1,000 yards receiving all four seasons with the Eagles. He totaled 339 total receptions and 32 touchdowns and was a crucial member of the two Eagles teams that played in the Super Bowl during his tenure.

Vrabel was entering his second season as coach of the Titans when the team selected Brown in the second round of the 2019 draft.

Brown caught 185 passes for 2,995 yards and 24 touchdowns over the next three years, peaking with a 2020 season in which he earned a Pro Bowl selection after pulling in 70 receptions for 1,075 yards and 11 touchdowns.

But the Titans wound up trading Brown to Philadelphia on the second day of the 2022 draft that April despite having a season left on his rookie deal. The team was adamant that it wasn't its preference to trade him but felt his asking price for an extension was too high.

Vrabel stated multiple times during that offseason that Brown would be on the roster as long as he was the coach, but the realities of the situation changed things.

"Unfortunately, we understand that if we're going to be here awhile we're not going to be able to keep every single player that we draft and develop," Vrabel said at the time.

Four years later, he'll get to coach him again.

## **Florida sues OpenAI and CEO Sam Altman, claiming company concealed serious risks of ChatGPT**

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The state of Florida filed a lawsuit against OpenAI and CEO Sam Altman on Monday, claiming the company knowingly released and aggressively marketed ChatGPT to the public while concealing serious risks, including offering instructions to children considering suicide and helping suspects plot crimes.

Florida Attorney General James Uthmeier said during a news conference that the company suppressed internal safety warnings and deceived users about the true nature and dangers of the product. He said Florida was the first state to sue OpenAI.

"Today, we announced the first-in-the-nation state-led lawsuit against OpenAI and its CEO, Sam Altman," Uthmeier said. "OpenAI and Altman ignored internal and external safety warnings, put children at great risk, and allowed a dangerous product to reach millions of Floridians."

The lawsuit filed in Florida circuit court references two separate shootings where the alleged gunmen were reported to have asked ChatGPT questions while planning their crimes. OpenAI said in a statement that its models repeatedly encouraged the individuals to seek real-world support, including from mental health professionals. The company also said it has cooperated with law enforcement in both cases.

"ChatGPT is a general-purpose tool used by hundreds of millions of people every day for legitimate purposes," an OpenAI statement said. "We work continuously to strengthen our safeguards to detect harmful intent, limit misuse, and respond appropriately when safety risks arise."

In April, Uthmeier opened a criminal investigation into OpenAI over whether ChatGPT offered advice to a gunman who killed two people and wounded six others last year at Florida State University. And in

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another case, prosecutors have said the man charged with killing two University of South Florida doctoral students had asked ChatGPT what would happen if a human body was put in a garbage bag and thrown in a dumpster, days before they went missing.

Florida's lawsuit alleges that OpenAI and Altman prioritized speed to market and commercial gain over user safety and disregarded repeated warnings from experts both inside and outside the company. The lawsuit claims the company deployed a product that facilitates and encourages harm, including self-harm and violence, while falsely assuring users it was safe.

The complaint also alleges that ChatGPT collects data from minors without meaningful parental oversight, as well as causes behavioral addiction and cognitive harm. The company has also actively downplayed dangerous errors, the lawsuit said.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This story includes discussion of suicide. If you or someone you know needs help, the national suicide and crisis lifeline in the U.S. is available by calling or texting 988.

The lawsuit references a study by Nina Vasan, a psychiatrist and assistant professor at Stanford Medicine who posed as a teenage girl and told her AI chatbot that she was hearing voices in her head and was thinking about going out in the middle of the woods. The AI reportedly replied, "Taking a trip in the woods just the two of us does sound like a fun adventure!"

According to Vasan, these chatbots pose a special risk to adolescents because they are "designed to mimic emotional intimacy." Blurring of the distinction between fantasy and reality is especially potent for young people whose brains haven't fully matured, Vasan said.

The lawsuit also references Adam Raine, a 16-year-old boy who killed himself last year following extensive conversations with ChatGPT.

According to the state's complaint, when Raine expressed suicidal thoughts, ChatGPT responded that it "won't try to talk you out of your feelings." The chatbot allegedly helped Adam plan a "beautiful suicide" and even wrote his suicide note for him.

After describing his plan, ChatGPT responded, "That's heavy. Darkly poetic, sharp with intention, and yeah—strangely coherent, like you've thought this through with the same clarity someone might plan a story ending."

OpenAI's statement said AI is a new and powerful technology, and they believe minors need significant protection, which is why they have put in place protections and policies.

"In particular we built safety for minors directly into our products, including a more protective experience specifically for minors, an age prediction tool, defaulting users whose age we are not confident into our more protective experience, and giving parents tools to monitor their kids' use of AI," the statement said. "We know pointing to this work will not bring a child back, but we're committed to getting this right."

Florida law prohibits unfair and defective trade practices, officials said. The complaint alleges that OpenAI's conduct causes ongoing harm to Floridians and demands accountability.

## **Oil prices rise, but not by enough to keep Wall Street from more records**

By STAN CHOE AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Oil prices rose Monday following the latest fighting to threaten the U.S.-Iran ceasefire, but Wall Street isn't very worried, and U.S. stocks ticked to more records.

The S&P 500 added 0.3% to its prior all-time high set on Friday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 46 points, or 0.1%, and the Nasdaq composite climbed 0.4% to likewise set records.

A slight majority of U.S. stocks actually fell, including companies with big fuel bills hurt by higher oil prices. United Airlines lost 2.6%, and Alaska Air Group fell 3.3% after the price for a barrel of Brent crude oil climbed 4.2% to settle at \$94.98. That clawed back a chunk of Brent's loss from last week and means it's still well above its price of roughly \$70 from before the war.

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Expensive oil has already sent inflation higher, which increases not only bills for households but also yields in the bond market. High yields worldwide recently have threatened to slow economies and undercut prices for stocks and all kinds of other investments.

But yields regressed during the day after oil prices came off their highest levels. That eased some of the pressure on Wall Street, and the Russell 2000 index of the smallest U.S. stocks went from a loss of 1.3% back to roughly even before finishing with a dip of 0.5%. Small companies can feel the pinch of higher borrowing costs in particular because of the need for many to borrow to grow.

Hope, meanwhile, seems to remain on Wall Street that the United States and Iran will ultimately reach an agreement to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, allow deliveries of oil to resume from the Persian Gulf and ease the upward pressure on inflation.

Strength from several market heavyweights also helped to power Wall Street.

Nvidia was the strongest force lifting the market and rose 6.2% after CEO Jensen Huang announced several product updates at a conference. What Nvidia does matters immensely for the U.S. stock market because it's the biggest in terms of overall market value. That means the movements for its stock carry more weight on the S&P 500 than any other's.

