

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Monday, June 15

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with beans, fruit, biscuit.

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena

Sr. Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m.

Jr. Legion hosts Selby, 5:30 p.m.

U8 Baseball host Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red and Blue)

U12 Softball at Claremont, DH, 6:30 p.m. (W&G)

## Tuesday, June 16

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combination, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, fruit.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

U14 Legion hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Baseball at Sisseton, 5:30 p.m.

U10 Baseball at Webster, 5:30 p.m. (W&R)

U8 Baseball host Britton, DH, 6 p.m. (Blue)

U14 Softball hosts Redfield, 5:30 p.m.

T-Ball Scrimmage, 5 p.m., Falk Field

## Groton Daily Independent

**PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445**

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

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## Wednesday, June 17

Senior Menu: Kielbasa with mac and cheese, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Gym/Arena

U12 Baseball at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m., North Complex

U10 Baseball at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m., North Complex, (R&B)

U8 Baseball at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (Red), North Complex

U14 Softball at Mobridge, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Softball hosts Redfield 2, DH, 5:30 p.m., (B&W)

U10 Softball hosts Redfield 2, DH, 5:30 p.m., (B&W)

U8 Softball hosts Redfield 2, 5:30 p.m., (W&B)

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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.**

## Iran Deal Reached

The US and Iran have agreed to extend their ceasefire by 60 days, President Donald Trump and mediators revealed yesterday. The countries are scheduled to sign a deal Friday in Switzerland. Oil prices fell on the news.

Iran has agreed to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to all commercial vessels "toll-free," Trump says, and the US will end its naval blockade on Iranian ports. The ceasefire is also predicated on an end to the conflict in Lebanon, where Israel has been fighting the Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Details surrounding Iran's nuclear program—including the fate of its stockpile of enriched uranium—are slated to be discussed after the deal is signed. The full text was not publicly available as of this writing.

The agreement was announced hours before Trump traveled to France for this year's G7 summit. In addition to the US war with Iran, the countries will discuss multilateral trade, among other issues.

## Knicks End Title Drought

The New York Knicks won the NBA championship Saturday night, rallying from a 16-point deficit to beat the San Antonio Spurs 94-90, ending the series in five games. It ends a 53-year title drought for the Knicks, the sixth-most valuable sports brand (about \$9.8B), and marks the third title in franchise history.

The win caps a dominant playoff run, with New York winning 15 of its last 16 games. It will also be remembered as one of the most clutch postseason performances—the Knicks were 6-2 in games where they trailed by double digits, including a historic 29-point comeback in Game 4 against the Spurs. Star guard Jalen Brunson, who scored 45 points in 41 minutes Saturday, was named Finals MVP.

Celebrations turned to chaos outside Madison Square Garden, as unruly fans ran through the streets and reportedly set five school buses on fire, with more than 60 people arrested.

## Mythos Shut Down

Anthropic shut down its latest Fable 5 and Mythos 5 AI models Friday night. The company said it did so to comply with a government order barring foreign nationals from accessing the models.

Anthropic first shared Mythos with over 40 technology companies in April. The goal was to help organizations overseeing critical computer infrastructure—including Apple, Amazon, and Microsoft—to identify bugs in their systems. Mythos uncovered thousands of severe or critical vulnerabilities within weeks, and Anthropic said it would not roll out the model publicly to prevent hackers from gaining access to it.

However, the company has since given Mythos to more than 150 other organizations. Last week, it publicly released Fable, a version of Mythos with added safeguards. Since then, Amazon has reportedly flagged to the White House an instance in which someone was able to sidestep Fable's safeguards.

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

White House's UFC Freedom 250 delayed by rain, with undefeated lightweight champ Ilia Topuria facing Justin Gaethje at the top of the card; see results. | Carolina Hurricanes win the Stanley Cup in Game 6, ending 20-year championship drought.

Lewis Hamilton wins Formula 1 race in Barcelona.

Oliver Tree, US rapper and singer behind "Life Goes On" and "Miss You," dies in helicopter crash in Brazil at age 32 alongside five others.

Australia's "Socceroos" blank Turkey 2-0 in the biggest upset of the first few days of the World Cup.

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## Science & Technology

Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo reaches close to 680 confirmed cases, almost 140 deaths; new cases reported in a displacement camp with 30,000 occupants.

Venus flytrap study reveals a rapid softening of the plant's outer cells causes its "mouth" to snap shut; findings overturn current theory the motion is caused by water movement.

Researchers discover using nickel oxides during hydrogen-based steel production can double the production speed; traditional steel and metal production account for roughly 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets rise Friday (S&P 500 +0.5%, Dow +0.7%, Nasdaq +0.3%); SpaceX jumps 19% during market debut, becomes 6th most valuable US company with a \$2.1T market cap.

Elon Musk officially becomes the world's first trillionaire, up from a net worth of \$14B in 2017.

Justice Department approves \$111B Paramount-Warner Bros. Discovery merger without requiring any divestitures or modifications.

Professional services firm KPMG pulls report on use of AI in business after claims the study contained numerous inaccuracies stemming from the authors' use of AI and resulting hallucinations.

## Politics & World Affairs

Swiss voters reject proposal to cap population at 10 million people.

More than 40% of the country has a "migration background," official records show.

A verdict is expected today for Marius Borg Høiby, the son of Norway's crown princess; Høiby faces 40 criminal charges, including rape.

Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is hospitalized; his team has not disclosed what prompted the need for medical care as of this writing.

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Every NFL offseason brings optimism. Every fanbase convinces itself the rookies will hit, the free agents will work out, and this is finally the year everything comes together. But before the season starts and hope takes over, it's worth taking a hard look at the roster as it actually exists today.

Over the next ten weeks, we'll break down every position group on the Vikings' roster and rank them from the group I have the most confidence in to the one I trust the least entering the 2026 season. We'll look at the projected starters, depth pieces, offseason additions, and biggest questions each group faces.

Last week we kicked it off with number 10, the WR group. Coming in at number nine this week is tight end.

But first, a bonus pick: special teams!

Confidence level: 98%

I didn't include special teams when creating my list of positions, and I think that was a mistake. Will Reichard has already established himself as one of the best kickers in the league, and if it wasn't for camera wires, he would've been perfect last season. Punter Ryan Wright left this offseason, but the Vikings are actually in a better spot. Veteran Johnny Hekker is a four-time Pro Bowler who can hold down the spot until Brett Thorson, the 2025 Ray Guy award winner for best punter in college football, is ready to roll. And Andrew DePaola is the best long snapper in the game.

Now on to the tight ends.

Confidence level: 90%

Current projected starters: T.J. Hockenson, Josh Oliver

Competing for a roster or practice squad spot: Gavin Bartholomew, Bryson Nesbit, and Ben Yurosek

Why I'm confident: T.J. Hockenson is one of the better tight ends in the NFL. At one point he was in the "best in the league" conversation, and while his reputation has taken a small hit over the past couple of years, he's still considered to be a good starter. Josh Oliver is everything you want in a TE2. His best skill is his blocking, but he's not bad as a receiving threat and can step in for a few games if (when) the starter goes down.

Cause for concern: No surprise, Hockenson's injury history is the biggest question mark. He's missed 11 games over the past three seasons. Like I mentioned above, Oliver is capable of filling in when needed, but no team respects his receiving ability so the team is much more predictable when he's on the field. Hockenson is also playing on the final year of his contract, and although this list only looks at confidence level for the 2026 season, it's worth noting that the Vikings will likely need to replace him next offseason.

Potential upgrades: There are no starting tight ends available in free agency, so if the Vikings were going to upgrade the position, it would have to come through a trade. (It's also worth noting that the Vikings, supposedly, were hoping Kenyon Sadiq fell to the 18th pick in the draft, but the Jets scooped him up at pick 16)

Ultimately, it all comes down to health. With the Vikings' fantastic WR group, having a healthy Hockenson adds one more thing opposing defenses must worry about.

Next week, we continue the countdown and move to the position group that came in at number eight.

## "Don't Rub Your Eyes!"

Keratoconus is one of the most important eye diseases for parents, teachers, coaches, and adults to understand because, if caught early, we now have the ability to help save vision and reduce the chance of future corneal transplantation. One of the most overlooked contributors to this disease is something many people do every single day without thinking about it: rubbing their eyes.

People often do not realize how much repetitive eye rubbing can damage the eye. When we rub our eyes, we are pushing on the eyeball and especially on the cornea, the clear front window of the eye that provides most of the eye's focusing power. Over time, repeated pressure can weaken this delicate structure. For many people, rubbing begins innocently because their eyes itch from allergies, dryness, or irritation. Unfortunately, rubbing can become habitual. Patients often push harder and harder over time to achieve the same temporary feeling of relief, without realizing they may be harming their vision.

In some individuals, especially those genetically predisposed, repeated rubbing or pressure can contribute to the development or progression of keratoconus. Keratoconus occurs when the cornea becomes weakened and begins to thin and bulge outward into a cone-like shape. When this happens, light no longer focuses properly, leading to blurred vision, increasing astigmatism, glare, halos, ghosting, and progressive visual distortion. If left untreated, severe cases can eventually require corneal transplantation.

Eye rubbing is not the only source of pressure. We also see damage from what some doctors call "pillow diving," where patients press their eye into a pillow while sleeping, particularly stomach sleepers or side sleepers. Sometimes we see one eye with very little astigmatism and the other eye with a large amount, and the patient will tell us that the worse eye is the one they constantly rub or sleep on against the pillow. Many patients later say, "I wish someone had warned me earlier."

Children are especially important to watch because keratoconus often begins during the teenage years and can progress rapidly in younger patients. Parents may notice frequent eye rubbing, squinting, changing glasses prescriptions, headaches, or declining school performance related to vision. Kids with allergies are particularly at risk because itchy eyes drive the urge to rub. Treating allergies and dry eye disease early can help reduce this cycle.

That is why comprehensive eye examinations are so important. Modern corneal imaging called corneal topography allows eye doctors to map the shape of the cornea and detect early keratoconus, sometimes even before vision becomes severely affected. Detecting the disease early can be life changing.

One of the greatest advances in eye care has been corneal crosslinking. In this treatment, riboflavin (vitamin B2) eye drops and ultraviolet light are used to strengthen and stabilize the cornea. Crosslinking does not simply treat symptoms, it addresses the underlying weakness of the cornea itself. When performed early, especially in children and young adults, it can dramatically reduce progression and lessen the likelihood of needing a corneal transplant later in life.

It is very important to stop rubbing your eyes, treat the underlying causes of itching, and make sure children and adults at risk are screened for keratoconus. Early detection and modern treatments like crosslinking are helping preserve vision for an entire generation of patients.

A Gregory, South Dakota native, Vance Thompson, MD has been Refractive, Corneal, and Cataract surgery in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the state he grew up in, since 1991. He is an internationally recognized specialist in refractive corneal laser, phakic IOL, and lens replacement surgery. He is the Founder of Vance Thompson Vision Sioux Falls, SD which has grown to serve the mid and mountain west with nine locations. Dr. Thompson also serves as a Professor of Ophthalmology at the Sanford USD School of Medicine. As a leading international researcher, he has played a key role in the development of the most advanced technologies and techniques for both laser and implant vision correction. He has served as the medical monitor or principal investigator in over 130 FDA monitored research trials studying laser and implant surgery. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).



By Dr. Vance Thompson

## Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Keep It Close Against Watertown Arrows 16U, Lose On Walkoff

By GameChanger Media

A walk-off left Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion on the wrong end of a 7-6 defeat to Watertown Arrows 16U on Sunday. The game was tied at six in the bottom of the seventh when Konrad Pitkin singled, scoring one run.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion lost despite out-hitting Watertown Arrows 16U 12 to nine. Alex Abeln and Lincoln Shilhanek each collected three hits for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion got on the board in the top of the third inning after Braden Fliehs singled to left field, and Watertown Arrows 16U dropped a third strike, each scoring one run.

Watertown Arrows 16U jumped back into the lead in the bottom of the fifth inning after Magg singled down the right field line, and Fischer singled to right field, each scoring two runs.

In the top of the sixth inning, Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion went back into the lead after Abeln singled to center field, Noah Scepaniak stole home, and Jordan Schwan singled to left field, each scoring one run.

Arnold stole home, which helped Watertown Arrows 16U tie the game at six in the bottom of the sixth.

Antoine earned the win for Watertown Arrows 16U. The starter allowed five hits and two runs over three innings, striking out two and walking one. Fliehs took the loss for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The hurler went two innings, giving up two runs on four hits, striking out four and walking one. Abeln stepped on the mound first for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The starter allowed five hits and five runs over four and two-thirds innings, striking out six and walking four.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion piled up 12 hits in the game. Zach Fliehs drove the middle of the lineup, leading Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with two runs batted in. The right-handed hitter went 2-for-4 on the day. Schwan stole three bases. Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion were sure-handed in the field and didn't commit a single error. Kason Oswald had the most chances in the field with 11.

Fischer and Lohr were a force together in the lineup, as they each collected two hits for Watertown Arrows 16U. Fischer provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Watertown Arrows 16U with three runs batted in. The cleanup hitter went 2-for-3 on the day. Arnold stole three bases. Watertown Arrows 16U stole six bases in the game. Watertown Arrows 16U turned one double play in the game. Watertown Arrows 16U were sure-handed and didn't commit a single error. Mayo made the most plays with eight.

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## Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion 6 - 7 Watertown Arrows 16U

📍 Away 📅 Sunday June 14, 2026

|      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | R | H  | E |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|
| GRTN | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 6 | 12 | 0 |
| WTRT | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 9  | 0 |

### BATTING

| Groton Post 39...     | AB        | R        | H         | RBI      | BB       | SO       |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A Abeln #5 (P)        | 4         | 2        | 3         | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| K Oswald #12 (C)      | 4         | 0        | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| J Schwan #11 (CF)     | 2         | 2        | 1         | 1        | 1        | 1        |
| B Fliehs #19 (3B)     | 4         | 0        | 1         | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| Z Fliehs #23 (RF)     | 4         | 0        | 2         | 2        | 0        | 1        |
| J Bisbee #15 (2B)     | 4         | 0        | 1         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| L Shilhan... #17 (1B) | 4         | 0        | 3         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| W Borg #1 (SS)        | 3         | 1        | 1         | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| N Scepani... #7 (LF)  | 2         | 1        | 0         | 0        | 0        | 1        |
| <b>Totals</b>         | <b>31</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> |

**2B:** A Abeln, **TB:** A Abeln 4, W Borg, J Bisbee, Z Fliehs 2, L Shilhanek 3, J Schwan, B Fliehs, **CS:** J Schwan, **HBP:** W Borg, N Scepaniak, J Schwan, **SB:** N Scepaniak, J Schwan 3, B Fliehs, **LOB:** 9

### PITCHING

| Groton Pos... | IP         | H        | R        | ER       | BB       | SO        | HR       |
|---------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| A Abeln #5    | 4.2        | 5        | 5        | 5        | 4        | 6         | 0        |
| B Fliehs #19  | 2.0        | 4        | 2        | 2        | 1        | 4         | 0        |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>6.2</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>0</b> |

**L:** B Fliehs, **P-S:** A Abeln 104-61, B Fliehs 37-26, **BF:** A Abeln 23, B Fliehs 10

| Watertown Arro... | AB        | R        | H        | RBI      | BB       | SO        |
|-------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Schott (CF)       | 4         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 1         |
| Magg (LF)         | 4         | 1        | 1        | 2        | 0        | 2         |
| Lohr (DH)         | 3         | 2        | 2        | 0        | 0        | 0         |
| K Pitkin #15      | 1         | 0        | 1        | 1        | 0        | 0         |
| Fischer (RF)      | 3         | 0        | 2        | 3        | 0        | 1         |
| Arnold (SS)       | 3         | 1        | 1        | 0        | 0        | 0         |
| Pitlkm (1B)       | 2         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 1        | 2         |
| Mayo (3B)         | 3         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 3         |
| Halling (C)       | 1         | 1        | 0        | 0        | 2        | 1         |
| Palmquist (2B)    | 2         | 1        | 1        | 0        | 1        | 0         |
| Antoine (P)       | 2         | 1        | 1        | 0        | 1        | 0         |
| <b>Totals</b>     | <b>28</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>9</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>10</b> |

**2B:** Fischer, **TB:** Magg, Arnold, K Pitkin, Antoine, Palmquist, Lohr 2, Fischer 3, **CS:** Fischer, **SB:** Arnold 3, Pitlkm, Lohr, Fischer, **LOB:** 5

| Watertown...  | IP         | H         | R        | ER       | BB       | SO       | HR       |
|---------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Antoine       | 3.0        | 5         | 2        | 2        | 1        | 2        | 0        |
| Lohr          | 2.0        | 4         | 4        | 2        | 0        | 1        | 0        |
| H Schutt #17  | 2.0        | 3         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>7.0</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>4</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>0</b> |

**W:** Antoine, **P-S:** H Schutt 18-15, Antoine 53-35, Lohr 30-23, **WP:** Antoine, **HBP:** Antoine 2, Lohr, **BF:** H Schutt 7, Antoine 17, Lohr 11

## Groton Locke Electric Defeats Merchants On Back Of Clutch Display From Ty Sieber

By GameChanger Media

Ty Sieber drove in four runs on four hits to lead Groton Locke Electric past Merchants 12-5 on Sunday at Groton. Sieber singled in the sixth scoring two, hit a solo home run to right field in the fifth scoring one, and doubled in the seventh scoring one.

Groton Locke Electric rallied for the victory despite trailing 5-1 in the fourth.

A single by Ben Althoff put Groton Locke Electric on the board in the bottom of the first.

Ethan Beyers walked, which helped Merchants tie the game at one in the top of the third.

Merchants took the lead in the top of the fourth. Ashton Remily hit a grand slam to right field, to give Merchants the leg up, 5-1.

Groton Locke Electric tied the game in the bottom of the fourth thanks to a wild pitch, a triple by Korbin Kucker, and a single by Brevin Fliehs.

A solo home run to right field by Sieber gave Groton Locke Electric the lead, 6-5, in the bottom of the fifth.

Groton Locke Electric scored five runs on five hits in the bottom of the sixth inning. Sieber singled, scoring two runs, Althoff doubled, scoring two runs, and Alex Morris singled, scoring one run.

Morris earned the win for Groton Locke Electric. The reliever gave up one hit and zero runs over five innings, striking out six and walking one. Remily took the loss for Merchants. The pitcher went five innings, giving up six runs (one earned) on eight hits, striking out two and walking two. Ryan Groeblichhoff started the game for Groton Locke Electric. The starter gave up five hits and five runs over four innings, striking out nine and walking six.

Groton Locke Electric accumulated 14 hits in the game. Bradin Althoff, Fliehs, and Althoff each collected multiple hits for Groton Locke Electric. Groton Locke Electric turned one double play in the game.

Remily provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led Merchants with four runs batted in. The pitcher went 2-for-3 on the day. Merchants had patience at the plate, piling up seven walks for the game. Beyers and Dawson Ward led the team with two free passes each.