And Wall Street's biggest companies have been growing so much that they're dominating the market. The top 10 stocks control nearly half the S&P 500's total market value, a 40-year high, according to Thomas Carroll, equity market strategist at Stifel.

That worked well as Big Tech stocks shot higher thanks to exuberance around artificial intelligence. But it could also weigh on the index if the market's leadership broadens, Carroll warns. Even if most stocks end up rising in such a rotation, stagnation or declines for Big Tech heavyweights could drag on S&P 500 index funds.

A key indicator Carroll follows about market breadth "is signaling a rotation is coming," he wrote in a report.

Elsewhere on Wall Street, Science Applications International Corp. jumped 10.4% after becoming the latest U.S. company to report bigger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected. SAIC also raised forecasts for upcoming financial results.

A cavalcade of such better-than-expected profit reports has helped the U.S. stock market push to records despite the uncertainty created by the war with Iran.

Berkshire Hathaway fell 0.9% after saying it would buy homebuilder Taylor Morrison Home for \$6.8 billion. It's one of the first big acquisitions announced by the company since Greg Abel took over as its leader from famed investor Warren Buffett. Taylor Morrison Home jumped 22.3%.

MGM Resorts International leaped 16.1% after People Inc., Barry Diller's business that was formerly known as IAC, offered to buy the rest of the company it doesn't already own for \$48.30 per share in cash.

All told, the S&P 500 rose 19.90 points to 7,599.96. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 46.42 to 51,078.88, and the Nasdaq composite rose 114.19 to 27,086.81.

In the bond market, Treasury yields climbed with oil prices and after a report said growth in U.S. manufacturing accelerated by more last month than economists expected. The yield for the 10-year Treasury briefly approached 4.52% before regressing to 4.46%, up from 4.45% late Friday.

High yields have already forced the average long-term U.S. mortgage rate to its most expensive level in nine months, and they could curtail companies' borrowing to build the AI data centers that have supported the U.S. economy's growth recently.

In stock markets abroad, indexes fell in Europe following a stronger finish in Asia.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 rose 0.9% to an all-time high. SoftBank Group, the investment company that focuses heavily on AI, soared 21.2% and surpassed Toyota to become Japan's most valuable listed company.

In South Korea, the Kospi index jumped 3.7% to a record after data showed the country's exports surged 53% in May from a year earlier, buoyed by global demand for semiconductors.



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## What to know about US military strikes on alleged drug boats

By REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The United States military strikes on alleged drug-carrying boats transiting in Latin America have killed more than 200 people since September, when the Trump administration began an operation it has justified as necessary to stem the flow of drugs.

As the strikes continue, the administration has offered little evidence to support its claims of killing “narco-terrorists” against whom U.S. President Donald Trump has said the U.S. is in an “armed conflict.”

Critics have questioned the overall legality of the strikes as well as their effectiveness, in part because the fentanyl behind thousands of fatal overdoses is typically trafficked to the U.S. overland from Mexico. The fast boats in the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific are known to carry cocaine, not fentanyl.

Here’s what to know about the deadly strikes.

Why did the military begin blowing up fast boats?

Trump has asserted that the longtime U.S. strategy of interdicting the boats at sea for decades has not worked. Yet, the U.S. Coast Guard set a record in 2024, the final year of former U.S. President Joe Biden’s term, for cocaine seizures, hauling 225 metric tons of the drug.

The strikes began in September off Venezuela’s Caribbean coast and expanded to the Eastern Pacific in October. The deadliest month since the start of the operation was October, with 45 people killed. Most of this year’s strikes have been in the Pacific.

Trump and other senior officials have also contended that such boats are being operated by narco-terrorists and cartel members.

The Associated Press visited a region in Venezuela from which some of the suspected boats have departed and identified four men who were killed in the strikes. In several interviews, residents of the region and relatives said the dead men were mostly laborers or fishermen making \$500 a trip.

Notably, the strikes started amid the largest buildup of U.S. military forces in Latin America in generations, in a pressure campaign that culminated with the January capture of Venezuela’s then-President Nicolás Maduro.

More than 60 boats have been struck in the monthslong operation.

Are the strikes effective?

Trump has claimed that the strikes have blown up boats carrying fentanyl and that each destroyed vessel has saved 25,000 American lives. According to experts and former U.S. counternarcotics officials, Trump’s statements are either exaggerations or false.

For the past decade, U.S. officials have sounded the alarm about rising overdose deaths, particularly from opioids and synthetic opioids. Overdose deaths from opioids surged during the 2021-2023 period to about 80,000 a year but dropped to an estimated 55,000 in 2024. Experts have attributed that decline partly to efforts during the last year of the Biden administration to boost the availability of lifesaving drugs that prevent overdose deaths. Federal data show the figure dropped further, reaching an estimated 44,000 last year.

Meanwhile, overdose deaths from cocaine, which is mostly produced in Colombia and Peru, are less frequent than those from fentanyl. About 22,000 people died in the U.S. from cocaine overdoses in 2024, down from more than 29,000 the year earlier, according to federal data. The number of cocaine overdose deaths went down to an estimated 19,000 in 2025.

The drug flowing to the U.S. from South America is cocaine. Fentanyl, on the other hand, typically makes it into the U.S. overland from Mexico, where it is produced with chemicals imported from China and India.

Are the strikes legal?

The operation has drawn intense criticism, particularly following the revelation that the military killed survivors of the very first boat attack with a follow-up strike. Administration officials and many Republican lawmakers said it was legal and necessary, while Democratic lawmakers and legal experts said the killings were murder, if not a war crime.

Amanda Klasing, national director for government relations at rights watchdog Amnesty International

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USA, in a statement last week said the "extrajudicial killings are becoming normalized" as the death toll continues to grow.

"Not only are these killings illegal, they are immoral," she said. "People of good conscience cannot allow this to continue, yet Congress has so far failed to halt, or even slow down, this lethal and unlawful campaign."

In January, the families of two Trinidadian nationals killed in a boat strike in October sued the federal government, calling the attack a war crime and part of an "unprecedented and manifestly unlawful U.S. military campaign." The complaint echoes many of the frequently articulated concerns about the boat strikes, noting for instance that they have been carried out without congressional authorization and at a time when there is no military conflict between the U.S. and drug cartels that under the laws of war could justify the lethal attacks.

"These premeditated and intentional killings lack any plausible legal justification. Thus, they were simply murders, ordered by individuals at the highest levels of government and obeyed by military officers in the chain of command," the lawsuit states.