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## Merchants 5 - 12 Groton Locke Electric

📍 Home 📅 Sunday June 14, 2026

|      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | R  | H  | E |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|
| MRCH | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5  | 6  | 2 |
| GRTN | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 0 | X | 12 | 14 | 1 |

### BATTING

| Merchants            | AB        | R        | H        | RBI      | BB       | SO        |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| D Fischba... #1 (SS) | 3         | 2        | 1        | 0        | 1        | 1         |
| B Kirsch #14 (CF)    | 4         | 1        | 1        | 0        | 1        | 1         |
| A Remily #22 (P)     | 3         | 1        | 2        | 4        | 1        | 0         |
| G Heyne #11 (2B)     | 2         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 2         |
| E Beyers #34 (3B)    | 2         | 0        | 0        | 1        | 2        | 0         |
| M Sangster #7 (LF)   | 4         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 3         |
| M Waltn... #29 (1B)  | 4         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 2         |
| D Ward #20 (RF)      | 2         | 1        | 1        | 0        | 2        | 0         |
| C Bahr #6 (C)        | 4         | 0        | 1        | 0        | 0        | 2         |
| A Cabrera #9         | 4         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 4         |
| <b>Totals</b>        | <b>32</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>6</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>15</b> |

**3B:** A Remily, **HR:** A Remily, **TB:** D Fischbach, D Ward, C Bahr, B Kirsch, A Remily 7, **HBP:** D Fischbach, G Heyne 2, **SB:** D Fischbach, **LOB:** 9

| Groton Locke El...  | AB        | R         | H         | RBI       | BB       | SO       |
|---------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| B Fliehs #1 (CF)    | 5         | 2         | 2         | 1         | 0        | 1        |
| R Groebli... #0 (P) | 3         | 1         | 1         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| C Cama... #10 (C)   | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| C Simon Legion      | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 1        |
| C Larson #8 (C)     | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| T Sieber #24 (3B)   | 5         | 2         | 4         | 4         | 0        | 0        |
| B Althoff #27 (RF)  | 5         | 2         | 2         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| B Althoff #4 (SS)   | 5         | 2         | 2         | 3         | 0        | 0        |
| A Morris #13 (C)    | 3         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 2        | 0        |
| B Hansen #11 (1B)   | 3         | 0         | 1         | 0         | 1        | 1        |
| D Frey #6 (LF)      | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| N Morris #45 (2B)   | 3         | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| J Zimme... #3 (2B)  | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        |
| K Kucker #9 (LF)    | 4         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 0        | 1        |
| <b>Totals</b>       | <b>39</b> | <b>12</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>11</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>4</b> |

**2B:** B Althoff, B Fliehs, T Sieber, **3B:** K Kucker, **HR:** T Sieber, **TB:** R Groeblichhoff, B Althoff 3, B Fliehs 3, A Morris, B Hansen, K Kucker 3, B Althoff 2, T Sieber 8, **HBP:** D Frey, N Morris, **LOB:** 8

## EARTHTALK

### Are Agrivoltaics The Future Of Sustainable Agriculture? by Marium Zahra

Dear EarthTalk: What are agrivoltaics, and why are environmental advocates so bullish on it?  
-- Pat Billings, Butte, MT

Agriculture requires large amounts of resources, especially water and energy. Almost a third of global greenhouse gases are linked to agriculture. As world population grows, the demand for food and agricultural production only increases. That's where agrivoltaics come in, utilizing land for both solar installation and agricultural production, fostering a symbiotic bond between agriculture and energy.

Agrivoltaics allows for more efficient land use while also protecting agricultural yields. Solar panels protect plants from intense weather conditions and prevent them from exceeding their light saturation point, while plants help keep solar panels cool. The protection of plants also protects economies that rely on agriculture. At the same time, solar energy can power essential agricultural needs like equipment. The excess energy produced in agrivoltaics is stored in battery banks or transmitted to the grid for other users.

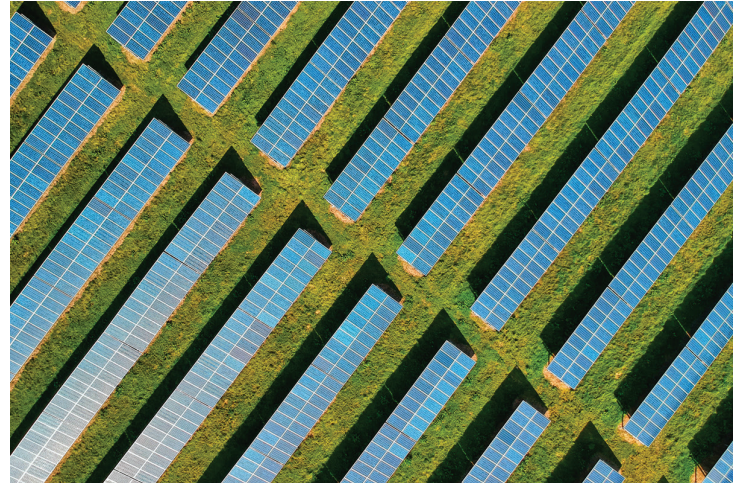
Agrivoltaics represents the epitome of sustainable agriculture and climate resilience because of its ability to address various concerns. It also provides a renewable energy system that directly limits greenhouse gases by reducing reliance on fossil fuels, thus mitigating the carbon footprint involved in agriculture. Agrivoltaics also promotes water conservation by ensuring that plants are not oversaturated with sunlight.

Chad Higgins, an environmental engineer at Oregon State University, told Reuters in 2023 that agrivoltaics nullifies the choice between energy and farm production. "The solar versus ag debate is a non-starter... They're [solar panels] like any other electronic device, they become more efficient as they become cooler, so it can be a truly symbiotic relationship."

Challenges still exist, especially cost. The high start-up expenses and the difficulty in having farmworkers adapt to new systems are obstacles that reinforce the importance of realism. Still, the many advantages of agrivoltaics are a reason for optimism. According to Colorado State University, utilizing agrivoltaics for land systems can potentially increase farm productivity from 35 to 73 percent. Through prioritizing sustainability and energy efficiency, agrivoltaics embody a win-win situation.

Agrivoltaics is only becoming more popular. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, solar energy could jump from providing 4 percent of the U.S. electrical supply to 40 percent by 2035. Moreover, policy across the United States from Colorado to New York is working to increase awareness, research, and usage of agrivoltaics systems, amplifying it as the future of sustainable agriculture.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: [question@earthtalk.org](mailto:question@earthtalk.org).



**Agrivoltaics may just be the future of sustainable agriculture.** Credit: Pexels.com.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

**Silos are disappearing from the landscape. One woman wants to hunt them down before they do.**

**FOR 150 YEARS, SILOS HAVE BEEN A FIXTURE OF THE CORN BELT, BUT EFFORTS TO PRESERVE THEM HAVE BEEN HAPHAZARD.**

**BY: JESS SAVAGE**

McHENRY COUNTY, Ill. — Silos — tower-like structures on farms that hold fermented feed for livestock — have dotted the Midwestern landscape for 150 years. But they're threatened by development and old age. One "silo hunter" in northern Illinois has been tracking down silos her grandfather built before they disappear.

Marianne May drove around the backroads of McHenry County on a recent afternoon, scanning for those tall, round structures with a shallow point at the top that's characteristic of her grandfather's silos. Some of them have a little diamond shape on the very top — his signature.

She's a self-proclaimed silo hunter, and she comes back to her hometown throughout the year to find ever more silos that her grandfather, Frank May, built on some of the oldest farms in the Midwest.

"I grew up in Richmond, and I always knew where a lot of my grandpa's silos were," she said. "I just sort of had them in my head. I never really thought that I would do anything about it. They just were always there, part of the landscape."

Silos probably fade into the background for most people who live in the Corn Belt. Though they often serve as landmarks, people's connection to them has tended to be utilitarian. Occasionally, silos have been saved by being converted into housing or public space, but many others have been destroyed.

But their legacy is rooted in Illinois. Historians believe the first one in the Midwest was built in Spring Grove, a village not far from here. Bill Kemp, historian with the McLean County Museum of History, said



**Marianne May poses at one of Frank May's silos in Johnsburg, Ill. on April 25, 2026. This one is particularly special to Marianne; her grandfather constructed it as an adult on the homestead he grew up on. Across the street, a matching silo stands besides Marianne May's grandmother's childhood home. Her grandparents were neighbors as kids.** (Jess Savage/ Northern Public Radio)

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silos transformed agriculture in the Midwest.

"Silos and all of these magnificent, very utilitarian buildings," Kemp said, "really speak to this rich, dynamic, very diverse agriculture that was practiced up until World War II — or the decade after World War II — when industrialization and commercialization and singular, two-crop farming came into play."

Farmers used to have to rely on dried hay to feed their animals over the winter, but it was bulky and it didn't last long. But silos are airtight containers that farmers could pack tightly with corn, allow it to ferment, and then store it for years. They used to be made of wood, but when people like Frank May started using concrete in the early 1900s, farmers could grow their livestock herds even larger.

Kemp said initially, farmers were skeptical of this new invention.

"Once you would have a farmer in a particular township or in a rural neighborhood construct a silo and find how useful it was," he said, "that would be quickly adapted by his or her neighbors."

It's an essential structure.

"We tend to forget about the built environment of the Corn Belt," he said. "And all these wonderful stories — the buildings and the structures in the countryside that people drive past all the time but never really think about — what do they say about the past?"

Marianne May said silo hunting can be a thankless task. She's been doing this for six years and has identified almost 200 of her grandfather's silos. She said there may be at least that many more.

"Almost every place I go, there's something," she said. "There's some connection, whether it's somebody in my family or extended family, or maybe they worked with Frank. There's something fun to be discovered."

So much of the work is investigation and guesswork. But she can speculate what it was like for her grandparents to grow up as neighbors, just like she wonders why the silos are clustered in groups, or why he used one shape over another.

She found a silo at Frank May's childhood home, as well as a matching silo at the farmhouse across the street. That's where Marianne's grandmother grew up.

"I think it's important that these silos are identified," she said. "The locations where they are and where they were, because each time I come home, there are some gone that get pushed over for development or just fall over."

It's a reminder that May's project is never ending, and that it's a gift to learn more about the family history of the area's farming community — and the mark farming made on the Midwestern landscape.

*This story is a product of the Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk, an independent reporting network based at the University of Missouri in partnership with Report for America, with major funding from the Walton Family Foundation.*

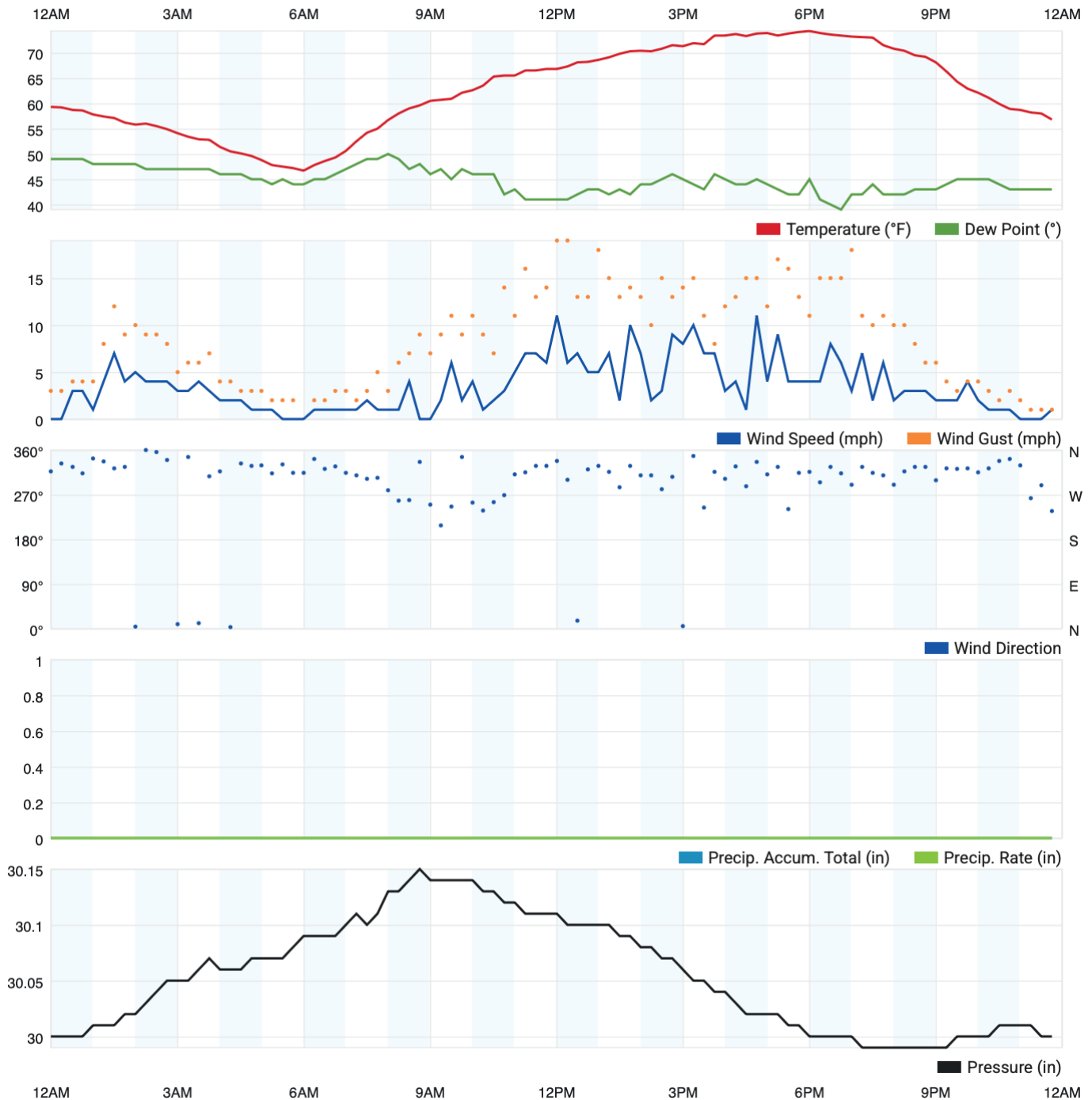
*Jess is the environmental reporter at Northern Public Radio based in DeKalb, Illinois. They are a Report for America corps member covering agriculture and the environment throughout the Mississippi River Basin. They also regularly contribute food and farm stories to Harvest Public Media.*

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

June 14, 2026



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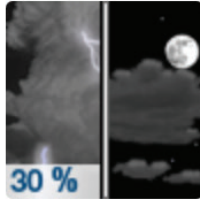
Today



**High: 78 °F**

Mostly Cloudy  
then Chance  
T-storms and  
Breezy

Tonight



**Low: 46 °F**

Chance  
T-storms then  
Partly Cloudy

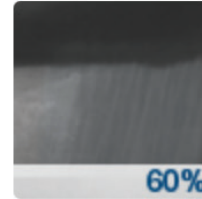
Tuesday



**High: 77 °F**

Increasing  
Clouds

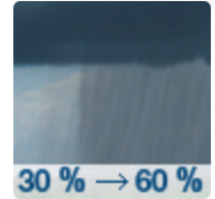
Tuesday Night



**Low: 53 °F**

Showers  
Likely

Wednesday



**High: 72 °F**

Chance  
Showers and  
Breezy then  
Showers  
Likely and  
Windy



Showers and  
thunderstorms  
return. No severe  
storms expected.

## Tuesday

Increasing clouds. Rain and  
thunderstorms move in Tuesday  
evening.

Highs: 72-82°F



West to northwest  
winds gusting 30-40  
mph today.

## Today

30-50% of scattered showers and  
storms this afternoon and  
evening. Small hail will be a  
concern in stronger storms.

Highs: 74-80°F

## Wednesday

Showers and thunderstorms  
mainly north of Hwy 14. Northwest  
winds gusting 40 to 50 mph.

Highs: 69-80°F

June 15, 2026 4:28 AM

Unsettled weather returns for the first half of the work week. While no severe weather is expected at this time, showers and thunderstorms are expected each day through Wednesday. Stronger storms may contain hail or strong winds. Northwest winds will be gusty today and Wednesday.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 75 °F at 6:03 PM**

**Low Temp: 46 °F at 6:03 AM**

**Wind: 26 mph at 11:20 AM**

**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 105 in 1933

Record Low: 36 in 1968

Average High: 80

Average Low: 55

Average Precip in June.: 1.77

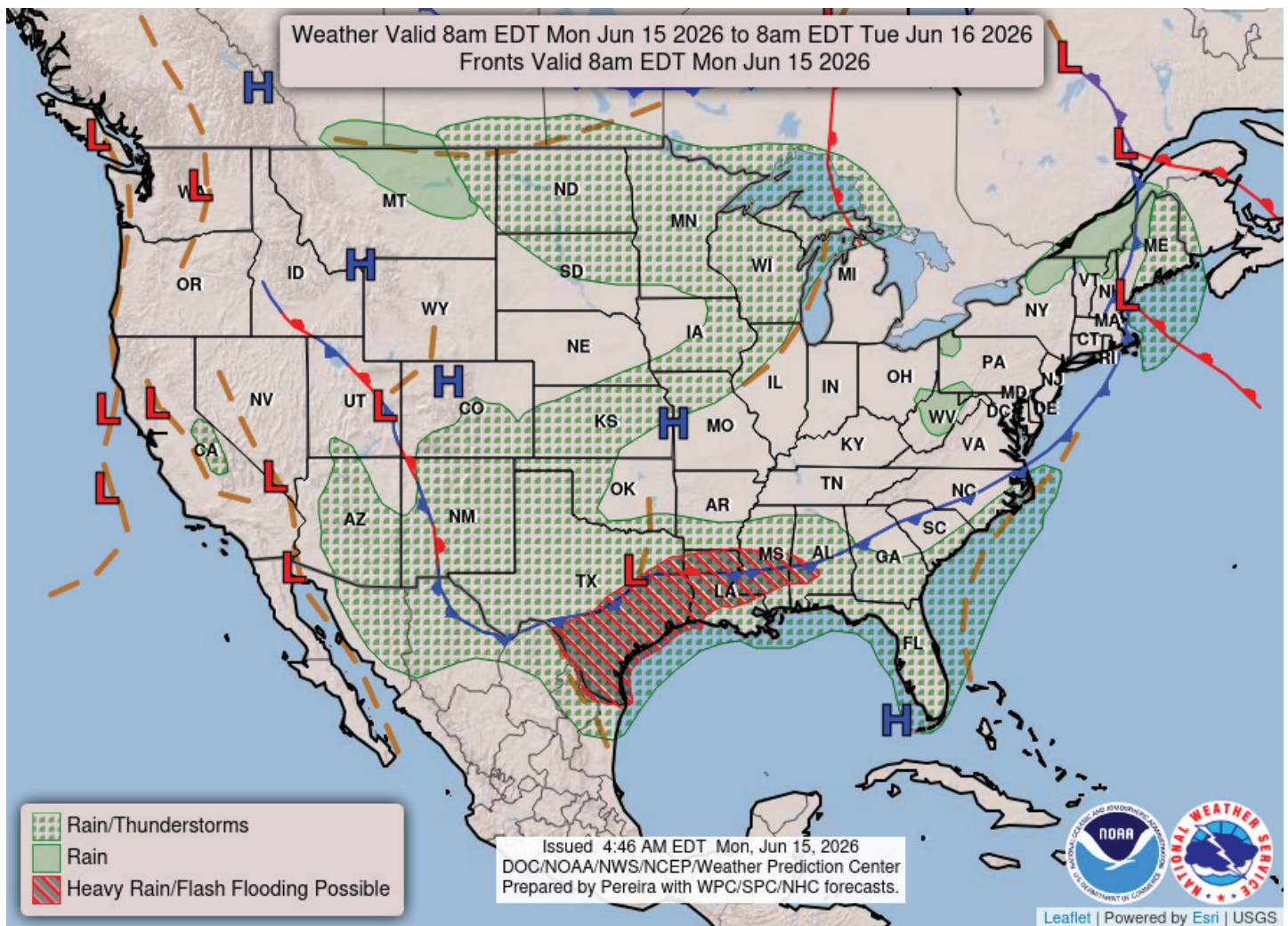
Precip to date in June.: 1.11

Average Precip to date: 9.02

Precip Year to Date: 7.47

Sunset Tonight: 9:22 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43 am



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## Today in Weather History

June 15th, 1935: An estimated F3 tornado moved east from 17 miles southwest of Onida. There was near F4 damage to one farm about 9 miles SSW of Onida. The storm destroyed a house, injured five people, and killed an estimated 60 cattle. At another farm, the home shifted over the storm cellar, trapping a family.