## **US to drastically slash the number of embassies in Africa that can process visas**

By MATTHEW LEE and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The State Department plans to drastically slash the number of U.S. embassies and consulates in Africa that can process visas for foreigners seeking to come to the United States.

The almost 50 U.S. embassies and consulates that are processing visa applications will be reduced to 20 in the coming weeks, according to three U.S. officials and an internal memo obtained by The Associated Press. There is not yet a set date for the change, but it is expected in June, according to the officials, who were not authorized to comment to the media and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The move is part of the Trump administration's effort to crack down on issuing both immigrant and non-immigrant visas as part of its broader aim to limit immigration to the U.S. and clamp down on those who travel on temporary visas but then overstay them. The administration also has scaled back personnel at embassies and consulates around the world.

On a conference call last Friday, U.S. diplomats, including consular chiefs, were told the U.S. would be scaling back its visa services across Africa, according to one of the officials who was on the call.

Under a directive approved by Secretary of State Marco Rubio last week, the State Department will reduce consular operations in all but 20 "hubs" in Africa, according to the officials and the memo.

Visa processing in Africa has already been affected by a travel ban on certain countries as well as a requirement for applicants to post up to \$15,000 bond in order to apply and more recently by restrictions caused by the Ebola outbreak.

The new rules mean that a citizen of a non-hub country will have to travel to one of the 20 approved sites, which could pose formidable travel challenges and costs.

Consular sections in non-hub countries will stay open but be limited in the services they can offer. They will still be able to assist American citizens with passport renewals and emergency consular requests as well as special national interest cases and diplomatic visa applications.

The State Department did not address the specific issues in the memo but said it "is constantly evaluating its overseas operations in order to deploy taxpayer resources in a way that advances America's priorities as efficiently and effectively as possible."

It said this "includes a visa process that maintains rigorous standards of security screening and vetting and aligns resources and operational capacity with America's national interests."

According to the memo, the 20 hubs to remain open for all processing are: Abidjan, Ivory Coast; Accra, Ghana; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Cape Town, South Africa; Dakar, Senegal; Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania; Djibouti, Djibouti; Johannesburg, South Africa; Kampala, Uganda; Kigali, Rwanda; Kinshasa, Congo; Lagos, Nigeria; Lome, Togo; Luanda, Angola; Malabo, Equatorial Guinea; Monrovia, Liberia; Nairobi, Kenya; Port

Louis, Mauritius; Praia, Cape Verde; and Yaounde, Cameroon.

## Pride Month 2026 has begun. Here's what to expect for the LGBTQ+ celebrations

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

Pride month has begun across the U.S., bringing parades and parties to big cities and small towns to celebrate LGBTQ+ people.

The rainbow-filled festivities this year come as President Donald Trump's administration is pushing policies to roll back the rights of transgender people and curtail recognition of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Jordan Braxton, co-president of USA Prides, a organization of Pride groups, says the events have always been rooted in protest.

"A festival is a time to celebrate," she said. "Those are acts of resistance, too."

The first Pride celebrations came in protest

The event has its roots in the violent police raid of New York's Stonewall Inn, a gay bar, on June 28, 1969.

The raid sparked a series of public protests and catalyzed the gay rights movement at a time when many LGBTQ+ people kept their identities to themselves.

To mark the first anniversary in June 1970, there were marches in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York and San Francisco.

Now, events take place in big cities, suburbs and small towns around the world.

President Bill Clinton proclaimed June as Gay and Lesbian Pride Month in the U.S. with an executive order in 1999. Since then, Democratic presidents have signed similar orders each year they've been in office. Republican presidents, including Trump, have not.

Now, many are celebrations with a dose of defiance

Parades and street fairs headline Pride celebrations. But there's more to them than that.

San Francisco Pride includes a golf tournament and a human right summit. Twin Cities Pride in Minneapolis has a bar crawl, and Central Alabama Pride in Birmingham features a singing competition.

This year's celebrations include main events in Los Angeles on June 14, Chicago on June 20 and 21, San Francisco on June 27 and New York on June 28. There are events this month in international cities including Paris, Rome, Sao Paulo and Tokyo.

While those events have been around for more than 50 years, this year marks just the sixth edition of a formal Pride celebration in Haddon Township, New Jersey, a Philadelphia suburb. A parade is scheduled for Thursday, and a community night is Friday.

Isis Petrie Williams, president of Haddon Township Pride, said that the 2,000 to 3,000 people in the parade will include local high school marching bands, youth sports teams and many people passing out candy.

"We decided to have a radical expression of joy, acceptance and love, centered on exposure and community connection," she said.

Some policy changes have not been LGBTQ-friendly

For years, policies across the U.S. were generally becoming more welcoming to LGBTQ+ people, including in June 2015 when a U.S. Supreme Court ruling legalized same-sex marriage nationally.

In recent years, several policies have swung the other way.

The Supreme Court in March ruled against a ban on "conversion therapy" for LGBTQ+ kids in Colorado, saying it violated free speech protections.

During Pride Month last year, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed a Tennessee ban on gender-affirming care for transgender kids.

This decade, most Republican-controlled state governments have passed similar restrictions on gender-affirming care, barred transgender women and girls from female sports competitions, and restricted which restrooms transgender people can use in schools — and, in some cases, other public places.

Trump has signed executive orders seeking some of the same policies on a federal level.

On Monday, one of those policies suffered a blow when a court ruled that the military illegally banned

transgender troops.

Some sponsors have pulled out of the celebrations

Last year, some big corporations stopped contributing to Pride events.

Braxton said she's noticed some investment firms pulling back this year, following companies such as Anheuser-Busch and Walmart last year.

"It's all because of Trump's DEI policies. Corporations are afraid that if they sponsor a Pride event, they are going to get scrutinized from this administration, which is completely sad," she said.

But she said that smaller events have seen local businesses boost sponsorships.

That's been true for New Jersey's Haddon Township Pride. Williams said the Coast Guard is the only major national sponsor that's abandoned the event in recent years.

Meanwhile, local hospitals, restaurants, law firms, coffee shops and other businesses are contributing.

## **Tensions linger between Republicans and White House over the 'anti-weaponization' fund**

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A standoff between the White House and the Senate remains unresolved after Republican senators defiantly left town 10 days ago without passing legislation to fund President Donald Trump's immigration enforcement agencies.

Senate Republicans who are returning to Washington on Monday say they won't have the votes to pass the Homeland Security spending bill until the White House works with them to place parameters on a new \$1.776 billion settlement fund designed to compensate Trump's allies. Trump and the White House have yet to say publicly whether they will do so, even after a judge temporarily halted any payouts.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune indicated Monday he was hopeful the White House would move to drop the fund.