June 15th, 1977: Thunderstorms with heavy rain and some hail began on the 15th and continued into the 16th. At Watertown, almost 6.9 inches of rain fell during these two days. In Deuel County, Gary received 6 inches, Altamont 5.5, Brandt 4.5, and Goodwin 3.70 inches in Clear Lake. Other amounts include 4.85 inches at 3NE of Raymond, 4.57 inches in Clark, 4.21 at 1NE of Bryant, and 3.97 inches in Castlewood.

June 15th, 1978: Numerous severe thunderstorms developed over central South Dakota. Tornadoes, funnel clouds, hail up to baseball size, and wind gusts near 80 mph caused widespread destruction. The estimated loss was between 20 and 25 million dollars. The Governor declared some counties disaster areas. Six trailers were destroyed, and a home was unroofed northwest of Aberdeen. The storms injured 15 people.

June 15th, 1978: Torrential rains began during the evening and continued into the morning of the 16th. Heavy rains were estimated to have been between 5 and 6 inches, causing flash flooding south of Watertown. Some rainfall amounts include 2.43 inches in Watertown, 2.07 inches in Castlewood, and 2.05 inches in Clear Lake. Hail caused severe crop damage in Hughes County.

1662 — A fast was held at Salem MA with prayers for rain, and the Lord gave a speedy answer. (David Ludlum)

1879 — McKinney ND received 7.7 inches of rain in 24 hours, a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1896 — The temperature at Fort Mojave, CA, soared to 127 degrees, the hottest reading of record for June for the U.S. The low that day was 97 degrees. Morning lows of 100 degrees were reported on the 12th, 14th and 16th of the month. (The Weather Channel)

1953 — Dust devils are usually rather benign weather phenomena, however, two boys were injured by one near Prescott AZ. One of the boys suffered a black eye, and the other boy had two vertebrae fractured by wind-blown debris. (The Weather Channel)

1957 — East Saint Louis was deluged with 16.54 inches of rain in 24 hours, a record for the state of Illinois. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in the northwestern U.S. A tornado damaged five homes and destroyed a barn near Salmon ID. It lifted a metal shed 100 feet into the air, and deposited it 100 yards away. Hail an inch and a half in diameter caused ten million dollars damage to automobiles at Nampa ID. (The National Weather Channel) (Storm Data)

1988 — Severe thunderstorms in the Central High Plains Region spawned five tornadoes around Denver, CO, in just one hour. A strong (F-3) tornado in southern Denver injured seven persons and caused ten million dollars damage. Twenty-six cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 97 degrees at Portland ME was a record for June. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather over the Southern and Middle Atlantic Coast States. The thunderstorms spawned eight tornadoes, including strong (F-3) tornadoes which injured three persons at Mountville PA and four persons at Columbia, PA. There were 111 reports of large hail and damaging winds, including wind gusts to 80 mph at Norfolk, VA, and Hogback Mountain, SC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Daily Devotion

## Understanding the Christian Life

**Do you understand what it means to be saved?**

Galatians 1:11-17: 11 For I would have you know, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For you have heard of my former manner of life in Judaism, how I used to persecute the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it;

14 and I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries among my countrymen, being more extremely zealous for my ancestral traditions.

15 But when God, who had set me apart even from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, was pleased

16 to reveal His Son in me so that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with flesh and blood,

17 nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus.

A change in both lifestyle and understanding should result from salvation (Romans 12:2). Shortly after encountering Jesus on the road to Damascus, Paul pulled away to Arabia for a time. Before he could start his ministry, he needed to learn from the Lord. Similarly, new believers coming into faith need to understand what salvation really means. Let's look at some terms that help explain what is meant by "being saved":

Born again (John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17). Rebirth is a starting over. We become new creations in Christ, with new spiritual life and identity.

Converted (1 Thessalonians 1:9). Converting something means changing it, like money that's exchanged from one currency to another. The Christian life involves many different changes.

Receiving Christ (John 1:12). We often think of salvation as something God gives us, but it is more than that. When someone trusts in Christ, that person welcomes the Lord to live within his or her being.

Think about how you thought and lived before you knew the Savior, as compared with now. In what ways do you see genuine change? Ask God to reveal areas in your life where Christ could become more evident.

*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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Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

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## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.14.26

3 6 16 18 48 1

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 36 Mins 59  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.12.26

9 17 24 39 51 3

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$430,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 21  
Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.13.26

6 13 31 35 48 7

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$29,610,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 36 Mins 59  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.13.26

4 10 18 28 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$134,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 51  
Mins 59 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.13.26

24 55 56 57 67 15

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 20 Mins 59  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
06.13.26

3 13 44 50 53 2

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$269,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 20 Mins 59  
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### Trump heads to G7 summit with wind at his back after announcing agreement aimed at ending Iran war

By SYLVIE CORBET, AAMER MADHANI and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

EVIAN-LES-BAINS, France (AP) — President Donald Trump is headed to the French Alps on Monday to meet with fellow world leaders at the Group of Seven summit after announcing an agreement that he says will bring an end to the U.S. war with Iran.

Trump and Iranian officials had been saying for days they were making progress toward reaching a deal, but even on Sunday, things appeared to be on shaky ground after a new round of strikes between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.

With the agreement, Trump is due to arrive in Evian-les-Bains on Monday afternoon with some wind at his back for talks with G7 leaders, including some who have been sharply critical of his managing of the roughly 15-week conflict that has led to a surge in global energy prices.

The conflict, which polls show American voters largely disapproved of, had made some Republicans nervous about the political impacts it could have on the November midterm election.

"Ships of the World, start your engines," Trump said in a social media post celebrating the deal that he said would lead to the U.S. ending its blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of the world's crude had flowed before the conflict. "Let the oil flow!"

Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Kazem Gharibabadi, however, said the Iranian closure of the strait would continue until the agreement is officially signed.

Neither the White House nor Iran published the final agreement or revealed many details. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, whose country served as a mediator in the negotiations, said there would be "pre-implementation discussions" this week to lay the ground for 60 days of technical talks on Iran's nuclear program.

The deal could change the G7 dynamic

Sealing an agreement before jetting off to the summit could certainly change the dynamic of the gathering for Trump. He has had friction with French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni over failing to consult them before the decision to go to war.

Meanwhile, Trump has pushed back on the four European leaders — all members of the NATO military alliance — for their lack of support for the U.S. in the conflict.

Trump is expected to discuss with leaders the demining of the Strait of Hormuz, according to the White House. Britain and France have expressed interest in assisting with the demining once the conflict is paused. Fear of potential mines is among the reasons that tanker traffic has come to a halt during the war, and quickly clearing them will be crucial to regaining the confidence of commercial vessels.

Macron, this year's summit host, invited the leaders of three nations that aren't part of the G7 — Egypt, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — to take part in a session on the Middle East on Tuesday where Iran is expected to be a central focus.

"The aim will be to assess the implications of this agreement, support for Lebanon, the long-term reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and, of course, reaching a deal on Iran's nuclear and ballistic (missile) programs," Macron said in a video posted on social media on Sunday evening.

The leaders of the U.K., France, Germany and Italy also issued a joint statement welcoming the agreement as a "moment of opportunity to restore regional stability and stabilize the global economy."

"It is now vital that the detailed negotiations are concluded and this agreement is implemented rapidly and comprehensively," the leaders' statement added.

In a separate development, Trump ahead of departing for the summit said in an interview with the New York Post he has warned Macron the US will "have no choice" but to slap 100% tariffs on French wines

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unless Paris eliminates its digital tax on American tech companies, renewing a long-running threat from the Republican that dates to his first administration.

Wines and spirits exported to the U.S. from the European Union currently face a 15% tariff.

Trump faces questions about financial incentives for Tehran

Trump had fiercely criticized former President Barack Obama for the 2015 nuclear agreement that Trump argued failed to stop Tehran from advancing toward a weapon and funneled billions into the Islamic Republic's coffers.

In 2018, Trump exited the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the European Union were also signatories to the pact.

Trump in an interview on Sunday with The New York Times pushed back on comparisons to the Obama-era nuclear deal. "We negotiated from strength," Trump said. "He was basically paying them off."

But Trump hasn't detailed how his agreement will address some key issues about Iran's nuclear program, including who will be in charge of verifying that Iran is complying with the agreement and who will destroy or remove 972 pounds (441 kilograms) of highly enriched uranium believed to be buried under nuclear sites that were badly damaged by U.S. strikes last summer.

The deal is also expected to include some sanctions relief and economic incentives for Tehran as it meets certain benchmarks aimed at assuaging White House concerns, senior administration officials said ahead of the two sides reaching an agreement.

Some Democrats and hawkish critics say Trump has failed to explain how the financial relief in his agreement will differ from what Obama did in the 2015 nuclear deal.

"For all his critique of JCPOA, we had international observers, we actually had an alliance there that included the Europeans, and Russia and China were all signatories," Sen. Mark Warner, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "Now it is America going alone or going with Israel only, and that does not make us safer."

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham, a close ally of Trump and an Iran hawk, expressed skepticism, saying that Congress will need to review and vote on any nuclear deal with Iran, and said he expects Vice President JD Vance — "the architect of the deal" — to present it.

"I am somewhat concerned that Iran's view of the agreement seems different than what the American negotiating team is claiming," Graham said on social media.

Trump makes calls to Putin, Zelenskyy ahead of G7

Macron also invited Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for a working session with G7 leaders on Tuesday to discuss the Russia-Ukraine war.

At the moment, Zelenskyy is not scheduled to hold one-on-one talks with Trump while they're both in France, but Trump on Sunday held separate phone calls with Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin's call with Trump lasted just under an hour, according to Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov, who briefed reporters afterward.

On Ukraine, Ushakov said Trump emphasized the need to end hostilities and stated his readiness to influence European allies and Kyiv toward that goal, including at the G7.

According to Ushakov, Trump also said that recent strikes on civilian targets in Russia complicate a settlement. The White House did not comment on the call.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner are expected to travel to Russia soon, Ushakov said.

Zelenskyy said in a statement posted on Telegram that he told Trump about how Ukraine's position along the eastern front line has improved and strengthened.

"We agreed to discuss more during our meeting at the G7 summit," he said.

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## Tentative deal on ending the Iran war sends stocks soaring while oil prices fall

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — World share prices soared Monday after a tentative deal was announced on ending the Iran war and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, while oil prices fell more than \$4 a barrel.

The future for the S&P 500 was up 1.2% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.9%, auguring likely early gains for Wall Street.

In early European trading, Germany's DAX advanced 1.3% to 24,942.12, while the CAC 40 in Paris added 1.1% to 8,444.00.

Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.2% to 10,496.56.

After repeated false starts, investors were betting that this time, the war might end. U.S. President Donald Trump confirmed the initial agreement and authorized an end to the U.S. naval blockade of Iranian ports.

Iran confirmed it but signaled that implementation would not start until a signing that Pakistan said would be held Friday in Switzerland. Broader negotiations on issues like Iran's nuclear program are expected to continue over the next 60 days.

In early trading Monday, the price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, fell \$4.37 to \$82.96 per barrel. U.S. benchmark crude lost \$4.53 to \$80.35 per barrel.

It may take months for oil prices to stabilize after the disruptions from the war caused them to surge, pushing costs up for gasoline and many other products. Energy experts said shipping and insurance companies will want to be confident the pact will hold, ensuring that oil and gas supplies will flow freely enough for the world's needs to be met.

"The reopening of Hormuz is a relief valve, not a full peace dividend. The market can remove some crude panic, but it still has to price the gap between a headline, a signature, and a regime that actually complies," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a report.

Still, the news was a huge relief for markets that have been roiled since the conflict began in late February.

Stocks rallied in Asia, where Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gained 5% to 69,317.50 as the benchmark logged another record high.

Buying was heaviest for technology shares, especially those related to artificial intelligence. The boom in AI has been driving gains in Japan, where the benchmark has gained more than 80% in the last year.

"This is great news," said Takashi Hiroki, chief strategist at Monex. "Buying by foreign investors is leading the market with expectations of easing tensions around the situation in the Middle East. Then the decline in New York crude oil futures is supporting this positive market."

The Kospi in Seoul surged 5.2% to 8,545.98.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng gained 0.5% to 24,842.67, while the Shanghai Composite index was up 1.6% to 4,096.47.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 advanced 1.3% to 8,922.90. Taiwan's Taiex was up 2.8%, and the Sensex in India rose 1.2%.

On Friday, U.S. stocks advanced as Musk's SpaceX soared in its highly anticipated debut on Wall Street.

The strong start suggested plenty of demand still exists among investors for AI after SpaceX stock leaped 19.2% in its first day of trading. That gave Elon Musk's rocket company a total value of \$2.1 trillion, making it bigger than Exxon Mobil, Bank of America and Coca-Cola combined. In addition to building rockets, SpaceX also owns the artificial intelligence company xAI.

The S&P 500 added 0.5% to close out its 10th winning week in the last 11. The Dow industrials climbed 353 points, or 0.7%, and the Nasdaq composite gained 0.3%.

This week will bring interest rate decisions from the Federal Reserve and Bank of England, on Thursday. On Tuesday, the Bank of Japan is due to announce its monetary policy updates. It is widely expected to raise its benchmark interest rate to 1% from the current 0.75%.

That would be the highest rate in more than 30 years.

In other dealings early Monday, the dollar slipped to 160.10 Japanese yen from 160.12 yen late Friday. The euro climbed to \$1.1611 from \$1.1578.

## Iran and US reach a tentative deal to end war as Israel rules out withdrawing from seized land

By JON GAMBRELL and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States and Iran reached an initial agreement early Monday that would extend their shaky ceasefire and lead to the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, but challenges immediately loomed, including Israel insisting it would hold onto land seized in Lebanon as it battles Hezbollah.

Details of the deal, which would potentially allow desperately needed oil and natural gas to reach the global market through the critical waterway, were not immediately released. Iran signaled implementation would not start until the signing, which key mediator Pakistan said would take place Friday in Switzerland.

But the memorandum of understanding over the war already faced hurdles. Israel's continued hostilities with the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah in Lebanon, where Israel bombed Beirut's southern suburbs Sunday, nearly derailed the negotiations. Israel joined the U.S. in launching the war on Feb. 28.

Israel says it won't withdraw from Lebanon

In the first official Israeli comments after the announcement of the deal, Defense Minister Israel Katz said Israel won't withdraw from land seized in Lebanon as the interim deal is pending. Katz said Israel plans to stay "indefinitely" in lands it holds in Lebanon, as well as Syria and the Gaza Strip. Iran has tied the interim deal over the war to halting Israel's attacks on Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Katz also threatened that if Iran attacks Israel over Israeli strikes in Lebanon, Israel will strike Iran with "great force."

Over the past 2 1/2 years, Israel has taken control of areas in Gaza, Lebanon and Syria amounting to 1,000 square kilometers (386 square miles) of territory — an area that is slightly smaller than New York City.

Meanwhile, the deal between the U.S. and Iran gives just 60 days to resolve what to do about Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium and its atomic program. That took years to resolve in Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from that accord in his first term, setting the stage for the tensions that culminated in the war.

"Congratulations to all!" Trump wrote on social media as he celebrated his 80th birthday Sunday with a UFC cage match fight at the White House.

He added, "I hereby fully authorize the toll free opening of the Strait of Hormuz, and, simultaneously herewith, authorize the immediate removal of the United States Naval blockade," which was imposed in retaliation for Iran's grip on the crucial waterway.

He soon hedged, however, saying the strait wouldn't open until Friday's signing.

Iran's deputy foreign minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, confirmed the agreement on state television but said Iran would not start implementing it until it was signed Friday. He said the deal followed talks with Qatar, another mediator.

World leaders applaud the agreement

Leaders from China to Europe welcomed the announcement. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has roiled international markets and sent prices of fuel and other essential goods, including food, spiraling.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said that China "hopes the U.S. and Iran will sign the initial memorandum of understanding as scheduled." Beijing hopes that safe and free passage through the Strait of Hormuz will be restored as soon as possible, he added.

France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot welcomed the agreement "that should bring an end to hostilities on all fronts, including in Lebanon." He said that "all parties to the conflict must respect this agreement."

Barrot said "for far too long" the war in Iran has driven prices of fuel and fertilizer painfully high. With the ceasefire, he said dozens of nations like France and the United Kingdom could send ships to protect freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

The European Union's top diplomat pledged support for further negotiations over outstanding issues like Iran's nuclear program.

"Fingers crossed that they will be also initialized on Friday, because everybody needs the Strait of Hormuz

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to be open and actually this war to stop," Kaja Kallas, foreign policy chief of the 27-nation EU, said ahead of a gathering of foreign ministers in Luxembourg on Monday.

But some of the ministers, like Luxembourg's Xavier Bettel, expressed skepticism. "It's a long time till Friday," he said.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer also welcomed the breakthrough and said it was vital that all parties in the region seize the opportunity to restore freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

"We will now work closely with our partners to support this agreement and to ensure that it turns into a durable, lasting peace," he said.

Pakistan, a key mediator, announced the deal

Pakistan first announced the deal, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif saying "both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon." He added that mediators this week will facilitate meetings to "lay the foundation for the technical talks."

Broader negotiations on outstanding issues like Iran's nuclear program would continue over the next 60 days, two senior Pakistani officials said earlier Sunday, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. If the sides fail to reach a resolution within that time, the timeline could be extended.

Iranian state television cited the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council as saying the war on all fronts "will end immediately and permanently beginning tonight" — and that the U.S. blockade "will be terminated immediately and in full."

Qatari mediators later left Tehran following 17 hours of negotiations, said an official briefed on the developments who spoke on condition of anonymity due to sensitivity of the talks. Separate preparatory meetings with each side will take place in Doha this week, the official said.

It was not clear who from Iran would sign the deal on Friday. U.S. Vice President JD Vance told Fox News the White House was still figuring out who would attend: "I certainly plan to be there, but it's possible the president himself could be there."

But concern among Republicans in the U.S. already could be seen. They included U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who described Vance as "the architect of the deal."

"I am somewhat concerned that Iran's view of the agreement seems different than what the American negotiating team is claiming," Graham wrote online.

## **Starmer says Britain will ban under-16s from using a range of social media apps**

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain will ban under-16s from using a range of social media apps, Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday, calling it "a big moment for our country."

Starmer told a news conference that he will fight back if technology companies resist the move, intended to protect children from harmful content and excessive screen time. He said he is "not prepared to compromise on the safety and happiness of our children."

The move makes the U.K. part of growing global movement to tighten online safety for children. Australia, Canada, Brazil and Indonesia have introduced legislation or announced age-based restrictions or requirements for children's access to social media. France, Spain, Denmark, Thailand and South Korea are among others studying or developing similar approaches.

Starmer said the U.K. measures "possibly go a bit further" than Australia's ban, which bars under-16s from holding social media accounts and allows for multimillion-dollar fines for tech firms if they don't remove them.

The U.K. said its ban will apply to platforms including Snapchat, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and X, but not messaging services like WhatsApp and Signal.

Starmer said the government will also act to prevent strangers from contacting children on gaming and

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streaming platforms. He said the ban will take effect early next year.

Starmer, elected just under two years ago is under pressure to step down from members of his own party over what they see as poor leadership and could face a leadership challenge in the coming days or weeks. He is seeking to bring in consequential measures that can serve as a legacy.