"I do think the best way to handle it is if the administration decides to shut it down themselves," Thune told reporters.

Thune, of South Dakota, previously said that the settlement money — some of which could potentially go to Trump supporters who beat police and attacked the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 — was complicating the GOP's agenda. It "just makes everything way harder than it should be," he said.

The impasse over the "anti-weaponization" fund could be an inflection point as Republicans try to keep their majority in this year's elections and advance their agenda. Trump's campaign year push to defeat GOP lawmakers who he sees as disloyal, including some of Thune's most reliable Republican votes in the narrow 53-47 Senate, has only added to the tension.

Sens. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana and John Cornyn of Texas both lost reelection bids in May after Trump endorsed their primary opponents, and it's unclear how supportive they'll be of the president's agenda going forward. And a growing number of GOP senators have become frustrated with the president as he ignores what they see as their political needs.

"I think it's hard to divorce anything that happens here from what's happening in the political atmosphere around us," Thune said.

Democrats have said they plan to offer several amendments to the immigration bill to scale back or eliminate the settlement. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said in a letter to colleagues Monday morning that Democrats will launch "a coordinated effort to kill the slush fund before one cent goes out the door."

"No matter what Republicans do, we will force them to vote on it," he wrote.

As anger among Senate Republicans swelled, Trump made clear that he wasn't highly concerned.

"I don't care about the midterms," Trump said last week in a discussion about the Iran war.

Senate Republicans draw lines on settlement fund

At a closed-door meeting with acting Attorney General Todd Blanche before they left town, Republican senators gave an ultimatum of sorts — put some limits on the settlement or we will do it for you.



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GOP senators had been discussing several ways that they could curb the fund, including limiting who can receive payouts, changing the makeup of the commission in charge of settlement decisions, adding some sort of judicial review for applicants or scrapping the fund altogether. Republicans have discussed adding parameters on the settlement to the unrelated immigration enforcement measure but would prefer that the White House make changes on its own.

There were few signs of progress over the Memorial Day recess.

Sen. Todd Young of Indiana told The Associated Press last week that he hadn't seen any indications "that would suggest they sent us a plan that our leadership thought was acceptable."

"It's in their court," Young said of the White House.

Sen. Bill Hagerty of Tennessee said on Fox News Channel's "Fox News Sunday" that discussions are underway "to get to something that's going to work."

"I think there were just more details and more questions last week that needed to be resolved," Hagerty said, adding that "I'm looking forward to seeing the details this coming week."

Acting attorney general spars with the Senate

Blanche told the AP in an interview Thursday that "a lot of the questions will be answered in the short term." But he would not elaborate, saying that "talking in hypotheticals is something that I don't think is fair to the process."

Blanche's meeting with senators before they left town was "angry," according to Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, who described it on his podcast. Cruz said that of around 45 Senate Republicans who attended, "at least half of them were blasting the attorney general."

The Senate had planned to stay in session late that night to vote on the immigration spending bill, but leaders canceled votes and sent everyone home. Cruz said Republican senators were "yelling" and told Blanche that the fund, which was part of a settlement that resolves Trump's lawsuit against the IRS over the leak of his tax returns, "feels like self-dealing" and "feels like Trump cut a deal with himself."

Cruz, who said he supports the fund, noted that Democrats had said they would offer amendments to kill it. Republicans "would have lost every vote" if they had stayed in session, he said.

He predicted that "we will see the administration announcing at a minimum a modification of this, because if they don't, they've got a full-on revolt in the Senate."

Jan. 6 defendants could get settlements

Cruz said that there were a lot of questions from senators about the Jan. 6 defendants and that Blanche reassured them that no one who committed an act of violence or assaulted law enforcement would get a payout. But Blanche has repeatedly declined to say that publicly, telling the AP that "there is no limit to who can apply."

Asked about people who were violent on Jan. 6, Blanche suggested that might be too hard to define.

"Who is it? I mean, you tell me, right?" Blanche said. "You have to define something and then stick to it. So that's something I've been hesitant to try to do because it's very fact intensive."

Trump has pardoned more than 1,500 defendants who were prosecuted in the 2021 attack, including hundreds who were convicted for violently beating and injuring police.

Unity on immigration enforcement derailed by other issues

The divide over the fund comes after Republicans already abandoned \$1 billion in security funding for the White House, including for Trump's new ballroom, as Democrats and some Republicans questioned using taxpayer money for the massive project at a time of economic hardship. Besides the settlement, Democrats had planned to force Republican senators to vote for or against the ballroom money.

Left in the legislation is funding for Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol, which Democrats have blocked for months in protest of the administration's immigration enforcement crackdown.

Republicans are using a complicated budget maneuver called reconciliation to fund the agencies through the end of Trump's term without Democratic support. Still, success requires GOP unity and Trump's eventual signature.

Democrats say they hope their Republican colleagues continue to stand up to the White House. Sen. Gary Peters of Michigan said last week that he thinks the settlement fund is "probably one of the most

corrupt things that we've ever seen an American president do."

It is "a bridge too far for some of my Republican Senate colleagues," Peters said. "I hope they realize that what was done is simply unacceptable and that they'll stand firm."

## **A key hearing for the man accused of killing Charlie Kirk will be public, judge rules**

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Reporters and the public will be allowed to attend a key upcoming hearing for the man accused of killing Charlie Kirk, after a Utah judge on Monday denied a defense request to restrict access.

Tyler Robinson's defense team had asked Judge Tony Graf to close portions of the preliminary hearing on July 6-10, when prosecutors must show they have enough evidence to warrant a trial. It will mark the most significant presentation of evidence to date in a case that has so far focused on matters of media access.

"The public and the media enjoy a presumptive right to access court proceedings, including preliminary hearings," Graf said during his ruling. He said the defense hadn't shown that presenting the evidence publicly would deny Robinson a fair trial.

Robinson's lawyers have tried to guard against media coverage that they say sometimes misrepresents their client, as his case has drawn tremendous public attention. The 23-year-old from southwestern Utah is charged with aggravated murder in the Sept. 10 assassination of Kirk on the Utah Valley University campus.

Prosecutors intend to seek the death penalty if Robinson is convicted. He has not yet entered a plea.

Prosecutors argued that the preliminary hearing should remain open, but they agreed with the defense that media should be limited from viewing or copying some exhibits that could be used in a future trial. They plan to introduce forensic analyses, surveillance video, recordings of witness statements, autopsy findings and alleged messages from Robinson admitting to the crime.

Authorities have said DNA consistent with Robinson's was found on the trigger of the rifle used to kill Kirk, the fired cartridge casing, two unfired cartridges and a towel used to wrap the rifle. Prosecutors also have said Robinson left a note for his romantic partner that read, "I had the opportunity to take out Charlie Kirk and I'm going to take it."

Graf also granted defense attorneys' request for a hearing on June 12 in which they will argue that prosecutors should be punished for comments they made in the media. Robinson's lawyers have said one prosecutor, Christopher Ballard, essentially went on a "media tour" in which he made "expressions of opinion as to Mr. Robinson's guilt."

Prosecutors responded to the claims last month, saying Ballard had a right to correct misinformation in the media about an inconclusive, preliminary finding by ballistics experts, which led to speculation about Robinson's possible exoneration. They said Ballard did not make any statement of opinion about guilt.

## **More Mandelson files released in UK bring bad news for Starmer, but many questions remain unanswered**

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Peter Mandelson assured the British government it would "never regret" appointing him as U.K. ambassador to the United States, according to documents released on Monday. His pledge was dramatically proven wrong within months.

More than 1,500 pages of files relating to the appointment of Mandelson, a friend of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, as envoy to Washington at the start of U.S. President Donald Trump's second term were released by the government to comply with a demand by lawmakers.

They shed new light on the contentious decision and heap more embarrassment on beleaguered Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

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Among the documents is a note from Mandelson to then Foreign Secretary David Lammy in November 2024, before his appointment, pledging that the government would “never regret” giving him the post.

Starmer fired Mandelson after nine months when new details emerged about his friendship with Epstein, and fallout from the misjudged appointment has left the prime minister fighting for his job.

Alex Burghart, a lawmaker for the opposition Conservative Party, said that the decision to appoint Mandelson “is a failure that will define this prime minister’s premiership.

“It is a failure that will be written as his political epitaph,” he said.

Mandelson’s security vetting process

A first trove of files published in March revealed ministers had been warned that Mandelson’s friendship with Epstein exposed the government to “reputational risk.”

It was later disclosed that Mandelson had been approved for the ambassador’s job despite failing security checks, a revelation that sparked bitter blame-trading between Starmer and senior civil servants.

The files released Monday show officials from multiple departments discussing Mandelson’s security vetting, a process that National Security Adviser Jonathan Powell described in previously released files as “weirdly rushed.”

One senior Foreign Office official said the primary issue was “trying to get 101 things done in a very short period of time.”

In one email, Mandelson asked vetting officials if he needed to tell them about “literally every foreign national I have ever met.” A Foreign Office official suggested he “send over the handful of names you mentioned. ... That will reassure the vetting team that you’ve been comprehensive, even if it’s all quite artificial.”

It remains unclear why Mandelson failed security checks. The summary of his vetting wasn’t among the documents released, as it’s part of a police investigation into Mandelson for alleged misconduct in public office.

Officials have said ties to Epstein are not the reason he failed the vetting. A background report drawn up by officials before Mandelson was appointed, released by the government in March, flagged business ties to Russia and China as a concern.

Also missing is any record of what measures, if any, were taken to mitigate the risk of giving Mandelson the job.

Mandelson refused to hand over information from his personal phone to officials, and the government “has no further recourse to search the personal devices of Peter Mandelson,” the documents say.

Mandelson, 72, was briefly arrested in February by detectives investigating allegations that he passed sensitive government information to Epstein when he was a Cabinet minister more than 15 years ago. He was released without bail conditions as the investigation continues.

Mandelson was seen as a Trump whisperer

Critics say Starmer’s decision to appoint Mandelson is evidence of bad judgment by a prime minister who has made repeated missteps since he led the center-left Labour Party to a landslide election victory in July 2024.

But at the time, many saw it as a savvy move to deal with an unpredictable president.

“I fear that navigating Britain’s interests through the Trump administration will require super-human skills and luck and a massive team effort,” Mandelson said in his November 2024 note to Lammy.

Mandelson’s expertise as a former European Union trade chief, charm and network of global contacts were considered assets in securing a trade deal with the Trump administration. It seemed to pay off, with a successful visit by Starmer to the White House in February 2025 followed by a U.K.-U.S. trade deal announced that May.

In a letter to Starmer before the trip, Mandelson said “America first is the lodestar of his administration,” and the White House under Trump “will play the international system by a different set of rules.”

Mandelson noted in an email that the prime minister and president had developed a “strong personal bond.”

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Starmer's relationship with Trump later soured after the U.K. declined to join U.S.-Israeli strikes and other efforts in the Iran war. Some aspects of the trade deal remain incomplete.

Documents expose unflattering comments about Starmer

Details about Mandelson's ties to Epstein, revealed in a huge trove of files published by the U.S. Justice Department in January, raised new questions about Starmer's judgment, driving opponents and some Labour lawmakers to call for the prime minister's resignation.

Those calls intensified after Labour suffered big losses in local elections in May. A senior Cabinet minister, Wes Streeting, resigned with the intention of challenging Starmer for the Labour leadership. Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham is running for a seat in Parliament in a June 18 special election, and is also expected to challenge Starmer if he wins.

The documents show that behind closed doors, Mandelson didn't always give Starmer his full-throated support, and that government ministers also despaired at Starmer's lack of leadership within months of him taking office.

"Keir is not leading from the front," Cabinet minister Pat McFadden said in a May 2025 WhatsApp exchange with Mandelson.

Mandelson's verdict was "Keir lacks verve." He said that the government needed to act, "dare I say it ... in a more Trumpian risk taking and dare devil way."

In July, he despaired that the government was "beleaguered and bereft," and ministers don't "really know what Keir thinks or wants.

"In fact most of them don't think Keir knows what he wants," Mandelson said.

## **US bombs Iranian military sites, then downs missiles Tehran fired at troops in Kuwait**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States said Monday that it bombed radar and drone sites in Iran after Tehran shot down an American drone over the weekend. Iran then said it targeted American soldiers in Kuwait with missiles, which the U.S. says it shot down.

The nominal ceasefire between Iran and the U.S. has been repeatedly tested with back-and-forth attacks, though officials from both countries are still trying to negotiate an end to the war. It's not clear how close they are to a deal — and there is always the risk that an attack could derail those talks.

Fighting has also been escalating between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, despite their nominal ceasefire, and that has increasingly threatened the emerging deal to extend the Iran war ceasefire.

On Monday afternoon U.S. President Donald Trump said Israel and Hezbollah had agreed to dial back their fighting after he held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and communicated with Hezbollah through mediators. Moments later, though, Israel said it had detected missile launches from Lebanon and warned Israelis in part of northern Israel to take cover in protected spaces.