The prime minister, who has two teenage children, said success for the ban would mean "a massive drop off of children on social media" and "a cultural change, a sense that actually you can grow up differently."

Starmer said the government is "confident that this ban can be effective," despite skepticism from some children's advocates.

The decision follows a public comment period in which the government got 116,000 responses from parents, the tech industry and children. The number of responses was second only to one seeking input about same-sex marriage in 2012.

The vast majority of respondents — more than 90% — wanted an under-16 ban, the government said.

Esther Ghey, whose 16-year-old daughter Brianna was killed in 2023 by two teenagers who had accessed harmful content online, said the ban would "potentially save so many children's lives," but had to be accompanied by other measures.

She told the BBC that she is happy "that the government are now investing in after-school clubs, because we can't just take things away from children."

The ban could further inflame tensions with the U.S., which has warned that regulations should be narrow and not violate free speech protections, according to a statement from the U.S. Embassy in London. It said it was also concerned that regulations would place greater burdens on American technology companies.

Starmer said he expected to discuss the issue with President Donald Trump and other world leaders at a Group of Seven summit in France that starts Monday.

"I honestly think that across world leaders, there has always been a recognition that leaders have to take steps to protect children," he said. "I don't think that's controversial. There will always be arguments as to exactly what the limits of that are and what rules should be in place, but I don't see that as a problem."

Jon Crowcroft, a communications systems professor at University of Cambridge, said people supporting social bans are well-meaning but probably misguided, and changes could prevent children from accessing sites they need.

"There is a real risk this will drive some users to worse sites and policing devices is close to impossible technically," Crowcroft said. "Policing platforms is far easier, if only regulators would bother."

## Russian drone and missile barrage on Ukraine's biggest cities kill at least 10 people

By HANNA ARHIROVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russian drone and missile attacks on Ukraine overnight killed at least 10 civilians and wounded dozens more, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other officials said Monday.

The attacks on the capital, Kyiv, and the second-largest city, Kharkiv, came after Zelenskyy and Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke separately by phone with U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday. The exchange suggests Washington hasn't given up on its diplomatic efforts to stop the fighting that followed Moscow's all-out invasion of its neighbor in February 2022.

The war in Ukraine is also set to feature in talks on Tuesday between G7 leaders at a summit in France. Zelenskyy and Trump are due to attend the gathering, as Ukraine's president pushes to keep the war on leaders' minds while the Iran war diverts international attention from Ukraine's plight.

"This is how Russia shows the world its intention to continue the war," Zelenskyy said in a post on X referring to the overnight attack, which also damaged a historic religious site in Kyiv.

"It is very important that there be a response from the G7 countries ... and that this response be decisive and substantive: more pressure on the aggressor and more support for Ukraine's air defense, especially anti-ballistic capabilities," the Ukrainian leader said.

Children are among the injured in Kyiv

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The overnight assault by Russia involved hundreds of drones and dozens of missiles.

The barrage killed five people in Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said. At least 30 people were injured, including two children aged 5 and 6, according to Tymur Tkachenko, head of the city's Military Administration.

A series of powerful explosions were heard across Kyiv, with a wave of ballistic missiles followed by Shahed drones as many people sought shelter underground and officials urged residents to take cover. Clouds of black smoke drifted over the city.

Five strikes hit civilian sites in the city's Shevchenkivskyi district in less than 30 minutes, Tkachenko said, including a 25-story apartment building, while a market and a grocery store caught fire. In the Obolonskyi district, a nine-story residential building took a direct hit.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that the strikes targeted defense and industrial facilities in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Dnipro, including enterprises and workshops producing components for long-range drones and cruise missiles. It said that a workshop producing medium- and long-range drones located on the premises of the Dovzhenko film studios in Kyiv was among the targets hit.

Russia also claimed to have hit Kyiv's Radar plant, which it said makes drone components, and the Mayak plant that it said makes Ukraine's Flamingo long-range cruise missiles. Military conscription offices in Kyiv were also struck, it said.

Authorities in the northeastern city of Kharkiv said Russian forces used a "double tap" tactic, launching four additional drone strikes after emergency crews arrived at the scene of an earlier attack.

Four emergency service workers and an employee of the Kharkiv City Council's emergency department were killed, while six rescuers and three civilians were injured, local officials said.

**Religious site damaged in attack**

In Kyiv, the bombardment damaged the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, an 11th century monastic complex and a religious landmark.

The roof of the complex's Dormition Cathedral caught fire during the attack, said Metropolitan Epiphanius, head of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. He condemned the strike as another Russian crime "against humanity, against history, against Christianity" and appealed for prayers to save the site.

The Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, also known as the Monastery of the Caves, is a sprawling complex of monasteries and churches, including some underground, built between the 11th and 19th centuries. Some of the churches at the UNESCO-listed World Heritage site are connected by a labyrinthine complex of caves spanning more than 600 meters (2,000 feet).

Zelenskyy called the attack Russia's "biggest crime yet against Christian culture" and reportedly visited the scene on Monday morning together with Prime Minister Yuliia Svyrydenko and Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko.

The cathedral, churches and other buildings overlook the right bank of the Dnieper River and have been a pilgrimage site for centuries.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said the attack was the "equivalent, for us French, of a bombing of Notre Dame," referring to the Paris cathedral.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the attack only strengthened the determination of Ukraine's allies to pursue a ceasefire and work toward peace.

"Just as nothing can justify the war of aggression that Russia has been waging against Ukraine for more than four years, nothing can justify this attack on our shared universal heritage," Macron wrote on social media.

Russia's Defense Ministry claimed without offering evidence that the complex was hit by one of Ukraine's U.S.-made Patriot air defense missiles, saying that it might have veered off course because its shelf life had expired.

**Russia fires more than 600 drones at Ukraine**

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched 70 missiles and 611 drones overnight, primarily targeting Kyiv, while also striking the cities of Dnipro and Kharkiv.

The military said air defenses intercepted or electronically suppressed 632 aerial targets, including 50

missiles and 582 drones.

Preliminary data showed 20 ballistic missiles and 27 attack drones hit 42 locations across the country, while debris from intercepted drones fell at 12 sites.

Russia's Defense Ministry said air defenses downed 123 Ukrainian drones overnight.

## Hurricanes use stifling defense to blank Golden Knights 3-0 in Game 6 and win the Stanley Cup

By MARK ANDERSON AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Carolina spent the first part of the Stanley Cup Final surviving, finding ways to overcome deficits and play a high-scoring game that didn't fit the Hurricanes' typical style.

But when it came down to doing what it takes to win the Cup, the Hurricanes' defense put its stamp on this series, shutting down the Vegas Golden Knights and not letting up.

The Hurricanes held Vegas to five total goals in Games 4 and 5 and used a suffocating defense in a 3-0 shutout Sunday night in Game 6 to win their first championship in 20 years.

"That's a lot of years," said Carolina center Jordan Staal, who received the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP. "It's amazing. This is something I've been going after ever since we got the first one. You want to win it again and again and again."

Brandon Bussi, whose entrance late in Game 3 helped turn around the series, had his first career playoff shutout in stopping 22 shots. Jackson Blake had a goal and assist, and Taylor Hall scored just 3:47 into the game to set the tone. Nikolaj Ehlers added an empty-netter.

"Your mind wanders the last couple of days and wonder what it may be like out here (on ice after winning) and it's better than I could have expected," Hall said.

The Golden Knights struggled badly to muster any kind of offense in Game 6 and went 18:37 between shots on goal in the second and third periods. Playing in their third Cup final, this is the first time they have been shut out.

This final game was what many observers expected the series to be like between the defensive-minded teams, but each side watched leads of two-plus goals disappear in the first three games.

Now, the Cup belongs to the Hurricanes, led by coach Rod Brind'Amour, who also captained Carolina to its 2006 title.

"It's just as awesome," Brind'Amour said. "But as a player, it was a little different. I worked and dreamt of winning the Cup my whole life, so that was like a piano came off my back. This time around, I wanted it for the group."

This was the first game of the series that Vegas goalie Carter Hart didn't allow four goals in a game. He finished with 20 saves.

The Hurricanes began to assume control of the series after falling behind by the score of 4-0 in Game 3. They came back force overtime, and though the Canes lost, they outplayed the Golden Knights from there on out.

Reflecting the do-or-die situation for the Golden Knights, they made several lineup changes, with Brett Howden replacing the injured William Karlsson at second-line center. Mitch Marner could have moved there, but remained at right wing.

Original Golden Knight Reilly Smith made his Cup final debut at third-line right wing, and Braeden Bowman made his playoff debut at fourth-line right wing. Kaedan Korczak replaced Dylan Coghlan on the third defensive pairing.

"This is tough to be on this side of it," Golden Knights defenseman Brayden McNabb said. "But on the other side, these chances don't come around very often. So it stings."

This title is a testament to Carolina's resilience as a franchise that kept coming close to winning the Eastern Conference, but couldn't quite get through until now.

Brind'Amour made sure the Hurricanes kept getting back up after losing in the conference final twice in the past three years and three times in their current eight-year playoff run. The talent was clearly there,

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but there was always a stumbling block.

Not anymore.

After dispatching Montreal in five games to make the final, the Hurricanes then faced perennial power Vegas and took care of business there, too. Now, Brind'Amour will get his name on the Cup for the second time.

So will 37-year-old Staal, who also won the title in 2009 with Pittsburgh. He planted himself in front of Hart and dared the Golden Knights to knock him out of the way. Staal scored in each of the first five Cup final games, the first time that has happened.

The Hurricanes got off to a fast start with a goal just 25 seconds into Game 1, only to lose 5-4 on a late goal from Tomas Hertl. And the Golden Knights were on the verge of taking complete control as minutes ticked down in Game 2 while holding a 2-0 lead and appearing as if they would take a two-game advantage back home.

Then, it all changed. Carolina showed a fight that not only brought the Hurricanes back into the series by rallying to win 4-3 in overtime on Seth Jarvis' one-timer, but would serve as their signature throughout the series.

That was especially true the following game when the Golden Knights took a 4-0 lead into the third period and the Canes seemed to have no answers. Brind'Amour even appeared to wave the white flag by removing goalie Frederik Andersen and replacing him with Bussi.

But the Hurricanes weren't simply trying to get to Game 4. They sent a message, going on a remarkable rally to force overtime. Though Carolina lost, it was inflection point, with Bussi backstopping a team that was only growing stronger. Carolina then went on to win the next two games and moved within a victory of the championship.

The Hurricanes got it done against the Golden Knights team that was on a heater after John Tortorella replaced Bruce Cassidy with eight games left in the regular season. Vegas then went from third in the Pacific Division to first, knocked off Utah and Anaheim in six games apiece in the playoffs and shockingly swept Presidents' Trophy-winning Colorado to win the West.

"I am very proud to be a part of this organization, very proud to lead this team, very proud to play with every single guy that steps into our locker room," Vegas captain Mark Stone said. "This feeling sucks. I never want to have it again."

## Trump celebrates 80th birthday with an Iran deal and UFC cage fights at the White House

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump marked his 80th birthday on Sunday by hailing an initial agreement to end the war in Iran and staging a once unfathomable cage-fighting show on the White House's storied South Lawn.

Trump had been touting the emerging deal for weeks and the continuing conflict threatened to overshadow the UFC mixed martial arts extravaganza, where combatants inside a wire-mesh Octagon tried to punch, kick, chop and pummel each other into submission.

Ahead of the event, however, the president said an agreement to end the conflict "is now complete." He declared that the U.S. will end its blockade of Iran, and that the Strait of Hormuz would reopen. Crucial details still need negotiating over the coming weeks, however.

Top administration officials and Republican leaders attended the fights, including Secretary of State Marco Rubio and House Speaker Mike Johnson. Polish President Karol Nawrocki was also at the White House.

It started with Trump and UFC chief Dana White walked together from the Oval Office to the Blue Room Balcony to survey the Octagon, standing for the national anthem as fighter jets thundered overhead.

Thousands of spectators crowded into the temporary arena under "The Claw," a spaceship-like metal arch fitted with lights, sound equipment and large screens. Thousands more watched on big screens from

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the nearby Ellipse.

"This event is a one of one event, incredible event," said White, a close friend of the president's, during a Friday night hype session at the Lincoln Memorial, where pairs of fighters shoved and scuffled for the cameras under the stoic gaze of Honest Abe's marble likeness.

Before Sunday's final fight, lightweight fighters Ilia Topuria and Justin Gaethje, who wrapped himself in an American flag, each stepped out of the Oval Office and walked to the Octagon — meaning Trump even ceded his workspace as part of the show.

The American Gaethje then stunned Spanish-Georgian Topuria to win after four rounds that left copious blood on the cage floor. Trump later headed inside the cage to shake hands and watch a fireworks display that launched well after 1 a.m.

That capped a night where many of the winning fighters thanked Trump and God. Heavyweight Josh Hokit took it further with an extraordinary and unfounded attack based on a right-wing conspiracy theory about a former first lady: "Michelle Obama is a man. Am I right, America?"

Hokit also headed over to Trump and placed a chain around the president's neck.

Rain doesn't mar fights

Wearing a suit and tie despite the summer heat, Trump a lot of time sitting stoned-faced, watching the action through wire-mesh cage. At one point he spoke briefly with Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg.

When American Sean O'Malley fought Canadian Aiemann Zahabi, Trump donned a white USA hat. After Zahabi won, he shook Trump's hand and saluted the president.

Earlier, as Diego Lopes was defeating American Steve Garcia in the opening fight, the president could be seen speaking to first lady Melania Trump. After Bo Nickal knocked out Kyle Daukaus in the second fight, Nickal went over to Trump and knelt down, chatting briefly.

"I gotta thank President Trump for making this happen," Nickal said in a subsequent interview, as Trump grinned. Nickal added that the president is a "special person," before Trump-favorite "YMCA" played.

The president sought to tie the fights to larger celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. But it was so geared toward himself that the G7 summit for leaders of industrialized nations pushed back their get-together so that the president could attend his cage-match party and then fly to Europe for the meetings.

The weekend wasn't all smiles for Trump, though. Crews pried Trump's name off the Kennedy Center near the White House after a judge ruled naming it after the president had gone too far. And, before the fight began, UFC Middleweight champion Sean Strickland — an outspoken critic of Israel — was escorted out of the Ellipse by a crowd of law enforcement officers.

Still, despite forecasts predicting strong chances of thunderstorms that delayed the event briefly, rain wasn't an issue.

A dramatic departure from how the last president marked his 80th

The crowd repeatedly chanted, "USA! USA!" when an American fighter faced a foreign opponent. Until the finale, that didn't always help the American fighter prevail. After winning his fight, Brazil's Mauricio Ruffy proposed to his girlfriend who — in Trumpian fashion — flashed a thumb's up from the crowd.

It was all a very long way from when Trump's predecessor, President Joe Biden, turned 80 in November 2022. Biden celebrated with a private family brunch at the White House, laying bare just how much and how quickly things have changed.

Asked about the contrast, White House spokesperson Allison Schuster in a statement called the UFC event "one of the most entertaining nights in American history."

When he turned 80, Biden was the oldest president in U.S. history, and was months away from launching a reelection bid that he would ultimately abandon after a disastrous debate against Trump and mutiny among Democrats.

Trump has now supplanted Biden as the oldest person to be elected U.S. president. He's constitutionally barred from running again, yet constantly toys with the notion. That's despite polls showing rising public skepticism about Trump's mental and physical health — recalling concerns Biden faced as he turned 80.

A Washington Post/ABC News/Ipsos poll conducted in April found that less than half of U.S. adults think

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Trump has the mental sharpness or physical health to serve effectively as president.

The White House countered with a lengthy statement from Trump's former White House physician, Texas Republican Rep. Ronny Jackson, saying Trump's "stamina, focus, and strength are exceptional and on display every day." Jackson added that polling concerns were "being propagated by the same biased, liberal, Trump-hating press that completely ignored the absolute cognitive and physical disaster that was President Biden."

'Bread and circuses' — Trump-style

The UFC is an apt metaphor for Trump's pugilistic political style. He is as big a fan of cage-match-style politics as he is of cage-fighting itself.

But Trump has also long been a master of political misdirection, purposely presenting people with something other than his presidency to focus on when things aren't going well.

With the war in Iran having kept gas prices high and renewing concerns about inflation while Trump's job approval ratings fall, a White House birthday party unlike anything America has ever seen can certainly qualify as a diversion.

"This is all distraction," said Mike Fontaine, a classics professor at Cornell University, who likened it to the gladiatorial games of Imperial Rome, when combatants brutalized each other for public entertainment meant to bolster rulers' popularity and quell potential unrest.

"This is a classic strategy," Fontaine said. "In ancient Rome, the phrase would be, 'bread and circuses.'"

Trump says the UFC is paying for the event and while its full costs haven't been divulged, the National Park Service said in a court filing that \$60-plus million and tens of thousands of hours of labor went into it, while seven government agencies have "allocated significant resources and manpower."

UFC also announced that it was adding as an official partner for the event World Liberty Financial to create a special \$250,000 athlete bonus pool for Sunday night's winners. The cryptocurrency company is co-owned by the Trump family, founded with the president's special diplomatic envoy Steve Witkoff and run by his son, Zach.

The arrangement further blurs lines between the Trump family's financial interests and the events and construction projects the president has prioritized and used government resources to pull off.

Still, Fontaine said that when it comes to a personal flair for pageantry, the president's second-term tendency to lean into "hardcore masculinity and brute fighting" is marrying the UFC's blood sport with Trump's trademark humor and enduring sense of showmanship.

"President Trump has a once-in-a-generation talent for this stuff," he said.

## Daichi Kamada's late goal gives Japan a 2-2 draw with the Netherlands in World Cup opener for both

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Sports Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Daichi Kamada and his Japanese teammates were minutes away from a World Cup -opening loss that wouldn't have been unexpected considering the opponent.

His tying goal will be remembered for a long time in his homeland, especially if the country with some soccer momentum reaches the round of 16 again.

Kamada scored when a header by teammate Koki Ogawa deflected off his head into the Dutch goal in the 88th minute, sending the Samurai Blue fans into a frenzy and giving Japan a 2-2 draw with the higher-ranked Netherlands on Sunday.

While the Dutch extended their unbeaten streak to 17 games in group play, the orange-clad Oranje supporters were stunned by the late goal that left them with 21 wins, two losses and 11 draws in group play at the World Cup.

"Our players managed to be tenacious but at the same time be patient and just keep calm and finding and seizing an opportunity," Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu said through an interpreter. His team reached the round of 16 for the fourth time in 2022 in Qatar.

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Virgil Van Dijk and Crysencio Summerville scored off each post for the Netherlands early in the second half, while Keito Nakamura had a goal between those as part of a three-goal flurry in just 14 minutes.

A mostly uneventful first half changed quickly after the break for a crowd evenly split at AT&T Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys with the retractable roof that offered relief from the muggy Texas heat, and the giant video board that fans had a hard time keeping their eyes off.

Summerville gave the eighth-ranked Dutch the lead in the 64th minute, and Japan was running out of hope until a Ogawa's perfectly timed header off a corner kick. The ball glanced off Kamada's head and past goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen, who got his hands on it with a sprawling dive but couldn't keep it from going in.

Van Dijk sent a header toward the far post on the right in the 50th minute, bending forward from inside the penalty area as he stared at the ball before it caromed in for the Dutch captain's 13th international goal.

Nakamura answered seven minutes later for 18th-ranked Japan, turning and rifling a shot past Verbruggen from the left side of the arc after taking a pass from Takefusa Kubo.

Another seven minutes later, Summerville took a pass from Ryan Gravenberch and sent a left-footed shot to the far left post past Zion Suzuki, where it caromed in again.