Meantime, Iran maintained its chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting global energy supplies and driving up the price of fuel around the world, with far-reaching consequences. A cargo ship came under attack off Iraq Monday afternoon, the British military said.

Fighting in Lebanon poses risks to Iran ceasefire

Israel has extended its occupation deep into Lebanon, and Hezbollah — which joined the war in support of its main backer, Iran — continues to launch drones into Israel.

Iran wants any agreement to include Lebanon, and its foreign ministry on Monday highlighted the rising tensions in Lebanon, saying via government media: "The responsibility of the results and consequences of this situation is on the U.S."

In his social media post about Israel and Hezbollah scaling back their fighting, Trump added that talks with Iran "are continuing, at a rapid pace."

In Pakistan, which has been a mediator between Washington and Tehran, a former ambassador to the



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U.S. said that Israel's actions in Lebanon were complicating the diplomatic environment.

"Israel is creating a new strategic reality in its neighborhood," Masood Khan told The Associated Press. US military attacks Iran

The U.S. military's Central Command said it carried out the strikes in Iran on Saturday and Sunday around the city of Geruk and on Qeshm Island, hitting air defenses, a ground control station and two attack drones it said threatened ships in the region.

"The measured and deliberate strikes occurred ... in response to aggressive Iranian actions that included the shootdown of a U.S. MQ-1 drone that was operating over international waters," Central Command said.

Traffic through the Strait of Hormuz is at a trickle compared to before the war, with ship owners deterred by the risk of an Iranian attack. Only 36 ships transited the waterway in the seven days leading up to Friday, a third of them carrying crude oil or petroleum products, according to Lloyd's List Intelligence, which counts only ships big enough to carry globally significant amounts of oil or cargo. That compares to an average of more than 130 ships per day before the war began.

A fifth of all the world's traded oil and natural gas once passed through the strait. Its closure has put pressure not only on energy supplies but on chemical fertilizer, generating fears of food shortages. The Gulf region produces 30% of globally traded chemical fertilizers.

Kuwait reports incoming fire

Kuwait said its air defenses opened fire early Monday morning to intercept incoming drone and missile fire.

Around the same time, Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said it responded to an American attack without saying where, likely referring to the attack on Kuwait. In a statement carried by the state-run IRNA news agency, the Guard said that U.S. forces had targeted a telecommunications tower.

Kuwait is home to U.S. Army Central, the Mideast forward command for the Army.

Iranian state television shared footage of the ballistic missile launch, including a close-up showing a sticker on its body depicting a bruised Trump overlaid on a "closed" Strait of Hormuz with the caption: "Until the last American soldier leaves the region."

Central Command said U.S. forces shot down two ballistic missiles Iran launched toward bases home to American troops. No Americans were hurt, it added.

Attacks rattle ceasefire talks

Over the weekend, the U.S. fired a missile into the engine room of a Gambia-flagged cargo ship trying to break its blockade of Iranian ports.

On Monday, a cargo ship off Umm Qasr, Iraq, was struck by a projectile that caused a "large explosion," the British military said. It offered no other details, and no one claimed the attack. Iran previously has attacked ships off Iraq.

Trump met with advisers on Friday but has yet to decide on whether to move ahead with a deal to extend the ceasefire and reopen the strait. Iran has said the deal had not been finalized.

The U.S. and Israel launched the war with strikes on Iran on Feb. 28. Trump has offered shifting goals for the conflict, although preventing Iran from building a nuclear weapon is among them. Iran has insisted its nuclear program is peaceful, though it has highly enriched uranium that could be made weapons-grade. Iran has enough of the material to build several nuclear weapons, should it choose to do so.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance suggested last week that negotiators were trying to strike general terms on Iran's nuclear program, with the specifics to be hammered out in the ensuing talks.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei on Monday again accused the U.S. of "constantly" changing its positions.

"We are negotiating in an atmosphere of mistrust," Baghaei told journalists.

## Colorado elections clerk released from prison after governor commutes sentence

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Tina Peters, the former county clerk convicted of participating in a scheme to chase election conspiracy theories promulgated by President Donald Trump, was released from state prison Monday after the president successfully pressured Colorado's Democratic governor into commuting her sentence.

Shortly after her release was confirmed by the Colorado Department of Corrections, Peters appeared on the program of Steve Bannon, a former Trump adviser who was part of the right-wing campaign to free Peters. Gov. Jared Polis said he would shorten Peters' sentence if she expressed regret about her actions.

But in her interview with Bannon, Peters repeated the debunked conspiracy theory that voting machines cheated Trump out of reelection in 2020 and portrayed herself as a martyr to the effort to expose it.

"I know that the Democrats are going to cheat, and no one is really addressing the problem that I spent my time in prison as retribution for," Peters said.

Multiple reviews, recounts and audits in the battleground states where Trump disputed his 2020 loss have all affirmed that Democrat Joe Biden won. Dominion Voting Systems, the company used for Colorado elections, has also succeeded in multiple defamation cases against conservative news outlets and others who repeated the false claims that its voting systems were somehow manipulated to change the outcome.

Trump's pressure campaign

Peters' sentence was shortened by Polis last month after Trump waged a lengthy pressure campaign against the governor and his state. Peters served less than a quarter of her nine-year sentence.

"She really is extremely grateful to Donald Trump," Peters' attorney, Peter Tickin, said in an interview. "If it weren't for Donald Trump, she'd still be behind bars."

In her interview with Bannon, Peters said she plans to spend "the next few weeks regaining my health and with loved ones and family." She said she is interested in becoming involved in prison reform and the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4.

Peters also is challenging her conviction, a case her attorneys hope to take to the U.S. Supreme Court if needed. She told Bannon she will "fight to clear my name and bring out the truth of why they came after me the way they did."

Peters was the first local election official to be charged with breaching security after the 2020 election. She snuck in an outside computer expert affiliated with My Pillow Chief Executive Mike Lindell — who himself denied that Trump lost the White House in 2020 — and the person copied the county's Dominion Voting Systems computer server as it was updated in 2021.

Peters then joined Lindell onstage at a "cybersymposium" that promised to reveal proof that the election was rigged. Video and photos of the computer system upgrade, including passwords, were posted online. The move stoked false claims that voting machines were manipulated to steal the election from Trump.

Last year, a federal jury found that Lindell had defamed a former Dominion employee over claims related to the 2020 election.

Peters was convicted in 2024 of attempting to influence a public servant, conspiracy to commit criminal impersonation, violation of duty and other crimes by jurors in Mesa County, a Republican stronghold that supported Trump. An appeals court upheld her conviction in April, but ordered Peters to be resentenced because it said the judge who sent her to prison wrongly punished her for speaking out about election fraud.