"It's disappointing now because obviously conceding the lead is never good," said Van Dijk, the second-oldest Dutch goal scorer in a World Cup at 34 years, 341 days, behind Giovanni van Bronckhorst at 35 and 151 against Uruguay in 2010. "It's extra disappointing that we conceded from a set piece so late on."

The Dutch's most recent loss before the elimination round came the last time the World Cup was in the United States in 1994, when a group play defeat was followed by a quarterfinal loss to Brazil at the Cotton Bowl in Dallas.

The pressure is always on the Netherlands to reach the elimination round, in part because it's the only country to reach the final three times without winning the World Cup.

A draw to open Group F, which includes Sweden and Tunisia, won't ease that pressure on coach Ronald Koeman, who faced several pointed questions about strategy and shot back with cryptic replies.

The Dutch beat Japan in their only other World Cup meeting in 2010.

"I'm disappointed that we didn't win, but that's because we were ahead twice," Koeman said through an interpreter. "Many people underestimated Japan, but for the 100,000th time, if you underestimate them, that's your problem. You think Japan's strength was overexaggerated before the match? Let's wait until the end of the tournament to see who's right."

The Netherlands plays Sweden on Saturday in Houston, while Japan goes to Monterrey, Mexico, to face Tunisia on Saturday.

## A history of Iran's nuclear program and tensions with the US as an interim deal is reached

By The Associated Press undefined

The United States and Iran have reached an interim deal aimed at ending the war and reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

There are plans for a signing of the deal on Friday in Switzerland. However, previous announcements fell through, and what the deal contained remained in dispute Monday.

Here's a timeline of the tensions over Iran's atomic program:

Early days

1967 — Iran takes possession of the Tehran Research Reactor supplied by America under the "Atoms for Peace" program.

1979 — U.S. ally Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, fatally ill, flees Iran as popular protests against him surge. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini returns to Tehran and the Islamic Revolution sweeps him to power. Students seize the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, beginning the 444-day hostage crisis. Iran's nuclear program goes fallow under international pressure.

August 2002 — Western intelligence services and an Iranian opposition group reveal Iran's secret Natanz

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nuclear enrichment facility.

June 2003 — Britain, France and Germany engage Iran in nuclear negotiations.

October 2003 — Iran suspends uranium enrichment under international pressure.

February 2006 — Iran announces it will restart uranium enrichment following the election of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Britain, France and Germany walk out of stalled negotiations.

June 2009 — Iran's disputed presidential election sees Ahmadinejad reelected despite fraud allegations, sparking protests known as the Green Movement and a violent government crackdown.

October 2009 — Under U.S. President Barack Obama, the U.S. and Iran open a secret back-channel for messages in the sultanate of Oman.

July 2012 — U.S. and Iranian officials hold secret face-to-face talks in Oman.

July 2015 — World powers and Iran announce a long-term, comprehensive nuclear agreement that limits Tehran's enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

The nuclear deal collapses

May 8, 2018 — U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdraws the U.S. from the nuclear agreement, calling it the "worst deal ever." He says he'll get better terms in new negotiations to stop Iran's missile development and support for regional militias. Those talks don't happen in his first term.

May 8, 2019 — Iran announces it will begin backing away from the accord. A series of regional attacks on land and at sea blamed on Tehran follow.

Jan. 3, 2020 — A U.S. drone strike in Baghdad kills Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the architect of Tehran's proxy wars in the Middle East.

Jan. 8, 2020 — In retaliation for Soleimani's killing, Iran launches a barrage of missiles at military bases in Iraq that are home to thousands of American and Iraqi troops. More than 100 U.S. service members suffer traumatic brain injuries, according to the Pentagon. As Iran braces for a counterattack, the Revolutionary Guard shoots down a Ukrainian passenger plane shortly after takeoff from Tehran's international airport, reportedly mistaking it for a U.S. cruise missile. All 176 people on board are killed.

July 2, 2020 — A mysterious explosion tears apart a centrifuge production plant at Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility. Iran blames the attack on Israel.

April 6, 2021 — Iran and the U.S. under President Joe Biden begin indirect negotiations in Vienna over how to restore the nuclear deal. Those talks, and others between Tehran and European nations, fail to reach any agreement.

April 11, 2021 — A second attack within a year targets Iran's Natanz nuclear site, again likely carried out by Israel.

April 16, 2021 — Iran begins enriching uranium up to 60% — its highest purity ever and a technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90%.

Feb. 24, 2022 — Russia launches its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Moscow ultimately will come to rely on Iranian bomb-carrying drones in the conflict, as well as missiles.

July 17, 2022 — An adviser to Iran's supreme leader, Kamal Kharrazi, says Iran is technically capable of making a nuclear bomb, but has not decided whether to build one.

Mideast wars rage

Oct. 7, 2023 — Hamas militants from the Gaza Strip storm into Israel, killing around 1,200 people and taking 251 others hostage, beginning the most intense war ever between Israel and Hamas. Iran, which has armed Hamas, offers support to the militants. Regional tensions spike.

Nov. 19, 2023 — Yemen's Houthi rebels, long supported by Iran, seize the ship Galaxy Leader, beginning a monthslong campaign of attacks on shipping through the Red Sea corridor that the U.S. Navy describes as the most intense combat it has seen since World War II. The attacks mirror tactics earlier used by Iran.

April 14, 2024 — Iran launches an unprecedented direct attack on Israel, firing over 300 missiles and attack drones. Israel, working with a U.S.-led international coalition, intercepts much of the incoming fire.

April 19, 2024 — A suspected Israeli strike hits an air defense system by an airport in Isfahan, Iran.

July 31, 2024 — Ismail Haniyeh, a Hamas leader, is assassinated during a visit to Tehran after the inau-

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guration of reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian. Israel later takes responsibility for the assassination.

Sept. 27, 2024 — An Israeli airstrike kills Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Lebanon.

Oct. 1, 2024 — Iran launches its second direct attack on Israel, though a U.S.-led coalition and Israel shoot down most of the missiles.

Oct. 16, 2024 — Israel kills Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in the Gaza Strip.

Oct. 26, 2024 — Israel openly attacks Iran for the first time, striking air defense systems and sites associated with its missile program.

Trump returns and reaches out

Jan. 20, 2025 — Trump is inaugurated for his second term as president.

Feb. 7, 2025 — Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei says proposed talks with the U.S. are "not intelligent, wise or honorable."

March 7, 2025 — Trump says he sent a letter to Khamenei seeking a new nuclear deal with Tehran.

March 15, 2025 — Trump launches intense airstrikes targeting Houthi rebels in Yemen, the last members of Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance" capable of daily attacks.

April 7, 2025 — Trump announces the U.S. and Iran will hold direct talks in Oman. Iran says they'll be indirect talks.

April 12, 2025 — The first round of talks between Iran and the U.S. take place in Oman, ending with a promise to hold more talks after U.S. Mideast envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi "briefly spoke" together.

April 19, 2025 — The second round of talks between the U.S. and Iran are held in Rome.

April 26, 2025 — Iran and the U.S. meet in Oman a third time, but the negotiations include talks at the expert level for the first time.

May 11, 2025 — Iran and the U.S. meet in Oman for a fourth round of negotiations ahead of Trump's trip to the Mideast.

May 23, 2025 — Iran and the U.S. meet in Rome for a fifth round of talks, with Oman saying the negotiations made "some but not conclusive progress."

The Iran-Israel war begins

June 9, 2025 — Iran signals it won't accept a U.S. proposal over the nuclear program.

June 12, 2025 — The Board of Governors at the International Atomic Energy Agency finds Iran in non-compliance with its nuclear obligations. Iran responds by announcing it has built and will activate a third nuclear enrichment facility.

June 13, 2025 — Israel launches its war against Iran. Over 12 days, it hits nuclear and military sites, as well as other government installations.

June 22, 2025 — The U.S. intervenes in the war, attacking three Iranian nuclear sites.

June 23, 2025 — Iran responds to the U.S. attack by targeting a military base in Qatar used by American troops, causing limited damage.

June 24, 2025 — Trump announces a ceasefire in the war.

July 25, 2025 — Iranian and European diplomats hold talks in Istanbul over Iran's nuclear program.

Aug. 8, 2025 — France, Germany and the United Kingdom warn Iran in a letter that it will reimplement U.N. sanctions if there is no "satisfactory solution" to the nuclear standoff by Aug. 31.

Aug. 28, 2025 — France, Germany and the United Kingdom say they've started the process to "snapback" U.N. sanctions on Iran.

Sept. 9, 2025 — Iran and the International Atomic Energy Agency reach a deal over potentially starting inspections, but questions remain over its implementation.

Sept. 19, 2025 — U.N. Security Council declines to stop "snapback" sanctions on Iran.

Sept. 26, 2025 — U.N. Security Council rejects China and Russia's last-minute effort to stop "snapback."

Sept. 28, 2025 — U.N. reimposes "snapback" sanctions on Iran barring any last-minute diplomacy.

New protests roil Iran

Dec. 28, 2025: Protests break out in two major markets in downtown Tehran after the Iranian rial plunges

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to a record low — 1.42 million rials to one U.S. dollar — compounding inflationary pressure and pushing up the prices of food and other daily necessities.

Jan. 3, 2026: Khamenei says “rioters must be put in their place,” in what is seen as a green light for security forces to begin more aggressively putting down the demonstrations.

Jan. 8, 2026: Following a call from Iran’s exiled crown prince, a mass of people shout from their windows and take to the streets in nationwide protests. The government responds by blocking the internet and international telephone calls to cut off the country from outside influence. An ensuing security force crackdown kills thousands and sees tens of thousands detained.

Jan. 13, 2026: Trump says he has called off any meetings with the Iranians and promises that unspecified “help is on its way.”

Jan. 26, 2026: The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln and three accompanying warships arrive in the Middle East amid Trump’s threats to attack.

Feb. 3, 2026: A U.S. Navy fighter jet shoots down an Iranian drone approaching the Lincoln in the Arabian Sea. Iranian fast-attack boats attempt to stop a U.S.-flagged ship in the Strait of Hormuz.

Feb. 6, 2026: Iran and the U.S. hold indirect nuclear talks in Oman, with the head of the U.S. military’s Central Command also coming.

Feb. 17, 2026: Iran and the U.S. hold talks in Geneva while Tehran says it has temporarily closed the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all oil traded passes.

Feb. 26, 2026: Iran and the U.S. hold another round of talks in Geneva as America assembles the largest fleet of warplanes and aircraft in the Mideast in decades.

The Iran war

Feb. 28, 2026: Israel and the United States launch a war on Iran, killing Khamenei in the conflict’s first moments.

March 9, 2026: Iran names Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, the late supreme leader’s son, as country’s new paramount ruler.

April 7, 2026: A fragile ceasefire in the Iran war is announced, with talks to continue. Israel is not included in negotiations.

April 8, 2026: Israel bombards Lebanon’s capital, Beirut, killing over 300 people in a 10-minute attack.

April 11, 2026: U.S. Vice President JD Vance leads an American delegation to Islamabad, meeting with Iranian team led by parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, the highest-level direct talks between the two nations since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The talks end after 21 hours without a deal.

May 31, 2026: Israel’s ground invasion of Lebanon makes its deepest incursion in over a quarter century.

June 15, 2026: The United States and Iran reach an initial agreement to open the Strait of Hormuz and further extend a shaky ceasefire in the Iran war.

## Most AAPI adults say the US is no longer a great country for immigrants, new poll finds

By TERRY TANG and LINLEY SANDERS Associated Press

Many Asian American and Pacific Islander adults have experienced or witnessed some degree of upheaval because of the Trump administration’s heightened immigration policies, a new AP-NORC/AAPI Data poll finds, while most say the U.S. is no longer the land of opportunity for immigrants.

A new poll released Monday from AAPI Data and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows about half of AAPI adults say they — or someone they know — have been detained or deported within the last year, started carrying proof of immigration status or U.S. citizenship, upended travel plans or significantly changed their routines because of immigration status.

The findings come after more than a year of immigration crackdowns. The poll indicates that the Trump administration’s aggressive approach, which has resulted in multiple clashes between protesters and enforcement officers and led to the shooting deaths of two U.S. citizens in Minneapolis earlier this year, may be changing the way some people in immigrant-heavy communities see the U.S. itself.

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AAPI adults are one of the country's fastest-growing demographic, and most AAPI adults in the U.S. were born outside the country. The survey found a majority of AAPI adults — about 6 in 10 — believe the U.S. used to be a great country for immigrants but is not anymore. Only about 3 in 10 AAPI adults say America is a great place for immigrants, while a few, 5%, say it was never a great place for immigrants.

At the same time, AAPI adults are more likely than Americans overall to see the mixing of culture and values from around the world as central to the country's identity.

"America's success story has depended critically on the role of Asian Americans, but also immigrants in general," said Karthick Ramakrishnan, founder and executive director of AAPI Data. "When you have people who are already in this country, have been here for decades saying, 'I'm not really sure that this is the best country anymore,' that's a warning sign."

'Better safe than sorry' approach

Even some immigrants with legal status have been affected by the Trump administration's policies. One policy that would have hiked fees for certain types of visas was shot down in federal court this month. Another judge struck down a policy that "categorically barred" immigrants from 39 Asian, African, Latin American and Middle Eastern countries from receiving final decisions on asylum, work permit, green card and citizenship applications.

Khoa Tran, 27, of San Antonio, Texas, came to the U.S. from Vietnam in 2015 at age 15. He gained citizenship four years later. In 2023, he sponsored his wife from Vietnam.

Last year, Tran became concerned when his social media feed kept bringing up posts about how essential it was that even legal immigrants carry documentation. It had not occurred to the couple that his wife should have her green card with her at all times.

"It seemed like we needed to do it. It's literally become like a second form of identification in addition to the driver's license," Tran said.

He has also seen how international students in his community have put off trips to visit family in Asia due to concerns about student visas.

"They're just scared. They don't know the law around that," Tran said. "Better safe than sorry."

About half of South Asian adults — compared to about 4 in 10 AAPI adults overall — know someone who started carrying proof of legal status or citizenship over the last year. South Asian adults are much more likely than East Asian or Southeast Asian American adults to have been born outside the U.S., according to the survey. Many of those immigrants may have green cards or be naturalized citizens, Ramakrishnan said, yet feel "like their presence and their status in this country is under question."

Cultural identity matters as much as American identity

AAPI adults are likelier to say their family's ancestry or country of origin is "extremely" or "very" important to their personal identity, compared to being an American.

Just over half of AAPI adults say their family's ancestry or country of origin is important to who they are, while 44% say this about their American identity. That extends to AAPI adults who were born in the U.S. About 6 in 10, 59%, U.S.-born AAPI adults say their family's heritage is important to their personal identity, while 47% say this about being an American.

A separate AP-NORC survey conducted in April found that 55% of U.S. adults say being an American is important to who they are, while only 37% said that about their family's ancestry.

Abigail Jeyaraj, 22, of South Hadley, Massachusetts, was born in Texas. Her Indian parents' decision to build a new life in the U.S. is something she never takes for granted. When she describes her nationality, she identifies herself as not just "American" but South Asian American.

"Especially as a South Asian woman, I'm very sensitive to the fact that I have opportunities that my mother and my grandmother, all the women before that didn't," Jeyaraj said. "I really try to honor that culture. I try to maintain really strong connections to my family in India."

Soonho Kwon, 30, of La Mirada, California, was born in Korea. His family settled in New Jersey when he was 8 years old.

"I think I still feel more Korean. I came right around the age where I had very solid memories from growing up in Korea. My immediate family's back there now," Kwon said. "I'm a naturalized citizen. I'm

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committed to living here, but identity is a different question.”

Ambivalence around America’s 250th anniversary

The vast majority, 73%, of AAPI adults say the mixing of cultures and values from around the world is “extremely” or “very” important to the U.S.’s identity as a nation, compared to only 55% of U.S. adults in the April AP-NORC poll.

Jeyaraj grew up around Dallas and Houston — cities where she was “able to interact with people of so many different races and different cultures that weren’t my own.” She credits that experience with making her more empathetic.

Restrictions on immigration and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives leave her feeling conflicted about celebrating the country’s 250th anniversary this year.

“I’m proud we made it this far as a country,” Jeyaraj said. “You have recent actors who are trying to undo that progress. They maybe view it as restoring an ideal, but it’s removing so much work that powerful and influential people made to bring us toward an ideal of equality and justice.”

The anniversary feels arbitrary to Tran, a math teacher.

“I don’t think this country is ‘founded’ at some point in time. It just changes from one form to another,” Tran said. “Even the Native Americans (were) a long time here. I’m pretty sure that was more than 250 years.”

The poll of 1,075 U.S. adults who are Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders was conducted April 20-28, using a sample drawn from NORC’s probability-based Amplify AAPI Panel, designed to be representative of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.4 percentage points. This poll is part of an ongoing project exploring the views of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, which are usually not highlighted in other surveys because of small sample sizes and lack of linguistic representation.

## What to know about a possible deal to end the Iran war

By MUNIR AHMED, WILL WEISSERT and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The United States and Iran have reached an interim deal aimed at ending the war and reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

There are plans for a signing of the deal on Friday in Switzerland. However, previous announcements fell through, and what the deal contained remained in dispute Monday.

Iran exchanged fire with the U.S. and Israel last week, threatening to push the region back into a full-scale war. The war launched by the U.S. and Israel on Feb. 28 has rattled the region and virtually shut down oil and natural gas shipments from the Persian Gulf. A fragile ceasefire has been in place since April 7.

Here’s what to know:

A 60-day period would address Iran’s nuclear program

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said Friday the terms of dealing with Iran’s nuclear program would be finalized in the 60 days after the initial agreement is signed and that the parties could decide to extend that period.

The U.S. and Israel fear Iran’s nuclear program could lead to an atomic weapon — a main reason their leaders cited for going to war. Tehran has insisted its nuclear program is peaceful, though it has enough highly enriched uranium to build several atomic bombs, should it choose to do so.

A senior U.S. administration official, who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by the White House, said Friday that the emerging agreement would begin the process of destroying or removing Tehran’s highly enriched uranium. That’s something disputed by Iran, which has insisted it would hold onto its stockpile.

The official said the 60-day period after both sides sign the deal would be used to work out technical details for removing the uranium. The official did not say who the U.S. envisions taking charge of removing the uranium, which is believed to be entombed under three nuclear sites battered by U.S. strikes last year.

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The deal may include addressing reopening the Strait of Hormuz

The U.S. official said the emerging agreement includes provisions for reopening the strait.

Araghchi said Iran wants a deal that allows Tehran to charge ships "for services rendered" when they transit the strait. Iran charged vessels for passage during the war, which the U.S. and other nations have said violates international law. The strait long has been considered an international water though it sits in the territorial waters of Iran and Oman.

Transit through the strait, a vital shipping lane for oil and natural gas, has disrupted global energy supplies, driven up fuel prices and made food and other basics like fertilizer more expensive well beyond the region.

The agreement would include Iranian sanctions relief

Three regional officials said the emerging deal was expected to include the phased lifting of sanctions on Iran and the release of frozen Iranian assets. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the negotiations.

What will happen to Lebanon remains unclear

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said after the deal had been announced that "both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon." It remains unclear whether Israel, which relies on the U.S. but has launched wars against its enemies since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, agreed to that term.

Iran has insisted that any deal must include a ceasefire in Lebanon, where Israel has been fighting the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz warned Friday that Israel could still act independently toward Iran and that the country would not pull out of the zones it is occupying in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza, nor would it withdraw from the northern refugee camps of the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

## **A tentative deal is reached to end the Iran war and Trump orders a stop to the US naval blockade**

By MUNIR AHMED, JULIA FRANKEL, ABBY SEWELL and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The United States and Iran reached an initial agreement early Monday to open the Strait of Hormuz and further extend a shaky ceasefire in the Iran war, potentially allowing desperately needed oil and natural gas to reach the global market.