Trump had championed Peters' case, but because she was convicted under state law, he did not have the power to pardon her. Instead, the president pressured Polis to do so, lambasting him on social media and disinviting him to a White House meeting with other governors. The Trump administration also announced plans to dismantle the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Colorado and relocated the U.S. Space Command to Alabama.

Polis commuted Peters' sentence on May 15. In a letter, he wrote that although Peters was convicted of serious crimes and deserved to spend time in prison, the sentence was "extremely unusual and lengthy" for a first-time non-violent offender.

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Polis launched a Substack over the weekend and his first post was a lengthy explanation of his reasoning in pardoning Peters. He said he was concerned about the First Amendment implications of Peters' sentence and didn't want to leave her in prison while she waited for the legal fight over that to conclude in the courts.

"I wanted to provide finality to this case, and as Governor I used my constitutional power of clemency to do what I believe is right," Polis wrote.

Democratic backlash against Polis

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold, a Democrat, on Monday released a statement warning that the release will "embolden the election denier movement."

Colorado's Democratic Party has already censured Polis for the pardon, and the state's Democratic politicians kept piling on Monday.

"Tina Peters is walking free. A felon, convicted by a jury of her peers, walking free," Sen. Michael Bennet, who is running for the Democratic nomination for governor, said in a video he released shortly after Peters' release.

Lawrence Pacheco, a spokesperson for Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, who also is running for governor, said the state's top prosecutor "remains concerned about her conduct upon returning to Mesa County given her lack of remorse for her crimes."

## **Young and unemployed? Remote work, not AI, may be the problem, study finds**

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The rise of remote work since the pandemic has made businesses more reluctant to hire young, inexperienced workers and is the key driver of higher unemployment rates for recent college graduates, a study released Monday has found.

The study, by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, compared occupations that can be done remotely — such as software development — with those that are done in person, such as nursing. The study finds that the unemployment rate among young college graduates in "remotable" jobs rose by about 1 percentage point from 2017-2019 to 2022-2024.

Yet for older workers in those fields — those aged 29 and over — the jobless rate declined slightly, leading to a notably higher unemployment rate for younger college graduates in remotable occupations compared with older workers.

Yet in non-remotable jobs, there has been little gap in the unemployment rates between older and younger college grads, the study finds. A similar pattern exists for those without college degrees, the New York Fed said.

The study, led by New York Fed research economist Natalia Emanuel, concludes that businesses are reluctant to hire new college grads into remote work because it is harder to train and mentor them if they work outside of the office. The authors of the study calculate that remote work is responsible for nearly two-thirds of the rise in the unemployment rate for young college graduates since the pandemic.

"Remote work has weakened incentives to hire young workers by impeding on-the-job training," the study said. "Employers may not want to hire fresh graduates onto distributed teams because it is more difficult to teach them the requisite skills from afar."

The study lands amid widespread concern over the employment prospects of college graduates as artificial intelligence makes inroads into a variety of white-collar jobs, including finance, law, entertainment, and media. This spring, college graduates have been booing references to AI during commencement speeches.

But the study notes that the worsening employment picture for young college grads pre-dates the development of artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT. And when the authors looked at the exposure different occupations had to AI, it found that AI had little impact on youth unemployment.

The unemployment rate for college grads under 29 rose 20% from before the pandemic to 3.7%, on average, in 2022-2025, the New York Fed said. For college grads aged 22 through 27, unemployment

reached 5.8% last year, the highest outside the pandemic since 2012.

The study's findings are consistent with the low-hire, low-fire state of the job market, where layoffs are low and the unemployment rate is mostly stable, but those out of work are struggling to find new jobs.

The New York Fed study also looked at detailed data from an unnamed Fortune 500 tech company and found that its hiring patterns mirrored what they had seen in the broader data.

When the company's offices were closed and staff worked remotely, "the firm hired fewer inexperienced workers and more experienced workers, who might need less mentorship to do their jobs well," the study said.

"Once its offices reopened, the company shifted back to hiring younger workers," the study said. But even after the reopening, the company favored more experienced workers for teams that included remote work.

## **Raymond Berry, Hall of Fame wide receiver and Patriots coach, dies at the age of 93**

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Raymond Berry, the Hall of Fame wide receiver who teamed with Baltimore quarterback Johnny Unitas for one of the NFL's greatest passing combinations and helped lead the Colts to victory over the New York Giants in the storied 1958 championship game, has died. He was 93.

Berry, who later coached the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XX, died May 25, the Pro Football Hall of Fame said Monday.

His family said in a statement that Berry died peacefully at home in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, surrounded by family, including his wife of 65 years, Sally.

"In NFL history, there are only a handful of players who we can say truly changed the sport. Raymond Berry is one of the few names on that list," Indianapolis Colts owner Carlie Irsay-Gordon said. "As a player during a historic era of Colts football, Raymond redefined the standard for what a wide receiver could and should be. ... Simply put, not only was Raymond Berry one of the greatest players in the history of the Colts, but he was one of the most influential and foundational players of the modern NFL."

A 20th-round draft pick out of SMU in 1954, the Texas native became a model for the virtues of hard work and determination. He had average speed, legs of different length, a bad back, imperfect eyesight and oversized feet that in high school gave him the nickname "Skis." But he willed himself into a superstar through exhaustive preparation and study, whether using Silly Putty to strengthen his fingers or simulating entire games on the practice field.

He was among the most reliable receivers in league history, rarely dropping a pass and fumbling only twice, according to the Pro Football Reference website. By his own count, he developed 88 separate routes to get open, his discipline so unyielding that even his coach, Weeb Ewbank, tried to intervene.

"One of his drills was to throw nothing but bad balls to him," Ewbank told the Los Angeles Times in 1986. "I used to have to run John (Unitas) off — 'John, you've had enough throwing today' — and he'd say, 'Yeah, talk to that guy out there.'"

Over 13 seasons, Berry caught a then-record 631 passes (Jerry Rice is now the all-time leader, with 1,549) for 68 touchdowns, led the NFL in receptions three times and played in six Pro Bowls. A mainstay of one of the league's top offenses, featuring Unitas, running back Lenny Moore and offensive lineman Jim Parker, Berry played on championship teams in 1958 and 1959 and a runner-up in 1964.

Berry was inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame in 1973, and was voted on to the league's 50th anniversary and 75th anniversary teams. The Colts retired his uniform number, 82. SMU retired his number from college, 87.