Details of the deal were not immediately released and Iran signaled implementation would not start until the signing, which key mediator Pakistan said would occur Friday in Switzerland. It could provide a way to end a war that killed thousands across the Middle East, including the top leaders of Iran's theocracy, and sparked a historic energy crisis.

But the memorandum of understanding over the war already faced intense challenges. Israel's continued hostilities with the Iranian-backed militia Hezbollah in Lebanon, where Israel bombed Beirut's southern suburbs Sunday, nearly derailed the negotiations.

Meanwhile, the deal gives just 60 days to resolve what to do about Iran's stockpile of highly enriched uranium and its atomic program. That took years to resolve in Tehran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from that accord in his first term, setting the stage for the tensions that culminated in the war.

"Congratulations to all!" Trump wrote on social media as he celebrated his 80th birthday Sunday with a UFC cage match fight at the White House.

He added, "I hereby fully authorize the toll free opening of the Strait of Hormuz, and, simultaneously herewith, authorize the immediate removal of the United States Naval blockade," which was imposed in retaliation for Iran's grip on the crucial waterway.

He soon hedged, however, saying the strait wouldn't open until Friday's signing.

Iran's deputy foreign minister, Kazem Gharibabadi, confirmed the agreement on state television but said Iran would not start implementing it until it was signed Friday. He said the deal followed talks with Qatar, another mediator.

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Israel, which has insisted it be allowed a freehand to pursue Hezbollah as it occupies southern Lebanon and has extended its military operations into areas its forces haven't been in a quarter century, did not immediately comment. Israel joined the U.S. in launching the war on Feb. 28.

Benchmark Brent crude oil fell more than \$4 a barrel on the news as Asian stock markets rallied.

Pakistan, a key mediator, announces deal

Pakistan first announced the deal, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif saying "both sides have declared the immediate and permanent termination of military operations on all fronts, including in Lebanon." It remains unclear whether Israel, which relies on the U.S. but has launched wars against its enemies since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, agreed to that term.

He added that mediators this week will facilitate meetings to "lay the foundation for the technical talks."

Broader negotiations on outstanding issues like Iran's nuclear program would continue over the next 60 days, two senior Pakistani officials said earlier Sunday, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly. If the sides fail to reach a resolution within that time, the timeline could be extended.

Iranian state television cited the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council saying the war on all fronts "will end immediately and permanently beginning tonight" — but that the U.S. blockade "will be terminated immediately and in full."

Qatari mediators later left Tehran following 17 hours of negotiations, said an official briefed on the developments who spoke on condition of anonymity due to sensitivity of the talks. Separate preparatory meetings with each side will take place in Doha this week, the official said.

It was not clear who from Iran would sign the deal on Friday. U.S. Vice President JD Vance told Fox News the White House was still figuring out who would attend: "I certainly plan to be there, but it's possible the president himself could be there."

But concern among Republicans in the U.S. already could be seen. They included U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, who described Vance as "the architect of the deal."

"I am somewhat concerned that Iran's view of the agreement seems different than what the American negotiating team is claiming," Graham wrote online.

U.S. Rep. Gregory Meeks of New York, the top Democrat on the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said Congress would exercise oversight on any accord with Iran.

"We have seen time and again: War cannot change the Iranian regime," he said.

Interim deal faces intense scrutiny

The first strike of the war killed Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and Khamenei's son, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, is now supreme leader. He has not been seen in the public since the war began, but his approval was needed for Iran to sign off on the deal.

There was apparent friction inside Iran in the hours before the announcement, as the government warned that division at home over the deal weakened its negotiating position.

The deal likely returns the region to a status that existed before the war, but with Iran having proven its ability to disrupt shipping in the strait. The waterway is crucial to significant shipments of oil, natural gas and related products like fertilizer, and its effective closure rocked the global economy.

Even with a deal, it will take months for oil and gas supplies to flow freely enough for the world's needs to be met because shipping and insurance companies want to be confident the agreement will last, energy experts said.

Tehran also still has a ballistic missile arsenal and enough highly enriched uranium to build several nuclear weapons, should it choose to pursue them.

Iran has long maintained its nuclear program is peaceful and has not publicly committed to giving up the enriched uranium, which is believed to be buried under three nuclear sites that were badly damaged by U.S. strikes last year.

The U.S. has sought the removal of the enriched uranium from Iran as part of a deal. Russia has offered to take it. But Iran insists it wants to keep the uranium.

## Georgia's vote-counting method will soon be banned. Lawmakers will try to find a fix this week

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — When Georgia lawmakers return to the Capitol this week for a special session, they are expected to try to clean up an election mess of their own making.

The election system used throughout the political battleground state relies on a QR code printed on ballots to tally the votes. Legislators passed a law two years ago barring the use of that barcode for the official vote count beyond July 1 of this year, but no replacement method of tabulating votes was ever implemented.

One of the instructions Republican Gov. Brian Kemp laid out for lawmakers when he called the special session is to “address issues created” by that law. Meanwhile, the secretary of state’s office and the State Election Board have further muddled the waters by issuing conflicting guidance for county election officials about how votes should be cast and counted.

If the issues are not resolved soon, there is likely to be confusion and possibly litigation over the state’s elections after July 1. A special election to fill a U.S. House seat is scheduled for that month.

How did we get here?

Georgia’s current election system was first used statewide during the 2020 primary. After the general election that year, when Republican President Donald Trump narrowly lost the state to Democrat Joe Biden, Trump and his supporters claimed without evidence that the machines had deleted or switched votes.

Trump’s backers continued to complain about the touchscreen voting machines, with some loyalists espousing wild conspiracy theories. Election integrity advocates also criticized the machines, saying they are vulnerable to hacking and that voters cannot be sure their selections are accurately reflected because people can’t read QR codes.

Republican lawmakers in 2024 tried to address those concerns by passing a law banning barcodes for the “official tabulation count” after July 1, 2026. But in the two years since, no other counting method has been adopted. Now, the deadline is fast approaching and a major midterm election looms.

Trump singled out those machines, which are used in at least some counties in more than a dozen states, in his first executive order on elections shortly after he took office for his second term in January 2025. That order has been blocked by multiple courts and is not being enforced.

The governor steps in

Last month, Kemp announced a special legislative session, scheduled to start Wednesday, to draw new congressional maps for the 2028 elections and to address the QR code issue.

It’s possible that lawmakers could extend the deadline in the law to allow the QR codes to be used for now and give themselves some breathing room to come up with a new system before elections in 2028. But in the waning hours of the regular legislative session earlier this year, they rejected a proposal that would have done that.

Even if lawmakers agree on a solution, it might be tough to implement before a special election to fill the remainder of the term of U.S. Rep. David Scott, who died in April. The special election is set for July 28, with early voting beginning July 6.

Secretary of state offers guidance to election offices

The secretary of state’s office last week issued guidance to election officials in the six counties included in that congressional district. The office says it’s preliminary and subject to change based on any developments from the special session.

The ballots will be run through the scanners, which will read the QR code to generate the election night vote count. Then, before county certification, electronic images created by the scanners for each ballot will be uploaded to a server, where optical character recognition software will be used to tally the votes using the human-readable text. The results of that second process will be the official tabulation count.

The secretary of state’s guidance expressly says counties must continue to use the current election system, including the touchscreen voting machines, and that there is nothing in the law that authorizes

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the use of hand-marked paper ballots for in-person voting.

Conflict with the election board

The State Election Board weighed in two days later with conflicting guidance. Board members argued the plan proposed by the secretary of state is not authorized by law.

The board passed a resolution instructing counties on what to do if the special legislative session does not result in an extension of the deadline for using QR codes. The resolution directs counties to use their emergency backup, which calls for hand-marked paper ballots with scanners used to count voters' selections.

When asked about the conflicting guidance during the election board meeting, Elizabeth Young, a lawyer with the state attorney general's office, said that while the guidance is not binding, "obviously it would cause confusion for elections superintendents if they are getting differing instructions from two agencies, both of which have some authority over what they're doing."

The election board has been controlled by a Trump-aligned majority and is often at odds with Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, a Republican who is a frequent Trump target.

Local election officials are in the middle

Henry County in Atlanta's suburbs is one of the counties where voters will go to the polls for next month's special election. Axiver Harris, interim elections director, said the county is aware of the conflicting guidance and is awaiting further clarification from the state.

"Given the uncertainty surrounding the guidance currently available, we believe it is wise to wait for further direction to ensure that any decisions made are consistent with state requirements and election administration best practices," he wrote in an email.

Marcy Scott, who is running in the special election to serve the remainder of her late father's term, said she is not sure most voters are even aware of the issue and is focusing her attention elsewhere.

"My goal is to get people to the polls, get my people to the polls and get them to vote for me," she said.

But Carlos Moore, another of the six candidates running in the special election, said he is worried about legal challenges if a new method of vote-counting is implemented without enough time. He hopes lawmakers extend the deadline to allow the use of the QR codes for now.

"I would ask that legislators do the right thing, leave well enough alone for the special election," he said. "Otherwise, it's almost certain there will be challenges in court."

## Oil and gas supplies could take months to return to normal after Iran deal, energy experts say

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — High oil and gasoline prices and energy supply problems won't be solved overnight, despite an agreement to end the Iran war and open the Strait of Hormuz announced Sunday.

It will likely take months before energy companies can resume operations to the point of meeting the world's demand, according to energy experts. The slow pace of the process of shipping and refining crude oil, and doubts about the security of traveling through the strait mean the effect won't be seen immediately, they said.

Ships loaded with crude oil have been stranded in the Persian Gulf for more than three months, unable to safely travel through the waterway, through which about a fifth of the world's oil and gasoline supplies typically traveled before the war began.

"It's going to take time for people to feel comfortable and for insurance to be in place ... particularly to get people on the ground to restart some of these assets," said Daniel Evans, global head of fuels and refining research at S&P Global Energy.

Still, oil prices slipped early Monday after the deal was announced.

Brent crude, the international standard, was down \$3.45 at \$83.89 per barrel. U.S. benchmark crude oil lost \$4.03 to \$80.85 per barrel.

Those prices are still well above the roughly \$70 per barrel where oil was trading before the war started.

As the higher prices unwind, ships that have been stranded will have to exit the strait, and then new

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tankers will have to come in to be loaded, Evans said.

"To bring a ship in, you need to be confident that you've got a big enough window of safety to bring it in, load it and move it out," he added.

Oil tankers also move slowly, he explained. It takes months to travel from the strait to distant countries, deliver the crude oil to a refinery for processing and then arrive at its final destination.

In addition, some producers in the Middle East paused extracting oil from the ground, known as a shut-in, when they ran out of storage space. Restarting those operations can be a slow process.

Countries such as Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, where there are alternate pipelines or routes besides the Strait of Hormuz to deliver oil, may be among the quickest to resume production, said Alan Gelder, senior vice president of refining, chemicals and oil markets at Wood Mackenzie, an analytics firm.

"But places like Iraq could be much more challenged because they've had a much bigger shut-in, their fields are more difficult ... it may well take about a year before they get back," he said.

Investment in the energy system, which can take years to see the results, ground to a halt after the strait's closure, Gelder said. So it will take time for this capital to restart.

Countries that shut in oil production won't want to restart until they know there is a stable, durable strait, and that a ceasefire will last more than 30 or 60 days, said Daniel Sternoff, senior fellow at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University.

"We don't know what open means or what the speed of evacuation of trapped material is going to be," he said.

## What to know about the G7 summit Trump is attending in France

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

EVIAN-LES-BAINS, France (AP) — Right after his 80th birthday party celebrations, U.S. President Donald Trump is heading to a summit in France of the G7 club of powerful democracies to dive into issues — Iran, Ukraine, trade and more — that have been sources of friction with allies he will be meeting.

Hours before leaving Washington, Trump announced an agreement to end the war — a development that could change the dynamic for the G7 leaders during the talks from late Monday to Wednesday.

Just days ago, when the Iran-U.S. ceasefire was hanging by a thread, with resumed strikes, the gathering on the shores of Europe's largest Alpine lake appeared headed for stormy waters.

Analysts speculated that tempers could flare and that Trump might not stick around for long in Evian-les-Bains, the Alpine spa town that's been enveloped in a security bubble for the G7 leaders and guests also invited by French President Emmanuel Macron, the host.

Aside from France and the U.S., the other G7 nations are Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

Here's what to know about their latest annual summit:

Summit outcomes could depend on Trump's mood

Shared values and interests, leaders' personal chemistry and the informality of G7 gatherings — the club first came together in 1975 to brainstorm fixes for the ailing global economy — have facilitated discussion at previous meetings.

"Many of the great G7 summit initiatives have come from leaders' spontaneous combustion, created by them on the spot, based on free, unrestricted dialogue about the values, memories and even the sports, like baseball, that they share," said John Kirton, a G7 specialist at the University of Toronto.

But Trump's relationships with European allies have been fraught even before he launched the Iran war with Israel in February without consulting them. The Evian gathering is their first get-together since then.

Allies that Trump berated for refusing to join the war are likely to greet any Iran deal with relief if it reopens the Strait of Hormuz and enables Persian Gulf energy exports to flow freely again.

Ukraine wants to make its case to Trump

As host, Macron has packed the meatiest and potentially most contentious topics into the summit's first 24 hours, including the Iran war and its impact on energy supplies and the Ukraine war that's largely

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slipped down the White House's list of top priorities.

Tuesday's morning session on Ukraine will afford invited guest President Volodymyr Zelenskyy an opportunity to showcase progress that Ukrainian forces are making against the Russian invasion. If Zelenskyy is able to convince Trump that Russian President Vladimir Putin cannot achieve his aims in the war militarily, he might perhaps also be able to persuade him that Putin should be pushed to the negotiating table.

After his Oval Office thrashing by Trump and Vice President JD Vance last year, Zelenskyy now has "a significantly stronger hand," said Maria Snegovaya, a Russia expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington, D.C., think tank.

The Trump administration "does tend to look more favorably at those states that have certain positions of power tilting in their favor," she said.

Outlook uncertain for talks on Iran

A lunch meeting Tuesday on the Middle East could go any number of ways. The U.S.-Iran deal is expected to be signed on Friday, followed by technical talks on details over the next 60 days. Trump will be pressed for more information about the terms of the agreement.

If it reopens the Strait of Hormuz, France and Britain are expected to make the case that they could help rid the narrow waterway of any mines and escort tankers through it. They have been working on such plans with other nations but have been waiting for a stable ceasefire to launch the mission.

G7 leaders are also expected to talk about developing other energy supply routes out of the Gulf, including via Egypt. The Egyptian president, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, as well as Qatar's ruling emir and the United Arab Emirates' president will join those talks. Trump is also meeting with each of those regional leaders privately during the summit.

A dense agenda of other issues

China, not a G7 member, is expected to be a focus of economic talks on Wednesday. G7 nations are concerned that China is flooding export markets with subsidized products, unfairly out-competing their own industries and destroying jobs. China's economy dwarfs those of all G7 nations except the United States.

Discussions are also scheduled on artificial intelligence, including how to protect young people online, and how to economically aid developing countries.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva are attending some of the summit. So, too, are the leaders of South Korea and Kenya.

The G7 has been a force for more than 50 years

The G7 countries take turns hosting and organizing activities. France inherited the G7 presidency from Canada, last year's summit host, and will pass it to the U.S. in 2027.

The club's first summit, in Rambouillet, France, in 1975, brought together the leaders of six nations — France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, the U.K. and the U.S. — for brainstorming on how to speed their recovery from the sharpest economic slump since World War II. Canada joined the following year, making the G7.

No G7 leader has ever skipped an annual summit, a perfect attendance record for more than 50 years, said Kirton, the University of Toronto specialist.

Membership has always been limited to democracies, enabling Russia to join as a fledgling democracy in 1998 but ruling out Communist Party-ruled China.

The club has broken off with Russia since 2014, when Putin seized Crimea from Ukraine, foreshadowing the full-scale war now raging since 2022.

## In Georgia, Senate hopeful Mike Collins celebrates being Trump's latest 'MAGA' pick in GOP primaries

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WOODSTOCK, Ga. (AP) — In the closing stretch of Georgia's Republican U.S. Senate runoff, Rep. Mike Collins celebrated his 11th-hour endorsement from Donald Trump on Sunday and dismissed any ideas that the Republican president's stamp of approval is a risky bet in a potential showdown with Democratic

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Sen. Jon Ossoff in November.

Trump disclosed his choice of Collins over former football coach Derek Dooley in a middle-of-the-night social media post that praised the second-term congressman for his loyalty.

"I've always said that President Trump has this just impeccable ability to put his thumb on the scale at the right time," Collins said at a campaign stop Sunday in the northern Atlanta exurbs.

The Republican candidates are competing Tuesday for the chance to unseat Ossoff in one of the most closely watched campaigns in the November midterm elections. Dooley, a political newcomer, is backed by outgoing Gov. Brian Kemp, who has clashed with Trump in the past.

Collins called it "encouraging" to have the president's approval. Looking past Dooley to the potential matchup with Ossoff, the congressman said he planned to invited Trump to Georgia, despite the president's sagging approval ratings.

"I'd love to have President Trump in Georgia every day, any day he wants to come down," Collins said.

Collins has been a stalwart Trump ally

Collins has backed Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement since his first House campaign in 2022, and the president said in his announcement early Sunday on social media that the trucking company owner and second-term congressman "has been with me from the very beginning" and is a "true friend, fighter, and WARRIOR."

"I don't know Derek Dooley, and neither does anyone else, but he seems like a nice person," Trump wrote, while noting that Dooley did not vote in 2016 or 2020, when Trump was on the ballot. Dooley has acknowledged going nearly two decades without voting but says he did vote for Trump in 2024.

Trump also complained that Dooley — accurately — said Trump lost Georgia to Democrat Joe Biden in 2020, refusing to back the president's lie that the election was stolen from him.

Collins has consistently echoed Trump's false claims about his defeat and, on Sunday, called the 2020 election "legitimately rigged," arguing that elections officials in Georgia and other states erred by expanding absentee voting and, in the congressman's views, relaxing other election controls.

Collins led Dooley in the May 19 primary but neither surpassed 40%, leaving many Republican votes up for grabs. Trump's endorsement has proved powerful as he shapes a party identity that is increasingly indistinguishable from his own.

Still, the president's choice puts him at odds with more traditional Republicans, including Kemp. The endorsement is reminiscent of Trump's decision to back Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton before his victory over U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in that state's recent primary runoff.

Dooley maintains confidence despite Trump's decision

Collins supporters cheered enthusiastically at the mention of Trump's endorsement.

"He waited a little bit," said James Haddad, a 66-year-old retired engineer from Woodstock in Cherokee County. "But he's studied the candidates, and he did the right thing. It's going to help."

Dooley responded to the president's pick by saying Georgia voters do not want "typical D.C. politicians like Mike Collins." In an X post, Dooley expressed confidence that he'd still win.

With Kemp as his top surrogate, Dooley argues that a first-time candidate has a better shot to defeat Ossoff, the only Democratic senator facing voters in a state Trump carried in 2024.

Kemp was the top choice of Senate Republican leaders looking for an Ossoff challenger. Kemp recruited Dooley, a childhood friend, to run instead.

Haddad said he voted for Kemp twice and appreciates the job he's done but did not consider the outgoing governor's opinion when deciding who to back for the Senate.

Collins did not mention Kemp on Sunday, paid little attention to Dooley and spent more time criticizing Ossoff.

"He doesn't reflect the state of Georgia," he told supporters from the bed of a pickup truck. "He doesn't represent our values — matter of fact, he shouldn't even be there."

Trump's uneasy relationship with Kemp

Trump's choice, and his insistence on bringing up the 2020 election again, puts the spotlight again on his

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uneasy relationship with Kemp. The governor resisted Trump's pressure not to certify Biden's presidential electors before the Electoral College convened in December of the election year.

Trump criticized Kemp in the years after and backed a primary challenger, former Sen. David Perdue, against the governor in 2022. Kemp trounced Perdue and coasted in the general election. By 2024, he and Trump managed a detente as Trump worked to return Georgia to the GOP presidential column.

But behind the scenes, it's been clear the alliance was fragile and circumstantial. Kemp's decision to recruit Dooley in the first place, with an emphasis on the need for a political outsider, has itself been a subtle rejection of Trump's domination of the party.

In his many campaign stops alongside Dooley, Kemp has reminded voters that Republicans have not won a Senate election in Georgia since 2016 — when Trump was first elected. Each time, the GOP nominee has fully embraced Trump.

The governor points to a trio of first-term Republican senators — Montana's Tim Sheehy, Pennsylvania's Dave McCormick and Ohio's Bernie Moreno — who defeated Democratic incumbents in 2024 running as outsiders who still aligned with the president.

Collins pushed back at Kemp's framing, saying his record in Washington shows he can be staunchly conservative, align with Trump and still court moderates voters who may not like the president.

The congressman sponsored the Laken Riley Act, a 2025 law that requires immigrants be detained when charged with certain crimes. Republicans believe the issue damages Ossoff because he initially voted against the measure before supporting it after Trump returned to the White House.

Collins noted that dozens of Democrats supported the measure.

"Bipartisan is not a bad word," he said, arguing that metropolitan voters will reward him for results.

And even Kemp deviated from his Senate argument Sunday by endorsing Lt. Gov. Burt Jones in the GOP's primary runoff for government. That choice puts Kemp on the side as Trump — who endorsed Jones last year — and against billionaire businessman Rick Jackson, who's run as an outsider like Dooley.

Trump's primary track record

Dooley's and Kemp's argument is matched against Trump's winning streak inside the party. In a matter of weeks, Trump has celebrated victories over Republicans who did not pass his test of loyalty.

Cornyn lost to Paxton, U.S. Rep. Thomas Massie of Kentucky lost to Ed Gallrein, U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana failed to make a runoff and several Indiana state senators were defeated by challengers. Dooley needs Georgia to look more like Iowa, where Trump was unable to lift U.S. Rep. Randy Feenstra to victory in the state's gubernatorial primary.

Dooley has told voters he will "work with President Trump but fight for you."

He will campaign again Monday, and Kemp will be at his side.

## 12 dead in crash of plane on skydiving outing in Missouri, authorities say

By KRISTIN M. HALL and REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BUTLER, Mo. (AP) — A plane carrying a pilot and 11 passengers on a skydiving outing in Missouri crashed in a field and was engulfed in flames Sunday, killing all aboard, authorities said.

The crash happened shortly after the plane took off from a local airport around 11:30 a.m., and some of the occupants' family members witnessed the crash, said Bates County Sheriff Chad Anderson.

A heap of blue and silver mangled metal lay in the grass near Butler Memorial Airport with a massive lineup of emergency vehicles gathered on a nearby street. Clergy and volunteers went to the site to assist relatives, Anderson said, and officials were working Sunday afternoon to identify all victims and notify their next of kin.

Officials with the Federal Aviation Administration were also on scene Sunday afternoon, Anderson said, and a team from the National Transportation Safety Board was en route.

The private plane was operated by Skydive Kansas City, said Dennis Jacobs, the acting airport manager and Bates County Emergency Management Agency director. It was identified as a single engine turboprop

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plane.

"It had just taken off and made a left turn" before the crash, Jacobs said. "In my opinion, I think it was losing power, and he was trying to make it over to the highway and land, and he stalled and went down nose first and caught fire."

Emergency responders put out the fire in the wreckage soon after the crash, Jacobs said, calling the scene "brutal." First responders also checked the area under the flight path and did not find anyone who might have tried to jump out before the plane came down, he said.

The Pacific Aerospace 750XL that crashed is a model that's popular for skydiving and also has proven useful for carrying cargo, aerial surveying and medical evacuation flights. The aircraft can carry more than 4,000 pounds (1,800 kilograms) and is capable of taking off and landing on short runways, according to the manufacturer. The plane was built in 2010, according to FAA records.

Sky diving companies operate in the region eight or nine months of the year, with the season usually starting in late March or early April and lasting into October or November. Someone answering the phone at Skydive Kansas City declined to speak to a reporter from The Associated Press.

The crash occurred on a sunny day in the area. Data from the digital flight tracking company FlightAware shows the plane had already completed two short flights on Sunday before the crash. Two more successful flights were logged Saturday, and five on Friday, according to FlightAware.

It's not yet known what factors may have contributed to the crash, Missouri Highway Patrol Sgt. Justin Ewing said, and those details will be part of the investigation carried out by NTSB officials.

The sheriff emphasized that the public is safe and this "appears to be an accident."

Aviation safety expert Jeff Guzzetti said poor maintenance has been a factor in a number of previous skydiving plane crashes because these companies are not held to a high standard under FAA rules. Guzzetti said skydiving companies are governed by the same rules any private plane owner has to follow and not the more stringent rules that charter flight operators and airlines adhere to.

"There's been a whole history of skydiving accidents for inadequate maintenance and deficient safety culture," said Guzzetti who used to be a crash investigator for both the NTSB and FAA.

The exact cause of Sunday's crash won't be clear for a year or more until the NTSB publishes its final report.

The NTSB has previously raised concerns about the weak oversight for skydiving operators in past crash investigations. The agency said after a 2019 crash that killed 11 people in Hawaii that the FAA's regulatory system isn't strong enough to ensure the safety of skydiving flights.

The small airport serves around 30 aircraft, all privately owned, including crop dusting companies and sky dive operators, Jacobs said.

The small town of Butler has a population of around 4,300 people and is roughly 65 miles (105 kilometers) south of Kansas City. The Butler Memorial Airport, as well as the highway that runs beside it, will remain closed while federal investigators are on the scene, Anderson said Sunday afternoon.

## Japan fans use blue bags to uphold a cleansing World Cup tradition after draw

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Those blue bags Japan fans waved in a frenzy after their team got a late tying goal were then used after the final whistle to maintain what has become a cleansing World Cup tradition.

The Samurai Blue fans cleaned up before they left the stadium Sunday, picking up trash from the stands after Japan's 2-2 draw against the Netherlands in Group F.

Only a few minutes earlier, those then-empty blue bags were prominent in the celebration when Daichi Kamada scored on a header off Koki Ogawa's corner kick in the 88th minute.

Along with the constant chants for their team, those bags the fans bring to the stadium are often raised in unison. The scene becomes frantic after goals, such as Keito Nakamura's earlier in the second half to tie the game at 1-all and Kamada's shot that ultimately secured a point for Japan.

Scenes of Japanese soccer fans picking up and sweeping trash first drew public attention during the

team's first World Cup appearance in France in 1998. They have done it every four years since, including in Qatar in 2022.

Now they have left their mark and no trash at AT&T Stadium, home of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, where workers usually have a lot more cleanup duty after games.

## Alabama's GOP dismisses a residency challenge to Tuberville's bid for Alabama governor

By KIM CHANDLER Associated Press

HOOVER, Ala. (AP) — The Alabama Republican Party said U.S. Sen. Tommy Tuberville will remain the party's gubernatorial nominee, rejecting a claim on Sunday that he had not lived in the state long enough to run for governor.

The unanimous decision came after the party's 21-member steering committee heard a challenge filed by Tuberville's former primary opponent, Ken McFeeters. The challenge argued that Tuberville did not meet the Alabama Constitution's seven-year residency requirement.

"We looked at it with the facts. The contest was unsuccessful. And Coach Tuberville will be our nominee for governor," said Scott Stadthagen, the state Republican Party chair. Tuberville is often referred to as "Coach" because of his background coaching college football.

Stadthagen did not take questions from the news media. The hearing was not open to the public.

Tuberville has long faced accusations of living in Florida rather than the state he represents in Washington. He has faced the same claim as he runs for governor.

McFeeters did not immediately return a text message seeking comment.

"Does he live in Alabama? No," McFeeters said before the hearing. "He doesn't live here."

Tuberville, who easily defeated McFeeters in last month's primary and has been endorsed by President Donald Trump, called the accusation a "witch-hunt" by the media.

"I'm thankful for the committee holding a hearing today to finally put this ridiculous residency hoax to bed," Tuberville said. "For the past six years, I've proudly represented Alabama in the United States Senate. When I'm not in D.C., Suzanne and I are at home in Auburn and yes, sometimes, at our beach house on the coast."

The party said Tuberville submitted state tax records, property and home ownership records, driver's licenses, voter registration and other corroborating material demonstrating his residency. The document said McFeeters was given the opportunity to question Tuberville on the witness stand about how much time he spends in Alabama and in Florida.

Property tax records show Tuberville and his wife own a beach home in Florida valued at \$5.6 million. His campaign has said his residence is a home in Auburn. The 1,551-square-foot property has an appraised value of about \$291,780. The Auburn home was purchased by his wife and son in 2017. The senator's name was later added to the property in 2024, and the son's name removed. Both the Auburn and Florida homes appear to have recently been put in a revocable trust.

Tuberville released heavily redacted Alabama income tax returns from 2018 to 2024 as evidence he meets the seven-year residency requirement. The returns list a redacted Auburn address and indicate the Tubervilles moved to the state in August 2018.

Voting records show Tuberville voted in Florida in November 2018. He registered to vote in Alabama on March 28, 2019, about two weeks before announcing his run for Senate.

McFeeters said Tuberville's Senate travel records also show frequent travel to the Florida Panhandle, which he said buttresses the idea that he resides in the location.

In a seven-page document explaining their decision, party officials cited Tuberville's evidence, including his voting history in Alabama. The officials said courts have determined voter registration to be an important consideration when determining domicile.

Tuberville was head football coach at Auburn University from 1999 to 2008. He then coached at Texas Tech and the University of Cincinnati. He went to work for ESPN after retiring from coaching. In a 2017

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promotional video for ESPN, he talked about moving to Florida after retiring from coaching.

The residency requirement in the Alabama Constitution is awkwardly worded, which could muddy any legal dispute. It says the governor and lieutenant governor "shall have been citizens of the United States ten years and resident citizens of this state at least seven years next before the date of their election."

Tuberville faced similar accusations when he ran for Senate in 2020. He was up against Jeff Sessions, who was running for the same seat that he held before he became Trump's first attorney general. Sessions aired a television advertisement describing Tuberville as a "Florida Man." Tuberville won 61% of the vote, compared with 39% for Sessions, in a Republican primary runoff, and went on to defeat Doug Jones, the Democratic incumbent.

Tuberville and Jones are headed to a rematch in the governor's race in November.

Stadthagen said in a statement that, "it is time for the ALGOP to firmly close and lock this chapter and turn our full attention toward defeating liberal Democrat Doug Jones" and "keeping Alabama the brightest red Republican state in the nation."

## **Putin, Zelenskyy speak with Trump by phone as drone strikes kill 2 in Russia and UK detains tanker**

By The Associated Press undefined

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy each spoke by phone with U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday, as Trump marked his 80th birthday and the war in Ukraine remained a flashpoint ahead of this week's G7 summit.

Putin's call with Trump lasted just under an hour, according to Russian presidential aide Yuri Ushakov, who briefed reporters afterward.

On Ukraine, Ushakov said Trump emphasized the need to end hostilities and stated his readiness to influence European allies and Kyiv toward that goal, including at the upcoming G7 summit.

Trump also said that recent strikes on civilian targets in Russia complicate a settlement — though the White House has not confirmed that, nor commented on the call — and said that ending the war quickly could open the door to "a truly new quality of U.S.-Russian relations," Ushakov quoted him as saying.

Putin, for his part, argued that attacks on Russian civilian infrastructure by Kyiv would not change Ukraine's position on the battlefield, and said that if Zelenskyy wants a meeting with him, "let him come to Moscow," according to Ushakov.

U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner are expected to travel to Russia soon, Ushakov said.

The leaders also discussed Iran, where Trump said a U.S. agreement with Tehran was close and that he hoped the results of the talks could be made public today, Ushakov said.

Zelenskyy said in a statement on Telegram Sunday that he had a "wonderful conversation" with Trump.

Beyond congratulating Trump on his birthday, the Ukrainian president said he thanked the U.S. president for supporting Ukraine.

He said they discussed "what could help bring peace closer now," without providing details. Zelenskyy also informed Trump about how Ukraine's position along the eastern front line has improved and strengthened.

"We agreed to discuss more during our meeting at the G7 summit," he said.

The calls came as Trump prepared to mark his birthday with a UFC fight on the White House lawn Sunday evening, an event without precedent in American history. Once it concludes, Trump is set to fly overnight to France for the G7 summit, where Ukraine is expected to be a major topic of discussion Tuesday and Zelenskyy is due to join the gathering.

Russia's war in Ukraine has long frustrated Trump, who as a candidate claimed he could end the conflict within 24 hours of taking office. He has since stopped making such claims and tends to pivot away from the topic when pressed. He has also grown increasingly vexed by the war between Israel and Iran, which has driven up gas prices, rattled financial markets and stoked concerns about inflation.

The diplomatic exchanges came against the backdrop of continued fighting. Ukrainian drone attacks

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killed one person and wounded nine others overnight in a residential building in the regional capital of Russia's Oryol region, Gov. Andrei Klychkov said Sunday. Another drone attack killed one person Sunday in Russia's Bryansk region, local authorities said.

A separate drone strike hit fuel storage facilities in Russia's Yaroslavl region, around 440 miles from the Ukrainian border, sparking fires. Zelenskyy said the strike had hit "an oil facility that was important for the reserve of the aggressor state."

Ukraine has stepped up attacks on Russian oil and gas infrastructure in recent months, arguing the sector funds Moscow's invasion.

Separately, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Sunday that the U.K. is investigating a sanctioned tanker, the Smyrtos, suspected of belonging to Russia's "shadow fleet" of vessels used to evade sanctions tied to the war.

British forces boarded and detained the vessel in the English Channel, in what the Defense Ministry called the first U.K.-led operation of its kind, carried out in coordination with French authorities.

"This operation delivers yet another blow to Russia and reminds those fueling Putin's war in Ukraine that they cannot hide," Starmer said.

## **Ebola cases in eastern Congo climb to 782 and deaths reach 181, authorities say**

By JEAN-YVES KAMALE Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — The number of confirmed Ebola cases in Congo has increased to 782, with 181 deaths, the Congolese Ministry of Health said in a statement on social platform X on Sunday evening.

However, the number of cases in Congo is believed to be higher because the outbreak was confirmed on May 15, weeks after it is suspected to have begun, and the contact tracing coverage rate is at 56%, a sharp decrease from last week.

The latest Ebola outbreak is caused by the rare Bundibugyo virus, which has no approved vaccine or treatment, unlike the "Zaire virus," which was responsible for most of Congo's past 16 outbreaks of the disease.

Fifty-six people have recovered, and the current fatality rate of the outbreak is 23%, the Ministry said.

The outbreak is concentrated in Congo's eastern province of Ituri, which accounts for more than 90% of the cases. Cases have also been recorded in the North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, and have spread across the border to Uganda.

Nearly a million people have been displaced by conflict in Ituri, according to the U.N. humanitarian office, making contact tracing difficult as people flee attacks or move frequently in the vast province with dense forests, poor roads and remote villages that can take days to reach.

Tracing is also difficult among the thousands of artisanal miners who regularly move between remote sites in the mineral-rich region.

Attacks on health workers from angry residents, skepticism among some locals, and armed conflict in hot spots continue to challenge efforts to stop the outbreak.

Last month, U.S. officials said Washington intends to send Americans exposed to Ebola while abroad to a new facility in Kenya rather than flying them back home. They said the center would be located at Laikipia Air Base with a capacity of 50 quarantine beds. The move led to protests over the plans to build an Ebola quarantine center, which was later halted by the courts.

## **Tyra Banks sues Netflix over 'America's Next Top Model' documentary, alleging defamation**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Tyra Banks has filed a defamation lawsuit against Netflix and the directors of its docuseries "Reality Check: Inside America's Next Top Model," alleging that the producers stripped down hours of interview footage to construct a false narrative.

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In the lawsuit filed Saturday in Los Angeles federal court, the model who created and hosted "America's Next Top Model" said she was interviewed for 3 ½ hours, during which she took responsibility for some of the show's controversial decisions. Those interviews were edited down to 16 minutes and manipulated "to support a false and defamatory narrative unrelated to what she actually expressed," the lawsuit said.

"The accountability Ms. Banks took ended up on the cutting room floor. It was there, but viewers were never given the opportunity to see it," her lawyers wrote.

Banks is seeking damages in her lawsuit against Netflix, the directors Daniel Sivan and Mor Loushy and EverWonder Studio. She's also seeking an injunction barring the use of her image in connection with the docuseries' soundtrack, released as an album.

Emails seeking comments were sent Sunday to the defendants' representatives.

"America's Next Top Model" launched in 2003 and ran for 24 seasons. In recent years, the reality competition series has undergone a critical reevaluation over accusations of body shaming, manipulation of contestants and problematic photoshoots. Banks has previously addressed those criticisms, acknowledging "the insensitivity of past ANTM moments" and "some really off choices."

The lawsuit contends that the producers of the Netflix docuseries used "selective editing, deliberate omission, and surgical manipulation of continuous footage" to formulate a narrative that Banks allowed a contestant to be sexually assaulted on the show, used the contestant's trauma to drum up ratings and then couldn't remember it when asked during the interviews.

"Defendants edited the Netflix Series to make it appear that Ms. Banks knew she was being asked about a sexual assault and was intentionally trying to evade the topic," the lawsuit stated, contending that Banks hadn't been told — or asked — about the assault during the interview.

Banks' lawyers wrote that she wasn't permitted to review the docuseries until a day before its Feb. 16 release. According to the lawsuit, she had not been contacted for fact-checking after her interviews, and was not given an opportunity to respond to accusations from other participants. Other judges from the show, including one her lawyers contend holds a grudge against Banks, consulted on the docuseries.

"Had Ms. Banks known these individuals were so deeply involved in the formulation of the Netflix Series, also serving as consultants shaping the editorial direction, and that she had been excluded from such a role, it would have raised a red flag," the lawsuit read. "She would have known she was being set up. She would not have participated."

Banks' lawyers reached out to Netflix in March to request access to the full footage of her interviews. Netflix and EverWonder denied that request, according to the lawsuit. Since the docuseries' release, public reaction has been "swift, harsh, and directed squarely at Ms. Banks" — even SMiZE & DREAM, her ice cream shop in Sydney, Australia, has been subject to review bombing on Google, the lawsuit read.

The Associated Press sent an email seeking further detail from Banks' lawyers and representatives on Sunday.

"Every other conversation about ANTM's legacy — including the candid reflection Ms. Banks came prepared to have — is now drowned out by an accusation she was never given the chance to answer," her lawyers wrote. "This lawsuit is that answer — particularly after her efforts to resolve the matter directly with Netflix and the producers were refused."

## Mayhem mars euphoria as New York City celebrates the Knicks' first championship in 53 years

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and SHELBY LUM Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It was bedlam on Broadway as the New York Knicks won their first NBA championship in 53 years on Saturday night, with exuberant celebrations marred by mayhem and violence, including a shooting in Times Square.