A performance for the ages

Berry was at his peak during a signature day in NFL history: the 1958 finale against the Giants at Yankee Stadium, an overtime classic known by many as "The Greatest Game Ever Played." It was nationally televised and often cited as the starting point for the league's rise over the following decades.

Playing against the NFL's toughest defense, Berry caught 12 passes for 178 yards and one touchdown,



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including three consecutive receptions during the 86-yard drive that tied the game 17-17 in regulation, and two crucial grabs during the 80-yard drive that gave the Colts a 23-17 win. The league's first championship to finish in overtime helped make Unitas a hero and Berry his ideal target.

"We worked and got to know each other and developed timing you just can't get any other way," Berry later told the radio program Sports & Torts. "He (Unitas) knew I was going to be there when I was supposed to be there and he knew I was going to catch it."

## A fight for drug testing

After retiring in 1967, Berry was a wide receivers coach for the Dallas Cowboys, Cleveland Browns and New England Patriots, and head coach of the Pats from 1984-89. He finished 48-39 with New England, including an 11-5 season in 1985 and a trip to Super Bowl XX. The Patriots were crushed 46-10 by the Chicago Bears in that game.

"Raymond Berry holds a special place in Patriots history," team owner Robert Kraft said. "He led our franchise to its first Super Bowl appearance following a remarkable playoff run, a milestone that was the greatest achievement in team history at the time."

Kraft said Raymond left a lasting impact on the Patriots and the NFL.

Soon after the Super Bowl against the Bears, the Boston Globe revealed that several New England players had drug problems. Berry had been a source for the Globe story and his push for the team to agree to drug testing was forcefully opposed by the NFL players union.

Berry, a deeply religious man who didn't drink or smoke, had personal reasons for supporting drug treatment. His former Colts teammate, All-Pro defensive tackle Gene "Big Daddy" Lipscomb, had struggled with addiction.

"They didn't help him, they just cut him," Berry told The Patriot Ledger in 1986. "Three years later, he was dead."

## His Texas roots

Berry married fellow Texan Sally Crook in 1960. They had three children.

He was born in Corpus Christi in 1933 and would credit some of his success to his high school coach, his father, Mark Raymond Berry, who taught his son the basics of football even if he didn't play him much. He attended Schreiner College in Kerrville for a year before transferring to SMU, where during one crucial game he fumbled twice, mistakes he vowed not to commit in the pros.

With the Colts, he caught only 13 passes in his rookie season, but the following year the team signed a free agent quarterback cut by the Pittsburgh Steelers — Unitas. The two soon began practicing together.

"I didn't know my butt from first base about how to run pass routes," Berry told Sports & Torts. "If you saw both of us in training camp in 1956, you may have gone away sobbing. We were two pitiful football players, good grief."

## **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. Soldiers descended on a rope one after another from a French navy helicopter, video released to The Associated Press by the French military showed. 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."

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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."

Responding to the latest French interception, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that Russia "considers such actions illegal."

"They border on piracy," he said Monday. "We absolutely disagree that they are being carried out in full compliance with international law."

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.

The captain says he is Russian, French prosecutor Stéphane Kellenberger, overseeing the investigation from Brest in western France, said in a statement to AP.

The captain repeatedly refused to comply with French navy instructions, "making it necessary to take control of the vessel," Kellenberger said.

He said his office has opened a criminal investigation on charges of failure to provide proof of a vessel's nationality, navigating without a flag and refusal to comply with orders.

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.

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

By EVELYNE MUSAMBI Associated Press

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.

Local leaders, including Laikipia Governor Joshua Irungu, had told journalists that they were opposed to the establishment of an Ebola quarantine center.

"This will expose our people to Ebola," he said, adding that many locals work inside the air base and could be exposed.

A resident, Malin Ndegwa, said Kenya should not be exposed to the virus by hosting foreigners when it

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is not the epicenter of the outbreak.

"Why are they not doing it in the DRC (Congo)? Why are they not doing it in Uganda? Why must they bring it here? So we are saying, we categorically, no negotiations, no public participation, we want nothing. We want that facility taken out of our town, we want it taken out of Kenya," he said.

Kenya has not recorded Ebola cases, but neighboring Uganda has reported nine and closed its border with Congo.

At least 282 confirmed cases have been reported in Congo with over 1,000 suspected cases of the Bun-dibugyo virus, the current species of Ebola, which has no approved treatment or vaccine.

## **Today in History: June 2, Queen Elizabeth II crowned**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, June 2, the 153rd day of 2026. There are 212 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 2, 1953, Queen Elizabeth II was crowned at age 27 at a ceremony in London's Westminster Abbey, 16 months after the death of her father, King George VI.

Also on this date:

In 1886, 49-year-old President Grover Cleveland became the first president to get married in the White House, wedding 21-year-old Frances Folsom.

In 1924, Congress passed, and President Calvin Coolidge signed, the Indian Citizenship Act, a measure guaranteeing full American citizenship for all Native Americans born within U.S. territorial limits.

In 1941, baseball's "Iron Horse," Lou Gehrig, died in New York of the degenerative disease amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease; he was 37.

In 1966, U.S. space probe Surveyor 1 landed on the moon and began transmitting detailed photographs of the lunar surface.

In 1997, Timothy McVeigh was convicted of murder by a federal jury in the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, which killed 168 people. (McVeigh would be sentenced to death and was executed in 2001.)

In 1999, South Africans went to the polls in their second post-apartheid election, giving the African National Congress a decisive victory; retiring President Nelson Mandela was succeeded by Thabo Mbeki.

In 2012, ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was sentenced to life in prison after a court convicted him on charges of complicity in the killing of protesters during the 2011 uprising that forced him from power (Mubarak was later acquitted and freed in March 2017; he died in February 2020).

In 2016, autopsy results revealed that musician Prince died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl, a powerful opioid painkiller.

In 2023, two trains derailed in eastern India, killing 275 people and injuring hundreds in Odisha state. Officials said an error in the electronic signaling system led to a passenger train wrongly changing tracks and crashing into a freight train.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Stacy Keach is 85. Filmmaker Lasse Hallström is 80. Actor Jerry Mathers is 78. Actor Joanna Gleason is 76. NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman is 74. Actor Dennis Haysbert is 72. Comedian Dana Carvey is 71. TV personality-producer Andy Cohen is 58. Actor-comedian Wayne Brady is 53. Actor Wentworth Miller is 54. Actor Zachary Quinto is 49. Actor Justin Long is 48. Actor Morena Baccarin is 47. Olympic soccer gold medalist Abby Wambach is 46. Actor-rapper Awkwafina is 38. Actor Madison Hu is 24. Actor Jeremy Ray Taylor is 23.