Outside Madison Square Garden, a crowd watching on a big screen roared as the Knicks rallied from a 16-point deficit to beat the Spurs in San Antonio in Game 5 of the NBA Finals.

Soon after, tens of thousands of people filled the streets and the rowdiest among them were clashing

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with police, smashing windshields, scaling scaffolding, light poles and a statue, climbing into and atop school buses in Times Square and trying to hitch a ride on a moving fire truck.

Around 2 a.m., a 17-year-old was shot near 42nd Street and Broadway, police said. Bystander video captured the sound of at least seven shots and showed people crouching and running for cover. Police took the victim to the hospital because an ambulance could not get through the crowds, police said. A gun was recovered and three people were taken into custody.

Four people were stabbed or slashed and one of the school buses, which was being used for World Cup transportation, was lit on fire and engulfed in flames, police said. Other buses and five police cars were also damaged, police said.

In all, 63 people were arrested, with charges including assault on a police officer, criminal possession of a weapon, criminal mischief and disorderly conduct.

Knicks owner James Dolan, speaking in San Antonio after the game, urged fans to stay calm.

"We need to tell everybody in New York that we know that they're celebrating, we want them to have a great time," said Dolan, interrupting guard Josh Hart's news conference. "Please be safe. Don't get hurt, don't hurt anybody."

The city will officially celebrate the Knicks on Thursday with a parade and City Hall ceremony.

As the clock ticked to the final buzzer on Saturday night, anxiety that had dominated the game's first three quarters gave way to euphoria. An orange-and-blue-tinted fever dream that started with the Knicks' first playoff game two months ago ended in the third title in their 80-year history.

Fireworks boomed over Brooklyn and Central Park. Fans flocked to Times Square and ran through the streets. Outside the Garden, they sang the team's anthem: "Go New York, Go New York, Go!"

Police officers and ambulance workers shouted "Let's go Knicks" over loudspeakers in Brooklyn. Strangers shook hands and hugged. In the Lincoln Tunnel, where people were riding buses back from the World Cup at MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, drivers honked their horns in celebration.

"I'm so overwhelmed. I'm so happy," said Mathieu Ogno, of Long Island, who fought back tears as he soaked in the victory at a team-sanctioned watch party at Wollman Rink in Central Park.

Ogno wore the jersey of Knicks captain Jalen Brunson, whose 45 points propelled the Knicks to victory and him to the NBA Finals MVP. Brunson's gritty determination and chip-on-his-shoulder style have made him a fan favorite, embodying New York's working-class ethos.

The Knicks' championship — 19,392 days since their last — capped an extraordinary postseason for a franchise that hadn't been to the NBA Finals since losing to the Spurs in 1999. Since April 23, the team has won 15 of 16 games, with its lone loss coming Monday in Game 3.

Their last title, in 1973, was also won on the road in a Game 5. Their first, in 1970, was won at home in a Game 7 thriller. Neither was celebrated with a parade.

"I'm happy to see my Knicks finally make it over the hump," said Shawn Muoneke, 26. "I've seen them knock on the door. They were knocking on the door the past few years. But they finally made it over the hump, and I'm so happy to see it and I'm so happy I'm in the city to experience it."

Muoneke, born a year after the Knicks' last trip to the NBA Finals, started rooting for them when he was 10. He drove from Maryland to be in the city for Game 5 at the team's Central Park watch party.

"I saw the ups, the downs and I watched the team come back up, and I was so happy to see them finally reach the highest echelon of stardom as a team," Muoneke said.

After the Knicks' win, he said, the vibes in the city "are the highest they've ever been."

President Donald Trump, a longtime Knicks fan who attended Game 3 at the Garden with Dolan, congratulated the team in a post on his Truth Social platform.

"What a year it has been but, even more so, what incredible playoff wins we have all witnessed, especially the last four - Maybe the greatest in the history of basketball," Trump wrote.

With Brunson's clutch performance, he added, "a superstar was born."

After several dozen arrests throughout the playoffs and violence after Games 3 and 4 in New York that left officers injured and a teen in a coma, police girded for unrest as Saturday bled into Sunday.

"As we celebrate, be responsible, look out for one another, stay safe, be smart, and make this a night that reflects the very best of our city," Mayor Zohran Mamdani said on social media. "Let's go Knicks."

## Italy's Meloni faces a dilemma as challenger 'Il Generale' Vannacci rises

By GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

ROME (AP) — In a packed auditorium in Rome on Sunday, a former Italian army general known to supporters as "Il Generale" rallied followers of his fledgling party, casting himself as an outsider reshaping Italy's right and challenging Premier Giorgia Meloni.

Roberto Vannacci's "National Future" party is injecting uncertainty into the conservative bloc that has underpinned Meloni's government, exposing tensions ahead of the 2027 general election.

Meloni's party has its roots in fascism and she campaigned as an EU-skeptic, prompting analysts to speculate she would be a hard-line nationalist if elected. Instead, she has been a pragmatic conservative leader with a more moderate, pro-European approach, which also ensured a period of unusually long stability for Italy.

In early September, if still in office, Meloni will become the longest-serving head of government in the 80-year history of the Italian Republic, surpassing the late Silvio Berlusconi.

A rival carving out space to her right could test her ability to hold that tack, analysts say. The question is no longer whether Vannacci will influence the vote, but whether Meloni can contain, co-opt or outmaneuver her challenger.

Vannacci calls his party the 'real right'

"With us, Italy will once again be the home of Italians," Vannacci said at his party's founding assembly on Sunday. "Everyone must feel safe in their own home."

One day earlier, he proudly described his core lawmakers as the "dirty dozen," stressing his outsider role.

Vannacci, 57, emerged politically with his 2023 self-published book "Il mondo al contrario" (The World Upside Down), which drew controversy for harsh attacks on LGBTQ+ people, migrants and minorities.

He entered politics a year later with Matteo Salvini's anti-migration League, winning more than 530,000 preferences in European Parliament elections. He left the League in February to launch his Futuro Nazionale, a break Salvini called a "betrayal."

Since then, Vannacci has consolidated support. The party says it has surpassed 100,000 members and now has eight deputies, including defectors from the League and centrist Forza Italia, underscoring unease within Meloni's coalition.

He rejects the traditional "far-right" label, calling his movement the "real right," and has accused Meloni of failing to turn shared priorities into policies. He's for now ruling out a possible alliance.

Vannacci platform centers on hard-line positions on security and migration, including calls for the "remigration" of foreigners he considers not integrated; opposition to EU policies such as the Green Deal; and criticism of Western sanctions on Russia.

Vannacci's rise comes as far-right and nationalist parties gain ground across Europe, reshaping the political landscape and focusing on polarizing issues like migration and security.

A potential wild card

Analysts say Vannacci's rise in Italy reflects a political and cultural shift.

"He is commanding a sort of political raid for hard-right votes within the main parties of the coalition," said Massimiliano Panarari, politics professor at University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. "Meloni's strategy was to have no one to her right. Now she does."

Panarari described Vannacci as "an entrepreneur of fear," whose rhetoric pushes themes that Meloni can no longer openly embrace in government, like openly anti-gay and anti-feminist positions.

Lorenzo Pregliasco, political analyst and polling expert at YouTrend, said the development introduces "something new — an opposition from the right to the current government."

"Now there is a force outside the majority that challenges it on popular issues like migration, security and culture wars," he noted.

That shift carries electoral weight. Polls give Vannacci's party single-digit support, but that's a potentially

decisive share when time comes for coalition building, given Italy's main center-right and center-left blocs are so closely matched.

"They could be the difference between finishing ahead or behind," Pregliasco said, describing Vannacci as a potential wild card.

Meloni has a tough choice to make

For Meloni, the dilemma is strategic.

"In terms of political debate, he introduces instability on the right," Pregliasco said. "She and her allies must decide whether to absorb him into the coalition — but that would create problems."

Addressing parliament earlier this week, Meloni accused Vannacci-aligned lawmakers of undermining the government and favoring the left, while her Brothers of Italy party and centrist allies have ruled out electoral agreements.

For now, Meloni has avoided direct confrontation, a strategy seen as both calculation and a bet that Vannacci's momentum may fade.

"The issue is what to do with this loose cannon of Vannacci, which could drag the right back toward the far right," Panarari said.

"I'm not sure it would benefit Meloni to shift further right before general elections. Her approach will likely be marked by ambiguity and ambivalence, as long as possible."

## **Palestinian death toll in Gaza tops 73,000 as Israel launches strikes despite ceasefire**

By WAFAA SHURAF and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Palestinian death toll from the Israel-Hamas war has surpassed 73,000, Gaza's Health Ministry said Sunday, as Israeli military operations continued despite a stalled and fragile ceasefire in place since October.

Israel says it is targeting Hamas and other militants who pose a threat, and in response to ceasefire violations, including occasional attacks.

Nearly 1,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the start of the ceasefire, according to the health ministry. Five Israeli soldiers have been killed since the truce.

The number of deaths since the beginning of the war is now 73,001, according to the health ministry's tally. Over 173,200 people have been wounded since the start of the war on Oct. 7, 2023, following the Hamas-led attack into Israel. That attack killed some 1,200 people and took 251 others hostage.

The health ministry, part of the Hamas-led government, is staffed by medical professionals and maintains detailed records viewed as generally reliable by United Nations agencies and independent experts. It does not distinguish between civilians and militants but says women and children make up around half of all fatalities.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and blames their deaths on Hamas because the militants operate in densely populated areas.

Stalled ceasefire

The U.S.-brokered ceasefire deal reached in October ended full-scale military operations and led to the return of all the remaining hostages. But other elements of the deal have stalled as Hamas has refused to disarm and Israeli troops have advanced in Gaza, rather than withdrawn. Both sides accuse the other of violating the agreement but say it is still in effect.

Progress on all other issues — including reconstruction, Israeli troop withdrawals and the establishment of a new Palestinian government — is being held up by the deadlock over disarming Hamas, the top diplomat overseeing the U.S.-brokered ceasefire in Gaza, Nikolay Mladenov, has said.

The war displaced most of the Palestinian population of over 2 million, left large parts of the territory in rubble and created widespread shortages of food, medicine and other basic supplies as the border crossings with Gaza — all but one controlled by Israel — slammed shut.

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At least eight more Palestinians killed in the weekend

An Israeli strike on Sunday afternoon in northern Gaza's Jabaliya refugee camp killed at least four people and wounded others, according to health officials at the Shifa hospital, where the casualties were taken. An Israeli military official, who spoke anonymously in line with military guidelines, said the military "struck terrorists" in the area, without elaborating.

A 13-year-old boy was among five Palestinians killed in Gaza on Saturday night and into the early hours of Sunday, according to Palestinian health officials. In response to the Saturday night strike that killed two of the five, the Israeli military claimed that it was striking Hamas militants.

## **Swiss voters reject right-wing's bid to cap population at 10 million, early results show**

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — Nearly 55% of voters in Switzerland on Sunday rejected an initiative championed by the top right-wing party to cap the rich Alpine country's population at 10 million, early results showed.

The populist Swiss People's Party, which has the most seats in parliament, has stirred up and fostered anti-migration sentiment over the years, notably about an influx of workers from the neighboring European Union.

Some have dubbed the proposal a "Swiss Brexit" because it could jeopardize Switzerland's deep ties to the European Union anchored by deals that foster economic growth, cultural ties and cross-border travel, among other things. Switzerland is not one of the EU's 27 member states, but it is all but surrounded by four of them.

Recent polling from the gfs.bern agency suggested that it could be a close contest.

Preliminary results shared by the federal government showed that nearly 55% of voters rejected the proposal, with nationwide turnout almost 59%. Results were still pending from many of Switzerland's 26 cantons.

Right-wing party says Swiss way of life strained by growing population

The number of people living in Switzerland has soared by nearly one-quarter over the last generation, and foreigners today make up nearly one-third of the population.

Critics say the boom in migration has brought foreign labor and skills to sectors such as healthcare, finance, pharmaceuticals, and technology.

The right-wing party put forward the "sustainability initiative" measure, saying Swiss infrastructure, housing, social programs, natural resources and way of life have been strained by the spike in demographic growth.

The federal government, Parliament and EconomieSuisse, a major business association, oppose the idea.

In Geneva, Switzerland's second-largest city and a hub of U.N. institutions and humanitarian groups, early results showed about two-thirds of voters in the region opposed the measure.

Maria Lalu, a former diplomatic mission worker from the Philippines who arrived in Switzerland in the early 1980s, said she supported the proposal. "I have nothing against immigration. I also am a stranger," she said after casting her vote, adding that she wants immigration to be more orderly.

Schoolteacher Natascha Robert said she voted against the bid, expressing concern that approval could hurt Switzerland's relationship with the EU. She also said Switzerland's growing diversity is an asset.

"I think people always have something to bring us," she said outside a polling station in the central Paquis neighborhood, emphasizing that she was born in Switzerland to two Swiss parents. "Does that mean that we have more foreigners, I feel less Swiss? Really, not."

International migration is a controversial issue across Europe

Swiss democracy gives voters a direct say in policymaking through referendums typically held four times a year. Most ballots are cast through the mail, and in-person voting ended at noon local time on Sunday.

A "yes" vote would require the Swiss government to take action to cap the population by 2050.

If the population reaches 9.5 million before then, the government would be forced to restrict asylum,

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family reunification and residency permits, and may have to scrap Switzerland's EU deal on the free movement of people.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development has reported that Switzerland had a foreign-born population of 32% as of 2024, behind only Luxembourg and Australia among the group's 38 member countries.

International migration has long been a sensitive issue in Europe, as nations grapple with an aging population and increasing anti-foreigner sentiment. While that sentiment in other European countries centers on migrants from the developing world, most foreigners in Switzerland are Europeans.

Since Switzerland and the EU eased restrictions on citizens living and working across their borders in 2002, the Swiss population has grown by 23%, to 9.1 million as of the end of last year. Economic output has also increased, up 24% over the same period, government data show.

Swiss voters have repeatedly tackled the immigration issue over the last half-century. Only one such referendum — "Against mass immigration" in 2014 — narrowly passed, after campaigners stoked fears about overpopulation and rising numbers of Muslims in the country.

While many countries have limits on immigration, none has ever voted to limit its population, Swiss experts say.

## **Nara Organics recalls baby formula sold at Target after multistate infant botulism outbreak**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Nara Organics recalled its organic baby formula sold nationwide in Target stores and online Saturday after a multistate outbreak of infant botulism, federal authorities said.

Three babies between 2 and 5 months became ill in April and May in California, Pennsylvania and Washington after consuming Nara Organics Whole Milk Organic Powdered infant formula, which is also sold on Nara.com, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration said.

They were hospitalized and treated with the FDA-approved treatment for infant botulism, the agency said.

Infant botulism is a rare but serious illness that occurs in babies under age 1, whose gut microbiomes are immature. It is caused when infants consume bacteria with spores that produce a toxin in the gut.

Symptoms include constipation, poor feeding, drooping eyelids, weak muscle tone, difficulty swallowing and breathing problems, among others.

Babies who develop those symptoms need immediate medical attention. The sole treatment is BabyBIG, an IV medication made from blood plasma of people immunized against botulism.

Nara Organics Whole Milk Organic Infant Formula makes up less than 1% of all infant formula sold in the United States, and the outbreak does not create shortage concerns for parents and caregivers, the FDA said.

People who have the formula are urged to stop using it immediately, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control said in a statement. The formula is manufactured in Europe but sold only in the U.S., it added.

The CDC recommended that anyone with an opened can take a picture, record the lot number and use-by date and watch their infants for symptoms.

"Label it 'DO NOT USE' and keep it stored in a safe place away from other items you feed your baby for at least a month," the CDC said. "If no symptoms appear after a month, throw the leftover formula away."

## **Britain detains sanctioned oil tanker believed to be linked to Russia's shadow fleet**

By ELISE MORTON and BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Armed British forces boarded and detained a sanctioned tanker Sunday that is suspected of being part of the Russian "shadow fleet," shipping oil in violation of international sanctions over Moscow's war on Ukraine, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Sunday.

Royal Marine commandos rappelled from helicopters onto the vessel, the Smyrtos, in the English Channel, in what the country's Defense Ministry called "the first U.K.-led operation of its kind."

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The vessel will be held and monitored off the south coast of England for investigation, according to the Defense Ministry. The operation was carried out "in close coordination" with French authorities, who have previously intercepted a number of vessels linked to the "shadow fleet."

"This operation delivers yet another blow to Russia and reminds those fueling Putin's war in Ukraine that they cannot hide," Starmer said.

Russia is believed to be using a fleet of hundreds of ships to evade sanctions over its war against Ukraine.

Sailing under a Cameroon flag, the Smyrtos left the Russian Baltic port of Ust-Luga on June 5 destined for Port Said, Egypt, according to the MarineTraffic website.

U.K. authorities said that such operations were "directly bearing down on the resources sustaining Russia's aggression in Ukraine and reducing its capacity to threaten security across Europe and beyond."

Ukraine President Voldymyr Zelenskyy thanked Starmer and the British people for their "principled resolve."

"It was Russia's hubris, fueled by high oil and gas revenues, that paved the way for this war, and every decision by partners that deprives Russia of money also limits the war itself," Zelenskyy said on X.

"Europe urgently needs to take legislative steps to enable not only the detention of tankers and restrictions on oil shipments, but also the confiscation of the oil they carry."

## **Today In History: June 15**

### **Over 1,000 killed in New York steamboat accident**

By The Associated Press

Today is Monday, June 15, the 166th day of 2026. There are 199 days left in the year.

On June 15, 1904, more than 1,000 people died when fire erupted aboard the steamboat PS General Slocum in New York's East River; it remained the deadliest individual event in the New York area until 9/11.

In 1215, England's King John placed his seal on the Magna Carta ("the Great Charter"), which curtailed the absolute power of the monarchy.

In 1775, the Second Continental Congress voted unanimously to appoint George Washington head of the Continental Army.

In 1864, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton signed an order establishing a military burial ground that became Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia.

In 1895, a tsunami triggered by a magnitude 8.5 earthquake struck the coast of northeastern Japan with waves reaching a height of 125 feet (38 meters), killing more than 22,000 people.

In 1934, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed an act making the National Guard part of the U.S. Army in the event of war or national emergency.

In 1934, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, now the most-visited national park in the United States, was established by Congress.

In 1938, Johnny Vander Meer of the Cincinnati Reds became the only baseball pitcher to toss two consecutive no-hitters, leading the Reds to a 6-0 victory over the Brooklyn Dodgers in the first night game ever held at Ebbets Field, four days after no-hitting the Boston Bees by a score of 3-0.

In 1982, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in Plyler v. Doe that states cannot deny students a free K-12 public education because of their immigration status, citing the Constitution's Equal Protection Clause.

In 1991, Mount Pinatubo in the northern Philippines exploded in one of the most powerful volcanic eruptions of the 20th century, killing more than 800 people.

In 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court, with a 6-3 vote in its Bostock v. Clayton County decision, ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects gay, lesbian and transgender people from discrimination in employment.

Today's Birthdays: Baseball Hall of Famer Billy Williams is 88. Former MLB player and manager Dusty Baker is 77. Actor Simon Callow is 77. Singer Russell Hitchcock (Air Supply) is 77. Chinese President Xi Jinping is 73. Actor-comedian Jim Belushi is 72. Actor Julie Hagerty is 71. Baseball Hall of Famer Wade Boggs is 68. Actor Helen Hunt is 63. Actor Courteney Cox is 62. Rapper-actor Ice Cube is 57. Actor Leah Remini is 56. Actor Neil Patrick Harris is 53. Olympic gymnastics gold medalist Madison Kocian is 29. Actor Sissy Sheridan is 22.

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